

## Simply Salt History



*At the turn of the century, miners used shovels to fill carts with rock salt. All bagging was done by hand as well.*

Underground salt mining is a rich tradition in Western New York, dating back to 1865. But the history of salt begins far earlier with the first civilizations.

Because salt is necessary to our survival, it was a scarce and valuable commodity for centuries. Salt enhances the taste of foods, works as a preservative, and helps maintain good health by transporting nutrients and oxygen throughout the body. Before modern production methods made salt available to everyone, men had to fight,

open new trade routes, or make new discoveries to get it.

According to "Salt, A World History," the earliest written record of salt production is in China, 800 B.C. At that time, clay vessels were filled with ocean water and boiled until the salt crystals were left behind. Solar evaporation is another common method for production still in use today. In the 1600's, Greek historians wrote of the huge Celtic salt miners who worked in the Austrian town of Salzburg (which translates as Salt Town). These are only a few of thousands of historic stories describing how different cultures searched for, secured, and used salt.

In modern times, the drama of salt has focused on its production. Vast mines are dug, deep wells are drilled, and new machines are invented – all to ensure that salt is produced in adequate quantities to meet the needs of every individual.

Over 40 million metric tons of salt are produced in the United States each year through solar evaporation, rock mining, and evaporative wells (also known as mechanical evaporation). Over half of that amount is rock salt, used for de-icing roads.



*In the late 1930's, Sturtevant machines were used to crush and screen the salt.*



*In 1923, the Fuller shaft of the Retsof Salt Mine was nearing completion.*

## **Western New York Rock Salt Mining Success**

By the late 1800's, many companies were drilling for salt throughout the world. Between 1878 and 1895, over 35 mining companies were formed in New York's Wyoming and Livingston Counties alone. In 1884, the first shaft salt mine was constructed in Livingston County at a cost of \$600,000. Previously, all other facilities in the area were wells that extracted brine, which was then evaporated to obtain the salt. The shaft salt mine increased production capacity and efficiency.

The extraction of salt in Western New York covers a vast geographic region. Mine shafts that were formerly operating in the hamlets of Retsof, Greigsville, and Cuylerville were eventually all connected underground, comprising an area even larger than the island of Manhattan. In 1994, due to a flooding of this network, the Retsof mine was closed and salt mining was no longer an industry in the region.

That changed in 1997, when the American Rock Salt Company was established with the vision of creating a new mine and tapping into the underground salt reserves that had been left undisturbed. After securing the required permits and purchasing 10,000 acres of mineral rights and 200 acres of surface property, American Rock Salt broke ground in 1998 for a new mine, ten miles away from all previous mining sites. Construction of the mine at Hampton Corners took more than three years. American Rock Salt built the mine using traditional techniques that have proven over time to be the best approach for safety and success.

The American Rock Salt mine is the first successful salt mine to be built in the United States in over forty years.



*The committee relaxed in 1956 after hours of hard work preparing for the annual Retsof Employee Association steak roast. From left to right, George Barber; James Yasso; George "Punch" Silfies, Association Vice-President; Floyd Nenci, Association President; Arthur Sattora; Herbert Toal. In the background are Angelo Giglio and Joseph Farruggia.*



*A miner removed salt by electric rail car in the mid-1930's. In the earliest days, mules pulled the carts of salt out of the mine.*

## **AT AMERICAN ROCK SALT, OUR ONLY BUSINESS IS SALT.**

With the capacity to produce vast quantities of de-icing salt annually, American Rock Salt helps ensure safe winter road conditions for millions of people in 12 states.

Each day, depending on demand, between 10,000 and 18,000 tons are produced by our experienced miners, which makes American Rock Salt the largest producing salt mine in the USA. We also have the largest distribution network in the northeast, which means more dependable (and faster) delivery. Our highest priority is pleasing the customers who use our products.

Unlike competitors, all of the rock salt we sell comes from the United States – from our Hampton Corners mine south of Rochester, New York. We draw on the experience of several generations of American rock salt miners. As they mentor and train our newest employees, we benefit from the blend of youth and experience.



American Rock Salt has revitalized the economy of this entire region, bringing over 200 new jobs to Livingston County and hundreds of related jobs to the region through the trucking, rail, and construction industries.

Founded in January 1997 by Joseph Bucci, Gunther Buerman, and Neil Cohen, American Rock Salt is the first successful salt mine to be built in the United States since 1960.

**Environmentally Friendly Operations**

To ensure American Rock Salt is environmentally friendly, we work closely with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Our mine, with its underground screening and crushing operations, prevents dust and particles from reaching the surface. In addition, our quality control engineer monitors groundwater and river water daily to ensure all ecosystems remain in balance.