

THE ANDREAS KURZ CABIN CHEST



Fig. 1 Andreas Kurz (N. Fletcher)

The chest was presumably made specifically for the trip from Germany to Australia, and may have been made by Andreas Kurz himself, or a local handyman. The chest is a rustic piece, albeit of sturdy construction, and its lack of sophistication suggests that it was not made by a master craftsman. However, it is nevertheless of an intricate design and its construction would have been laborious. The timber was probably locally sourced and is presumably of a pine variety, very prevalent in the forested southern region of Germany where Andreas lived.

The chest is in relatively good condition, although some of its timbers have split owing to the extreme weather conditions – both hot and cold – which it has endured in its 148 years in the Mudgee district. All of the ironmongery is intact, although the key is regrettably missing.

The chest is 855mm wide, 570mm high, and 560mm deep. It features extensive dovetailing of the front and back panels to the sides and a lightly-stained and lacquered exterior which retains its original finish, while the interior is raw. The chest's japanned ironmongery consists of metal straps around the sides and numerous hand-made nails which have ensured that the structure remains as robust as the day it was made; the remaining ironmongery – hinges, handles and lockplate – are equally pristine.

The front of the chest is inscribed with the numbers 240 – the significance of which is not known at this stage – in both the top right and top left hand corners. The front is also emblazoned with the name “Andreas Kurz” and the text “Aus Manshaupten nach Australien” (From Germany to Australia), all in large black-painted German Gothic script.¹

¹ “Manshaupten” should be more appropriately “Mannshaupten”.

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SCALED DRAWINGS

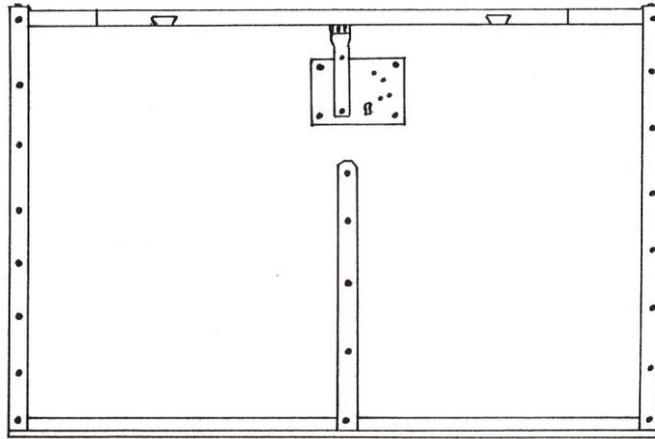


Fig. 2 The Andreas Kurz cabin chest: front (Scale = 1 : 10) (John Broadley)

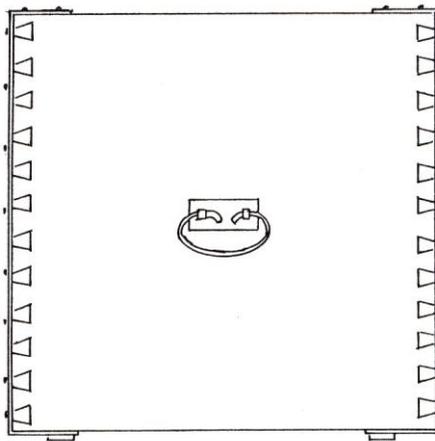


Fig. 3 The Andreas Kurz cabin chest: side (Scale = 1 : 10) (John Broadley)

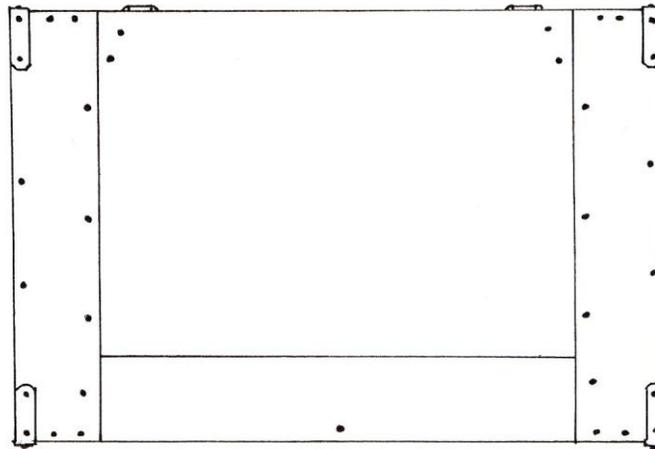


Fig. 4 The Andreas Kurz cabin chest: lid (Scale = 1 : 10) (John Broadley)

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PHOTOGRAPHS



Fig. 5 The Andreas Kurz cabin chest: front



Fig. 6 The Andreas Kurz cabin chest: lockplate



Fig. 7 The Andreas Kurz cabin chest: side handle

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Fig. 8 The Andreas Kurz cabin chest: front and top



Fig. 9 The Andreas Kurz cabin chest: front, top and side



Fig. 10 The Andreas Kurz cabin chest: interior

ANDREAS KURZ AND HIS CABIN CHEST A SHORT HISTORY

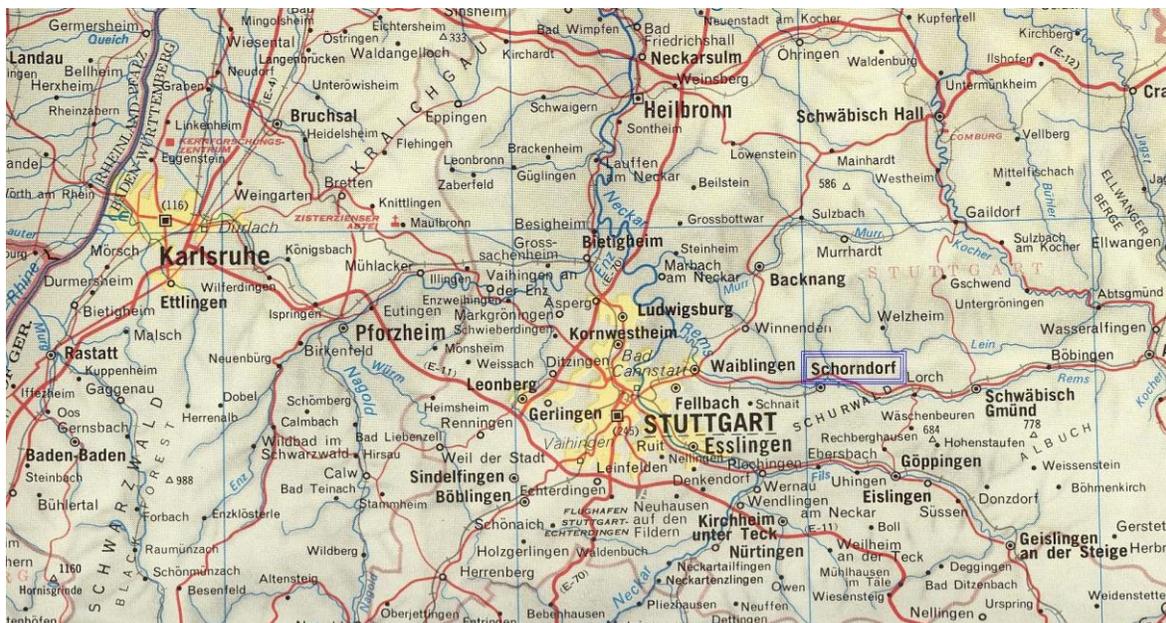


Fig. 11 Portion of map of south-western Germany, highlighting Schorndorf to the north-east of Stuttgart

Andreas Kurz was born on 2nd February 1819 in Mannshaupten in what was then the kingdom of Württemberg in Germany.² Mannshaupten is a small village which has long formed part of the larger town of Schorndorf, to the north-east of the city of Stuttgart. Andreas was the third son and fifth child of the third marriage of Johann Friederich Kurz to Margaretha Benz. A weaver by profession, Andreas married Anna Rosine Kurz on 29th May 1845. Andreas and Anna Rosine had four children by 1853, all born in Mannshaupten: Friederike (1846), Gustav (1848), Rosine (1850) and Andreas (1853); sadly, Friederike and Andreas died in infancy.

In 1855 Andreas and Anna Rosine and their children Gustav and Rosine emigrated to New South Wales per *Commodore Perry* out of Liverpool, but Rosine died en route. Four more children were born to Andreas and Anna Rosine in Australia: John Joseph (1857), John William (1860), George John (1863) and Cristina (1866). Andreas and his family settled at Pipeclay Creek, several kilometres to the north-east of Mudgee, where he established a vineyard. Andreas died at Mudgee in 1902.

Joseph Kurz, a younger brother of Andreas, emigrated to Australia in 1856 and also settled in Mudgee. Over time the family changed the spelling of the surname to Kurtz.³

The chest which Andreas and Anna Rosine had brought to Australia passed to the family of their second son, John Joseph, who had died in 1894. Ultimately, the chest was inherited by

² Württemberg is now in the Land (State) of Baden-Württemberg.

³ "Kurz" is the German word for "short".

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John Joseph's second son, Herbert Joseph (Joe), who married late in life as her third husband Mary Jane Wall, nee Haynes, previously Fitzpatrick. Joe Kurtz died in 1969 and the chest passed to his step-daughter, nee Jean Fitzpatrick, wife of Jack Drinkwater of Mudgee. Jean died in 1981 and her husband Jack in 1985, and their estates passed to their son John and daughter Helen Steffen.

Jean and Jack Drinkwater had lived for many years at 106 Denison Street, Mudgee, which was next door to my own house. In 1986, after the death of Jack, my wife Carol and I purchased 106 Denison Street and much of its contents, which included Andreas Kurz's cabin chest, a piece which I greatly admired and valued.

In 2005 the cabin chest of Andreas Kurz fittingly passes to the permanent care of the Mudgee Historical Society.

John Broadley