

## GET A PIECE OF THE CHALK!



### HAPPY JACK CHALK



This chalk comes from the Happy Jack Chalk Mine and Peak located 2 miles south of Scotia, Nebraska on Highway 11. *According to mining experts, this mine is the only one of its kind known in North America.* The honeycombed mine is more than 1 1/2 football fields in size and lets you explore a working mine. After a climb to the top of Happy Jack Peak you'll have a breathtaking and panoramic view of the river valley.

Happy Jack's Peak once was a look-out point used by the pioneers on guard against marauding Indians. The peak was named after frontiersman John "Jack" Swearengen, who midway in the 19th century, lived alone on the bluffs overlooking the river. A chalk mine was opened beneath Happy Jack's Peak in 1877, when Ed Wright began to mine the chalk. Excavation was done by blasting the white rock with dynamite and hauling it away with teams of horses. The mine remained idle for many years until early 1930's when a paint company from Omaha re-opened the mine with three persons employed at \$6 a day to blast the rock, load it on a truck and haul it to the railroad spur a mile away. It took the three men three days to fill a railroad car with 50 tons of calcium rock. It cost the company about \$1.75 a ton to mine the calcium.

Some 80 uses were found for the white rock which included paint, cement, whitewash, polishes and chicken feed. Farmers used the rock as foundation stone for barns and hog houses. However, many buildings suffered extensive damage because livestock found the chalky substance highly edible which weakened many foundations. In 1887, a Scotia resident decided to use the chalk rock to build what he believed would be the prettiest, gleaming-white buildings in the western frontier. One of these buildings still stands today in Scotia.

In 1967, the Nebraska State Game and Parks Commission purchased the land from Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Fuss and developed it into an attractive picnic site. It was named the Chalk Mine State Wayside area and now includes a State Arboretum because of the wide diversity of native trees and plants.

In 1979, the Game and Parks Commission closed the mine to the public by sealing the entrance to the mine and deeded the area to the Village of Scotia. In 1996 interest in reopening the mine was expressed by Steve Goldfish of Scotia. Steve and a group of interested citizens formed the non-profit "Happy Jack Chalk Mine Association" and purchased the mine and peak from the Village of Scotia in 1997. Work to reopen the mine has begun and the public should be able to tour the mine by August, 1997.

Happy Jack  
**CHALK MINE**  
ASSOCIATION  
Scotia, NE