Most accounts refer to Vincent de Rivafinoli as an Italian nobleman probably accounting for his title as "Count". He was also referred to as "Chevalier", a French title equivalent to the English title of Knight. Rivafinoli has been given credit with having served under Napoleon and so perhaps this is where he received the title "Chevalier". Regardless of the origins of his titles, he lived in a house "appropriate for a count" at the corner of South Tryon and West Morehead Streets (figure 1). "His style of living was deemed magnificent for that day, and his organization was run on severely military lines." He "employed a mulatto barber by the name of Paulidon Brickett, to shave and dress his hair every morning"30 and "from his lavish home would venture forth with a gold-headed cane, carefully stepping across mud puddles along the unpaved street on the way to inspect his mines". 81 Another insight is given into the lifestyle of Rivafinoli by Alexander. Referring to John Paul (or simply Paul?) Barringer, a member of a German mining family in the area, he relates that Barringer "lived well after the manner of his day, and 'they say' he exchanged a barrel of kraut with the Italian miner, Rivafinoli, for a barrel of imported wine".82

When Rivafinoli arrived in Charlotte, he brought with him some of the most learned and practical miners of Europe along with seventy or eighty working hands. He employed many local people so that at one point he had a staff of 130 men. He had several buildings erected to house these men. 83 The people of Charlotte were noted for their friendship and hospitality towards these foreigners; judging the men on the merits of their behavior rather than on the country of their birth (figure 6). 84

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Figure 6. Article describing the arrival of Count Rivafinoli and his miners.

The Miners' and Farmers' Journal (Charlotte), March 10, 1831, 2.