

AUGUSTUS KOCH (1834-1901)

Artist to Ferdinand von Hochstetter

(With a note on the Vienna Exhibition of 1873)

Items 2152 and 2153 of Claren Kidd's recently published and very useful catalogue of New Zealand geological maps (Kidd, 1996) are

- 2152 Koch, A. 1876. Map of colony of New Zealand, 1 in. = 14 miles. 1 sheet, 160 x 114, lithographd, coloured and pasted on canvas, compiled from official sources of Public Works Department, insert map showing railways and telegraphs, New Zealand.
- 2153 Koch, A. 1864. Plan of the province of Hawke's Bay, New Zealand showing a sketch of its geological formation, 1:760,320. London: Waterlow & Sons. 1 sheet, 93 x 88 cm, coloured lithograph. larger map "Plan of the province of Hawke's Bay, New Zealand". shows hachured topography, land ownership and limited areas of geology.

The name of Koch is not a prominent one in New Zealand geology but at the time of his death in 1901 he was the last surviving member of Hochstetter's expedition through the southern part of the Auckland Province in 1859.



Augustus Karl Frederick Koch was born in Berlin on 25 March 1834, the son of a wool merchant and carrier. At the age of 12 he entered the Royal Academy of Arts. Later he studied Art, Science, and Anatomy at the University, graduating B.A. in August 1850.

When the European political upheaval of 1848 reached Berlin, students made common cause with the people and on 18 March, the 13 year old Koch was at the barricades in the streets of Berlin for fifteen hours. As a result of that encounter 1300 soldiers and 400 civilians lost their lives.

Augustus Koch in 1889  
- Photo Kay and Eden 1983

On doctor's advice to remove to the seaside, Koch left Berlin in July 1851 and travelled through the Mediterranean. This left him with a taste for the sea and for the next seven years he travelled the world as a seaman. In 1855 he made his first voyage to New Zealand, calling at Auckland and New Plymouth. He was back in Auckland in June 1858, this time to settle permanently in New Zealand. He brought with him a small lithographic printing press which he claimed to be the first in New Zealand, and, within six to eight weeks of his arrival, the following advertisement began to appear in the two Auckland newspapers -

A. KOCH

Lithographic Artist and Designer

Shortland St.

His main work consisted of auction plans and he produced the first map of the city of Auckland. He was one of the first in New Zealand to use the process of printing photographs from negatives (obit., Evening Post 31 December 1901.)

In December 1858 the Auckland Provincial Government engaged Koch to accompany Hochstetter as artist and meteorologist on his South Auckland journey. Hochstetter (1867, p.330) mentions one episode involving his artist. Whilst the party was on the north side of Kawhia Harbour, a Mr. Charleston "expressed the wish, that my artist, Mr. Koch, would paint his house and garden, with the liberal remark, that he was not particular as to a pound or two, if only the apples in the garden were painted quite nice and red".

In the course of the journey, Koch made over seventy drawings of native carvings and painted a number of landscapes. He also assisted Hochstetter in the preparation of a large scale map ( 2 miles to inch) of the southern part of the province. (Turnbull Ms 0653-1, p.27; Hochstetter and Petermann, 1864, p.50)

On 28 May 1859, an Auckland newspaper, The New Zealander, reported -

We have had the pleasure of inspecting a portfolio of very accurate and artistic sketches - many of them on a very large scale - taken by Mr. Koch in the districts visited by the expedition, and many of which we hope to see lithographed.

Koch's sketches were displayed at Hochstetter's lecture on 'The Geology of the Province of Auckland' at the Mechanics' Institute on 24 June 1859 ( The New Zealander, 29 June 1859).

On 27 July, The New Zealander reported on the presentation of an

address and testimonial to Hochstetter in the same Mechanics Institute on 25 July. The "elegant decorations" included -

the minute and singularly accurate pen-and-ink drawings by Mr. Koch of Native carvings and "pahs" and of several of the most striking of the landscapes of the Waikato, of Taupo and other lakes, and of Geysirs.

Hochstetter must have taken Koch's sketches with him when he left New Zealand as they were later on display in the Colonial Museum at Vienna (Turnbull Ms 0653-1, p.27) and he used a number of them in his "New Zealand" (Hochstetter 1867).

In the latter part of 1859 Koch accepted the position of Chief Draughtsman in the newly formed Province of Hawkes Bay and shortly after his arrival he supervised the erection of the first meteorological station in Napier.

Koch was an exhibitor at the New Zealand Exhibition held in Dunedin in 1865. The Hawke's Bay section of the Catalogue (Anon. 1865, p.15) lists -

148. Koch, August, Government Draughtsman, del.- Map of Province of Hawke's Bay, shewing purchased lands by private individuals, land still in the hands of the natives, and Government land open for selection.
149. Koch, August, Government Draughtsman, del.- A small map, shewing the geological features of the Province

The first map won an Honorary Certificate from the jurors (Anon. 1866, p.248) and both maps together make up item 2153 of Kidd 1996.

Item 214 of the Fine Arts section of the catalogue is a portrait in crayons by Koch (Anon. 1865, p.93).

In the 1860's Koch was 'back at the barricades' but this time he was thousands of miles from Berlin. During the land wars he served for six years in the Napier Volunteer Corps. For his service in an expedition against Te Kooti in the Ureweras in 1868 he received the New Zealand War Medal. (Gudgeon, 1887, p.xviii). However the list of medallists given by Gudgeon indicates that Koch was merely one of four thousand who received the award

In 1870 Koch left Napier in an unsuccessful attempt to make a fortune as a mining surveyor in the Thames Goldfields.

In November 1871 the Engineer in Chief of the Public Works Department invited Koch to join his staff in Wellington. Amongst Koch's early assignments was the preparation of two maps for the

New Zealand Court at the International Exhibition held in Vienna in 1873 (See Concluding Note) In the Catalogue (Anon 1873, Appendix, p.9 ) these maps are described -

Topographical Map of New Zealand, on scale of 12 miles to inch, showing surface features, forests, railways, telegraphs, roads, and other public works, political and tribal boundaries etc. Compiled from official information in the Public Works Department, by Auguste Koch.

Geological Map of New Zealand, on scale of 12 miles to one inch, showing the distribution of the formations, illustrated by 12 geological sections through different parts of the islands. Compiled by James Hector, M.D., F.R.S., Director of the Geological Survey of New Zealand, from official information in the Geological Survey Department, and drawn by Auguste Koch.

In the Koch file at the Alexander Turnbull Library (Ms 0653-2) are newspaper cuttings of unknown origins and dates which tell us that the topographical map was published in London under the supervision of E.G.Ravenstein whilst the geological map, on a small scale, was published in 1873, also in London, but very few copies were issued.

The published geological map itself (Hector 1873) states the scale as about 33 miles to the inch and, significantly, is described as -

Geological Sketch Map of New Zealand. Constructed from official Surveys and the Explorations of Dr. F. von Hochstetter, Dr. Julius Haast and Others. by James Hector, M.D., F.R.S.

Both maps were again exhibited at the Philadelphia Centennial International Exhibition of 1876 (Anon, 1877, p.36).

The topographical map seems to have been the basis for later geological maps (McLernon, 1975, p.749). The geological map is described by Willett (1959, p.3).

In addition to his work with maps (The Alexander Turnbull Library has 19 of these) Koch supplied drawings for many government publications. He contributed several drawings to Volume 25 (1893) of the Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute.

Arising from his art training in Germany, Koch became involved in the Wellington art scene (Platts, 1980). He was on the Council of the New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts from 1889 to 1894. (Kay and Eden 1983, p.193).

He was also prominent in the early years of the Masonic Order in New Zealand and was connected with the Thorndon School for thirty years, twenty years as chairman of the school committee. (Obit. Evening Post 31 December 1901).

On 11 April 1860, at the residence of the bride's father in Auckland, Koch married Elizabeth Bain \* who predeceased him by 17 years. Koch died on 30 December 1901 and was survived by three sons and three daughters.

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#### A Note on the Vienna International Exhibition of 1873

In 1872 the New Zealand Government decided that the country would be represented at The International Exhibition to open in Vienna on 1 May the following year and on 15 November 1872 the New Zealand Agent-General in London, I.E. Featherston, wrote to Ferdinand von Hochstetter requesting his assistance in preparing the New Zealand displays. Four days later Hochstetter replied saying "I would with pleasure undertake to do anything for a land to whose esteemed inhabitants I am so much indebted". (Anon. 1873, p.6)

Official correspondence on the New Zealand participation in the exhibition is given in Anon. 1873 and 1874 and makes frequent mention of Hochstetter's contribution. He took control of the natural history specimens and set up the moa skeletons sent by Haast. After the Exhibition had closed, the New Zealand Government, through Hochstetter, presented the specimens displayed to various institutions in Vienna (Anon. 1873, p.13).

Haast (1884, p.209) gives more personal information on Hochstetter's work for the New Zealand exhibits -

As the New Zealand exhibits arrived very late, Hochstetter worked day and night to get them ready; the more so as the three Moa skeletons, sent by the Canterbury Museum, and a large collection of bird skins had first to be articulated and mounted. After five weeks' incessant labour, with five assistants, the whole was at last, by the end of June ready to be placed in position, nearly two months after the opening of the exhibition.

Also displayed in the New Zealand Court were 48 photographs of New Zealand scenery which had been taken by D.L. Mundy during a visit in 1869/70 (Bagnall, 1980, p.686). Fourteen of the scenes were of the geothermal areas (mainly Rotomahana). These were later published with commentaries by Hochstetter (Mundy 1875). Hochstetter's contribution to this book was his last publication on New Zealand geology

\* The New Zealander, April 14 1860.

Most of the exhibits in the New Zealand Court were sent from this country but a smaller number were accumulated from British sources by the New Zealand Agent-General in London, I.E. Featherston. One of the British donors was W. Lauder Lindsay whose contributions included "17 geological and other maps" (Robinson, 1873, p.212). Lindsay had spent several months in New Zealand in 1861-2 and had written the first account of Otago geology (Lindsay, 1862).

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### Acknowledgments

Most of the information on Koch's life has been obtained from two sets of handwritten autobiographical notes held by the Alexander Turnbull Library as follows -

1. Koch, Augustus. Papers 1859-1880. MS-Papers-0653
2. Koch, Augustus. Rough draft of A.Koch's life. 1834-1901. MS-Papers-3840.

I am grateful to the Library for their permission to use information from these papers.

The New Zealand Academy of Fine Arts kindly gave permission to reproduce the photograph of Koch in Kay and Eden, 1983.

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