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Bird's Eye View of New Braunfels Comal County Texas 1881.

Stock#: 39113
Map Maker: Koch
Date: 1881
Place: n.p.
Color: Color
Condition: VG
Size: 29 x 18.5 inches
Price: \$16,500.00



Description:

Rare view of New Braunfels, Texas, in 1881, published by Augustus Koch.

As noted on the Amon Carter Museum Website exhibition of Bird's-Eye Views of Texas:

In depicting New Braunfels, founded in 1845 under the auspices of the Adelsverein (also known as the Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas), Augustus Koch chose the perspective from the Sophienburg (Fort Sophia), the headquarters that Prince Solms-Braunfels established for the colony. Built on a hill on the south side of the new settlement with a view of the Comal River and its confluence with Comal Creek, the Sophienburg was to have included a headquarters building and a fort. The fort was never completed, but the original log cabin headquarters building (14 on map), shown in the center foreground of the print, is easily recognizable because of the sagging roof that seems about to collapse. In fact, the building was destroyed five years after Koch's visit by a hurricane that annihilated Indianola.

New Braunfels had been a regional agricultural center for decades by the time the International-Great Northern Railroad linked it with Austin and San Antonio in 1880 and 1881. "We have now entered into communication with the whole world by rail-road," announced the editor of the Neu-Braunfeler Zeitung. He predicted that the "steamsteed" would connect the city with the Pacific as well as "Montezuma's legendary residence," Mexico City itself. The railroad is prominently featured in the foreground of the print, with two steam locomotives heading toward each other on the same track. The passenger depot (6) is located at the intersection of San Antonio and Hill streets and the freight depot is at Church and Hill streets.



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Next in importance seem to be the mills along the Comal River: Landa Flour Mills on Comal Springs (4), which feeds the Comal River; Comal Mills (13), on the Comal Springs on the north side of town; the New Braunfels Woolen Manufacturing Company (5); and a brewery (8). The cotton gin and oil mill (15), only a block off the Public Square, suggest the growing importance of the city as a processing and transportation center. Two churches-one of the German Protestant churches (9) and the Roman Catholic Church (10)-are equally as prominent. The Comal County Courthouse is not as prominent as courthouses in many Texas towns because the public square is open, rather than having the courthouse located in its center.

While Koch did not trace the course of the Comal Creek and river as precisely as he might have, the features of the landscape are generally accurate and would have been easy to recognize by residents. The large building on Academy Street, between Bridge and Mill streets, is the public school, which New Braunfels residents established even before the Texas Constitution of 1876 made support of public education mandatory. Much of the strip of land between Comal Creek and the river became Landa Park, which attracted tourists and excursion trains from San Antonio and Austin. Koch showed Comal Town, which grew simultaneously with New Braunfels, on the north side of both the river and the creek.

Augustus Koch began his career as an itinerant birds-eye view artist in California in 1870. Over the next nearly 30 years, he would criss-cross the country, creating more than 100 views of towns, large and small. His large format, highly detailed views are among the most coveted among collectors, employing a unique style which provides both physical details of the town and a map-like quality.

Koch's view of New Braunfels is quite rare. Repps locates only a single example (Amon Carter Museum).

Detailed Condition:

Several minor holes in the sky, expertly repaired on the verso.