

## Augustus Koch

Koch was born on October 15, 1840 in Birnbaum, Prussia. By 1861 he lived in Wisconsin, probably in Manitowoc, where his parents also resided. In September, 1861 he enlisted as a private in Company B, 9th Regiment, Wisconsin Infantry, to fight in the Civil War. In 1863, when he was a clerk and draftsman in the Engineers Office in St. Louis, he applied for a commission as an officer. His superior officer, in recommending him, stated that Koch was "thoroughly educated and went to a good school." He was commissioned and assigned as an engineering officer in a Black regiment in the lower Mississippi valley where he sketched Vicksburg, Baton Rouge, and Mobile.

By 1869 Koch was living in Chicago producing lithograph prints of maps, an art form that was to be his life's work. His career spanned three decades, from 1868 to 1898, during which he produced 110 Birdseye View maps of communities in twenty-three states. He was associated with such notable lithographers as Eli S. Glover, Albert Ruger, and Joseph J. Stoner. The experts report that Koch drew with considerable care and depicted his scenes as if seen from high viewpoints.

Koch's first Texas views of Austin and San Antonio appeared in 1873. They were the first of nineteen Texas views he is known to have completed. The details of his El Paso sketching have not been established to date, but it must have been at a time when excitement was high for a railroad from El Paso to White Oaks, New Mexico.

The El Paso County Historical Society is proud to reproduce this unique view of our city at the Pass of the North. Appreciation goes to Professor John Reys of Cornell University for his excellent research on Koch.

*James M. Day*  
*President*