



Steve Goldfish, right, president of the Happy Jack Chalk Mines Association, explains the mining techniques used in the early 1900's to former U. S. Senator Bob Kerrey, as Association Secretary, Kathy (Kuszak) Bolich looks on and helps with the tour for Kerrey.

HAPPY JACK PEAK & CHALK MINE

The Happy Jack Chalk Mine is located immediately adjacent to state Highway 11 south of Scotia. This mine is one of the very few underground mines ever operated in Nebraska. The mine is the only place in North America where the public can view examples of "room and pillar" mining techniques. The mine area includes 7 acres of land with a peak extending more than 120 feet above the mine entrance. This gives a magnificent view of more than twenty miles up and down the North Loup River valley. The Pawnee Indians used this peak as a lookout point; and trapper/scout "Happy Jack" Swearngen, one of the first white settlers, lived on the hill from 1869-1872. The mining of chalk began in 1877. The last mining was during the 1930's and 1940's.

When you walk through the portal entrance of Scotia's Happy Jack Chalk Mine, you are walking back in time....not just to the year 1877, but to an era when much of Nebraska was covered by a giant, inland sea. It is the fossilized remains of tiny sea creatures from this time, which make up the sediments you see. The miners who dug these caverns were like astronauts in space, going where no man had ever gone before....

Happy Jack Chalk Mine is open daily 10am-6pm, Memorial Day through Labor Day. Picnic area and grounds open sunrise to sunset. For off-season or group tour arrangements you may contact The Happy Jack Chalk Mine Association, P O Box 72, Scotia NE 68875, Ph. 308-245-3276.