



**Survey and Research Report
On The Pump Shaft Head Of The
Rudisill Hill Gold Mine**



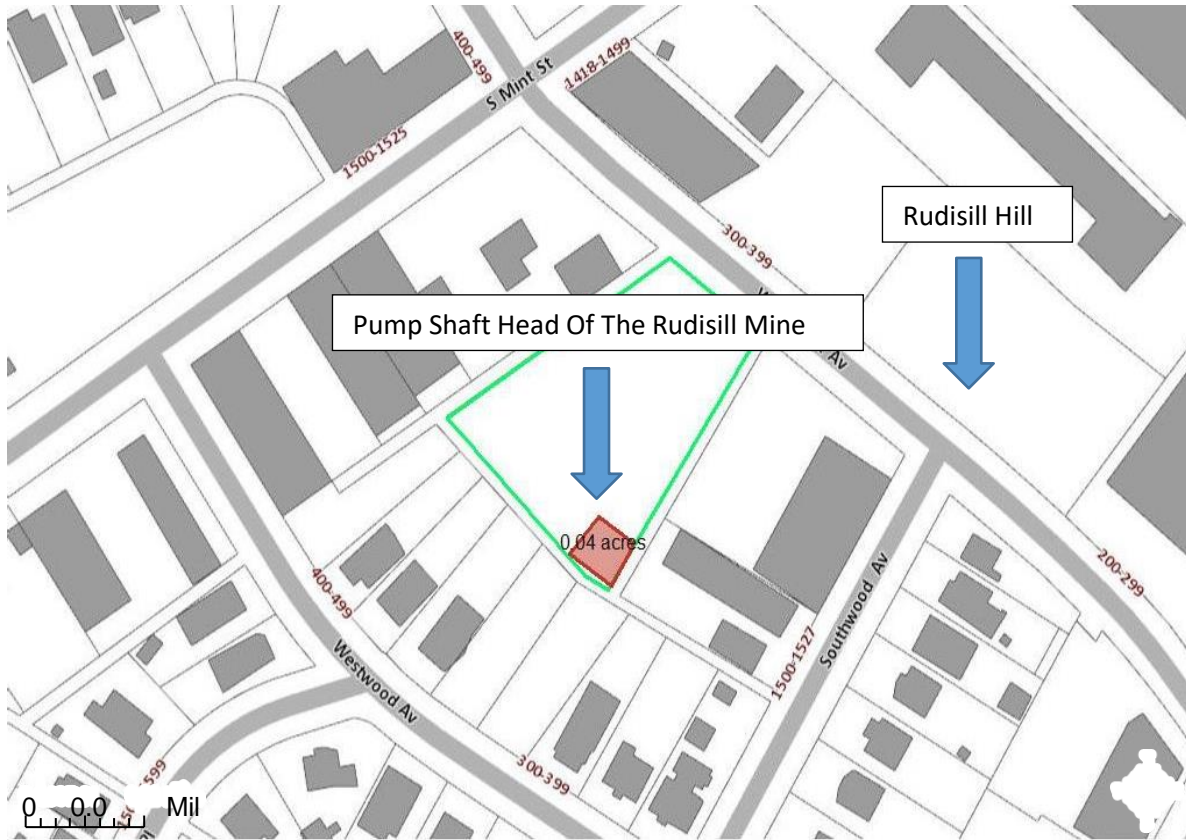
1. Name And Location Of The Property. The Pump Shaft Head Of The Rudisill Gold Mine is located at southeast corner of the parcel at 317 West Summit Avenue, Charlotte, N.C.

2. Name And Address Of The Present Owner Of The Property.

Beverly S. Welch
2019 Harris Road
Charlotte, N.C. 28211

3. Representative Photographs Of The Property. The report contains representative photographs of the property.

4. Map Depicting The Location Of The Property.



5. Current Deed Book Reference To The Property. The current deed to the property is recorded in Deed Book 7135 at Page 53. The tax parcel number of the property is 11908313.

6. A Brief Historic Sketch Of The Property. The report contains a brief historical sketch of the property prepared by Dr. Dan L. Morrill.

7. A Brief Physical Description Of The Property. The report contains a brief physical description of the property prepared by Stewart Gray.

8. Documentation Of Why And In What Ways The Property Meets The Criteria For Designation Set Forth In N.C.G.S. 160A-400.5.

a. Special Significance In Terms Of Its History, Architecture, And/Or Cultural Importance. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission judges that the Pump Shaft Head Of The Rudisill Gold Mine

possesses special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations:

1) The Pump Shaft Head Of The Rudisill Hill Gold Mine is the only groundlevel remnant of the Rudisill Hill Gold Mine, which in the 1830s was a major producer of gold in Mecklenburg County.

2) The Pump Shaft Head Of The Rudisill Hill Gold Mine, although almost certainly modified from the original, is the only groundlevel artifact that documents the impact of the transformative contributions of Count Chevalier De Rivafinoli to the development of gold mining in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

3) The Pump Shaft Head Of The Rudisill Hill Gold Mine illustrates the evolving efforts to extract gold from the Rudisill Hill Gold Mine from the 1830s until the 1940s.

b. Integrity Of Design, Setting, Workmanship, Materials, Feeling, And/Or Association. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission judges that the physical description included in this report demonstrates that the Pump Shaft Head Of The Rudisill Hill Gold Mine meets this criterion.

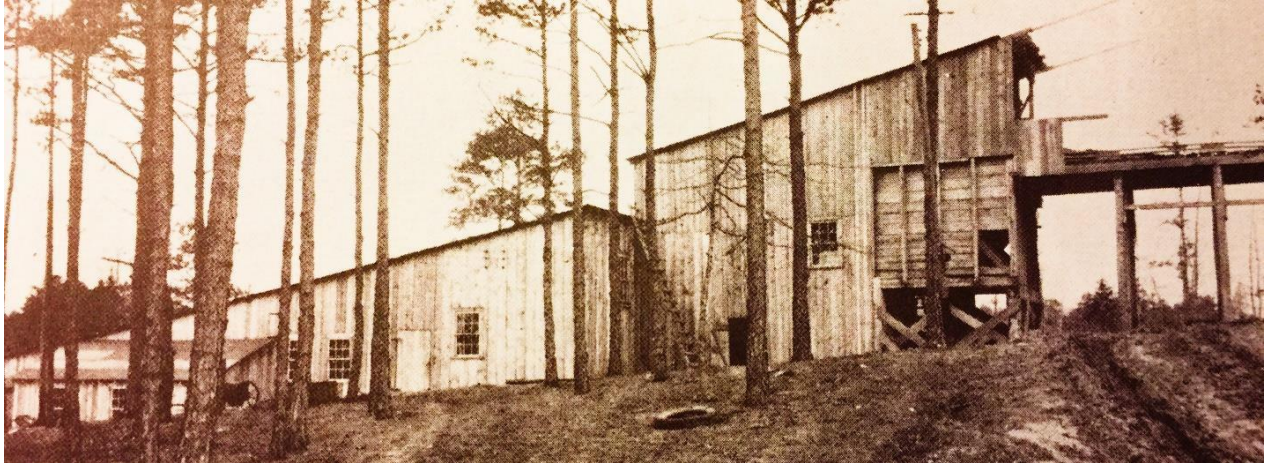
9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal. The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property that becomes a designated "historic landmark." The current appraised value of the parcel on which the Pump Shaft Head Of The Rudisill Hill Gold Mine is located is \$72,800. The property is zoned I-1.

Date Of The Preparation Of This Report: October 10, 2017

Prepared By: Dan L. Morrill and Stewart Gray

A Brief History Of The Rudisill Hill Gold Mine

**Dr. Dan L. Morrill
October 11, 2017**



**A Stamp Mill Building Erected In The 1930s At The Rudisill Hill Gold Mine
Photo Credit: Bruce Roberts, *The Carolina Gold Rush***

The history of Rudisill Hill Gold Mine and its Pump Shaft Head must be considered within the context of the emergence and evolution of gold mining in North Carolina and its place in the economic development of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The origins of the Carolina Gold Rush is an often-told tale. Gold mining had its beginnings in the Tar Heel state in 1799 on a farm in the Dutch Buffalo Creek section of what was then eastern Mecklenburg County. Conrad Reed, while fishing in Little Meadow Creek, spied a "yellow substance shining in the water."¹ John Reed, Conrad's father, was unable to identify the metal and decided to use the approximately 17-pound object as a doorstep.



Little Meadow Creek At The Reed Gold Mine Site

In 1802, John Reed traveled to Fayetteville on a routine trading trip and took the doorstep with him.² A jeweler identified the metal as gold and purchased the large nugget for the ridiculously low price of \$3.50. Soon realizing his blunder, Reed returned to Little Meadow Creek and began small scale mining operations. A number of Piedmont farmers did the same.

For the next two decades gold mining in the Carolina Piedmont remained a seasonal activity performed by amateurs. "The early mining operations," writes historian Fletcher Green, "were almost entirely lacking in system, skill, and scientific method."³ After their crops were harvested, farmers would scour their fields or dig shallow pits, called placers, in hopes of finding the precious metal. "It is laughable," one observer wrote, "to see these tall, cotton-coat North Carolinians . . . poking about like snails, and picking up the quicksilver every now and then, and eagerly squeezing it in their hands, to see how much gold is in it."⁴



Finding gold ore on the surface was largely an unpredictable, haphazard, and rather crude activity with sporadic rewards. The extraction of gold mostly involved washing gravel in a pan or a device called a rocker to separate the gold from the lighter-weight material in which it was imbedded.

A transformation of North Carolina gold mining occurred in 1825. Matthias T. Barringer, a German immigrant, made the first discovery of a *vein* of gold a few miles north of the Reed Mine. According to historians Richard F Knapp and Brent D. Glass, this event was a "watershed event in U.S. gold mining, moving the industry into the age of vein mining."⁵ "Underground vein mining . . . provided a method of seeking the precious metal in quantity at its source inside the earth rather than waiting until alluvial action deposited the gold in creek beds," writes Richard Knapp.⁶ When word spread of Barringer's find, mining companies with the capacity to dig and maintain shafts to access veins of gold underground began to set up operations in the Piedmont. No longer would gold mining be an enterprise where one needed only a pick, a shovel, a pan, and a strong back. Expertise and significant investment were now required.



Between 1825 and 1832 large veins of gold were discovered in Mecklenburg County.⁷ In August 1826, the *Western Carolinian* of Salisbury declared that "another Gold Mine" had been discovered near Charlotte. "Gold is now found in various places in Mecklenburg County," the newspaper said. Gold-laden

earth was being "carried through the streets of the town, in wagons, carts, &c. to be washed."⁸ "We learn that a rich, and apparently, extensive deposit of gold, has very recently been discovered on the land of James Capps, about five miles from Charlotte, on the Statesville Road," reported a North Carolina newspaper on May 5, 1827.⁹ Until then a tiny crossroads town, Charlotte boomed with unprecedented energy as experienced miners from Europe flocked to town to work in such enterprises as the Capps Mine, the Rudisill Hill Mine and the Sam McComb's St. Catherine Mine.¹⁰ By the late 1820s, gold fever had truly seized the psyche of the Piedmont. "I have heard scarce anything since arrival, except gold," proclaimed a visitor in 1829.¹¹

One of the places where gold was discovered near Charlotte was on Rudisill Hill, a promontory some 130 feet above the level of Sugar Creek just south of Charlotte. A Charlotte gunsmith who was stalking deer in 1826 noticed rocks containing gold lying on the surface of the earth beside a hunting stand in the vicinity of Rudisill Hill. Not surprisingly, others who learned about the gunsmith's fortuitous find journeyed to the site and joined in bagging the precious metal. One of these part-time miners ventured into the surrounding woods and observed that the ground atop Rudisill Hill was similar to that at the hunting stand. The miner also reported that gold was revealed in even greater quantities on the hilltop. "This was the first Gold found at Rudisill's, and took place in 1826," declared the *Charlotte Journal* a few years later.¹²

Samuel Henderson, a resident of Charlotte, superintended the establishment of the initial systematic gold mining operations on Rudisill Hill. Called the



"Gold 'Pioneer' of Mecklenburg," Henderson recruited a "few hands" and began digging and washing large quantities of "red clay" at the site. It soon became apparent that the greatest amount of gold as elsewhere was found in veins of quartz rock. "The natural consequence," explained the *Charlotte Journal*, "was to follow the direction of these minerals by small and crude excavations." Henderson's workers began feverishly burrowing into the "sides

and summit" of Rudisill Hill.¹³ By 1829, however, Henderson's gold mining at Rudisill Hill was interrupted, because ownership of the property was in question.



This photograph was taken on September 9, 2017. Major construction has begun on the Rudisill Hill. Here is where Samuel Henderson's workers were burrowing into red clay.

The news that subterranean veins of gold had been found near Charlotte spread rapidly. Among those who examined Rudisill Hill and other Mecklenburg sites to assess their suitability for large scale mining operations was Count Chevalier De Rivafinoli. A German-educated Italian who represented the London Mining Company, Rivafinoli had toured gold fields throughout Virginia and North Carolina. Rivafinoli came to Charlotte in May 1830 and returned the following December, bringing "a number of foreigners" with him.¹⁴ According to newspaper reports, the Count arrived with "\$200,000 in gold and silver, the silver in barrels."¹⁵ Rivafinoli leased the Rudisill Hill Mine and invested large amounts of money to construct the infrastructure to support underground hard rock mining there.¹⁶ Under Rivafinoli's direction, the Rudisill Hill Gold Mine "was tunneled in all directions."¹⁷

Rivafinoli was an expert mining engineer, having represented the London Mining Company at sites in South America, where he had supervised some 7500 laborers. This experience allowed him and the fifty European technicians and approximately one hundred and fifty foreign workers he brought to Charlotte to transform the Rudisill Hill Gold Mine from a primitive aggregate of unstable shafts into a network of vertical shafts and reinforced horizontal tunnels. Rivafinoli would forever change the type of gold mining done in Mecklenburg County. At its operational apogee, the Rudisill Hill Gold Mine hired approximately 1000 workmen, including slaves. Southern gold mines "owned directly eighty percent of the total slaves engaged in industry," writes Jeffrey Paul Forret in his U.N.C.C. Master's Thesis.¹⁸

Rivafinoli was "a very remarkable man," said one observer.¹⁹ "The day of the 'Chevalier' would make quite a chapter in Charlotte history," wrote

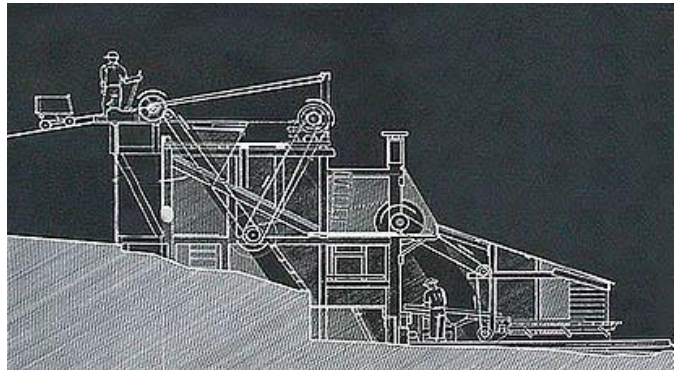
another. A newspaper reporter visited the St. Catherine Mine in 1831, which Rivafinoli also managed. "I went down a ladder about one hundred feet, perpendicular, and thence along galleries well braced on the sides, and roofed with boards overhead, for some one hundred feet further (sic.)," the reporter declared. "I then followed, in a slanting direction, the vein to the spot where the miners were taking the ore from the earth, and sending it aloft by means of buckets, which are drawn up by mules."²⁰

Rivafinoli's methods of underground mining, declared one writer, "brought the gold, and so impressed were mining experts with this fact, that for years afterwards, our mines attracted both skill and capital to this section."²¹ Rivafinoli turned the Rudisill Hill Gold Mine from a "primitive" place of unstable shafts "bored into hillsides" into the largest gold-producing mine in the region. Its output during the 1830's totaled between \$1.5 and \$2 million in the dollar value of that day.²² Rivafinoli was the founder of the industrial age in Mecklenburg County. He was the first to bring large numbers of foreigners to Charlotte, including many Cornishmen from the tin mines of Cornwall.²³ The Pump Shaft Head Of The Rudisill Gold Mine at 317 West Summit Avenue, although almost certainly modified from the original, is the only tangible ground-level remnant of Rivafinoli's legendary contributions to this community. Clearly, it has special significance as a cultural artifact.

Picture what you would have seen and heard if you had visited the Rudisill Hill Gold Mine sometime during the early 1830s. An awe-struck itinerant preacher called one Mecklenburg mine "the greatest sight that I ever saw." Another visitor called the nearby St. Catherine "the greatest establishment" he had ever encountered.²⁴ Even from a distance you would have known that a gold mine was nearby. You would have seen the Chilean Mill with its "large stone grinding wheel" propelled by mule power "with mercury in the trough to catch the gold."²⁵ The hissing of the steam engines that powered the pumps that removed water from the underground

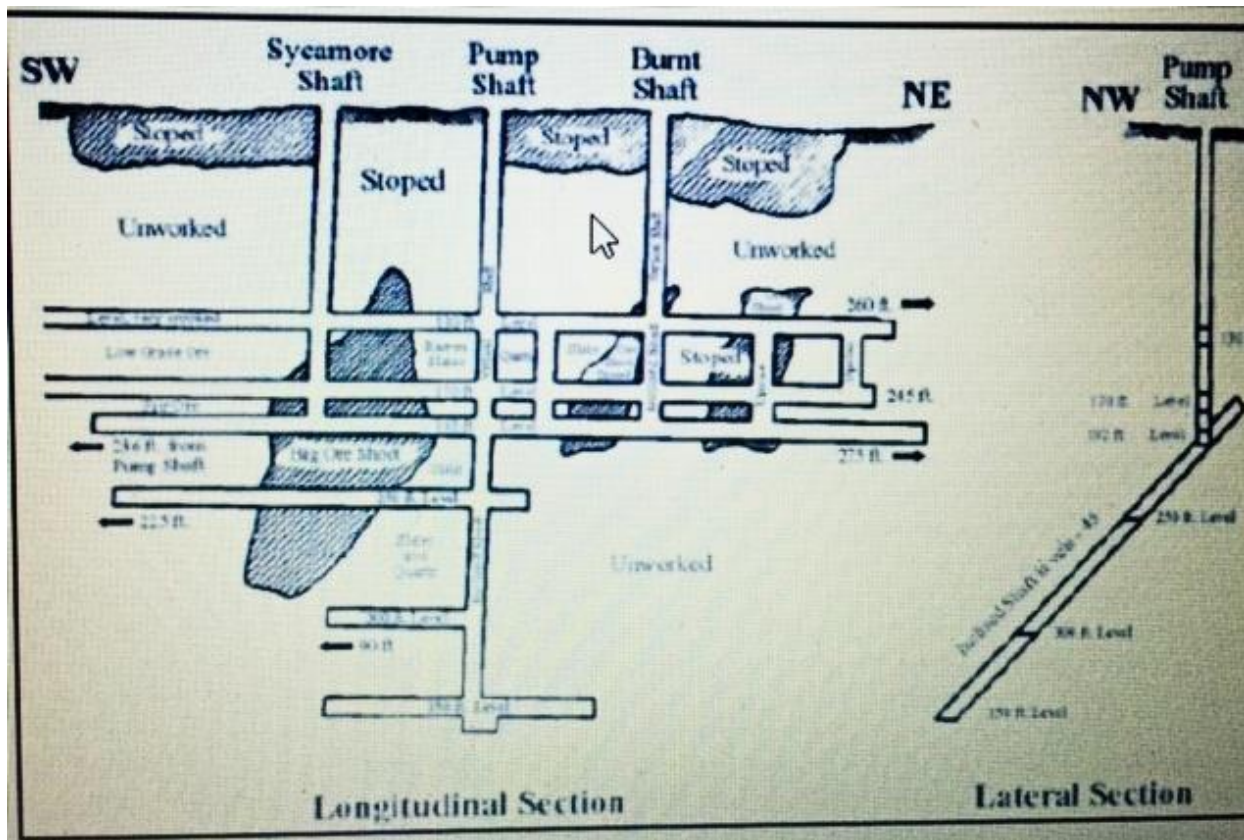


Chilean Mills Were Used To Crush Ore And Extract Gold At Small Mines.



Stamp Mills Were Used For Crushing Ore At Large Mines, Including The Rudisill Mine In Later Years.

tunnels would also have pricked your ears. As you got nearer, a cluster of buildings would have come into view on the ridgeline just outside Charlotte. Simple utilitarian wooden structures, they would have included a large windlass over the main vertical shaft, where a blind horse or a blind mule would have been circling endlessly to provide power for the cumbersome device that continuously lifted buckets of white quartz rock to the surface.



Map Of The Rudisill Hill Gold Mine Including The Pump Shaft
Map Of Rudisill Mine 1883

Rivafinoli did not stay long. He had departed Charlotte by 1835 because the London Mining Company which he represented had run out of capital due to excessive expansion. However, the tunneling techniques he had brought to



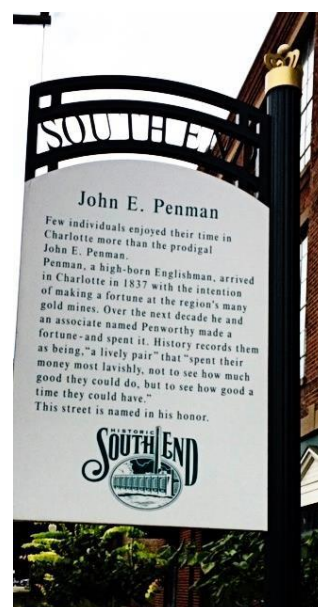
Mecklenburg County continued to bring gold to the surface. Indicative of Charlotte's on-going importance as the epicenter of the Carolina gold fields was the construction on West Trade Street of the Charlotte Branch of the United States Mint, which opened on

December 8, 1837.²⁶ Clearly, Count Chevalier De Rivafinoli, despite his brief tenure here, was a transformative figure in Charlotte-Mecklenburg history.

Another important person during the heyday of Mecklenburg gold mining was John E. Penman. Penman, an Englishman, was in Mecklenburg County by 1833.²⁷ It was “generally believed” that Rivafinoli brought him to Charlotte to assist in overseeing some of the gold mines the London Mining Company had leased.²⁸ Unlike the Count, Penman stayed in Charlotte, and by the 1850s he had earned the reputation of having “experience as a miner . . . more extensive than that of any other person who has ever operated in this section of the gold country.”²⁹ Among the mines he managed was the Rudisill Hill Mine. “The Rudisill mine, which has not been worked for some months, has been re-opened under the superintendence of Capt. Penman,” declared the *Fayetteville Daily Observer* on April 24, 1839.³⁰



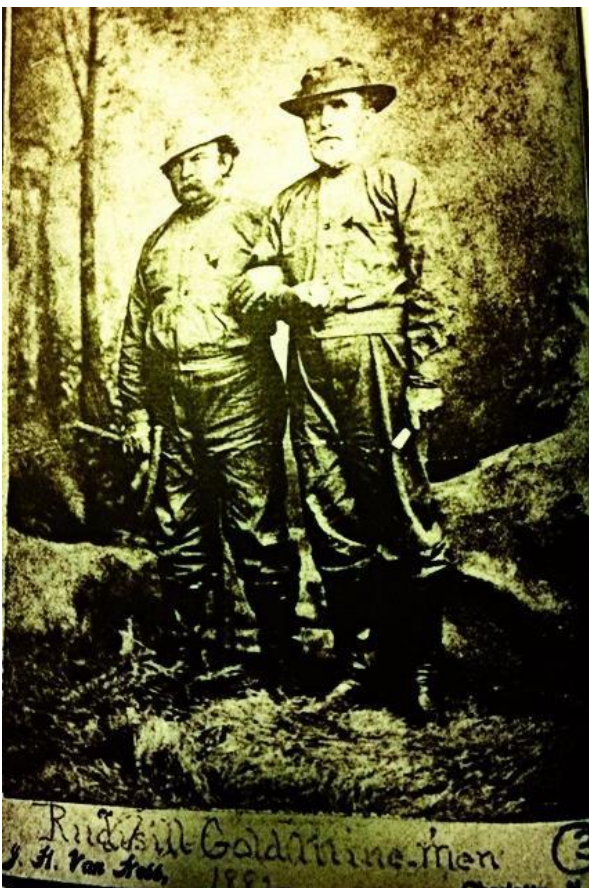
Penman Street Is Named For John E. Penman



Marker For John Penman On South Mint St. It Incorrectly States Penman Came In 1837.

The pace of gold mining in North Carolina began to wane after the economic downturn known as the Panic of 1837. The decline became even more precipitous after large veins of gold were found in California in 1848. The great majority of Southern miners simply packed up their belongings and departed individually and in groups for California, many taking their slaves with them. “One stream in McDowell County which had 3,000 miners at work in 1848,” writes historian Fletcher Green, “was practically deserted in the 1850.”³¹ All that remained at many North Carolina diggings were abandoned dilapidated buildings and piles of crushed white quartz rock.

The enticement of finding large amounts of undiscovered gold at the site of the Rudisill Hill Gold Mine persisted unabated but sporadically into the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. On November 14, 1878, the newspapers announced that Charlotte businessmen James Harvey Carson, R. M. Miller, and J. W. Wadsworth "have purchased the Rudisill gold mine, which they have, until recently, operated under a lease."³² Chartered under the name "Rudisill Gold Mining Company," the owners leased the mine to Northern investors J. D. Stewart and Edward McDowell in 1881.³³ The mine was shut down in 1888, when the lessees failed to meet their financial obligations to the owners.³⁴ The operators did not have the equipment needed to remove the volume of water that inundated large portions of the mine.³⁵



This 1882 Photograph Is Of J. W. Wadsworth On Left And R. M. Miller On Right. Photo Credit: Bruce Roberts, *The Carolina Gold Rush*



This Sketch Shows How A Pump Shaft Had A Pipe Running Up The Side. Photo Credit: Bruce Roberts, *The Carolina Gold Rush*

Undeterred by earlier failures, Northern capitalists leased the Rudisill Hill Gold Mine from owner R. M. Miller in 1903.³⁶ "The syndicate means business and is losing no time," declared the *Charlotte Observer*.³⁷ In 1906, the property was conveyed to the St. Catherine Rudisill Gold Mines Company,

which unfortunately was forced to sell the property at public auction in 1908.³⁸ The cost of removing underground water remained the biggest obstacle to making the mine economical. A New York firm bought the Rudisill Gold Mine site in 1909 but made no efforts to resume mining operations.³⁹ The mine lay abandoned in March 1917, when the hoisting room at the Pump Shaft was totally destroyed by fire.⁴⁰ The Suburban Real Estate Company acquired the Rudisill Hill Gold Mine in 1920. The company's president, F. C. Abbott, said it was "not the gold under the surface" that interested him "but the real estate development of the top of the ground."⁴¹



**Portrait Of James Harvey
Carson
Owned by Syble Balentine
Carson (Widow Of James H.
Carson, Jr.)**



**Carson Boulevard Is Named For The
Carson Family**

One final effort to obtain gold in substantial amounts at the Rudisill Hill Gold Mine occurred in the 1930s. In 1932, homebuilder James Holmes Carson, the grandson of previous Rudisill owner James Harvey Carson, unearthed a vein of gold on property he owned in a residential neighborhood he was developing off South Mint Street. Carson remembered visiting the Rudisill Gold Mine in the early 1900s.

*"You'd get off the elevator, and you'd cut right and then left and then you wouldn't know where you were. You'd be lost for a while. It was practically dark, only naked bulbs for light. I used to watch the miners dynamiting. The tunnels had been blasted out of pure rock."*⁴²

Carson shared news of his find with other nearby property owners, and all agreed that they should reopen the Rudisill Hill Gold Mine.⁴³ A dormitory

was built in 1934 to house the workmen who began pumping water out of the Rudisill shafts, and a mill was constructed to grind the ore.⁴⁴ Dynamite blasts shook the ground beneath nearby homes, and the rumble of machinery could be heard night and day. \$130,000 in gold was extracted, but it was not enough to meet expenses.⁴⁵ The last mention of mining activity at the Rudisill Hill Gold Mine appeared in the *Charlotte Observer* in August 1942.⁴⁶ By then the United States was preoccupied with the demands presented by World War Two.

There was growing momentum in the 1960s and 1970s for celebrating Charlotte's gold mining heritage and using it as a tool for economic development. In September 1965, Robert Schlageter, Director of the Mint Museum of Art, suggested that the Rudisill Hill Gold Mine "be reopened as a tourist attraction after being reinforced for safety and equipped with shuttle cars of some kind," chastising Charlotte for the City's "lack of awareness for its history," Schlageter decried the fact that "the name of Gold Street in Charlotte" had recently been "changed to Summit Street."⁴⁷

In August 1976, Vernon Sawyer, the head of City's Community Development Department, had the Charlotte Public Works Department and Engineering Department produce a *Historical And Engineering Report On The Rudisill Gold Mine*. "From all the information found to date," the report said, "the Rudisill Gold Mine was one of the largest gold mines in North Carolina, if not possibly the largest." The report continued: "However, very little of its history has been preserved. Charlotte, for the most part is not aware of this portion of its heritage, and without some commemorative effort in the very near future, it will certainly be lost to future generations." The report advanced the following recommendations: 1) change the name of Summit Street back to Gold Street, 2) place a commemorative marker at the location of the Rudisill Hill Gold Mine, 3) construct a "surface park" with the history of gold mining as its theme, and 4) undertake "further research for the purpose of locating one of the early horizontal excavations in order to initiate restoration activities for the eventual use by the public as an historic attraction."⁴⁸

In 1978, Sawyer's Community Development Department hired Dr. Henry Brown, a geologist, to perform a study on the feasibility of reopening a gold mine for visitation. The *Charlotte Observer* requested that anyone contact Dr. Brown "who worked in the mines, knows their history or has information on their exact locations."⁴⁹ This writer, as part of this study, participated in a tour of the Reed Gold Mine Historic Site in Cabarrus County with Charlotte officials and dignitaries to observe how a re-opened gold mine in Charlotte might function as a tourist site.

Dr. Brown produced a comprehensive set of recommendations regarding the economic and cultural potential of a re-opened Rudisill Mine. "Research has shown that gold mining played a more important role in the early development of Charlotte than has generally been recognized," declared the report. Dr. Brown contended that many cities "owe their greatness to something unique in their setting or history and are so remembered." The report endorsed the four recommendations included in the report submitted by the Charlotte Public Works Department. But Dr. Brown went further. He challenged the City to give "serious consideration" to opening up parts of the mine so visitors could go underground. "Nothing would 'drive home' the realization that gold mining actually existed under the present city of Charlotte better than to be able to walk through some underground tunnels and be told that 'this is where it happened, Count Rivafinoli himself walked these same passages.'"⁵⁰ The only part of these recommendations that has been implemented to date is the recent placement of a "Rudisill Gold Mine" commemorative marker on Summit Street.





James Harvey Carson Had Four Sons. Each Had A Wedding Ring Made Of Gold From The Rudisill Gold Mine.



**Dan Morrill Paradis Holding Cane
With Handle Of Rudisill Gold**



**Carson Family China Trimmed With
Rudisill Gold**

¹ Quoted in Richard F. Knapp, "Golden Promise in the Piedmont: The Story of John Reed's Mine." *The North Carolina Historical Review* (January 1975): 3. Hereinafter cited as *Knapp*. There are other versions of how the gold was found in Little Meadow Creek. The original name of the mine was the "Rudisill Hill Gold Mine." That is the nomenclature used in this report.

² Fayetteville, originally named Cross Creek, was at the head of navigation of the Cape Fear River. Consequently, Piedmont farmers regularly traveled there to buy and sell goods.

³ Fletcher Melvin Green, "Gold Mining: A Forgotten Industry Of Ante-Bellum North Carolina." *The North Carolina Historical Review* (January 1937): 8. Hereinafter cited as *Green*.

⁴ Quoted in Dan L. Morrill, *A History Of Charlotte And Mecklenburg County* (danandmary.com/historyofcharlotteabs,htm) Hereinafter cited as *Morrill*.

⁵ Quoted in *Morrill*.

⁶ *Knapp*: 7.

⁷ Samuel McComb discovered the first vein of gold near Charlotte in 1825, at the intersection of what is now West Morehead Street and South Graham Street (see Michael Smith and Elizabeth Hines, "The Rush Started Here II. Hard Rock Mining In North Carolina 1825 – 1864," Department of Earth Sciences, University of North Carolina, Wilmington, 51. Hereinafter cited as *Rush*.

https://www.academia.edu/6858284/THE_RUSH_STARTED_HERE_II_HARD_ROCK_GOLD_MINING_IN_NORTH_CAROLINA_1825_TO_1864

⁸ *Western Carolinian*, August 29, 1826.

⁹ *NewBern Sentinel*, May 5, 1827.

¹⁰ Many miners came from Cornwall where they had used shaft mining to obtain tin. Two houses having ties to Cornish miners survive in Mecklenburg County -- The Richard Wearn House on Tuckaseegee Road and the Thomas and Latitia Gluyas House of Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road. The population of Charlotte in 1830 was 717.

¹¹ Quoted in *Green*: 10.

¹² *The Charlotte Journal*, April 24, 1832.

¹³ *The Charlotte Journal*, April 24, 1832.

¹⁴ The North Carolina Spectator and Western Advertiser, May 21, 1830. *The Arkansas Gazette*, December 29, 1830. *Weekly Raleigh Register*, April 15, 1830.

¹⁵ *Charlotte Observer*, July 29, 1894. Rivafinoli became a local celebrity while in Charlotte. He was a sophisticated, highly educated individual, and the Scots Irish residents of early Mecklenburg County had never encountered anyone like him. Rivafinoli employed a "mulatto barber" who would prepare the Count's hair and shave his face each morning. His house stood at South Tryon Street and Morehead Street. As he rode about town on his horse, the local folks gave Rivafinoli the right of way out of respect. "All men instinctively bowed and yielded the way to such an imposing personage," said one observer. Rivafinoli had a "commanding air and bearing." There was one interesting personal incident during Rivafinoli's stay. He had dinner in a private home, and he was served sauerkraut. Rivafinoli "went into ecstasies over it, and declared he had never seen finer since he left Germany, and, bowing to my father said: 'My very dear friend, you send me a barrel of the royal kraut and I send you in return a barrel of my best wine.'" The deal was struck, and the wine soon arrived. (*Charlotte Observer*, August 12, 1894).

¹⁶ *Charlotte Democrat*, March 23, 1877.

¹⁷ *Charlotte Observer*, August 12, 1894. Rivafinoli began his operations in Charlotte at Sam McComb's St. Catherine Mine, but he soon added the Rudisill Mine to his lease holdings.

¹⁸ Quoted in *Morrill*.

¹⁹ *Charlotte Observer*, July 29, 1894.

²⁰ Quoted in *Morrill*.

²¹ *Charlotte Observer*, August 12, 1894.

²² *Rush*, p. 53.

²³ *The Sun*, December 19, 1837.

²⁴ Quoted in *Morrill*. The St. Catherine Mine entrance was near the present intersection of South Graham Street and West Morehead Street. It and the Rudisill Hill Mine tapped into the same vein of gold.

²⁵ *Charlotte Observer*, November 29, 1930.

²⁶ *The Sun*, December 19, 1837.

²⁷ *Raleigh Register and North Carolina Gazette*, February 26, 1833.

²⁸ *Charlotte Observer*, July 29, 1894.

²⁹ *The North Carolina Star* (Raleigh), May 18, 1853.

³⁰ *Fayetteville Daily Observer*, April 24, 1839. John Penman was a flamboyant, daring, wheeler-dealer, and a bit of a rascal. Despite his background as a Methodist minister, Penman brought two unmarried women with him to Mecklenburg County. Dressed in their finery, these ladies would ride into Charlotte behind horses hitched to a buggy in tandem and devote most of the day to spending Penman's money in the local shops. "Most men have faults and Penman had his," declared one acquaintance many years later. "He was a Methodist preacher before he came to America, and after he arrived here, but suppose he had fallen from grace in some particulars." Penman liked fine wine and enjoyed luxurious living. He was repeatedly summoned to court over land disputes. Penman could be generous with his money. When workers at the Rudisill Hill Mine deepened the shafts and unearthed a rich vein of gold, Penman put \$1500 in the collection plate at the Methodist Church the next Sunday. On another occasion, he honored 60 of his workers at another mine by having them adorn red shirts and march into Charlotte to the accompaniment of a drum and fife corps. Penman also treated the men to a fine restaurant meal. (*Charlotte Observer*, July 29, 1894; *Fayetteville Observer*, May 5, 1835) Penman, like other antebellum mine managers, rented slaves to work in the gold mines he controlled. Penman placed the following advertisement in the *Charlotte Journal* of October 9, 1835: *I wish to hire from 15 to 25 Negroes, to be employed in the Gold Mines in Charlotte. Gentlemen having slaves whom they wish to hire advantageously, Please call on me . . . or address me through the PostOffice*

(sic.). (*Charlotte Journal*, October 9, 1835). Mrs. Sam Presson, who wrote a series of articles on Charlotte's historical personalities, wrote this about Penman. *Penman was a large, red-faced typical Englishman, and was accustomed to being waited upon. He brought his body servant, named Goodluck, here with him. Every morning the servant would groom his master with as much care as our former slaves would our race horses.* (*Charlotte Observer*, November 23, 1930).

³¹ Quoted in Morrill.

³² *Greensboro North State*, November 14, 1878.

³³ *The Charlotte Democrat*, October 14, 1881.

³⁴ *North Carolina Herald* (Salisbury), September 26, 1888. Mining had occurred on the site since 1876.

³⁵ *Charlotte Observer*, September 5, 1903.

³⁶ *The Morning Post* (Raleigh), September 6, 1903.

³⁷ *Charlotte Observer*, September 5, 1903.

³⁸ *Charlotte News*, February 9, 1906; October 9, 1908.

³⁹ *The Evening Chronicle*, August 2, 1909; *Charlotte News*, December 5, 1920.

⁴⁰ *Charlotte Observer*, March 24, 1917.

⁴¹ *Charlotte Observer*, December 7, 1920.

⁴² *Charlotte Observer*, June 17, 1973.

⁴³ *Charlotte Observer*, August 20, 1932.

⁴⁴ *Charlotte Observer*, August 12, 1934.

⁴⁵ *Charlotte Observer*, May 7, 1936.

⁴⁶ *Charlotte Observer*, August 20, 1942.

⁴⁷ *Charlotte Observer*, October 1, 1965.

⁴⁸ "Historical And Engineering Report On The Rudisill Gold Mine (1826 – 1938) For the Community Development Department," Public Works Department/Engineering Division Charlotte, North Carolina (August 1976).

⁴⁹ *Charlotte Observer*, June 3, 1978.

⁵⁰ Dr. Henry Brown, Henry M. Singletary, "Recommendations For Actions To Commemorate The Role Of Gold Mining In The Growth And Development Of Charlotte And Location, Geologic Setting, And Probable Extent And Condition Of The Rudisill And St. Catherine Gold Mines – Charlotte, N.C." Geological Resources, Inc. (August 1978).

Physical Remnants of the Rudisill Hill Gold Mine



The identified remnants of the Rudisill Hill Gold Mine are limited to a pump shaft head, and foundations that were likely associated with a hoisting shed or hoisting equipment. These historic features are located on an open, approximately .83-acre lot at 317 Summit Avenue in Charlotte. The lot is on the eastern edge of the Wilmore neighborhood, and is included in the Wilmore Local Historic District. The historic features are located in a southern corner of the lot. The pump shaft head is located approximately 45 feet from the southeast property line, and approximately 55 feet from the principal southwest property line. The hoist foundations are located approximately 40 feet from the southeast property line, and approximately 25 feet from the principal southwest property line.



300-399

Pump Shaft Head

Foundations
associated with the
hoisting shed

Charlotte

Southwood Av

0 0.003 0.006 0.012 Miles





Pump shaft head. (viewed from the west)

The pump shaft head has been covered with a thick concrete slab that is approximately one foot thick and measures approximately 7'6" by 7'6". The slab is roughly finished. Based on the observation of exposed aggregate that included large rough stones, it is likely that the slab dates to the first half of the 20th century. The pump shaft head extends above the ground approximately 20 inches. The pump shaft head may be constructed of stone, but the exposed portion of the shaft head appears to have been parged with concrete when the slab was poured. The pump shaft head is overgrown with weeds. Power poles and metal streetlight poles are stacked on and around the shaft head. Grading and the storage and moving of the power and streetlight poles may have damaged the slab .



Southern portion of the foundations associated with the hoist shack.

The foundations associated with the hoist shack are composed of two concrete sections, each measure approximately 7'6" by 3', set approximately 1'6" apart. The foundation sections rise above the grade approximately 20 inches. The concrete is roughly finished. Rounded river rocks and other stones of various sizes were used as aggregate, and indicate early 20th century construction. Iron anchors at the ends of each section hold stubs of metal feet that have been sawn off near the surface of the concrete. The foundations are overgrown with weeds. Grading may have damaged the concrete.



Foundations associated with the hoist shack (viewed from the east)



View of the rear of the site. Remnants of the Rudisill Hill Gold Mine are located in the left portion of the image. (viewed from the northeast)

Other features of the lot are limited to a chain-link fence, and three open concrete bays containing gravel and other construction materials. The edges of the lot are overgrown.