

and was advised to take himself away."<sup>161</sup> On May 20th, 1861, the North Carolina General Assembly passed an ordinance of secession and the state began raising troops for the Confederate army.

The United States Branch Mint was taken over by Confederate forces in 1861, ending the coining of gold. The total value of coinage between December, 1837, and the suspension of operations on April 20, 1861, was \$5,059,188.<sup>152</sup> For a brief period, the mint served as a military headquarters but it was later converted to a hospital. Also, in 1861 the Confederate government took over the Mecklenberg Iron Works and directed it to produce such military goods as armor plates, propeller shafts, wrought iron projectiles and ammunition for the Confederate navy. The company's role as a vital Confederate industry increased greatly in May 1862 when a large part of the Confederate Navy Yard "was moved to Charlotte from Norfolk when the latter was threatened from the sea. Although Charlotte was 250 miles inland, it was chosen because of good rail connections."<sup>163</sup> The "Charlotte Navy Yard" was located in the 200 block of East Trade Street near the railroad underpass and is marked by a State historical marker.

While most Southern gold mining ceased during the Civil War years, the Rudisill mine managed to remain active and workings were gradually enlarged. While copper, lead and iron were important commodities, gold mining was not considered to be a vital industry by the Confederate government. One possible reason why the Rudisill mine remained active may have been the need for sulfuric acid. Sulfuric acid could be made by the roasting of sulfide ores and was used to manufacture explosives and to

make electrical batteries for operating the telegraph system. "On December 9, 1863, Professor Charles Henry Winston, president of the Richmond Female Institute, was instructed to go to Charlotte and look into the equipment owned by the Rudisill Gold mine".<sup>164</sup> Shortly thereafter he erected a plant for the making of sulfuric acid utilizing sulfide ores being mined from the Rudisill. Mint returns show that the production of gold in North Carolina, while quite low, did increase from 1863 through 1865.<sup>165</sup> The engine shaft of the Rudisill mine had, by the end of the war, reached a depth of 160 feet.

#### RECONSTRUCTION ERA.

Even though Charlotte was occupied by a force of 4,000 Northern troops at the end of the Civil War,<sup>166</sup> Charlotte and Mecklenburg County were blessed by a relatively "settled and peaceable state of affairs--", while all around was turmoil and strife".<sup>167</sup>

Charlotte experienced a commercial and industrial boom during the first five years after the war. "Northern capitalists reopened the gold mines and the money placed in circulation enlivened all branches of trade."<sup>168</sup> John Wilkes organized the First National Bank of Charlotte in 1865 and was its president from 1865 to 1869. This was the first National Bank established south of the Potomac.<sup>169</sup> He also regained possession of the Mecklenburg Iron Works and began building a large trade in gold mining and milling equipment. In 1867, the Charlotte Mint, which had been occupied by Federal military officials since 1865, was reopened by the U.S. Government as an assay office and three banks -