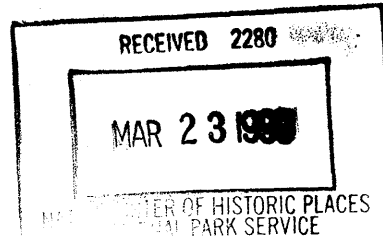


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



478

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "X" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "NA" for "not applicable". For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Argo Hotel

other names/site number The New Meridian Hotel, The New Meridian Sanatorium, NeHBS #KX05-015

2. Location

street & number 211 Kansas Street not for publication [ ]

city or town Crofton vicinity [ ]

state Nebraska code NE county Knox code 107 zip code 68730

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]  
Signature of certifying official

3/12/99  
Date

Director, 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 for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

- I, hereby certify that this property is:
  - entered in the National Register.
    - See continuation sheet.
  - determined eligible for the National Register.
    - See continuation sheet.
  - determined not eligible for the National Register.
  - removed from the National Register.
  - other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature]

5/5/99

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

Argo Hotel  
Name of Property

Knox County, Nebraska  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
n/a

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
n/a

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: hotel  
HEALTH CARE: clinic

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instruction)

DOMESTIC: hotel

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Commercial Style

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Brick  
walls Brick  
roof Tar  
other

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

- COMMERCE
- HEALTH/MEDICINE
- ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

1912-1949

**Significant Dates**

1912  
1940

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

n/a

**Cultural Affiliation**

n/a

**Architect/Builder**

n/a

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**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 for Additional Data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Argo Hotel  
Name of Property

Knox County, Nebraska  
County and State

---

## 10. Geographical Data

---

Acreage of Property Less than one acre.

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1.	14	623050	4731895	3.			
2.				4.			

[] See continuation sheet.

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

---

## 11. Form Prepared By

---

name/title Greg Miller, Preservation Historian, Todd Knispel, Research Assistant

organization Nebraska State Historical Society date December 1998

street & number 1500 R Street telephone (402) 471-4775

city or town Lincoln state NE zip code 68501

---

## Additional Documentation

---

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

---

## Property Owner

---

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Sandra L. McDonald

street & number P.O. Box 460 telephone (402) 388-2400

city or town Crofton state NE zip code 68730

---

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Argo Hotel  
Name of Property

Knox County, Nebraska  
County and State

Section 7 Page 1

The Argo Hotel, designed in the commercial prairie style, is located one block west of the central business district of Crofton in Knox County. The two-story, red brick, longitudinal block hotel, constructed in 1912, exhibits very good interior and exterior integrity. Within the Northeast Nebraska geographic region, it is one of only three second generation, brick longitudinal block hotels. A longitudinal hotel presents its narrow side to the street, with its longer dimension running back from the street toward the alley. While it exhibits a less-imposing presence on the street, it achieves greater efficiency in terms of the number of rooms per urban unit. Rooms are typically arranged along a double-loaded corridor which runs perpendicular to the street, with all rooms looking out. The nomination consists of one contributing building.

The Argo Hotel is a two-story red brick, flat roofed rectangular building which extends toward the back of the lot, characteristic of the longitudinal block hotel type. The building, which borders on a residential neighborhood, one block west of Crofton's main commercial district. Located in northeastern Nebraska, Crofton is less than 15 miles from the Nebraska/South Dakota border. The town is surrounded by hilly land which characterizes the area. The hotel itself sits on a corner lot, with vacant lots to the east. In the early days this lot housed a shed and place for chickens which were used for family use and to feed the boarders.

The main facade, which faces south, has a full-width pillared brick loggia. Ornamented geographic design enhances the brickwork on the upper and lower railings of the loggia. The first floor has a centrally located double door entryway which is flanked on either side by a large single pane window. The windows and doors all have transoms. The second floor has a single door located in the center with two double-hung windows on each side.

The east facade has segmentally arched double-hung windows on the first and second floors with an entrance at the rear of the building. A ghost sign on the east side bears the name "Argo Hotel." This sign had once been painted over when the hotel was renamed the New Meridian Hotel. That sign, however, has since disappeared leaving the original hotel sign. The west side has simple double-hung windows on the first and second floors and a door at the rear.

The front door opens to a vestibule which in turn leads to the main lobby that spans the width of the building. The main lobby is punctuated by the large wooden staircase. To the east of the stairs is the office with restrooms and the kitchen in the rear. On the west side of the grand staircase is the restaurant with the bar behind it. The staircase leads to a double loaded corridor, which is typical for a longitudinal style hotel, with rooms opening to the stair.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Argo Hotel

Name of Property

Knox County, Nebraska

County and State

**Section 7 Page 2**

---

Some of the rooms have been altered to include a bathroom, while others retain their original configuration. The doors to all the rooms retain their original transoms. A central enclosed area houses the shower and bath facilities. Both the first and second floors have the original pressed tin ceiling and the woodwork has been restored to its original condition. Despite some alterations to the original floor plan, the interior retains a high degree of integrity as a result of the fine rehabilitation and reuse of historically significant traditional spaces. This is especially true of the second floor which had been closed off for 30 years after its conversion to a health clinic. The inaccessibility of the second floor undoubtedly contributed to its pristine condition. Additionally, a non-traditional health clinic use did not bring about the need for extensive alterations.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetArgo Hotel

Name of Property

Knox County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 1

The Argo Hotel, constructed in 1912 in Crofton, Knox County, is significant at the local level under Criterion A. It is significant for its association with the commercial development of the town and with the building boom of second generation hotels that was occurring on a statewide basis during the first quarter of the twentieth century. The hotels built during this period, as exemplified by the Argo, were multi-floor, brick buildings that offered the most modern conveniences (such as indoor plumbing and gas or electric lighting), and catered especially to the businessmen who traveled on the railroad. Aside from providing pleasant quarters for travelers, the new hotels became the symbol of a prospering community with a bright future. For this reason, towns and cities of all sizes thought it was important to showcase a "modern" hotel as an indication of their prominent standing in the state. It is within this context that the importance of the Argo Hotel is realized. The building is also significant under Criterion A for its association with health/medicine. In 1940, the hotel was converted into a health clinic which provided a much needed service to Crofton and the surrounding area. Finally, the building is significant under Criterion C as a good example of a second generation longitudinal style hotel. This style of hotel presents its narrow side to the street, with its longer dimension running back away from the street toward the alley. While it exhibits a less-imposing presence on the street, it achieves greater efficiency in terms of the number of rooms per urban lot. Rooms are typically arranged along a double-loaded corridor which runs perpendicular to the street, with all rooms looking out. The Argo retains a high degree of integrity both on the interior and exterior. The period of significance begins in 1912 when the hotel was built and opened and ends in 1949 which marks the 50 year criterion. The nomination consists of one contributing building.

---

Platted in 1892, Crofton grew at a relatively rapid rate as the result of being at the end of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad line. By 1906, there were five trains, two passenger and three freight, coming into Crofton daily. In 1912 Crofton boasted of having 40 different businesses. Additionally, in that same year the International Meridian Road Association was formed. Later that year, the Meridian Road (later Highway) which passed through Crofton was being located and marked.

Even with the train traffic and the potential for increased automobile traffic, research indicates that aside from some inadequate rooming houses, there was only one hotel. There are no records to determine when this establishment, the Castle Hotel, was built or what type of accommodations it offered.

Despite this lack of information it would seem the community leaders saw the need for an additional hotel. When Mr. Nick Michaelis approached the town board in 1912 about building a new hotel they were not only receptive to the idea, but agreed to furnish water and a

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Argo Hotel  
Name of Property

Knox County, Nebraska  
County and State

Section 8 Page 2

sewer system to the establishment.

In mid-March 1912 the Argo Hotel, a rectangular brick building, opened for business. On the first floor was a lobby, dining area, kitchen, and two bathrooms. There were 20 rooms and one bathroom on the second floor. Unlike newspapers in other communities where second generation hotels were built The Crofton Journal did little reporting on the new enterprise and did not even cover its grand opening.

After opening for business there is little information on its operations. In the few times that it is mentioned in the newspaper, the subject matter generally deals with advertisements that doctors will be using the hotel to see walk-in patients. The first really newsworthy note appears in The Crofton Journal on September 20, 1923. A short article states "Messrs Kuhl and Hupp who have operated the Argo hotel here the past year, vacated and Mr. and Mrs. Joe Tieskotter came over from Humphrey and took charge...". So it would appear that Michaelis owned the hotel until 1922. Ownership changed again in August 1924 when the Tieskotter's sold it to Mr. and Mrs. E.A. Hoig (The Crofton Journal, August 14, 1924).

In 1924, the new owners changed the name of the Argo to the New Meridian Hotel (The Crofton Journal, September 18, 1924). This shows the growing importance and recognition of the Meridian Road, because it was in this same year the transportation route was upgraded from a road to a highway.

Mr. Hoig sold the hotel in early 1940 after owning it for 16 years. The building was purchased by the New Meridian Sanatorium for about \$10,000. The newspaper reported that "...this makes the Sanatorium somewhat a permanent establishment here. It has brought many people to Crofton during the past year and has increased business value of the community a great deal as it has the largest payroll here. Around 15 people are now employed and this is likely to be enlarged" (The Crofton Journal, February 29, 1940). The building continued to function as a health clinic for the remainder of its historic period of significance.

Despite the lack of attention given the Argo by the local newspaper, it undoubtedly demonstrated the emphasis placed on having a new hotel, especially by local businessmen. During this time, new hotel construction was occurring throughout the state. To have missed an opportunity at having a new hotel would have been an admission that the town was economically stagnant. This was especially true for Crofton which was at the end of a railroad line, wanted to be considered a good business community, and was in the midst of a moderate construction boom. Given these circumstances, it is evident that the Argo Hotel is significant on a local level under Criterion A.

Additionally, the building is eligible at the local level under Criterion A for its significance



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Argo Hotel

Name of Property

Knox County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 3

---

in the area of health/medicine. Beginning in 1940 it served the community as the only health clinic in the area. But it was not the type of health clinic that one might picture today. Rather it used "healing baths" (still in the basement today) to "cure" any number of ailments. Still, in this capacity, the building housed a valuable service to Crofton and the surrounding area.

The Argo Hotel is also significant under Criterion C on a local level. The Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey indicates that there are only two other second generation longitudinal style hotels in the Northeast Nebraska Region. One is in Thursten County (TS06-185), and the other in Dixon County (DX08-004). The present condition of these two properties is not currently known. The reconnaissance-level survey did not include interior documentation of either regional hotel to further determine degree of integrity. Based on this information it is eligible for listing under Criterion C at the local level as a relatively rare resource in the Northeast Nebraska Region, that is, a second generation longitudinal hotel.

It is also architecturally significant as a good example of a commercial prairie style building. This style was popular in the early 1900s. The style is characterized by the lack of elaborate ornamentation, flat roofs, and horizontal lines; all of which are present on the Argo Hotel. Additionally, the Argo retains a high degree of integrity, both on the interior and the exterior. The high degree of integrity can be attributed to both the rehabilitation effort and the fact that its non-traditional health clinic use did not bring about the need for extensive alterations.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Argo Hotel  
Name of Property

Knox County, Nebraska  
County and State

Section 9,10,11 Page 1

---

### Bibliography

Ahlgren, Carol. "Longitudinal Hotel Blocks." Property Type Analysis 12.3.1:2.2. Lincoln, NE: Nebraska State Historical Society, Draft, 1989

Miller, Greg. "Retail Commerce: Villages in Northeast Nebraska Region." Historic Context Report 12.02.02.02. Lincoln, NE: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1990.

Murphy, David R. "Hotels." Property Type Analysis 12.3.1. Lincoln, NE: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1989.

Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey. "Final Report of Knox County." Lincoln, NE: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1988.

### Newspapers

The Crofton Journal March 28, 1912

The Crofton Journal September 20, 1923

The Crofton Journal August 14, 1924

The Crofton Journal September 18, 1924

The Crofton Journal February 28, 1940

### Verbal Boundary Description

Described as lots 13, 14, 15, block 12, Original Town of Crofton, Knox County, Nebraska.

### Boundary Justification

Boundary includes all historically associated real estate.