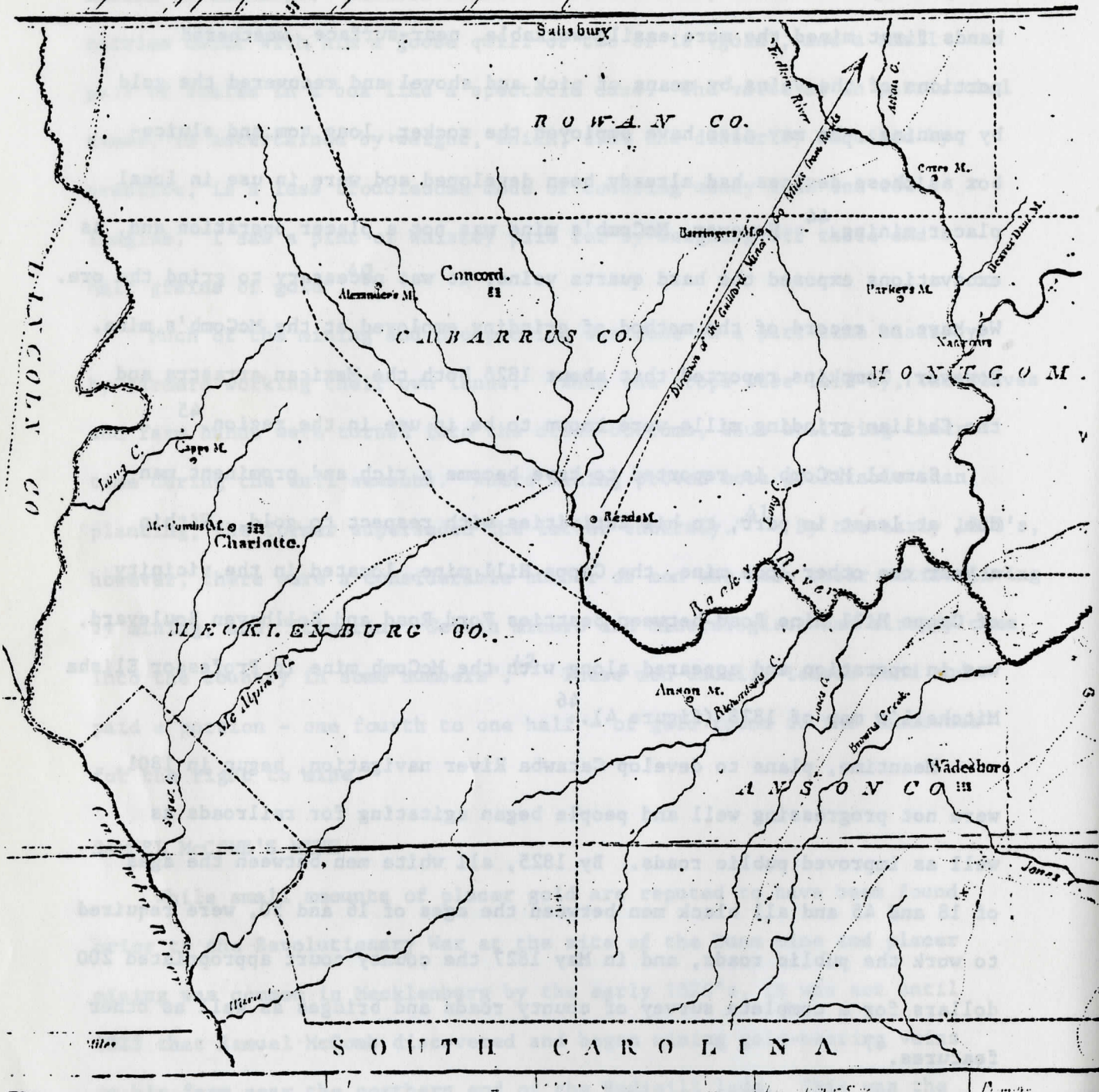


*Geology of the Gold Region of NORTH CAROLINA: I.*



of Europe . . .<sup>48</sup>

ABSOLOM HOLBROOK'S DISCOVERY ON RUDISILL'S HILL

Successful operation of the McComb mine led to prospecting for additional deposits in the vicinity. Absolom Holbrook<sup>49</sup> was one of, undoubtedly, many gold prospectors in Mecklenburg County inspired by McComb's discovery. Holbrook, however, was only an amateur prospector. His livelihood was made at a full time job in Hayes' grist mill which had been in existence since before the Revolutionary War. This milling complex, located on Sugar Creek (now Irwin Creek) about a mile away from McComb's mine, was impressive. Powered by water from a 130-acre artificial lake formed by a 12-foot dam on Sugar Creek<sup>50</sup> (figure 1), it consisted of a merchant flour mill with two sets of grinding stones, a sawmill, and a cotton gin. Also associated with the mill were two dwelling houses and log houses for servants.<sup>51</sup> On one of his prospecting forays in 1826, Absolom Holbrook found surface gold at what was then known as Rudisill's Hill about a half mile southwest of McComb's mine. Once news of this second discovery was spread, many men came to help Holbrook work the site. Among these men was Dr. Samuel Henderson, the "gold pioneer".<sup>52</sup>

As in the case of McComb's mine, the first workings on Rudisill's Hill were shallow pits and trenches - small and crude. Rockers were used to separate the loose gold from gravel and soil. Nothing more is known of Holbrook's gold mining adventures. It seems probable that he and others found gold mining on Rudisill's Hill unprofitable for after several months the property was sold under terms of a foreclosure by the sheriff,

Figure 4. Portion of Elisha Mitchell's 1828 Map of the Gold Region of North Carolina. (from American Journal of Science, Ser. I, v. 16, 1829).