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LINCOLN HOTEL Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska

Designed by architect A. Bandy for the Nebraska Hotel Company, the Lincoln Hotel was constructed in 1917-1918 (see *Figure 2*). It is supported by a massive reinforced concrete frame, with integrally poured columns, beams and slabs forming a uniform grid. This frame is expressed externally as spandrel beams and columns on the east and south walls; here it is infilled with brick panels. The brick is laid as curtain walls on the north and west facades, hiding the concrete structure. The original steel exterior fire escape is mounted onto the east wall, and small decorative steel balconies cantilever from the third and fifth floors of the west wall.



Figure 2. Lincoln Hotel, 1919, from North Platte Valley Museum, Gering.

The building derives its exterior architectural distinction from its Classical Revival facades. The north and west facades are divided vertically into a classical hierarchy of base, body and cap. The base was historically formed by the raised stone foundation walls, sided with smooth dressed limestone slabs: the equivalent of the stone street level of Renaissance architecture. This base supported corbeled brick columns, which were capped by a neoclassical terra cotta

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Larger cities such as New York, Chicago and San Francisco had their grand hotels, each vying for recognition as the biggest or the best. Resort areas such as Cape May, New Jersey, and Saratoga, New York, featured elaborate tourist hotels. Smaller cities such as Omaha and Lincoln had their own versions of grand hotels—the Fontenelle in Omaha (see Figure 3) and the Lincoln and Lindell in Lincoln. By the late 1800s hotels had begun appearing as well in smaller towns across the country. Scaled-down versions of the metropolitan hotels, they were typically located near the depots that were being built along newly laid railroad lines. The smaller railroad hotels of the late 19th century often shared many of the structural and architectural features of the grand hotels, including fireproof construction, electrical power, elevators, and eclectic revival architectural treatment.

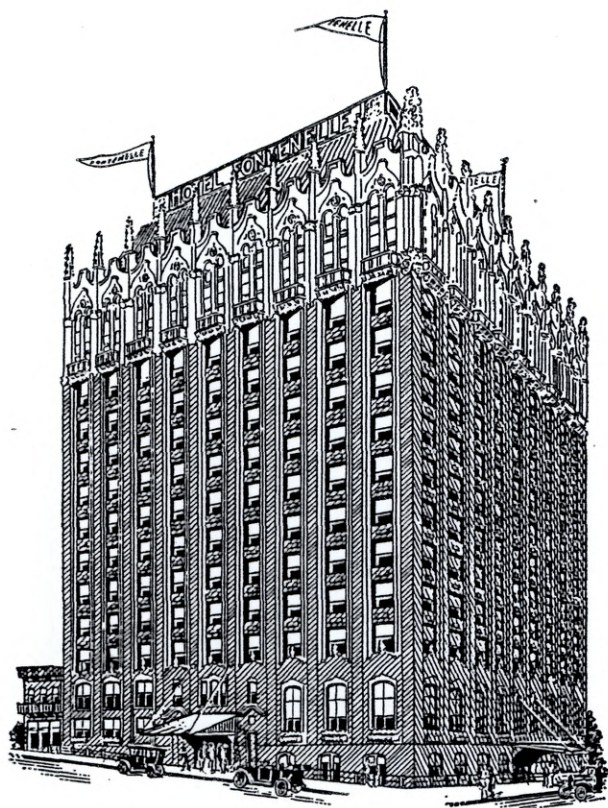


Figure 3. Fontenelle Hotel, Omaha, from *Mid-West Hotel Reporter*, 1921.

By the turn of the century, historicism had begun to wane for hotel architecture. Hotels built between then and the 1920s more often displayed simplified massing, relying on modest terra cotta or brick ornamentation at the cornices and entrances for architectural expression. They displayed a remarkable degree of stylistic homogeneity, described under today's lexicon as Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, Commercial and the catchall 20th Century Functional.

One of the biggest advances in hotel construction at this time was the development of reinforced concrete for building superstructures. The first reinforced concrete skyscraper was the 16-story Ingalls Building, completed in 1903 in Cincinnati. This was followed three years later by the first concrete-frame hotel, the Marlborough [1906] in Atlantic City. Engineered by Kahn's Trussed Steel Concrete Company, this 15-story structure was the largest concrete building in the world upon completion. Concrete construction allowed hotel architects the

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Figure 4. Lincoln Hotel, from North Platte Valley Museum.

The Lincoln immediately became a centerpiece of Scottsbluff commercial and social life (see *Figure 4*). Advertised as "Mighty Like a Home," it hosted the majority of overnight visitors in town and fed a steady stream of travelers and townspeople in the Lincoln Restaurant on the first floor. Women could get their hair finger waved or marcelled at the Lincoln Beauty Shoppe, and men could get smokes at the Lincoln Hotel Cigar Store in the basement. The Scottsbluff Room on the sixth floor was the scene of numerous social fetes and meetings for such organizations as the Commercial Club, the Chamber of Commerce, the Lions, Kiwanis and Rotary clubs, and the Business and Professional Women's Club.

Some of the hotels owned by the Nebraska Hotel Company may have been individually successful, but the parent company itself was not faring as well. After acquiring the Coates House [1918] in Kansas City in March 1919, the company ceased its aggressive expansion across the Midwest. The Lincoln in Scottsbluff would prove to be the last hotel built by Schaaf and Johnston, as their desperately overstretched firm slipped into insolvency in the financially depressed years after World War I. In February 1921 a receiver was appointed to manage the bankrupt corporation and disperse its assets. But Frank Schaaf was unwilling to relinquish control of his firm. It was not until he was sent to jail for contempt of court that he finally let go of the failed company.

Ironically, the North American Hotel Company declared bankruptcy at exactly the same time as Schaaf's corporation. Inklings of the firm's financial instability had begun to surface as early as 1917, as many of its hotel projects in Nebraska—including Scottsbluff—languished in an uncompleted state. In the summer of 1918 the company received congressional approval to issue more securities to raise money for construction. "This action means that there

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are excellent prospects for the completion and getting into operation six fine additional hotel properties in Nebraska, Iowa and Kansas in the near future," a company official stated in July.²⁶ After three years, little further had been accomplished, however. In March 1921 a receiver was designated to sell the completed hotels in Hartington, Nebraska, Hampton, Iowa, and Ottawa, Kansas, and the unfinished buildings at Norfolk, Ogallala, Kearney, Grand Island and Scottsbluff. Although eventually completed, the Scottsbluff building never opened as a hotel (see Figure 5). Instead, it was converted for use as Methodist Hospital.²⁷



Figure 5. Methodist Hospital, from North Platte Valley Museum.

Disposal of the Nebraska Hotel Company's properties proceeded quickly. In April 1921 all but the Coates House were sold to hotel entrepreneur Eugene Eppley. "After considerable uncertainty, a great deal of rumor and some competition," the *Mid-West Hotel Reporter* stated, "Eugene C. Eppley becomes the owner of the hotels of the Nebraska Hotel Co. Receiver Barkley recommended the acceptance of his bid of \$1,000,000 and on Tuesday the Court ordered the deal to be closed." The article listed the hotels involved in the sale:

The properties include the Fontenelle hotel of Omaha, with a lease having about fourteen years to run; the Lincoln Hotel of Lincoln, Nebraska, including the lots and building and an adjacent lot bought with a view to the enlargement of the Lincoln. It also includes what is known as the Capital [sic] lot, in the years gone by occupied by the Capitol hotel, at one time the leading hotel of the state capital and on which it was planned to erect a new and modern building. It includes also the Evans hotel building at Columbus, Nebraska, under lease at this time to Owens and Howell, who will probably continue in that capacity. The Scotts Bluff [sic] Lincoln, a new and modern hotel in that city, and two smaller ones known as the Lincoln in Franklin, Nebraska, and at Table Roc[k], Nebraska. Buildings, lots and businesses are included in all except the Fontenelle and Evans. In all these six hotels have a room capacity of 767, there being 330 in the Fontenelle, 218 in the Lincoln at Lincoln, 65 in the Evans, 90 in Scotts Bluff and 30 at Table Rock.²⁸

²⁶"Work on North Hotel to Resume," *Scottsbluff Star-Herald*, 16 July 1918.

²⁷Later named Western Nebraska General Hospital, the building stood until the late 1960s.

²⁸"Eppley Succeeds the Nebraska Hotel Co.," *Mid-West Hotel Reporter* 14:44 (8 April 1921): 1, 4.



"Mighty Like a Home"

L I N C O L N

Lincoln Hotel ■ Scottsbluff, Nebraska

Nomination for the National Register of Historic Places

submitted to:
MetroPlains Development, LLC
1600 University Avenue, Suite 212
St. Paul, Minnesota 55104

produced by:
FRASERdesign
1269 Cleveland Avenue
Loveland, Colorado 80537

November 1997

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Knorr-Holden Continuous Corn Plot
other names/site number NEHBS # SF00-047

2. Location

street & number Scottsbluff Experiment Station not for publication
city, town Scottsbluff vicinity
state Nebraska code NE county Scotts Bluff code 157 zip code 69361

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>1</u>	_____
			<u>0</u>

Name of related multiple property listing: NA
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Bob Fisher Roy, DSHPO 5/6/92
Signature of certifying official Date

Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. Entered in the National Register

See continuation sheet. *Melanie Byers* 6/11/92

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet. _____

determined not eligible for the National Register. _____

removed from the National Register. _____

other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION: research facility

AGRICULTURE: field

EDUCATION: research facility

AGRICULTURE: field

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

NA

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation NAwalls NA

roof NAother NA

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Knorr-Holden Continuous Corn Plot is located approximately six and one-fourth miles northwest of Scottsbluff, a west-central Nebraska city, on State Highway 71, and one-fourth mile south of the University of Nebraska's Scottsbluff Experiment Station. The southeast corner of the plot area is located 103 feet north of the center line of a county road and 300 feet east of the center line of the Scottsbluff Experiment Station entry road. The plot, approximately half an acre in size, is cultivated crop land which receives various manure and fertilizer treatments and is planted to corn in the spring of each year. The nomination consists of one contributing site: the corn plot.

The Knorr-Holden research plot is a rectangular area 108 feet wide by 171 feet long. The area is divided into two replications, each measuring 108 feet wide by 82.5 feet long. Each of these areas is further divided into two areas 108 feet wide by 41.25 feet long with one receiving 12 tons of manure per acre in the spring of each year. The manured and non-manured plots are divided into six plots measuring 18 by 41.25 feet. Each of these are given a fertilizer treatment.

The plot is approximately half an acre, including a five foot alleyway which divides the two replications and a small border which surrounds the plot. The corners are marked with buried concrete markers and electronic sensors. After the corn is planted, corners, individual plots and alleyways are marked with above ground markers. Alleyways are maintained corn free to give access to the plot and its treatments. A permanent sign is scheduled to be placed between the plot and the highway.

The Scottsbluff Experiment Station was established in 1910 and the land used for the rotation study series, (which includes the Knorr-Holden corn plot), and was plowed from the native vegetation consisting of herbaceous plants, chiefly grasses. After plowing, it was cropped to oats in 1911. The rotations were established in 1912 on plots 0.21 acres in area with one replication. Open pollinated corn was planted on the continuous corn plot in 1912 and was used through 1942. A local variety of calico corn was grown from 1912 to 1942. Various Nebraska Experiment Station and other hybrid varieties have been used from 1942 to the present.

No manure or commercial fertilizers were applied to the plot from 1912 to 1941. In 1942 the original plot was split and 12 tons per acre of wet barnyard manure have been applied on one half of the plot each year since. In 1942, a second replication was added with half of it also receiving manure. Beginning in 1953, each manured and non-manured plot was subdivided to receive Six/nitrogen fertilizer treatments.

The plot has been consistently planted to corn and used for research related to corn production since its establishment in 1912. In 1991, Scottsbluff Experiment Station staff initiated National Register listing for the Knorr-Holden plot to ensure its recognition and protection.

See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
 nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION

AGRICULTURE

Significant Person

NA

Period of Significance

1912-1942

Cultural Affiliation

NA

Architect/Builder

NA

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Knorr-Holden Continuous Corn Plot is significant on the state level under Criterion A for its role in the educational research conducted at the University of Nebraska's Scottsbluff Experiment Station. Since its establishment in 1912, the plot has been a significant part of the research conducted at the Scottsbluff Experiment Station and to the present, yields valuable information about the ecology, environmental impact, and production principles of long-term continuous irrigated corn. The period of significance begins in 1912 when the plot was established and ends in 1942, the last year in which the property meets the 50 year minimum age criterion.

In the first half of the 19th century many historic trails followed the North Platte River Valley. Thousands of immigrants traveled through the area on the way to the west coast with few stopping to settle. With the arrival of the railroad in the late 1860s and the elimination of the threat of Indian attack, the area became a promising site for homesteaders.

The rush of homesteaders became quite large in the late 1880s and early 1890s. The settlers soon realized that rainfall in western Nebraska was generally insufficient and unreliable enough to grow most crops to maturity. With only a few small streams in the area, the waters of the North Platte River were soon utilized to make up for the rain not supplied by nature.

The first irrigation company in the area was formed in 1887 near Minatare. The canal was finished in 1888 and was an immediate success. This attracted a great deal of attention from drought stricken farmers in the area. The success of this project proved that irrigation would be a necessity to realize the full potential of the land.

Many canals, large and small, were proposed, but due to the area farmers' lack of financial resources, large scale irrigation projects required government support. In 1895, the state of Nebraska enacted an irrigation district law which permitted the formation of districts with the power to assess land for irrigation improvements.

The Federal Reclamation Act was passed in 1902 and studies were begun by the Reclamation Service for the North Platte Project. The project was authorized in 1903 and during the same year surveys were implemented to determine the location of irrigable lands and a reservoir site. In 1905, construction began on the Pathfinder Dam and the Interstate Canal. By 1915, work on the Interstate Canal and Reservoir was completed and work had begun on the Fort Laramie Canal. The Northport Canal system was started in 1918. All construction was completed by 1925 and the Guernsey Dam was completed in 1927. Several other dams and irrigation projects have been constructed since 1925.

The North Platte Project extends 111 miles along the river valley from an area near Guernsey, Wyoming, to south of Bridgeport, Nebraska. The city of Scottsbluff, Nebraska is near the center of the

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development. The project supplies water for approximately 390,000 acres that are divided into four irrigation districts. A supplemental supply is furnished to eight water user associations serving a combined area of 190,000 acres.

With this large acreage now open to irrigation and the majority of farmers in the area lacking experience in managing the irrigated crops grown on the sandy soils of the valley, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) soon recognized that new techniques were needed to be developed to successfully farm the newly irrigated lands. To facilitate research and disseminate information to area farmers, an agricultural experiment station was established in the area.

In 1910, the USDA, in cooperation with the Nebraska Experiment Station, created the Scottsbluff Experiment Substation on 160 acres of unclaimed land six miles east of Mitchell, Nebraska. The Office of Western Agriculture, USDA, managed the station until 1948 when the land and management was turned over to the University of Nebraska.

The native short grass prairie was broken out in 1910 and the next spring the land was seeded to oats. In 1912, under the supervision of Fritz Knorr, the first superintendent of the station, an extensive series of both irrigated and dry land rotation experiments were begun.

In 1917, James A. Holden became the second station superintendent to supervise the rotation plots. Under his supervision the foundation was set for the rotation plots to become a long-term project. The rotation plots were continued until 1941 when all but the continuous corn plot was discontinued. From 1942 to the present, the corn plot has been maintained as a study by itself.

Over the years, the data collected from the Knorr-Holden plot has been presented at national meetings and published in several bulletins and scientific journals. From the time of establishment to the present, at least three dozen scientists and graduate students have been involved with the plot.

The data collected from the plot has proven that continuous corn can be successfully grown in western Nebraska and that manuring is a valuable practice in maintaining soil productivity. It has shown that N fertilization alone was capable of restoring most of the production capacity of the soil. The practice of manuring much improved the physical condition of the soil. Initiation of N fertilization resulted in a much more rapid recovery of yield than did the initiation of manuring. In the first year of N fertilization on non-manured non-fertilized soil, yields reached a level that required ten years of manuring to attain. Protein levels in the corn grain have been consistently highest on manured treatments at all but the 180 Kg/ha N fertilizer rate. Cultivation without manuring or N fertilization decreased the soil N content to 40 percent of the native content after 30 years of continuous corn production. Thirty years of manuring increased the soil N content to 90 percent of the level present in the soil in its native condition.

Much valuable information has been collected from this plot over the years and much more can be collected in the future. This type of information can only be collected from research plots that are long-term in design. Continuous research plots, however, are rare because they require a commitment for generations to come.

At the present time, over 600,000 acres are irrigated in the Nebraska panhandle; of that, 120,000 acres are in corn. The average corn yield in 1914 was about 60 bushels per acre; the average today is 160 bushels per acre. These statistics show the value of corn to the area and the improvements that research has made possible.

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The Knorr-Holden plot is one of the oldest continuous field crop experiments in the United States. Two other continuous field experiments, the Morrow Plots at the University of Illinois, and Sanborn Field at the University of Missouri, received National Historic Landmark designation in the 1960's. To date, only two are listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Magruder Plots, in Oklahoma (listed 1979); and the Old Rotation at Auburn University, Alabama (listed 1988).

The Knorr-Holden Plot was conceived when the first large scale irrigation projects were under construction in the North Platte Valley of western Nebraska. The state, and most of the intensively cropped areas of the west is highly dependent on irrigation. The Knorr-Holden Continuous Corn Plot was developed in response to a need to determine the best methods of farming the newly developed irrigated land of western Nebraska. Since it was established in 1912, the Knorr-Holden plot has been a significant part of the research conducted at the Scottsbluff Experiment Station and continues to yield valuable information on the long-term effects of soil management practices.

9. Major Bibliographical References

- Anderson, F. N. and G. A. Peterson. "Effects of Continuous Corn, Manuring, and Nitrogen Fertilization on Yield and Protein Content of Grain and on the Soil Nitrogen Content." Agronomy Journal, Volume 65, Sept-Oct 1973.
- Centennial Book Committee. "History of Gering, Nebraska (Early Irrigation of the North Platte Valley)." Curtis Media Corporation, 1989.
- Fenster, C. R. and J. L. Wehing. "History of the University of Nebraska Panhandle Research and Extension Center." Office file, Panhandle Research and Extension Center, 1985.
- Green, Thomas L. "Scottsbluff and the North Platte Valley." Scottsbluff Golden Jubilee Celebration Committee, Star Herald Printing Company, 1950.
- Holden, James A., Superintendent, Scottsbluff Experiment Station. "The Work of the Scottsbluff Reclamation Project Experiment Farm in 1917." Office file, Panhandle Research and Extension Office, 1917.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Panhandle Research & Extension Center

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one.

UTM References

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Zone Easting Northing

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The Knorr-Holden Continuous Corn Plot is a parcel of land located in the southeast quarter of Section 21, Township 23 north, Range 55 west, in Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska. The parcel is described as follows: Beginning at the southeast corner of said Section 21 then west on the south line of Section 21 a distance of 957 feet; then a deflection 90° right a distance of 103 feet to the true point of beginning; then extending on this line 171 feet; then a deflection 90° right a distance of 108 feet; then a deflection 90° right a distance of 171 feet; then a deflection 90° right a distance of 108 feet to the true point of beginning.

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Boundary Justification

The boundary includes that parcel of land which has historically been associated with the property.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title <u>Rex Nielsen</u>	date <u>February 1992</u>
organization <u>Panhandle Research & Extension Center</u>	telephone <u>(308) 632-1230</u>
street & number <u>4502 Avenue I</u>	state <u>NE</u> zip code <u>69361</u>
city or town <u>Scottsbluff</u>	

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Knorr, Fritz, Superintendent, Scottsbluff Experiment Station. "Irrigated Field Crops in Western Nebraska." Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin (1914).

Mitchell, C. C., R. L. Westerman, F. R. Brown, and T. R. Peck. "Overview of Long-Term Agronomic Research." Agronomy Journal, Vol. 83, No. 1. Jan-Feb 1991.

Willis, R. H. "Irrigation in Nebraska Historical and Informational Articles." Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation (Bureau of Irrigation, Water Power, and Drainage) 1950-1951.