

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**DATA SHEET**

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
AUG 27 1979  
RECEIVED  
OCT 11 1979  
DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Ed Wright Building

AND/OR COMMON

Scotia Chalk Building

(GY05-1)

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

*off NE 22*

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Scotia

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Third

STATE

Nebraska

CODE

031

COUNTY

Greeley

CODE

077

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Victor L. Wegner and Ray VanSlyke

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Scotia

VICINITY OF

STATE

Nebraska

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Register of Deeds, Greeley County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Greeley

STATE

Nebraska

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Historic Preservation in Nebraska

DATE

1971

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Nebraska State Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Lincoln

STATE

Nebraska

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Scotia Chalk Building is a one-story commercial structure located on the Main Street of the small town of Scotia (population 354). The construction material is dressed-faced coursed ashlar chalk blocks mined from the chalk hills 2½ miles south of town. The 6.78 x 29.3 meter (22' x 94¼') southern storefront is the original structure and the 6.7 x 18.3 meter (22' x 60 1/3') northern one was added at a later date.

All windows and decorative elements are placed on the street-side frontage of the unsophisticated building. The northern storefront, although later, has the original recessed entrance with double doors and transom arrangement and the eight-paned shop windows (see photo #1). The southern store front has been altered by the addition of the horizontal boarding with center door placed over half of the frontage, all of which is a sliding door entrance for the owner's vehicle storage. Quoins highlight the corners of the original building and the addition. The height of the parapet is uniform in both sections, although the addition has a shorter side wall and ceiling height. The north and south exterior walls are unbroken by windows or openings, as is the center wall between the stores. A gabled wood frame shed has been added at the rear of the south store. The rear wall of the north store had collapsed and was replaced by one of tile construction, and the building was shortened. Due to the chalk's susceptibility to weathering, plaster has been applied to the bottom part of the south and west walls.

The building is still used for commercial purposes. The northern store is a repair shop and the southern one is storage for the owner's truck dealership.

The Wright Building has stood for over 90 years with obviously little maintenance required. There is no structural threat to the building's continued existence. The considerable local interest in the building and its present commercial use give every indication of the future maintenance of the property and a long life for Scotia's major landmark.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW

<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

## SPECIFIC DATES

1887

## BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Ed Wright, Scotia

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Wright Building in Scotia exists as a visible symbol of a somewhat unique local geographical situation which is important to the history and cultural identity of the Scotia community. Built of locally quarried chalk rock, the building symbolizes the local sense of place within the larger plains community. The Wright Building is the only extant chalk building (perhaps the only complete one built) in the community which once had a number of structures with chalk rock foundations.

Chalk rock is a less consolidated cretaceous limestone which is a product of the Niobrara formation of limestones in Nebraska. The material outcrops extensively along the Missouri and Niobrara rivers in northeastern Nebraska and along the Republican River in southern Nebraska. Its white or light blue hue is considered a distinctive feature of the material, whether seen in cultural artifacts or as landmark features in the form of outcroppings in the landscape. The prominence and height of the chalk bluffs near Red Cloud were described by Willa Cather in her novels, particularly in My Antonia. Lewis and Clark in their famous exploration related the size, color, and texture of the chalk outcroppings along the Missouri River in northeastern Nebraska. The material for the Wright Building was mined from the chalk bluff near Scotia, called Happy Jack Peak, which was described in Nebraska History (Volume 5, page 34) as ". . . a bold hill on the North Loup river so chalky white that it may be seen for miles."

Nebraska's chalk rock has been used for a variety of industrial purposes over the years, particularly as an ingredient in whitewash, paint, polish, poultry feed, and in surfacing roads. A major application of chalk rock in the state was its employment in cement production. "The Niobrara chalk and the shales immediately below and above it are the state's principal cement resources." (Condra: 1923, p. 32). Construction material was quarried on a limited basis at Scotia and more extensively along the Niobrara River in Knox County where dwellings are known to have been built in Cedar, Knox, and Boyd counties. No other commercial building constructed of chalk rock has been identified in the state. The mine at Scotia was worked periodically throughout the last quarter of the 19th century and by the G. H. Nelson Paint Company during the 1930s for use in their Omaha paint factory.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one

Latitude 41° 27' 54"

Longitude 98° 42' 09"

QUADRANGLE NAME Scotia Quadrangle

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lot 13 and north half of lot 12, Block 7, Original Town Plat of Scotia, Greeley County.

### LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Penelope Chatfield, Preservation Historian, and David Murphy, Survey Architect

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Nebraska State Historical Society

August, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

1500 R Street

402/471-3270

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Lincoln

Nebraska

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Marian D. Kwett

8/20/79

TITLE

Director, Nebraska State Historical Society

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Carol Skell  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

10-11-79

ATTEST: William H. Graham  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE

10-11-79

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The chalk bluff on the North Loup River near Scotia exists as a prominent feature on the local landscape and is strongly associated with local history and pride. The bluff was named Happy Jack Peak in honor of Happy Jack Swarenger, a trapper, who lived at the base of the bluff when the first settlers arrived in the area. The chalk was first mined by Ed Wright in 1878, four years after the founding of the town. Wright, an early and prominent settler of Scotia, opened the first general store in the community the same year. He managed the store under various owners until his death in 1896. Wright erected the chalk building in 1887.

Plains settlers found little in the way of traditionally available building materials such as trees for logs or stone. Significant responses were developed for temporary and semi-permanent construction in the use of sod and baled hay as construction materials. Where stone was available, it was inevitably used for building purposes. Its long-term suitability would have to be determined by the passage of time. Additionally, stone was generally a preferred material because of its permanence and association with a "settled" condition by the pioneers.

The Wright Building achieves a strong sense of local identity through the use of a locally quarried construction material of which there are no other examples in the community or the state. The building has been recognized repeatedly in local articles and brochures as a structure of major significance to the community. It is the main structure of aesthetic distinction in downtown Scotia.

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- "Chalk Bluff or Happy Jack", Nebraska History Vol. 5 (1922), p. 34.
- Condra, G. E. Nebraska Beautiful. University of Nebraska. Conservation and Survey Division, Bulletin 17, 1925, p. 7-8.
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- McDermott, Edith Swain. The Pioneer History of Greeley County. (Greeley, Ne.: Citizen Printing Co., 1939).
- Puckett, Pearl. "The White Cliffs of Nebraska" Ford Times, vol. 45, no. 5 (May, 1953).
- Scotia Register. September 3, 1917, page 1. "Mary J. Wright Obituary".
- Richards, R. W., R. A. Weeks and D. M. Larrabee (comp.). Map Showing Construction Materials and Nonmetal Mineral Resources of Nebraska. U.S. Department of the Interior - Geological Survey, Missouri Basin Studies No. 15, 1:750,000, 1948.
- "The White Cliffs of Nebraska". State Bank of Scotia, Scotia, Ne., n.p., n.d.