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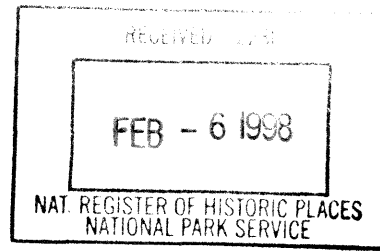
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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NAT. REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

187

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 an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" 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 _____ Lincoln Hotel

other names/site number _____ SF11-211

2. Location

street & number _____ 1421 Broadway _____ n/a ☐ not for publication

city or town _____ Scottsbluff _____ n/a ☐ vicinity

state ___ Nebraska ___ code __ NE __ county __ Scotts Bluff __ code __ 157 __ zip code __ 69361

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this _x_ 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 _X_ meets __ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant __ nationally __ statewide _x_ locally. (__ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ 1/26/98 Date

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 the 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):

Edson H. Beall 3.5.98

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

■ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

■ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

DOMESTIC: multiple dwelling

COMMERCE/TRADE: restaurant

COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: office building

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY

REVIVALS: Classical Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

walls   BRICK

roof   OTHER (composition flat roofing)

other

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

(see continuation sheet)

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 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.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1918 - 1947

Significant Dates

1918 (completion of construction)

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

A. Bandy, Architect

Childes and Price, Builders

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

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 of additional data:

■ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ other
name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property _less than one_

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 13 611060 4635015
    zone   easting   northing

2 _____
    zone   easting   northing

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property)

Lots 17 and 18, Block 12, Original Town of Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundaries of the nominated area coincide with the legal boundaries for the property.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title _____ Clayton B. Fraser, Principal

organization _____ **FRASER**design   date _____ 3 November 1997

street & number _____ P.O. Box 6025   telephone _____ 970.669.7969

city or town _____ Loveland   state _____ Colorado _____ zip code _____ 80537

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps
A **USGS map** (7½ 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 SHPO or FPO)

name/title _____ MDI Limited Partnership No. 48

street & number _____ 1600 University Avenue, Suite 212   telephone _____ 612.646.7848

city or town _____ St. Paul   state _____ Minnesota _____ zip code _____ 55104

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

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

section number 7   page 1

■ L I N C O L N   H O T E L   Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska

The Lincoln Hotel is located within the central business district of the small western Nebraska city of Scottsbluff. Situated at the south end of the district near the Burlington Northern Railroad tracks, the hotel–Scottsbluff's tallest building–forms a visual cornerstone for the downtown area. It stands at the southeast corner of Broadway and 15th Street,[1] facing west toward Broadway and the Burlington passenger depot beyond. Typical for its time and place, Scottsbluff's business district consists primarily of low-rise commercial and institutional buildings, built and modified over an extended period. All abut the sidewalks, use similar materials and have similar proportions and scale. Integrity of these buildings ranges widely, with the most serious alterations generally occurring on the street-level storefronts.

Immediately south of the Lincoln is the new office building of the *Scottsbluff Star-Herald*. This replaced a series of single-story brick commercial blocks that historically housed a steam laundry, automobile dealership, printing plant and other small businesses. Situated across Broadway to the west and 15th Street to the north are other rows of one- and two-story commercial buildings that historically housed several small businesses. These once included the Emery Hotel on Broadway, the Lincoln's predecessor, which ceased operations soon after the Lincoln opened in 1918. Immediately behind the hotel is a parking lot for the newspaper offices.
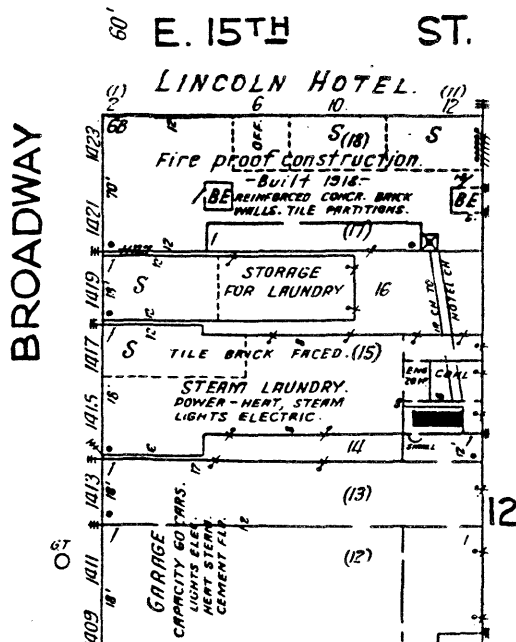
The Lincoln Hotel is massed as a great six-story block, oriented with facades facing west and north (see *Figure 1*). Measuring 50 feet wide by 140 feet deep, the building's raised main level with full basement presents a rectangle broken only by minor entrance recesses. From the second floor up, a light court is recessed over approximately half of the building's south (rear) wall. The roof is flat and bordered on three sides by decorative terra cotta and brick parapets.

Figure 1. Lincoln Hotel site plan, from 1924 Sanborn Map.

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[1]When Scottsbluff was originally platted in 1900, Broadway was named Main Street; 15th Street was originally named Shoshoni and later 3rd Street. The streets' names were changed while the Lincoln was under construction in 1918.

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■ LINCOLN HOTEL   Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska

Designed by architect A. Bandy for the Nebraska Hotel Company, the Lincoln Hotel was con-
structed 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 ex-
pressed 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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■ LINCOLN HOTEL   Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska

entablature. This has all been obscured by the present architectural treatment, which consists of epoxy stone panels and fixed-sash windows set in brushed aluminum frames. The unaltered major section of the walls—the body—is made up of wire-scored red brick laid in running bond. The brick walls feature a series of decorative rectangular panels, flush laid with terra cotta or stone corner blocks. The building's cap is formed by another neoclassical entablature, featuring a plain brick frieze and terra cotta molded architrave and cornice with block modillions. Above this is a short parapet, with corbeled brick walls and terra cotta copings. One story below the entablature is a terra cotta stringcourse, punctuated by terra cotta shields. The south and east walls are more much more plainly detailed, with flush panels of common brick infilling between the concrete columns and spandrels. Spilt-face concrete blocks have recently been added to the lower portion of the south party wall to cover the ghost of a previously attached building.

The fenestration on the guest floors is evenly spaced—four bays on the west and twelve bays on the north. Windows on the third, fourth and fifth floors feature simply configured 1/1 double-hung sash, with wood frames, loose lintels and stone lug sills. Windows on the second and sixth floors are additionally topped with fixed-sash transoms. Two bays of 1/1 double-hung windows are offset to the left of the fire escape on the east wall of the building, and windows are irregularly spaced on the south party wall and within the recessed light court. The building originally featured fixed-sash showroom windows with multiple-pane transoms in its west lobby and north restaurant. A street-level entrance was centered on the west wall, and a slightly smaller entrance was offset on the north; both were recessed and sheltered by decorative metal canopies cantilevering from the brick walls. Virtually all of this was removed or covered over when the street-level facade was replaced in the 1960s.

Although it is difficult to imagine today, given the building's deteriorated interior condition, the Lincoln Hotel once featured elegant interior appointments. *The Star-Herald* described it extensively at the grand opening on December 31, 1918:

> The first floor consists of a lobby, five office rooms for business purposes, cafe and kitchens. The lobby is finished in mahogany and marble, with Terrazza [sic] floor; the cafe is finished in silver gray oak, with furniture to match, and the kitchen is furnished with every modern convenience for the proper preparation of viands upon a large scale. The second floor or Mezinine [sic] floor, is a delight to the eye and provides most comfortable and luxurious lounging quarters. It is finished in white ivory and gold, and the furnishings are in a style and tone blending with the dignified elegance of this particular portion of the establishment.

> The sixth floor usually attracts the next attention of the visitor, embracing as it does the large and sumptuously appointed auditorium, which the hotel management has designated as the "Scottsbluff Room." The name is indicative of the use for which the room was constructed—a meeting place for social and business functions of the people of Scottsbluff. It is also fitted in white ivory and gold, and opening from the room is a service kitchen commodious enough to care for large banquets which has been thoroughly proven twice this week. Returning to what might be termed the more "practical" portion, the hotel contains 76 guest rooms, with a total of 102 beds, twin and double. Each bedroom is finished in mahogany and possesses a toilet, private bath, with hot and cold running water and, of course, a telephone.

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■ L I N C O L N   H O T E L   Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska

> The entire hostelry is equipped with the Spencer system of heating, with "fool proof" radiators, which yet are capable of absolute control as to the matter of the quantity of heat desired. Axminster rugs furnish all the rooms and corridors, lending their elegance to form the luxurious effect so noticeable in a tour of the building. The indirect lighting system is used throughout, the fittings being the most artistic and in complete harmony. Otis elevators, the passenger elevator opening off the lobby and the large freight elevator in the rear of the building, furnish speedy transit to the floors.
>
> And, with it all, the structure is fireproof in every particular. As is rather forcefully expressed by the management, a bonfire may be built in any room, in any hallway, in any part of the building, and it will merely burn itself out. Concrete and steel are not conductive to spectacular conflagrations.[2]

The interior spatial organization of the Lincoln House today remains largely unchanged. The sixth-floor Scottsbluff Room and its appurtenant kitchen facilities and coat rooms are completely intact. Most of the guest rooms on the second through sixth floors—aligned along full-length hallways and elevator lobbies—remain in place, although the bathrooms have been reconfigured in some and partitions have been added in others. The elevator lobbies and stairways on the guest floors are also essentially unchanged. The only serious alteration of the interior spaces occurred in the mid-1960s, when the open area in the mezzanine was infilled, closing in the first-floor lobby.

Many of the interior finishes remain intact as well, although years of deferred maintenance and the building's service in the 1960s and 1970s as a college dormitory have taken their toll. The decorative plasterwork and maple strip flooring in the Scottsbluff Room remain intact. The decorative plaster columns and brackets on the mezzanine also remain intact. The original finishes of the lobby have been covered with modern wood paneling, however. Much of the interior wood and stone trim remains in place, as does the terrazzo floor in the first floor public spaces. The original elevators are still in place, as is the interior stairway along the south wall. The most serious alterations in the upper floors involve the installation of suspended acoustical ceilings in some of the halls and rooms, the addition of furred, wood-paneled walls in many of the north- and west-facing guest rooms, and the replacement of the original floor coverings with carpet. The greatest change to the public spaces occurred in the cafe, which has more recently been renovated with 1960s coffee shop decor.

Despite the alterations to the first-floor exterior and the interior finishes, the Lincoln Hotel maintains a high degree of integrity of design, workmanship, location, setting, materials, feeling and association. The building is an important landmark for the city, a visual anchor for the central business district. It is one of the most refined examples of early 20th century Classical Revival commercial architecture in the region.

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[2]"Elegant New Hostelry Welcomes the Public," *Scottsbluff Star-Herald*, 3 January 1919.

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■ LINCOLN HOTEL   Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska

Built in 1917-1918, the Lincoln Hotel in Scottsbluff is a locally prominent landmark that derives its significance from two principal areas: commerce and architecture. The historical importance of the building under Criterion A lies in its association with the hotel industry and, more specifically, with the Nebraska Hotel Company. Relatively modern hotels were just beginning to enter into the secondary markets of Nebraska's small towns during the 1910s. As a source of civic pride and an emblem of material and cultural accomplishment, these hotels were pursued and often subsidized by towns eager for their construction. Scottsbluff was no different than many other Nebraska towns when approached with the opportunity for a "first-class hotel": the townspeople courted, and even donated money to, entrepreneurs to entice the building's construction.

In this case, the entrepreneurs were F.E. Schaaf and R.W. Johnston, directors of the Nebraska Hotel Company of Lincoln. Schaaf and Johnston had formulated an ambitious scheme to acquire or construct a series of modern, fireproof hotels across the Midwest. Employing innovative marketing and management strategies, theirs was one of the first successful Midwestern hotel chains. During the 1910s, the Nebraska Hotel Company managed to assemble seven hotels in Nebraska, ranging from the massive Fontenelle in Omaha to the diminutive Lincoln in Table Rock. The Lincoln in Scottsbluff was the last hotel built by the company, which failed in 1921. The meteoric rise and rapid decline of the Nebraska Hotel Company are emblematic of the transitory nature of free enterprise. Like the Evans Hotel in Columbus and the Lincoln Hotel in Table Rock, both listed as contributing structures in National Register historic districts, and the individually listed Lincoln Hotel in Franklin, the Lincoln Hotel in Scottsbluff is significant as part of the material culture of small-town commerce and of this noteworthy Nebraska company.

The Lincoln Hotel is also significant under Criterion C for its embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a period and style of construction. A locally prominent example of "modern" hotel architecture from the 1910s, it exemplifies the Classical Revival architectural treatment of the buildings designed and constructed by the Nebraska Hotel Company. The Lincoln's concrete structural frame earmarks it as a relatively early example of fireproof construction in western Nebraska. Its rear light court places it within a distinct architectural type identified in the state. For decades Scottsbluff's premier hotel, the Lincoln is an important part of the city's history. As such it deserves to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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███ L I N C O L N   H O T E L   Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska

The small guest inn dates from antiquity, but it was not until the 16th and 17th centuries that large-scale inns–i.e. hotels–were first recorded in Germany and England. Among these first hotels were the White Hart at Scole [1655] in Norfolk, England, a 2½-story building with a facade lined by Dutch gables; the Haycock [ca. 1670] at Wansford; and the George Inn [ca. 1676] in London, a 3½-story building with a full-width colonnades on the middle two floors. These earliest hotels differed in configuration and architecture, but most featured–in addition to the guest chambers–a pub or dining room, sitting room, stables, and sometimes an assembly room, ballroom and/or chapel. It was often these latter public spaces that differentiated hotels from inns. As more inns featured aggrandized accommodations in the 1770s and 1780s, the term hotel came into common usage. *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1797, for instance, stated: "Dessin's hotel [in Calais] is thought to be the most extensive in Europe. It is indeed itself a town: it contains squares alleys, gardens... and innumerable offices."[3]

That year venerable architect Benjamin Latrobe began designing what was to be America's first major hotel in Richmond, Virginia. Latrobe's grandiose scheme featured a series of assembly rooms, guest chambers, dining room, sitting room and bar organized around a central dome-roofed theatre. The Richmond hotel was never built, but other, equally imposing buildings soon followed. The Exchange Coffee House, built in Boston in 1806-1809, featured 200 guest rooms arranged in a galleria around a seven-story-high merchants' exchange. Other early American hotels included the Mansion House [1807] in Philadelphia, the Tammany Hotel [1810] in New York, Barnum's City Hotel [1826] in Baltimore, the National [1828] in Washington, and the Tremont [1830] in Boston.

The stakes were continually rising throughout the early 19th century, as each grand hotel sought to outdo its predecessors in size and grandeur. Brown's Indian Queen [1828] advertised itself as "if not the largest in the United States,... nearly so," and was considered the country's best until completion of the "epoch-making" Tremont two years later. The Tremont was itself overshadowed by New York's Astor House, completed by John Jacob Astor in 1836. Situated across from Central Park, the Astor House was called "perhaps the greatest establishment of its kind in the world." With their extensive facilities and elegant appointments, the Tremont and the Astor House set the worldwide standard for hotel accommodations. They would eventually be challenged as America's biggest and best by the St. Nicholas [1854] and the Fifth Avenue [1859] in New York and the Continental in Philadelphia. They were all ultimately superseded by New York's Waldorf-Astoria [1893], the first hotel to offer 1,000 guest rooms.[4]

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[3]As quoted in Nikolaus Pevsner, *A History of Building Types*, The A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts 35:19 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 172.

[4]Pevsner, 176-177.

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███ L I N C O L N   H O T E L   Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska

The trend toward bigger and more fulsome hotels in metropolitan areas continued through mid-century, spreading from the northeast to upstart midwestern cities such as Chicago and St. Louis. The Lake House [1836] and Sherman House [1837] in Chicago were called "the most pretentious hotels in the western country."[5] The St. Louis Hotel [1838] also featured many of the appointments of its eastern brethren. In 1863 Thomas Walsh, architect of the Lindell Hotel, also in St. Louis, summarized American hotel development since the Astor House:

> For the last twenty years the Astor House of New York, a plain but substantial building of grey granite, costing 360,000 dollars, has been the hotel, when size alone was taken into account. The 'St. Charles', at New Orleans; the 'Virginia' and 'Planters' of St. Louis; and the 'Burnett' at Cincinnati–the latter containing some 260 rooms, and being in some respects the queen of hotels–have for fifteen or more years been among the larger hotels of the union. For the last ten years these have been excelled in the north-west by the Tremont of Chicago, which in its turn is being eclipsed by the new Sherman of the same city; which is 181 feet in front by 120 feet deep, and has six stories in front and seven in the rear, over the side walk; its cost being over 400,000 dollars. There have been many excellent houses of larger capacity, and fine specimens of architectural taste, but of less pretensions, as the Newhall at Milwaukee, the Gayosa at Memphis, the Richmond at Chicago, Barnum's in Baltimore and in St. Louis & c. The large Metropolitan of New York overtopped the Astor; and the St Nicholas and Fifth Avenue, of later date, surpassed this in dimensions and modern improvements. These again were all cast in the shade by the magnificent Continental of Philadelphia, which, until the Lindell of St Louis was erected, was certainly not excelled in America. The Continental is six stories in height, exclusive of basement, and presents a front of 235 feet by a depth of 194 feet. Its grand dining-room is 80 feet by 47 feet; its tea-room 65 feet by 36 feet. Its capacity is for 800 to 900 guests.

> But extensive as is the Continental, the Lindell largely excels it, being seven stories high exclusive of the basement. Its height from side walk to top of eave cornice is 112 feet: its south front is 272 feet; its depth, 227 feet. The east and south fronts are faced with cream coloured magnesian limestone, elaborately finished. The north and west fronts are faced with the finest stock brick, with cut stone ornamental window trimmings... This hotel can accommodate with ease 1,200 persons.[6]

Walsh termed the style of his new hotel "Italian, of the Venetian School," illustrating both the revivalistic nature of hotel architecture in the 19th century and the imprecise use of architectural terminology among its practitioners. The earliest large hotels, such as Boston's Exchange Coffee House and Tremont House and New York's Astor House, featured relatively plain-faced facades with colonial or Greek forms and details. As hotel design progressed later in the century, exteriors became more flamboyant in their architectural expression. Their facades fea-

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[5]John Willy, "Hotels of the Past Century," *Mid-West Hotel Reporter* 12:35 (9 February 1918), 3.

[6]Thomas Walsh, "The New Lindell Hotel," *The Builder* 21 (1863), 92-93.

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LINCOLN HOTEL   Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska

tured more applied ornamentation and more planar relief; fenestration played a more important role; and architects relied more heavily on such period revivals as Italianate, Romanesque and Renaissance Revival.

The Lindell was what would today be termed Italianate, as were the St. Nicholas and the Fifth Avenue. In truth, they were essentially big masonry boxes. To allow for ventilation and summer cooling in the guest rooms, and to provide some architectural relief, the urban hotels of the period relied on recessed light courts—typically on the rear walls—to provide operable windows to the outside. As hotels grew progressively larger, architects found it increasingly difficult (and expensive) to apply classic architectural treatment to them. *Putnam's Monthly* stated in 1853 that most hotels tended "to look more like a penitentiary or a fortress... than a hotel." Stylistic idioms such as Italian and French revivals became intermingled indiscriminately, often blurring the distinctions between architectural styles and antecedents. The rambling resort hotels of the late 19th century (exemplified by such extravagant Victorian piles as the United States Hotel [1875] in Saratoga, the Ponce de Leon Hotel [1888] in St. Augustine, and the Hotel del Coronado [1888] near San Diego) could rely on more exotic styles. Their more constricted city cousins, on the other hand, took on the appearance of "the ordinary barracks order."[7]

Structural technology evolved during the 19th century as well. The earliest large hotels featured masonry bearing walls and wood-framed interior walls and floor/roof systems. They were prey to fire, however, and many of the early wooden hotels were destroyed in spectacular blazes. During the 1850s, cast iron gained widespread acceptance for facades and interior support of the larger urban buildings in America. Over the next half-century, the standard, so-called fireproof, construction for large-scale hotels entailed masonry bearing walls and iron internal framework. Perhaps the first fireproof hotel built in the country was the Palmer House [1872] in Chicago. The first hotel built in New York with a complete steel skeleton was the New Netherland, completed in 1893.

Mechanical systems also changed incrementally over this period. Hotel elevators, for instance, evolved from the first small luggage lifts at Holt's Hotel [1833] in New York, to the early passenger elevators in the Fifth Avenue Hotel [1859], to the banks of luxuriously appointed elevators in grand hotels of the late 19th century. Then as now, private bathrooms were more commonly found in American hotels than in their European counterparts. Other functional firsts for American hotels included: first central heating – the Eastern Exchange Hotel [1846] in Boston; first use of spring mattresses – the St. Nicholas [1854] in New York; and first use of electric light – probably the Gilsey in New York or the Palmer House in Chicago, both installed in 1882, a year after Edison invented the light bulb.

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[7]James Ferguson, *History of the Modern Styles of Architecture*, 1891, as quoted in Pevsner, 179.

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■ LINCOLN HOTEL   Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska

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.
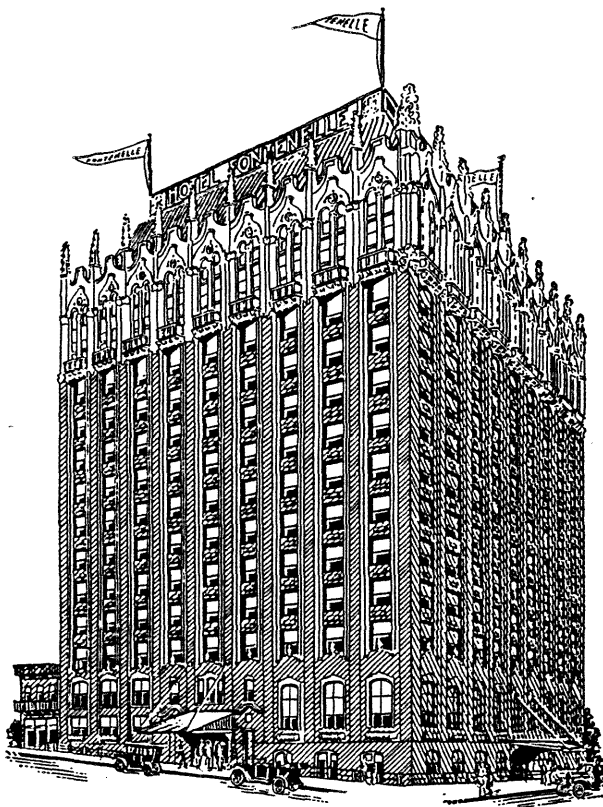

Figure 3. Fontenelle Hotel, Omaha, from **Mid-West Hotel Reporter**, 1921.

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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opportunity to integrate frame, floor, wall and roof into a structural system that was stable, fireproof and economical to erect. Additionally, concrete dampened structure-borne sound much more effectively than previous structural systems. Reinforced concrete technology developed rapidly in the first two decades of the 20th century, finding sweeping acceptance among American hotel architects as an alternative to wood or steel framed buildings. As the use of concrete-frame construction spread, hotel managers began advertising their soundproof, fireproof buildings.

In keeping with broader societal trends, attitudes regarding hotel functionality and hygiene were changing also, as reflected by architectural journalist Joseph Lux in 1909:

> The hotel must satisfy three demands. It must function, machine-like, like a perfectly constructed apparatus; it must be up to the standard of the wagon-lits, and it must, as regards hygiene and cleanliness, fulfil clinical demands... What is needed is a synthesis of hospital, wagon-lits and machinery. It maybe that in fifty years we will reach such excellent hotels.[8]

The Statler [1911] in Buffalo exemplified Lux's philosophy for modern hotel design. Designed by G.B. Post and Sons, the hotel introduced such services as circulating ice water, fire doors, full-length mirrors and private bathrooms to its clientele. Characterized by historian Jefferson Williamson in *The American Hotel* [1930] as "the first in transient hotels," the Buffalo Statler was "universally recognized as the pattern for all future bedroom and bathroom sets."[9] The Statler was additionally noteworthy as part of another developing phenomenon: the chain hotel, with several facilities owned and operated by a central conglomerate or business consortium.

The hotel industry evolved steadily through the 1910s, with the consolidation of hotel chains, the development of concrete-frame construction and the proliferation of smaller-scale facilities in secondary markets as primary trends. By the mid-1910s, widespread hotel building was underway in small towns throughout the country. In this, the hotel companies often received financial assistance from local business groups, who would subsidize hotel construction to lure modern facilities into town. "Investor groups acted not only out of self-interest but also to bolster civic pride," states *The Motel in America*, "for no town or city could prosper without a modern hotel to accommodate visitors, especially automobile travelers. The full range of hotel facilities such as dining rooms and coffee shops were important adjuncts to private business dealing and public entertainment. Hotels were intended to stand as landmarks symbolic of

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[8]Quoted in Pevsner, 192.

[9]Jefferson Williamson, *The American Hotel: An Anecdotal History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930), 153.

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economic and social vigor. The amenities they provided signified decorum and civility."[10]
Hotels in the Midwest had thus become in the 1910s what railroad stations had been in earlier
decades: emblems of material and cultural accomplishment.

It was in this milieu that the Lincoln Hotel in Scottsbluff was conceived.
Planning for the hotel began on February 7, 1917, when R.W. Johnston and F.E. Schaaf of the
Nebraska Hotel Company approached the Scottsbluff Commercial Club with a proposition. They
would build a "first-class hotel" in town if the Commercial Club would donate $15,000 toward
its construction. The best that Scottsbluff could then offer in hotel accommodations was the
Emery, a two-story brick/frame structure on Broadway (ne Main Avenue) near the Burlington
Railroad depot. Johnston's offer to erect a "modern eighty-room fireproof hotel" in Scottsbluff
was enticing, because it would provide more spacious visitor accommodations, it would enhance
the city's image and, most importantly, it would allow Scottsbluff to keep pace with rival neigh-
bor Gering, which had just completed its own hotel, The Gering.[11]

Johnston and Schaaf said what the Club wanted to hear. "In speaking of the proposed build-
ing," the Scottsbluff Star-Herald reported, "Mr. Johnstown [sic] and his associate stated that
they figured that Scottsbluff was one of the best points in the state for a modern hotel, and they
felt very loath to leave the city without starting the work of getting the building under way...
[Johnston] stated that the building they would erect would be a modern structure in every way,
absolutely fireproof and fitted out in the most up-to-date style. It would be of brick and contain
not less than eighty rooms, together with a large lobby, dining rooms and other necessary
perquisites to a high class hostelry."[12] In response, the Commercial Club almost unanimously
agreed to subsidize the proposed hotel by donating a $10,000 parcel of downtown property.
The group would also invest $5,000 in Nebraska Hotel Company stocks.[13]

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[10]John A. Jakle, Keith A. Sculle, and Jefferson S. Rogers, The Motel in America (Baltimore: Johns
Hopkins University Press, 1996), 25.

[11]"Hotel Proposition in Definite Form," Scottsbluff Star-Herald, 15 February 1917; "Gering Selects
Name for Hotel," Scottsbluff Star-Herald, 1 March 1917.

[12]"Hotel Proposition in Definite Form."

[13]The contract executed between the Nebraska Hotel Company and the Scottsbluff Commercial Club
stipulated that work on the building would begin before May 1, 1917, and be completed by May 1, 1918.
"Contract for Hotel Signed," Scottsbluff Star-Herald, 8 March 1917.

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Scottsbluff was not the only town targeted by the Nebraska Hotel Company. Johnston and Schaaf had or soon would make similar pitches to other groups in the state, as the two men embarked on an ambitious plan to assemble a chain of modern, fireproof hotels across Nebraska and the Midwest. The company's roots extended only to 1916. That February Schaaf incorporated the Nebraska Building and Investment Company in Lincoln "to purchase, take on lease or in exchange, or otherwise acquire any lands or buildings."[14] Schaaf and other directors H.L. Lohmeyer and J.R. Kruse did not mention hotels specifically in their plans. Hotel development would fall under the auspices of a sister corporation, the Nebraska Hotel Company, established by Schaaf and E.O. Gregg in May 1917.[15] "The corporation is organized to build, maintain and operate hotels throughout the United States," they claimed in their articles of incorporation. "To that end it shall have power and authority to acquire and own, hold and dispose of real property as may be necessary for corporate use. It may improve said real estate by the construction thereon of hotel buildings and other such buildings and appurtenances as may be deemed necessary in and to the business of the corporation."[16] The two Schaaf-controlled corporations would work in concert to build and maintain hotels and other commercial structures.

With an initial capitalization of $500,000, Schaaf and Gregg began empire-building by purchasing the Lincoln Hotel in Lincoln, a massive seven-story, Romanesque Revival edifice built in the 19th century. Later that year the company acquired the Evans Hotel [1913] in Columbus and the Okeima Apartments in Lincoln. Schaaf soon convinced R.W. Johnston, manager of the Lindell Hotel in Lincoln, to help him manage the fledgling hotel chain. Both earnest young men in their 30s with patrician features and accountant's glasses, Schaaf and Johnston soon embarked on a tour of small Nebraska towns. To commercial groups in each town they proposed to build modern hotels in exchange for local subscriptions of money. It is not known how many towns the two approached in this manner, but they soon had willing takers in Scottsbluff, Franklin and Table Rock.

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[14]Articles of incorporation for the Nebraska Building and Investment Company, filed with the Nebraska Secretary of State, 16 February 1916.

[15]Interestingly, the Nebraska Hotel Company did not even formally exist when Schaaf and Johnston first approached the Scottsbluff Commercial Club. In March the Club committed itself, probably unknowingly, to investing $5,000 in a corporation that had not yet been registered with the Secretary of State.

[16]Articles of incorporation of the Nebraska Hotel Company, filed with the Nebraska Secretary of State, 14 May 1917.

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The smallest of the proposed new facilities, the hotel in Table Rock was the first completed in February 1918. It was named the Lincoln, as were the buildings in Franklin and Scottsbluff to provide a degree of uniformity and name recognition for the company. Just as the Lincoln in Franklin was preparing to open in April 1918, the company announced that it had purchased the 1733 Ranch outside of Kearney (so called because it was situated at a point on the Lincoln Highway 1,733 miles from Boston and 1,733 miles from San Francisco). In a remarkable attempt at vertical corporate integration, Schaaf intended to use the ranch to grow wheat, fruits and vegetables, with a canning plant on-site, for use in his hotels. Additionally, the ranch would produce poultry, eggs and beef, and its large alfalfa crop would be used to support a herd of dairy cows. Schaaf planned to operate a packing plant and cold storage facility for the meat. He would build a creamery to process milk, cream and butter. Prompted in part by war-caused food shortages and high prices, he proposed to be "independent of packing companies, canning companies, commission houses and supply concerns as far as possible." *The Mid-West Hotel Reporter* remarked on Schaaf's bold strategy, saying:

> This new venture is probably the biggest project undertaken by any hotel company or individual in the way of supplying their own tables. A great many hotel men own ranches and farms to produce butter, milk, eggs and poultry and probably some pork for their own houses. The Nebraska Hotel Company proposes going even further and will practically take care of their storerooms on "Ranch 1733." It is not only a big thing for their hotels, but it is an evidence of the faith of the promoters in Nebraska farm lands and what the soil will do in the matter of products.[17]

Two months later Schaaf announced the company's next extraordinary acquisition: the Fontenelle Hotel in Omaha (*see Figure 3*). Built in 1914-1915, it ranked among the Midwest's largest and most opulent hotels. "The Nebraska Hotel company has achieved considerable prominence in the west in its operations during the past year," the *Mid-West Hotel Reporter* stated in June 1918. The article described the company roles Schaaf and Johnston played:

> The head of the company, F.E. Schaaf, is president of the Nebraska Building and Investment company and a very capable financier, as has been demonstrated by the healthy growth of the Nebraska Building & Investment Company, with assets of approximately a million dollars, acquired since organization in 1916. Also the remarkable growth of the Nebraska Hotel company, organized sixteen months ago, and now controlling property aggregating a value of a million and a half.

> The active hotel management is in the hands of R.W. Johnston, who has had wide experience in hotels in various parts of the country. Ten years ago he was manager of the Ellis hotel at Waterloo, Ia., and later proprietor of the Wahkonsa at Fort Dodge, Ia., from which point he removed to Lincoln.[18]

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[17]"Buys Big Nebraska Ranch: Nebraska Hotel Company Will Grow Meat and Produce for Chain of Hotels," *Mid-West Hotel Reporter* 12:44 (13 April 1918): 8-10.

[18]"Buys Hotel Fontenelle: The Nebraska Hotel Company Succeeds to Ownership of Magnificent Omaha Hostelry," *Mid-West Hotel Reporter* 12:52 (8 June 1918): 8-9.

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The Nebraska Hotel Company was one of several midwestern firms then embarking on hotel empire-building. The North American Hotel Company, incorporated in Iowa and operating out of offices in Omaha, was planning a chain of its own and had also targeted Scottsbluff for a hotel. No sooner had Johnston and Schaaf made their offer to the Commercial Club in February 1917 in behalf of the Nebraska Hotel Company, than the North American Hotel Company announced its own plans for a new 80-room, fireproof hotel. "The architect has not yet been selected, but sketches are being made," reported the *Omaha Bee*. "The work is to begin just as soon as the plans can be drawn and the contract awarded."[19] The proposed hotel would be managed by J.A. McDonald, proprietor of the Emery. Despite McDonald's earlier promises otherwise, the Omaha faction asked for the same subsidy that the Commercial Club had given Schaaf. The club pointedly ignored the request, however, apparently reasoning that one subsidized hotel in Scottsbluff was enough.

Despite this setback, North American continued its plans to build a hotel that was virtually identical in size to Schaaf's proposed building. The race between the two factions was soon on, to the approval of local businessmen. "Two hotels won't be too many for this fast growing city of ours," the *Star-Herald* exulted in April.[20] While accusing McDonald of trying to block his progress, Schaaf purchased two lots on the southeast corner of Main and Third (now Broadway and 15th).[21] He hired architect A. Bandy to draft the building's design. Construction of both buildings began simultaneously in April 1917. Just as the United States entered World War I, contractors Childes and Price cleared the existing single-story frame house from the corner lot and began excavating for the basement on the Nebraska Hotel Company building. As yet unnamed, the Lincoln was known locally as the south hotel; the other building, located three blocks north on Main, was called the north hotel.

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[19]Quoted in "Omaha People to Build Hotel," *Scottsbluff-Star-Herald*, 8 March 1917.

[20]*Scottsbluff Star-Herald*, 5 April 1917.

[21]Constituting Lots 17 and 18 of Block 12 of the Original Town of Scottsbluff, the property had been platted with the rest of the town in February 1900. O.B. Brown first purchased Lot 18 in 1905 for $350.00. Samuel B. Harter, who in 1878 had founded the Herzinger and Harter Mercantile store in Loveland, Colorado, first purchased Lot 17 in 1907 for $325.00. The two parcels changed hands separately in subsequent years, before being acquired by William McCain in 1917, preparatory for the sale to the Nebraska Hotel Company. McCain sold the two lots to the hotel company on March 31, 1917, for $10,000.00, which had been contributed by the Scottsbluff Commercial Club. The hotel company almost immediately mortgaged the property to the Nebraska Building and Investment Company, Schaaf other holding, for $45,000.00. Scottsbluff Abstract Company, "Abstract of Title: Lots 17 and 18, Block 12 of Original Town of Scottsbluff," located at Smith Systems, Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

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After the excavation was completed at both sites in May, construction stalled as the contractors struggled to obtain materials amidst the war-caused shortages. "For the past two months the excavation has lain idle and both the people of the city and some of the city officials were becoming rather impatient as to the lack of action," the *Star-Herald* reported in mid-July, "their only objection being the partial obstruction of the streets with piles of sand and the storage building without any tangible effort to continue construction."[22] Johnston blamed the inactivity on steel shortages and promised to resume work that summer. A month later work finally did continue on the "the much cussed and discussed hotel." "Commencing, rather slowly, more and more men have been put to work on the new hotel construction at Third and Main streets until yesterday witnessed quite a large crew on the job," the *Star-Herald* stated on August 17. "As many as the circumstances will permit have been engaged, the preliminary work being hampered through the large quantity of water which had collected in the excavation and in which the men and horses have been forced to flounder."[23]

Work on the north building–by now named the Bluffs Hotel–continued apace, with framing rising from the first-floor level in August. By December the building was taking form, and the North American Hotel Company announced that it would be complete by early the next summer. Like the Nebraska Hotel Company, North American was pushing its own ambitious expansion plans, acquiring or building hotels throughout the Midwest. Late in 1917 the firm purchased the Blackstone Hotel in Omaha. Additionally, it had under plan or under construction major hotel buildings in Kearney, Grand Island, Ogallala and Norfolk in Nebraska, and in Hampton, Iowa, and Ottawa, Eldorado and Topeka, Kansas, as well as the Scottsbluff building. Most of these were to open in 1918, according to company president John Letton.

By March 1918 the contractors had completed the concrete skeleton of the Lincoln Hotel. Plumbers and electricians were busy stringing lines throughout the structure, teamsters were delivering stone for the foundation facing and window sills, and masons were laying brickwork on the third-floor level. Three months later the building was closed in. Work was underway on the extensive interior plaster walls and wood trim. In August vandals wedged wooden blocks into the outlet pipes for a large water tank on the roof, causing minor interior damage but not delaying the project appreciably. With construction on the Lincoln rapidly concluding in October, Phillip Philbin moved to the city from Omaha to manage the new facility. Six weeks later, with the Lincoln essentially complete, the Commercial Club began planning a New Year's Eve extravaganza to celebrate the hotel's opening and the lifting of the influenza quarantine.

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[22]"Work on New Hotel to be Resumed," *Scottsbluff Star-Herald*, 13 July 1917.

[23]"Improvement Work is in Full Swing," *Scottsbluff Star-Herald*, 17 August 1917.

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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]

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:

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

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 and 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]

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

[27]Later 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.

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The settlement was characterized as "one of the largest hotel deals ever transacted in this section of the west." As the industry voice in Nebraska, the Omaha-based *Mid-West Hotel Reporter* rationalized the deal by saying:

> It is only a few years since Nebraska left the frontier condition, the sod house, the cattle on the endless prairies. This week a big hotel operator invests a million dollars in Nebraska hotels. Why? Apparently Gene Eppley in his aspiring youth, his ambition, realizes that this great Missouri Valley is the world's granary. It is yet in its infancy, so far as production and wealth are concerned. The wealth that is here, the vast resources yet developed, are an incentive to men of ambition. A few years ago such an investment would have been looked upon as extraordinary. It is a big thing, but the public is beginning to accept such investments as a natural sequence. This investment is a big thing for Nebraska hotel operators. Business men will join in welcoming Gene Eppley to their midst. There is always room in this part of the agricultural empire for men of ability and ambition.[29]

The Lincoln in Scottsbluff represented a minor star in Eppley's constellation of hotels, and he did not manage it himself. Instead he leased it to a series of local proprietors, beginning soon after the sale with Edward and William Hughes. In 1928 the Hughes Brothers assigned their lease for the Lincoln to A.F. Heyde, who operated the hotel until after World War II. Eppley retained ownership of the Nebraska Hotel Company buildings until he eventually sold them to the Sheraton-Midcontinent group in 1956. The multiple-property transaction was recorded officially at a nominal rate ($10.00 for the Scottsbluff Lincoln, for instance), but Sheraton mortgaged the hotels back to Eppley for $20.1 million. The giant hotel chain held the buildings for only a few months before selling them in turn to Leo A. Fields, then manager of the Governor Clinton Hotel in New York.

Fields immediately split the group up in October 1956. The Scottsbluff Lincoln, the Lincoln Lincoln, the Capitol, the Madison Hotel in Madison, and the Hotel Evans in Columbus all fell under the corporate umbrella of the Fields Nebraska Corporation. Five years later, the Fields Nebraska Corporation became the second owner of the Scottsbluff Lincoln to declare bankruptcy. In an appraisal report for the properties filed in October 1961, the Scottsbluff Lincoln was valued at only $70,000, some $10,000 less than the smaller Evans. "The business of this hotel is off very sharply from former years," appraiser John Hunter wrote of the Lincoln. "Motel competition has been especially severe."[30]

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[29]"The Growth of Empire," *Mid-West Hotel Reporter* 14:44 (8 April 1921): 10.

[30]John C. Hunter, "Appraiser's Report: In the District Court of United States for the District of Nebraska in the Matter of Bankruptcy of Fields Nebraska Corporation," 6 October 1961.

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Indeed, business had been off at the Lincoln for years. No longer Scottsbluff's premier hostelry, it had been displaced by motels along outlying U.S. Highway 26 and allowed to deteriorate by a series of short-term proprietors. This deferred maintenance, combined with the lack of modern amenities such as air conditioning and fundamental changes in transportation from railroads to private automobiles, further diminished the Lincoln's appeal to travelers. This sent it into an irreversible financial spiral. Hunter summed up the plight of the Lincoln as well as inner-city hotels elsewhere in America:

> Hotel properties of this type have been beleaguered in recent years by very stiff competition provided by the so-called motels or motor hotels. Consequently, most older hotels have had to face rising costs of doing business and making the necessary renovations to meet competition, while occupancy rates have been falling. As a result, property values in most instances have declined sharply.[31]

The Lincoln ceased operating as a hotel about three years after the Fields bankruptcy. In 1965 the building was purchased by Hiram Scott College and rehabilitated to house classrooms and a student dormitory. The original coffee shop and kitchen were used as a cafeteria, and the guest roms housed students. The college functioned until 1971 before ceasing operations. The building then stood vacant for five years. Between 1976 and 1983 the Lincoln was again used as a dormitory by the Platte Valley Bible College. Since that time it has stood laregely empty, occupied most recently by the business offices of Smith Systems. The Lincoln has been recently acquired by MetroPlains Development of St. Paul, Minnesota, which plans to adaptively reuse it to provide subsidized senior housing. Sensitively rehabilitated, the Lincoln Hotel will again offer an opportunity for preservation and interpretation of this important aspect of Nebraska history.

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[31]Ibid.

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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