

sleeves are going out of fashion, and a hope was expressed that the same fate would befall the ladies' big hats, some of which are two or three feet broad."¹⁰⁶

Taverns flourished, and the traffic in whiskey became so common that in 1833, an organization of the "Sons of Temperance" was formed. "A saloon keeper advertized that he had just received a fine consignment of liquors and one 'special preparation for the members of a certain society in this town'."¹⁰⁷ The town was certainly becoming lively but was not a wide-open, saloon town as were some gold-mining towns. For example, at one time the little town of Gold Hill, located about 40 miles northeast of Charlotte, was blessed by 27 saloons.¹⁰⁸ Charlotte appears to have had a balanced growth. The years 1832 and 1833 saw the establishment of, respectively, the first Presbyterian and Baptist churches. In 1833 the first "poor house" was built and opened.

James W. Osborne, who had a term as superintendent of the mint and was active in a number of mining operations in the North Carolina Piedmont, including a brief ownership of the Rudisill mine, was admitted to the bar to practice law in 1833. In that same year, a town ordinance was in effect "making it a misdemeanor, punishable by a \$5 fine to leave wooden boxes on the street, to dig sand or dirt from the street (were they prospecting the streets for gold?), or to keep more than one dog."¹⁰⁹

Persistent efforts by such men as Osborne and Samuel McComb finally led the U. S. Congress to pass an act on March 3, 1835, authorizing the establishing of a branch mint at Charlotte. Samuel McComb acted as agent for the federal government and purchased for \$1,500 eight lots at the

present location of the U. S. Post Office on West Trade and Mint streets.¹¹⁰ (figure 1) He also received the bids and supervised construction of the building.¹¹¹ The cornerstone of the building was laid in 1836, and it opened for business on December 4, 1837.

Mecklenburg and 18 other counties sent 131 delegates to a convention in Salisbury held on October 10, 1836, for the purpose of encouraging the construction of railroads.¹¹²

END OF AN ERA

Although Rivafinoli's mining and milling operations were probably the most advanced of their time, there were many who were unimpressed with his mining procedures and administrative abilities. One such person was Professor James Renwick of Columbia College, N.Y. who arrived in Charlotte in 1832 to make a report of the mining operations. He observed that fully half of the gold was being washed into Sugar Creek during the milling process. In addition, Renwick felt that the company was top heavy with salaried administrators. Based on these two observations, he concluded that the mining operation was unsound financially and could be in for some trouble. It is not surprising, therefore, that when the Depression of 1836-37 arrived, the mine closed down,¹¹³ and at this point in history we lose track of Count Rivafinoli.

In 1837, all of the holdings of the Mecklenburg Gold Mining Company, which at this time included not only the Rudisill and St. Catherine mines but the Cooper and Hutchison tracts, and the Capps mine, were sold at a trust sale (figure 13).¹¹⁴ Either at this sale or soon thereafter, John E. Penman, a high-born Englishman, acquired and began mining the