

During the Middle Ages gold medicines were used both internally and externally as treatments for various ills. The alchemists reasoned that an elixir of gold would perhaps impart some of its immortality to the person drinking the elixir. During this time great efforts were made by alchemists who attempted to create gold from base metals and chose "the sign ☉ - the sun - for gold".³

The Spanish conquistadors in the 1500's plundered most of the gold that had been accumulated by the Aztecs and Incas in Central and South America. In turn, pirates and privateers took gold from the Spaniards as they were transporting it to Spain in their galleons.

Gold mining in the southeastern United States reached a fever pitch during the first half of the 19th century. Thousands of mines and prospects were worked by tens of thousands of miners. For all this effort, however, it is probable that the total amount of gold produced would not exceed a volume represented by a one foot thick layer covering the floor of a 10 x 14 foot room. However, it resulted in the establishment of two U.S. Government branch mints in the area and altered the destinies of many persons and communities.

The remainder of this report concerns the history of one of these southern gold mines and the community it affected. It is the story of mining on the Rudisill lode located at Charlotte, North Carolina, a city located in the center of the southern gold fields' most productive area. Mining on the Rudisill lode spanned a period of over 100 years, from the earliest days of southern gold mining to the last fling during the Great Depression of the 1930's. The history of mining on the Rudisill lode encompasses essentially all the various aspects of southern gold mining,

including the sudden wealth, the bankruptcies, the foreign investors, the innovations in mining, wars and depressions, plus wheeling-and-dealing. In a sense, then, this is a history of all southern gold mining and the people and communities it touched.

The Rudisill lode is located in what is now considered to be the downtown part of the sprawling city of Charlotte. At the time of its discovery in 1825, however, the lode was well outside the limits of the (then) small city (figure 1).

The Rudisill lode is a gold-bearing zone of rock more than 100 feet wide in places and more than a half mile in length. It begins well to the southwest of the intersection of Mint and Summit Streets and runs northeastward crossing under West Morehead Street just west of the Southern Railroad. Its depth is unknown. The lode contains various degrees of gold mineralization and has supported two major mining operations, the Rudisill and St. Catherine mines. The Rudisill mine is located in the vicinity of Mint and Summit Streets, and the St. Catherine mine is located north of West Independence Boulevard, between Pitcher Street and the Southern Railroad (figure 1). Both mines were worked to depths of several hundred feet, with most of the work being done prior to 1880.

Several other mining operations and prospects, some of which may now be unknown, existed at one time or another on the Rudisill lode. These workings were generally of a superficial nature, with no deposits of any importance being discovered. The Brush (or Busch) Hill mine was situated just north of the Rudisill mine between Mint and South Graham Streets, in the vicinity of Bland Street, and was frequently worked along with the