

**Early History of Salisbury and Rowan County**

**1839 – 1861**

**“A Brief Chronological History of Black Salisbury Rowan”**

**Setting prior to 1839:** Census of 1800 in North Carolina Counties – Rowan Salisbury: White, 17,221; other free, 35; slaves, 2,839.

In 1818 slaves may be taught to read and write. In that same year, a Bill to prevent all persons from teaching slaves to read and write, the use of figures accepted. Be it enacted by the authority of the same, that any person who shall hereafter teach or attempt to teach any slave within this state to read or write, the use of figures excepted, shall be liable to indictment in any court of record in this state and upon conviction shall be fined at the discretion of the Court not less than Fifty Dollars (\$50), nor more than One Hundred Dollars (\$100) or imprisoned.

In 1820 the population in the Principal Towns; Salisbury: Whites, 743; slaves, 477; free colored, 14 & on Saturday,

February 3, 1827, the Bill to repeal so much of an act, passed 1762, as requires the Master or Mistress to teach or cause to be taught colored apprentices to read and write was read, and on motion, postponed indefinitely.

**1839** – Salisbury Female Academy (now Wrenn House Restaurant)

**1840** – Census of North Carolina Counties, Rowan: Whites, 14,460; slaves, 6,201; free persons of color, 135.

**1850** – Plank Road

**1850** – April 21...Rev. J. B. Soloman...Minister...The branch was constituted a regular Baptist Church...there were...ten white and eight colored members, eighteen in all.

**1853** – Andrew Murphy House

**1855** – 1<sup>st</sup> train comes to Salisbury

**1855** – Session House

**1859** – Gas comes to Salisbury

**1859** – Dr. Josephus W. Hall buys Hall House

Prosperity

**1859** – Gov. Ellis – home on Ellis St.

Secession

Prep. for War

**April 12, 1861** – 1<sup>st</sup> shots fired at Charleston

Charles F. Fisher (Christian Reid)

1861 – Salisbury Confederate Prison built

1861 – Gov. Ellis dies, buried in Old English Cemetery

**Recommended books:**

Tall Grey Gates – by Teresa Thomas

This Was Home – by Hope Summerell Chamberlain

Impending Crisis – by Hinton Rowan Helper (More)

**Subsequent years:** The Civil War began in 1861. During 1861-1862, 2 colored adults and 6 colored children were baptized by Rev. Jethro Rumble.

Towards the end of the war, the Methodist Church advanced into the South, sending down J.W. Hood, afterward Bishop, who arrived in New Bern, NC in January 1864.

To the Presbyterian Church 14 colored members were added from 1860-1864.

The Freedmen's Bureau was established in 1865. They established schools and hired teachers & "At the Constitutional Convention...Negro citizens asked for passage of legislation to aid them as freedmen and to educate their children".

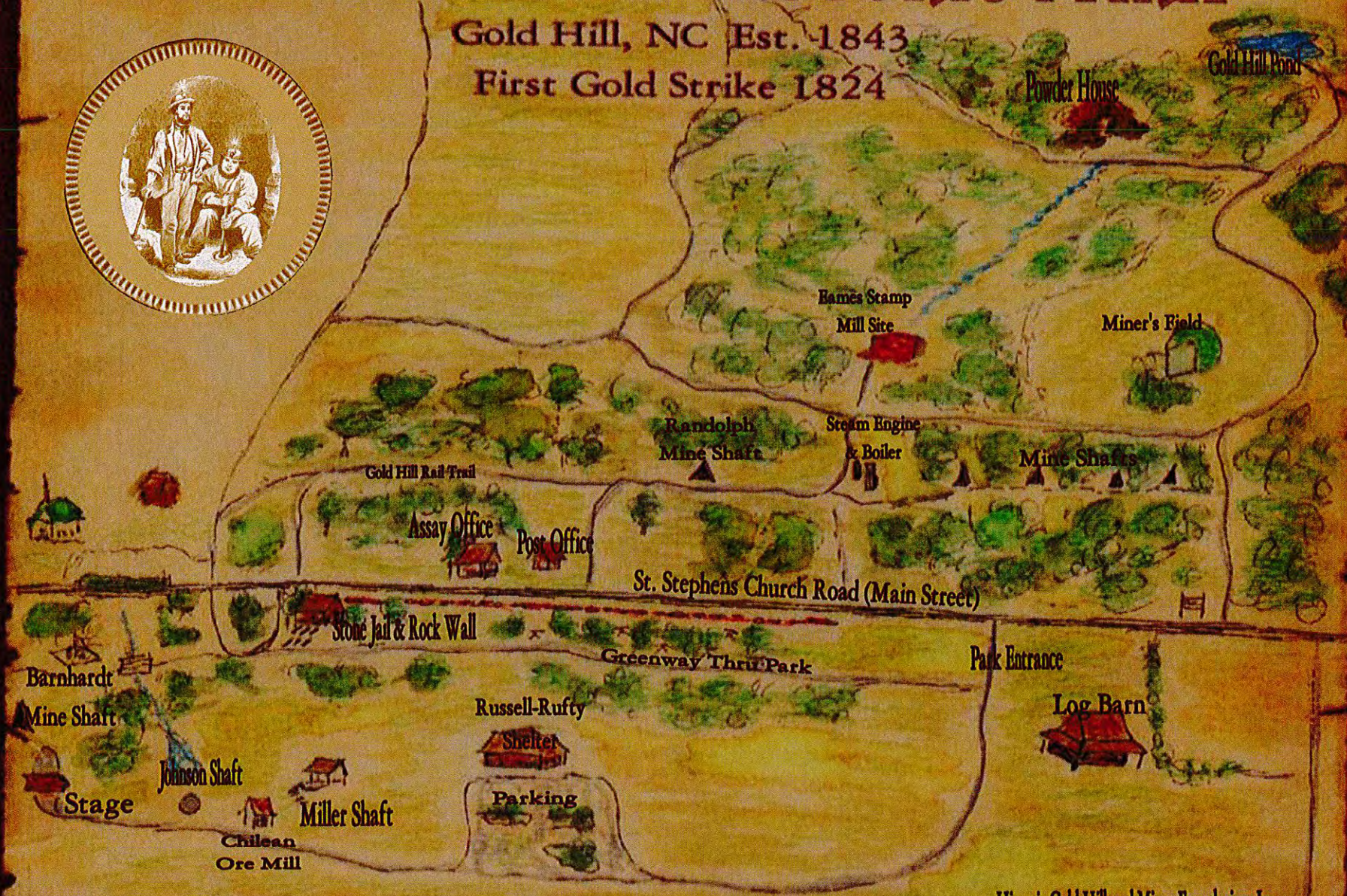
**Assignment:** A Brief History pg. 91-106    Rowan Story pg. 267-307



# GOLD HILL MINES HISTORIC PARK

Gold Hill, NC Est. 1843

First Gold Strike 1824



Historic Gold Hill and Mines Foundation, Inc.



## ***Historic Village of Gold Hill***

***Arts, Crafts, Antiques,  
Original Artwork  
and more***

***Can all be found in the  
Quaint Shops in the Village***



***Main Street, Gold Hill  
Now, Above and More than 100  
Years Ago, Below***



Historic Gold Hill and Mines  
Foundation, Inc.

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*A Publication of the*

*Historic Gold Hill and Mines Foundation, Inc.*

**[www.HistoricGoldHill.com](http://www.HistoricGoldHill.com)**



***Tour the Sites and  
Landmarks as the Trail  
Passes Through  
Gold Hill Mines  
Historic Park  
Enjoy Shopping and  
Reminiscing of Days Gone By in  
the  
Historic Mining Village of Gold  
Hill, NC***





# Rail Trail Hike



**The E. H. Montgomery Store has always been a popular meeting place.**

Your Tour/Hike will begin at the E. H. Montgomery General Store in the Village. Brochures and historic publications are on hand to further assist you if you are hiking on your own. Maps are available to assist you with your visit. (The hike we're taking will meander through the park and village and will deviate a little from the original railroad right-of-way.) As you begin your hike, cross the road into the



Mauney Store parking lot. (We'll come back later to shop.) At the back of the parking, area locate the Trail Head Marker. Follow the trail to the left to the marker at the Barnhardt Shaft. The first gold discovery at Gold Hill was in 1824. In 1842, George Barnhardt, the son-in-law of John Reed, dug the Barnhardt Shaft.

This was the first effort to organize the Gold Hill Mines into one mining conglomerate. The Earnhardt/Randolph Shaft across the street followed in 1843. A lot of gold was already being produced in the Gold Hill district and throughout Mecklenburg, Cabarrus and Rowan Counties. The Charlotte Mint was built in 1935 as a result of the gold production in the area. Enough here, let's follow the trail to the left and find the trail through the trees into the park's Amphitheater area. To the right of the stage from the protection of the fence you will get a better look at the Barnhardt Shaft. From here, catch the trail again by the playground and cross the bridge. I call this the Col. C.R. Hayes Memorial Bridge. Mr. Hayes, the last mining engineer in Gold Hill. This was his

'Last Ditch' effort to find a new gold vein. Let's get off the trail for just a minute and check out those big stones to your right. The Chilean Ore Mill was a very primitive tool used in the production of gold ore. The earliest of these mills were called 'Arastra Mills' and used a single wheel and base usually turned by horse or mule power. (We'll see a replica when we get to the Assay Office later in the hike.) The one pictured here was turned by a steam engine and is probably the only remaining full mill in the



state. Just up the lawn is the Miller Shaft. The photos on the Shafthead deck will explain the process of gold production using the Ore Mill and Log Rockers. (Ladies, did I mention that you also played an important



role in processing the precious gold ore from your farm? Just like rocking the babies.) From the deck you can see the Johnson Shaft (with the concrete pipe). All the shafts are in line with one another. This is the quartz vein that runs through the region. While here, you can go down the steps to view the shaft entrance. When you leave here, head back over to the trail and we'll visit the Old Stone Jail. By 1842-45 the Gold Hill Mines employed around 3000 men. The town was known to have about 23 saloons



and several brothels, so no doubt, the jail probably had it's fair share of overnight guests. The influence of Cornish Miners is evident here in that, the jail and wall are typical of the English Dry-Stacked Rock walls and stonework of England. There's more to see inside and then let's hurry on before this brochure runs out of typing space. We'll take the park walkway from here and visit a few more sites before crossing the road. The Russell-Ruffy Shelter on your right sits near the site of the Eames-Newman Mansion. The mansion was built following the Civil War by an English mining company, The New Gold Hill Ltd. Based in London. The mansion was built for the company manager, Richard Eames and family. It was later occupied by Walter George Newman. The walkway from here extends to the Log Barn. We can cross the road there and head for the Powder House and



Gold Hill Pond. We will take the old mining roads here and catch back up with the rail trail on the way back. We'll just follow the road to the right around Miner's Field. Then take the first left in the woods to get to the Powder House which was dug into the hillside and provided storage for dynamite and blasting supplies. Or, instead of



taking the left, we will continue on this road to the pond. Water was pumped from the Randolph Shaft to the pond and a pump house on the dam dispersed water to further aid mining operations in that area. Let's head back up to Miner's Field (if we're lucky, we'll catch a softball game). At the road by Miner's Field we'll take a right this time and investigate the ruins of the Old Stamp Mill and Smelter Site. When we get near the back of the



Randolph we take a right over to the Stamp Mill Site. Then it's back to the Randolph with a detour by the Steam Boiler. After visiting the Randolph, let's let everyone catch up to us at the Assay Office. The original Gold Hill

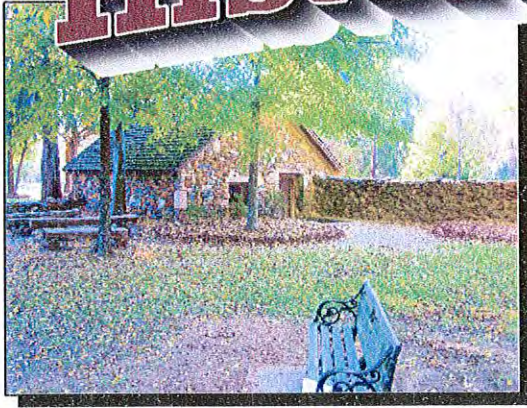
Mining Office was adjacent to the Assay Office and Post Office. It was an imposing structure and was indicative of the wealth of the region. The huge bucket hanging outside the Assay Office is called a Cornish Kibble, brought to the area by miners from Cornwall Eng-



land in the early 1840's. By the way, we're back on the Rail Trail. If you take a look behind the Assay Office you'll see the spur line that back the cars up to the side of the smelter building. Gold bouillon was loaded here and transported by rail to the Charlotte Mint. ... Well, if you're rested up and can take another hour of hiking, we'll head back over to the Trailhead sign where we started and continue in the other direction on the Rail Trail. This end of the trail will cross Old Beatty Ford and Lucy Melcor Roads, passing through the Old Field Shafts area. The sites are marked and then we can take St. Stephens Ch. Rd. back to the village or continue on the trail across the road. The trail continues to the ravine where the railroad trestle was and beyond that into Cabarrus County at the Union Copper Site. We will be sure to stay on the trail as it passes thru private property in this region. Please remember to respect our Rail Trail neighbors. Well, I don't about you, but I'm ready to head back to the village and prop up my feet for a while. Hope you've enjoyed the hike. We'll do it again sometime.



# Gold Hill Mines Historic Park



## Gold Hill Jail

Before the West was wild, there was Gold Hill. By the mid-1800's, Gold Hill was known to have had up to 23 Taverns. The Gold Hill Jail probably had its share of overnight guests.

## Russell-Rufty Memorial Shelter

Beautiful modern facility housing the Historic Foundation Office and Conference Room with large heated and air-conditioned Miners Hall available for rent for formal or informal functions.



## Bernhardt Barn

Built around 1845 on the Bernhardt farm near Gold Hill. The farm is on the National Register of Historic Places. Paul and Naomi Bernhardt of Salisbury, donated the barn to Historic Gold Hill in 1995. It was then moved and rebuilt in the park.



## From Rags to Riches

It was once said that the miners of Gold Hill were "poor men with rude machinery". But some indeed had pockets well lined with gold.

Gold Hill began emerging from a rough pioneer stage in the mid 1840's into a town of economic and social importance. Letters written among friends document great parties being held at Gold Hill which everyone of social importance attended. The events were labeled as Grand Affairs. It was an honor to attend and be in the company of the elite and fashionable residents of Gold Hill. Tickets were purchased in advance of the events.

There is no doubt that the Ballroom of the grand Gold Hill Hotel was decorated in the finest furnishings of the day. Its guests dined on linen covered tables and fine porcelain china. Today Gold Hill is emerging once again and is reminiscent of that Old West look. There is a certain feeling of pride, wonder and amazement when walking through the park or along St. Stephens Church Road (Main Street, Gold Hill). We're still busy creating history, and our rich cultural heritage is what fills our gold-lined pockets. Come visit us, we're really eager to show it off. But come soon, the clock is ticking....backwards.



## Historic Gold Hill & Mines

### Foundation, Inc

The Historic Gold Hill and Mines Foundation was established in January of 1992. Since its inception, its major goal has been to restore and develop Gold Hill Mines Historic Park. The various committees of the organization continue today to work on the restoration. The 70 acre park has been developed largely by volunteers with no state or federal funds to date.

#### Contact information

704-279-7897

704-267-9439

#### Facility Rental Information

704-279-5777

Tour information

704-267-9439

Annual Events

Spring Oyster Roast

Founders' Day - 4th Saturday in September

Ghost Tour - Last Saturday in October

Lighting of the Fall Fires- Monday before

Thanksgiving

Visit our Website

[www.HistoricGoldHill.com](http://www.HistoricGoldHill.com)



GOLD HILL FOUNDERS  
DAY STATION

Rebuilding the Past  
For the Future

SEPTEMBER 25, 1993

GOLD HILL, N.C. 28071

Gold Hill Mines Historic Park



Historic Gold Hill & Mines Foundation, Inc.  
P.O. Box 206, Gold Hill, NC 28071

# HISTORIC GOLD HILL

Est. 1843



Main Street, circa 1900

GOLD HILL, once called the 'Prince of the Atlantic'. The richest gold mining town east of the Mississippi. Located in the heart of the Carolina Gold Rush Territory, in Rowan Co., NC

## Membership Information

Please check desired membership for one year. Your generous support is appreciated

- ☐ Lifetime Member...\$1,000 and up ☐ Business.....\$100 and up
- ☐ Corporate Patron.....\$500 and up ☐ Sustaining.....\$50 to \$124
- ☐ Miner .....\$250 to \$499 ☐ Family.....\$35
- ☐ Prospector.....\$125 to \$249 ☐ Individual.....\$20
- ☐ I am interested in joining the Historic Gold Hill and Mines Foundation, and actively participating in Foundation activities.
- ☐ I am interested in including Historic Gold Hill and Mines Foundation in my will. Please send me information about the bequest of real estate, stocks, securities, antiques, etc...

ALL DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE TO THE EXTENT OF THE LAW



# **HISTORIC GOLD HILL, NC**

**NORTH CAROLINA'S GREAT GOLD MINING CENTER**



## **TIMELINE OF HISTORY**



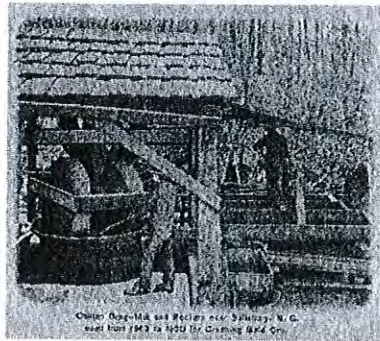
# 19th Century Mining in Gold Hill, NC



Gold Hill Mining Office



Miners 1857



Cherry Oak Mill and Rectory near Salisbury, N. C.  
used from 1843 to 1870 for dressing Gold Ore



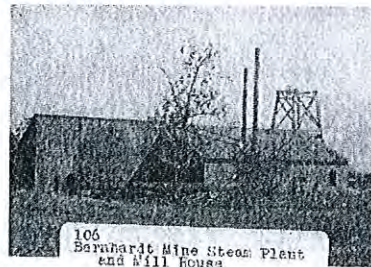
Miners circa 1890



Randolph Mine, Steam Plant and Mill House



Miners circa 1900



106  
Bernhardt Mine Steam Plant  
and Mill House



## Historic Gold Hill

The Montgomery, Mauney, and Will Martin Stores are the only remaining commercial structures surviving from the gold rush of the late 1830's -and early 1840's at Gold Hill.

These structures were built around 1840. Of course there are a lot of homes from the same period and some structures that have been moved to the area for preservation sake.

The state at that time was an agricultural state w/ corn and cotton being the main cash crops.

The accidental discovery of gold on the farm of John Reed in 1799 became the first gold discovery in America by Americans. (There are some indications of gold mining in the region dating to the Spanish American War era and the reign of Cortez, although those are mostly speculations and are not officially documented.)

The 16 lb. nugget found at Reed mine was used for a door stop for a couple years until John Reed was prodded into taking it to a Fayetteville jeweler for appraisal. After realizing what the precious stone was, Reed started searching the streambeds on his property for more gold. Just a short while later another nugget weighing 23lbs. was found near the same area.

Word traveled fast and other farmers began the search on their own farms and this began a new era of prosperity in the state. After fall harvest farmers would dig up the fields and streambeds searching for gold and hoping to get rich.

By 1823 there was so much gold coming from this region that the US government hired Denis Olmstead, a geologist, to conduct the first geological survey in North Carolina.

Starting at the Reed Farm, he followed the rich quartz laden mineral vein to the Gold Hill region and surmised that the region held three precious mineral veins, gold, copper and silver, with the gold being the more prevalent of the three. This would prove to be true.

The first gold found in the region of Gold Hill was on the farm of Andrew Troutman in 1824. As the production of gold at Gold Hill and other areas of Mecklenburg, Rowan, and Cabarrus counties increased, it became evident that the US Government saw the need for a mint in the region.

In 1835 President Jackson authorized three southern branches of the *United States Mint*—New Orleans, Charlotte, and Dahlonega, Ga.

For the next twelve years the gold production in North Carolina increased and the region flourished. During this period more than 89% of the gold coinage minted in the United States came from North Carolina. Approximately 35% of that total came from Gold Hill.

By September of 1842 Col. George Barnhardt, the son-in-law of John Reed leased property at Gold Hill and sank the Barnhardt Shaft. In just a couple short months the shaft had reached a depth of 500 feet, becoming the first vertical shaft to reach this depth in the US.

Most of the gold produced in other regions was from horizontal tunnels dug from shallow pockets along stream beds. These shallow pockets of gold are called *placer* gold deposits. The gold at Gold Hill is buried deep in quartz veins. These are *lode* gold deposits.

At the 500 foot level in the Barnhardt Shaft, the vein widened out to about a twenty foot wide wall of quartz laced with gold. The tunnel produced by the extraction of the quartz extended approximately fifteen hundred feet to the northwest and ran under the main street of Gold Hill.

(Continued on page 4)



By February of the following year (1843) the Earnhardt Shaft was dug and joined the tunnel from the Barnhardt Shaft. This shaft eventually reached a depth of 850-900ft. In 1855 this mine exchanged hands and became known as the Randolph Shaft.

Together the Barnhardt and the Randolph became the richest and most productive gold mines east of the Mississippi, giving rise to the wealth and prosperity of the region. The population of Gold Hill swelled to near 3000 creating a gold mining boomtown. Mine owners joined forces and incorporated many of the mines. This resulted in increased production. There were a total of twenty-three mines in the Gold Hill Mining District.

The town was incorporated in 1843 and was named Gold Hill. Col. George Barnhardt became the first mayor.

The town consisted of a Post Office, several general stores, two doctors, a blacksmith, a hotel, a wagon maker, and a shoe cobbler. Numerous other businesses sprang up. The town at its peak boasted no less than six saloons and a couple brothels. The Gold Hill Jail no doubt saw a regular number of weekend guests.

The Mayor of Charlotte made a statement during that time, that he had high hopes for Charlotte, that it would one day be as large and prosperous as Gold Hill.

By 1849 many of the miners at Gold Hill gave up the hard rock mining for the gold fields of California after the strike at Sutters Mill. The placer deposits discovered in the Nevada and California sounded appealing to miners who were looking for an easier living.

Mining at Gold Hill continued to grab the headlines in Newspapers across the US. In 1857 the editor of Harper's Weekly, a New York based magazine known for publishing the hottest news of the day, sent reporters to Gold Hill and subsequently published a story about Gold Hill.

An editor of the Asheville, NC newspaper wrote to a friend at Gold Hill stating that he was not planning to attend a great ball coming up at Gold Hill. He felt that he was not wealthy enough to shine among the elite citizens of Gold Hill.

Production at Gold Hill slowed with the coming of the Civil War. By 1861 almost all production ceased.

In 1861 The Federal Government suspended the use of gold and silver as payment for its obligations. Citizens who feared what the aftermath of war would leave them, hoarded the gold and silver coins. By the end of 1862 all coins had disappeared from circulation.

President Lincoln faced with the problem of financing the war began printing paper money forcing citizens to accept the greenbacks at face value. This was forced by the Legal Tender Act of 1861. The currency was the first US issued currency not backed by gold. The value of the gold dollar fell drastically.

One interesting note\*During the war the Confederate Government sought out the silver mines and used silver to produce bullets for the confederate soldiers. One such silver mine is near here. Silver Hill is located near Denton, NC.

Following the Civil War the mines at Gold Hill were purchased by a company in England. The New Gold Hill Limited Mining Company based in London was formed and a manager was sent to Gold Hill to oversee operations. The resurgence of mining brought newer technology and newer equipment. The company built a home on the property at Gold Hill for their manager and his family and servants.

Richard Megivan Eames was an engineer and assayer by trade, as well as a very good photographer as well. It is likely that by his hand that we are fortunate to have all the wonderful photos depicting the golden years of Gold Hill and gold mining in North Carolina



The amount of gold taken out of the mines during this period is uncertain. The bullion was sent directly to the company headquarters in London.

Around the end of 1889 an interesting gentleman arrived in Gold Hill and proceeded to inquire about purchasing the mines. Thomas Edison was experimenting with a new invention that would revolutionize the industry. He leased office space in the Gold Hill Mining Office and also set up a laboratory in the basement of the Charlotte Mint. His interests lie in not the gold, but the iron ore that was also plentiful in the region. Iron ore deposits in the north were beginning to be depleted. He devised a magnetic flotation device that he hoped would aid in the separation of the ore. After almost a year of experimentation with the invention, he finally gave up on the idea, thus becoming one of his very few career failures. Many years later his idea was used and perfected and is still used today in the industry.

By the turn of the century a flamboyant con artist, Walter George Newman, arrived in Gold Hill and the mines prospered for a couple years. Operating funds were in short supply and the production was failing to meet payroll. Newman created news on Wall Street and enticed New York investors to buy stock certificates in his new company. Union Copper was located at the Rowan-Cabarrus County line just southwest of town.

By 1907 the mines closed and all production at Gold Hill ceased. Newman disappeared from Gold Hill taking with him all the investors' money.

In 1910 the mansion at Gold Hill mysteriously burned to the ground. Newman returned in 1912 and cleaned up the area where the home once stood and created a park with a playground. He also converted two rooms of the Gold Hill Mining Office into classrooms providing a school for the town.

Some years later the New Gold Hill Limited Mining Company changed the company name to the Birmingham Mining Company.

By the 1960's mining engineer named C.R. Hayes was sent to Gold Hill by the company to oversee the property and took up residence in the second floor of the mining office. He was committed to searching for a new vein on which to sink a new shaft. Efforts were futile in his search. Mr. Hayes continued to reside in Gold Hill until the winter of 1969-70. He lost his life in tragic fire that consumed the mining office burning it to the ground.

The grounds of the mining company stood idle for many years, its buildings crumbled and fell. With time ticking away, nature took control and the land lie dormant for many years.

In 1989, with nothing left visible except the rock wall and the open holes that once poured out millions of dollars in gold bullion; the community launch the first Founder's Day Celebrating the history and cultural heritage of the area. This event spawned the formation of the Historic Gold Hill and Mines Foundation, Inc.

The foundation now owns seventy acres encompassing the Barnhardt and Randolph Gold Mines. Gold Hill Mines Historic Park continues to be remembered as the 'Prince of the Atlantic' and richest mining property east of the Mississippi.



## Foot Notes

*An excerpt from 'North Carolina and its Resources' published by the State Board of Agriculture in 1896.*

"The gold mining operations in Rowan County are on a larger and more expensive scale than elsewhere in the state. This is one of the most noted mining districts in the state. The seat of the chief mining industry is at Gold Hill, a village of several hundred inhabitants. Gold Hill and its associated mines, where the veins have been followed, in a single instance, to the depth of 800 feet, and in a linear distance of 1500 feet, have been credited with a gold production of over \$3,000,000.00. This amount represents about twenty-three percent of the assay values of the ore produced. This includes the total output from the several Gold Hill veins of great value in the county."

North Carolina, which has produced more gold than any of the other Southeastern States, has many gold mines arranged in zones within two physiographic provinces--the Piedmont and the Blue Ridge. Most of the deposits and the most productive mines are in the Piedmont province in Mecklenburg, Rowan, Cabarrus, and Davidson Counties. Deposits in the Blue Ridge province are in Burke and Transylvania Counties. Much of the bedrock in the gold-producing areas is granite, mica schist, and gneiss and hornblende gneiss of Precambrian, Precambrian (?) and Paleozoic(?) age. All these rocks were intruded by granite, diorite, and monzonite of Paleozoic age. Also syenite, pyroxenite, and dunite of Paleozoic age form small intrusive masses in both physiographic provinces.

The first information on gold production in North Carolina was in 1799, when a 17-pound nugget was found on the Reed plantation in Cabarrus County. This discovery and others on the Reed property stimulated interest in gold mining in the Southeastern States, and by 1825 mining was in full swing.

During the period 1829-55, the most productive in the State's history, 393,119 ounces of gold was produced.

An interesting sidelight, pointing out the importance of North Carolina as a gold producer, was the private coinage of gold by Christian Bechtler and his son, jewelers, who coined gold in \$1.00, \$2.50, and \$5.00 denominations with the consent of the Federal Government from 1831 to 1857. No record of gold coined was maintained for these 26 years; therefore, total gold production for the pre-Civil War years is very difficult to estimate. The first production in North Carolina was from placers and saprolite; by 1850 several important lode mines were opened, namely the Reed, Gold Hill, Kings Mountain, Rudisil, Conrad Hill, and Phoenix. These mines were closed during the Civil War, but most of them were reactivated after the war. The periods that stand out as especially productive in the post-Civil War history of North Carolina are 1882-91, 1902-6, and 1912-15. From 1954 through 1960 a few thousand ounces of gold was produced from the Ore Knob mine in Ashe County and the Hammee mine in Vance County as a by-product in the mining of copper and tungsten. Total gold production in North Carolina from 1799 through 1960 is estimated at 1,168,000 ounces.



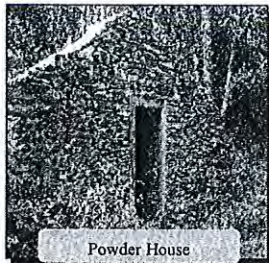
# GOLD HILL TODAY



Rock Wall & Gold Hill Jail



Assay Office



Powder House



Russell-Ruffy Mem. Shelter



Chilean Ore Mill



Main Street Today



E.H. Montgomery General Store



Filling Station



Gold Miner's Daughter



Lulu's Gold Miner's Cafe



Files Store



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