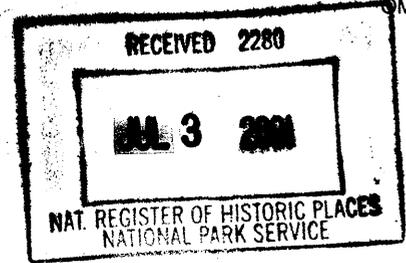


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



842

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 Heins Block

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 102-104 N. 9th St.  not for publication

city or town Olivia  vicinity

state Minnesota code MN county Renville code 129 zip code 56277

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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.)

Ian R. Stewart 6/28/01  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer  
State of Federal agency and bureau Minnesota Historical Society

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:)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Date of Action 8-8-01

Heins Block  
Name of Property

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**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**

0

**6. Function or Use**

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

COMMERCE/financial institution

COMMERCE/business

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

COMMERCE/business

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

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

Late Victorian/Commercial Queen Anne

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation limestone

walls brick

limestone

roof \_\_\_\_\_

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 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

**Period of Significance**

1896-1950

**Significant Dates**

1896

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Hedlund, A. J. (architect)

**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:

\_\_\_\_\_

Heins Block  
Name of Property

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreeage of Property** less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Olivia, Minn., 1982

1 

1	5
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3	4	2	5	7	0
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4	9	5	9	8	5	0
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Zone Easting Northing

3 

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--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

  
Zone Easting Northing

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 Margaret H. Sabongi

organization Sabongi Consulting Group, Inc. date April 9, 2001

street & number 4555 Erin Drive, Suite 120 telephone 651/452-8308

city or town Eagan state MN zip code 55122

**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 SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**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 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 Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Heins Block  
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**Description**

The Heins Block is an imposing three-story brick structure located at the northwest corner of the intersection of 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Lincoln Avenue in the heart of downtown Olivia, Minnesota. The building was constructed in 1896.

The building is located on the busiest corner in downtown Olivia. It is about 82 feet by 55 feet and dominates both 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Lincoln Avenue. There is no setback on either of the sides of the building which face busy thoroughfares. Concrete sidewalks on the south and east sides of the building, which are about four feet wide, are all that separate the building from the streets. The building shares the block with several one story commercial buildings and with the Olivia Hotel. The hotel was called the DePue House when it was built in the decade before the construction of the Heins Block.<sup>1</sup>

The Heins Block occupies two lots and part of a third lot. The site is nearly flat, but it does slope a little from east to west. There is no landscaping.

Pressed red brick covers the front and side facades. The Heins Block is the only three-story building in the center of downtown. The Heins Block has a rough gray limestone foundation and yellow limestone trim. The windows on the south and east facades have yellow limestone sills.

The flat roof cannot be seen from the street. It is surrounded on its east and south sides by a brick parapet. A brick chimney, visible in historic photographs extending up from the west side of the roof, no longer exists. A metal pediment above the cornice on the east side of the building has also been removed.

The Heins Block was designed to accommodate two businesses on the first floor: the Peoples Bank and the Heins and Byers hardware store. The bank and the hardware store were owned by the same person, Peter W. Heins, a prominent businessman in Olivia's early years. The plan is organized to house the two businesses and to accommodate offices and apartments on the upper floors. A tin shop was located on the first floor in a small room behind the bank. For many years a barbershop was located in the basement.

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*The 9th Street façade*

The principal elevation on the east side of the building has, on the street level, two faces. The entrances to the bank and the hardware store are so different, yet they are seamlessly linked by the symmetry of the two upper stories.

The entrance to the bank, flanked by polished granite columns at the top of six steps, is located on the south half of the front façade. The columns rest on heavy limestone bases. The bank entrance is very formal. It is accented by pilasters and keystone impost blocks made of smooth yellow limestone set into red brick. A keystone and curved brick arch enclose the top of the entrance. Framed by carved wreaths, the word "BANK" is carved in the limestone lintel above the keystone. On the north side of the bank entrance is a large square single panel window. The original window has been replaced by a modern, aluminum clad window.

A black wrought iron railing surrounds the exterior staircase which leads to the basement.

The north half of the front of the building is occupied by the hardware store entrance, which is set at street level. The door is set back a few feet from the sidewalk and is flanked by two large, single pane display windows.

The unembellished appearance of the hardware store entrance is strikingly different from the formal, decorous look of the bank. Brick pilasters frame the hardware store portion of the building, and the hardware store display windows, once full length, are now partially obscured by wood panel siding.

A door with sidelights is located between the bank façade and the hardware store façade. It marks the entrance to a staircase. The staircase, which is about six feet wide, leads to the offices and apartments on the second and third floors of the building. There is no access to the staircase from the interior of the bank or hardware store. The staircase bisects the building, and the exterior door marks the physical separation between the bank and the hardware store on the first floor.

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Two rows of raised bricks separate the second and third stories on the front façade. There is no change in the color or texture of the brick, so the effect of the raised bricks is to create a very thin, subtle belt course separating the two stories. The division is not so marked as a traditional belt course.

On the second and third floors of the front of the building there are four pairs of double-hung windows. The pairs in the middle of the façade are rectangular, topped by stone lintels. Each window has a yellow limestone window sill.

The outer pairs of the second floor windows are arched and are topped by a single small curve. On the third floor the outer pairs of windows are deeply arched. The brick detailing on top of these windows repeats the shape of the arches.

There is corbelled brickwork just below the dentiled cornice. A brick parapet is built on the edge of the flat roof.

***The Lincoln Avenue façade***

The south façade of the building faces Lincoln Avenue. It is more than eighty feet long and occupies almost half of a city block. The south façade is punctuated by four pilasters, constructed of the same brick as the rest of the façade. The pilasters have the effect of separating the façade into four vertical sections.

About two feet of the gray limestone foundation is visible on the south side of the building, slightly more at the west end since the ground slopes down a bit from east to west. A ribbon of yellow limestone separates the foundation from the red brick of the façade. Four square basement windows, surrounded by window wells, are only partly visible from the street.

Like the pattern established on the front façade, each of the three stories is separated from the others by a very thin belt course. The belt courses are made of the same double rows of red bricks, which are just raised a bit to mark the point at which the first story becomes the second, and the second becomes the third. Since there is no color change, the subtle details of the belt courses do not stand out in a bold way.

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A narrow door at the west end of the south façade leads to the back staircase which is located behind the tin shop. The back staircase connects the second floor of the building with Lincoln Avenue. The backstairs are not accessible to the bank and hardware store.

The single-sash windows on the south façade are symmetrical on each story. On the first floor alternating vertical rows of bricks are set at the tops of each of the windows. These segmental brick arches make the windows look even longer than they are. The most distinctive window in the building is the "Peoples Bank" window at the east end of the south façade. It is a double-paned window under a half-circle, stained glass transom. The words "Peoples Bank" are incorporated into the design, which is composed mostly of bits of white, blue and amber pieces of glass. Historic photographs show that the stained glass window was originally covered by an awning.

The windows on the Lincoln Avenue façade follow the pattern, established on the east façade, of unadorned rectangles in the middle sections and elegant, subtly curved windows on the east and west sides. On the second story, there are three windows in each of the two middle sections of the façade. Curves in the brickwork frame the windows in the middle of the second and third stories.

Matching pairs of double-hung windows are located on the ends of the building, beneath the same gentle curves which are present on the front façade. On the third story, there are two windows in each of the two middle sections of the façade. The tops of the windows on the ends of the third floor are more deeply curved than those on the second floor. They are punctuated by a double line of raised bricks which follows the deep curves.

There is a dentiled cornice below the roof line which replicates the one on the 9<sup>th</sup> Street side of the building. The brick parapet which is present on the front façade continues on the Lincoln Avenue side. The Lincoln Avenue facade is virtually unchanged from the time the building was constructed, except the original entrance to the tin shop behind the bank has been blocked.

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The north and west sides of the building are constructed of rough brick. There is no special detailing, nor any variation in the brickwork. The asymmetrical placement of windows does not follow any particular pattern. The north and west sides are now partially blocked from view by adjacent one-story buildings.

***The bank interior***

The bank interior is a refined combination of marble, wood and big windows. The pale, dark-veined marble and dark wood make the room rather wintry in feeling, but the room is illuminated by the light which streams in the windows on the east and south sides. Offices for the bank's officers are at the rear, accessible only by walking through the bank.

The bank is a large room, about 66 feet by 24 feet, with a high ceiling. It has a marble floor and marble paneling to a height of four feet on the south and west walls. Teller cages, which are located in the middle of the room, separate the public area of the bank from the areas which are not accessible to customers. (Apparently the teller in the middle cage was the most popular with bank customers. There is now a noticeable indentation in the marble floor in front of the place where the middle cage was located.) A vault, about ten feet by ten feet, is located adjacent to the teller cages in an area of the bank not open to the public. The cast iron door has a wood panel.

The north and east walls have oak wainscotting to a height of four feet. There is an oak fireplace with an unadorned, chamfered mantle and beveled glass mirror on the north wall of the bank. The fireplace is a twin to the fireplace which is located in P.W. and Maggie Heins' house in Olivia.

The back of the stained glass "Peoples Bank" window is visible inside the bank. Tall, thin windows on the south side of the room have deep wooden sills. Moulded wooden frames surrounding the windows are fluted. Each window is topped with a wood cornice. At the rear of the bank there are two offices, a storage area and a small half-bath. The smaller office, about nine feet by eleven feet, has wood paneling to a height of four feet and white painted walls above that. One window with a marble sill is located on the south wall. The larger office is about twelve feet by fifteen feet. It has the same wood paneling and painted walls as the smaller office. The two offices share a wall which has

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wood paneling to a height of four feet. Above the wood there are four glass panes which separate the offices. The glass panes allow light into the windowless, larger office while, at the same time, giving both offices some privacy.

Leaded light windows in the wood office doors have small panes of amber glass set into black metal comes.

The interior of the bank retains much of its historic integrity. A window air conditioner has been added and the teller cages have been removed. The wood floor behind the tellers has been carpeted. The original window on the east side of the bank has been removed and replaced by an aluminum clad window.

***The hardware store interior***

The hardware store on the north side of the building is one large room, about 82 feet by 24 feet. It has pressed tin, coved ceiling with a grid pattern of squares separated by raised vertical and horizontal borders. Light fixtures with bare bulbs hang from the ceiling. The light fixtures are framed by a circular inset and floral border, which interrupt the square grid pattern on the ceiling.

Appliances and other household items are displayed in the hardware store. The hardware store retains some of its historic integrity. Historic photographs show the hardware store had shelves which were about twelve feet high on either side of the room to hold merchandise. Some of the shelves, now painted blue, remain in the room.

***The tin shop***

A storage room behind the bank and adjacent to the hardware store was the site of a tin shop for many years. The tin shop was accessible from the street via an exterior door at the southwest corner of the building or through the rear of the hardware store. The tin shop is about sixteen feet by thirty feet. It has a pressed tin ceiling like that in the hardware store. Pressed tin panels, which have a butterfly pattern and are about sixteen inches square, cover the walls.

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The door to the street has been blocked, but the original window remains. A small half-bath has been added at the northwest corner of the room, next to the door which opens to the hardware store.

*The interior of the upper floors*

The upper floors are accessible from the street via two staircases. Accessible from Ninth Street, the main staircase is on the east side of the building. It is about six feet wide and has oak banisters on either side. There are twelve steps up to a landing, then fourteen more until one reaches the second floor. The wood treads and risers have been covered by linoleum. An oak railing tops dozens of balusters which surround the open stairwells on the second and third floors and stop at square newel posts. Some of the balusters are original, others have been replaced by similar-sized balusters.

The building's second staircase is on the west side of the building. It is accessible from an outside door behind the tin shop at the southwest corner of the building. That staircase connects the first and second floors only. There is no backstairs connection between the second and third floors.

Eight-foot oak doors originally marked the entrances to the offices and apartments on the second and third floors. The doors had four recessed vertical panels and moulded frames on the sides and top. At some time in the building's history the original doors were removed and stacked in the Masonic Temple on the third floor. Aluminum doors have replaced the original doors. The glass transoms at the tops of the doors have mostly been blocked, but the cornices remain.

Wood wainscotting in the second floor hall has been painted a dark reddish brown. The wood details around the windows have been painted white. Plaster walls have also been painted white.

At different times the second floor housed the offices of physicians, dentists, lawyers and the local telephone company. The second floor is currently being used as apartments.

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An open staircase leads from the second to the third floor. Like the stairwell on second floor, the third floor stairwell is also surrounded by an oak railing and balusters. A skylight above the stairs lets light into the third floor hallway. The staircase to the third floor has been blocked by a sheetrock panel. The third floor is currently unoccupied.

The third floor on the south side is the location of the Masonic Temple, its vestibule and dressing room and a dining room. There are two doors to the temple, each on the west side of the room and each with its own peephole. One door allows entrance to the temple from a small vestibule, the other from a dressing room with large closets. The closets no longer have doors, but they retain their vertical wood paneling and wood cornices. The ceiling in the temple vestibule had a light fixture, now gone, and still has an ornately carved hook.

Four apartments are located on the north side of the third floor. Some of the original tongue-and-groove wood floor is still visible where the linoleum has worn away. Original wood doors, moulding and corner pieces with circle and leaf patterns are still present on the third floor. The wood has not been painted. Some of the glass door transoms have been blocked by sheet rock.

***The basement***

The Heins Block has a full basement. There are three entrances to the basement, the exterior stairs in front of the bank on 9th Street, the interior stairs accessible through a door on the south side of the hardware store and the exterior stairs at the rear of the hardware store on the west side of the building. A ramp is built next to the rear exterior stairs which allows hardware store merchandise to be wheeled into the building. A wide double door, with its original metal deadbolt lock, is located at the top of the ramp.

The exterior stairs in front of the bank are now blocked by wood planks. The rear exterior stairs are now accessible only by walking through the back of a one-story office building which was constructed on the west side of the Heins Block.

Ceiling height in the basement is about seven feet. The walls are thick, rough-faced gray limestone, about sixteen inches in width. The original boiler, labeled Pacific Steel

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Heating Boiler of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, is located at the southwest corner of the basement. A newer Culligan water heater is present in the basement too. Old radiator covers are stored in the basement. Some of the original hardware store cabinets, identifiable in historic photos, are now stored in the basement.

Wood posts support the basement ceiling. The posts were originally sitting on compacted sand or soil. At some time in the building's history the wood rotted necessitating the removal of the lower parts of the posts. When a new concrete floor was poured, the wood posts were cut and the deteriorated part of the wood was removed. New concrete piers, which are about eighteen inches high, were added. The original wood posts now sit on top of the concrete piers.

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**Significance**

The Heins Block is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its local significance in the area of commerce. The building reflects the historical patterns identified by the Minnesota historic context, "Railroads and Agricultural Development, 1870-1940." The Heins Block, built in 1896, was constructed on the most significant commercial streets in Olivia and played a major role in encouraging business development in the town.

The Heins Block is important because it was the city's most prominent commercial building which provided space for major businesses, professional offices and fraternal, educational and cultural organizations. Its period of significance (1896-1950) encompasses the years in which the activities for which the building is known continued without major changes.

***The founding of the town of Olivia***

Olivia was originally a railroad town. The western Minnesota community is located in Renville County, about one hundred miles west of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul and about eighty miles east of the Minnesota-South Dakota border. The earliest European settlers in Renville County were from Britain and France. They were fur traders who maintained friendly relations with the Native American population. Settlers who arrived in the mid-1800s, mostly from Germany, were primarily interested in obtaining land for farming.

Renville County was organized by the state legislature in 1866. Most of the earliest settlers from Europe and the eastern United States arrived by steamboats, which came up the Minnesota River from New Ulm, Mankato and St. Paul. The steamboats brought people and supplies and took back the farm produce of the region. <sup>2</sup>

Before the railroads were built, the rivers were the only highways. Riverfront towns usually developed piecemeal, often only a few miles apart, and without being formally platted or having sharply defined boundaries. Beaver Falls, the first county seat of Renville County, was such a town. It was located on the Minnesota River and near the geographic center of the county. Prior to the arrival of the railroads, settlements located

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away from navigable streams were at a strong disadvantage in terms of transportation cost.<sup>3</sup>

Olivia was platted in 1878 on land owned by the Hastings and Dakota Railway Company. It was named for the wife of one of the railroad company officers.<sup>4</sup> The original plat shows twelve square blocks platted in a regular gridlike pattern immediately south of the railroad tracks.

Olivia was one of hundreds of towns founded in the late 1800s along an expanding network of railroad lines. Extensive cessions of public lands were made to railroad companies to promote railroad construction.<sup>5</sup> At designated intervals along the right of way the stations were located and future townsites surveyed and platted by the railroad company. Geographer John C. Hudson described railroad town development this way: "Almost all the towns on the plains were founded for the single purpose of serving trade brought by a surrounding agricultural population. Their reason for being was commerce which superordinated all other aspects of town life. Streets were invariably arranged in a grid pattern....Towns were spaced interdependently so as to organize the trade of the hinterlands most efficiently."<sup>6</sup>

Railroad builders took upon themselves the responsibility for creating the new towns which would connect their lines with the products of the agricultural countryside. The railroad created a system of nearly equal-sized market areas surrounding regularly spaced small towns. Too many stations meant too little business for each one.

A "trade center town,"<sup>7</sup> in Hudson's words, prospered because of the obliteration of all other nearby business sites once the railroad announced a new town. Merchants were driven out of their scattered locations and into railroad towns. The railroad towns were the only places where the merchants could operate profitably.

Chester Liebs described the influence of the railroad in a way which anticipates the new buildings which were about to be constructed on the railroad towns' main streets: "The coming of the railroad created the greatest stimulus for Main Street commerce. Through the downtown depot and railway freight house, goods arrived and local products were shipped out, newcomers alighted, visitors tarried, and residents set forth to explore a

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larger world. Fortunes were made, communities prospered, and by the late nineteenth century these developments could be read on the frontage of a community's principal street."<sup>8</sup>

People in the new railroad towns of Renville County, including Olivia, found the roads to Beaver Falls impassable during certain times of the year. Dissatisfaction with Beaver Falls as the county seat began to grow. In 1888 the community of Bird Island launched a vigorous campaign to persuade the county's voters to move the county seat from Beaver Falls. Bird Island lost, but there was another fight in 1894. At that time the mayor of Olivia, Peter W. Heins (who would build the Heins Block in Olivia just two years later) appeared before the county board and offered to deposit \$4,100 with the county.<sup>9</sup> The money was to be used to the construction of a courthouse in Olivia. Another election was held and this time Olivia was chosen as the county seat. The county commissioners' order that the county seat be moved from Beaver Falls to Olivia was eventually halted by the state Supreme Court. The fight continued until 1900, when Olivia won the third election.<sup>10</sup>

Some Olivia residents were so eager to move the county seat to their town that, as soon as the results of the last election were known, they went to Beaver Falls, loaded up some furniture and court records and moved them to Olivia.<sup>11</sup> No longer the county seat and bypassed by the railroad, the village of Beaver Falls became a ghost town.

***Peter W. Heins***

Peter W. Heins, the builder of the Heins Block, was born near Hamburg, Germany in 1846.<sup>12</sup> The third of five sons, he came with his family to the United States in 1851. The family settled in Iowa. In 1870 Peter W. Heins and one of his brothers moved to Beaver Falls, Minnesota where they started a general mercantile store.<sup>13</sup> In 1872 he married Margaret Jane "Maggie" Patterson of Indiana, who was a teacher. P.W. and Maggie Heins had six children, only two of whom lived to adulthood. Their oldest child, Charles A., joined the family hardware and banking businesses with his father. Their younger son, Warren H., was only seventeen when his father died. After graduating from Hamline and Columbia Universities, he returned to Olivia where he ran the hardware business and was active in civic affairs.<sup>14</sup>

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P.W. Heins was just one of several ambitious, hardworking men who saw prosperous futures for themselves in Olivia. In addition to P.W. Heins' hardware store, the other settlers who came to Olivia in 1878 opened a blacksmith shop, a grain elevator and a lumber yard. A steam powered flour and grist mill was built one year later.

P.W. and Maggie Heins were among the first families who started what is now Faith United Methodist Church in Olivia. They are memorialized in a stained glass window in the church. P.W. Heins served as mayor of Olivia for twelve years (1883-1885 and 1886-1896).<sup>15</sup>

P.W. Heins moved aggressively to expand his hardware business. In 1878 he started his hardware store in Olivia, the same year the extension of the railroad gave the town its start. By 1880 he had brought in a partner to run his store in Beaver Falls and he had moved his family to Olivia. He also owned interests in hardware stores in the towns of Renville and Morton. In 1889 P.W. Heins sold half of his interest in his Olivia store to B.F. Byers.<sup>16</sup> The store became known as Heins and Byers, a name which would be part of the community of Olivia until Mr. Byers' death.

In 1889 P.W. Heins started the Peoples Bank.<sup>17</sup> When he built the Heins Block in 1896, P.W. Heins was constructing a building for his hardware and banking businesses. The building was planned to accommodate not only the Heins family businesses but also professional offices, apartments and fraternal organizations. Local newspaper notices soon listed "Heins Block" as the address of doctors, dentists and law firms.

When P.W. Heins died in 1902 he was remembered as Olivia's "most prominent citizen" and a man who "believed in hard work, economy and enterprise, that trinity of virtues."<sup>18</sup> Though P.W. Heins had helped to start the local Methodist Church, his funeral was a Masonic service conducted at the Olivia armory. Over 800 people attended what the local newspaper called "the largest funeral ever held in Olivia."<sup>19</sup>

After the death of Maggie Heins in 1905, Charles A. Heins and Warren H. Heins inherited the Heins Block. They continued to operate the bank and hardware store and to rent the offices and apartments on the second and third floors of the building. The historical record does not indicate the reason, but Charles A. Heins was no longer

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connected with the hardware business after 1915. At the same time Warren H. Heins left his position as a member of the board of directors of the bank.

Warren H. Heins continued to operate the hardware store until his death in 1957. After the death of B.F. Byers, the store became Heins and Arndt. Warren H. Heins ran the store with his son-in-law, Floyd Arndt.<sup>20</sup> The hardware store was associated with the "Our Own Hardware" group, a national consortium of hardware stores.<sup>21</sup> It was also associated with the Hall Hardware Company, a national wholesaler.<sup>22</sup>

***The architect***

P.W. Heins retained A.J. Hedlund, a local architect, in 1896 to design an imposing building which would be home to the bank and the hardware store. A.J. Hedlund had already designed a house for P.W. and Maggie Heins. In 1880 their large, ornate Queen Anne style house was built at 312 Ninth Street in Olivia. A similar house, also designed by Mr. Hedlund, was built about 1905 for Charles A. Heins and his family at 311 Ninth Street. P.W. and Maggie Heins' house was later occupied by Warren H. Heins and his wife, Myrtle Prosser Heins. Warren and Myrtle's daughter, Margaret, her husband and their daughter, Barbara, were the last members of the Heins family to live in the house.<sup>23</sup>

A. J. Hedlund practiced with the Olivia firm of Warner and Hedlund. They called themselves "Architects and Superintendents" in an 1896 newspaper ad.<sup>24</sup>

In July 1896 P.W. Heins hired three skilled bricklayers from Ramsey County, more than one hundred miles from Olivia. The bricklayers, A.E. Gustavson, Ed Sundberg and Charley Andreen, were hired to work under the supervision of A.J. Hedlund, the local architect. The contract between P.W. Heins and the bricklayers specifies that they would be paid \$1,260 for their work, which was to be completed in six weeks. P.W. Heins supplied the materials and paid the workers' hotel expenses. The specifications state the men were to build, erect and furnish all brick work and the setting of all cut-stone for the Heins Block.<sup>25</sup>

***The role of the Heins Block in the development of Olivia***

The Heins Block has played a significant role in the community of Olivia because it has been the location of so many businesses and community organizations. It has also been a

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place which was significant in the social and fraternal life of the community. Throughout its existence it has been the site of two banks, a hardware store, barbershop, offices for physicians, dentists, lawyers, chiropractor, newspaper and telephone company. Apartments and a lodge for fraternal organizations were located on the third floor.

In its early days Heins and Byers sold stoves and tinware, John Deere wheel and walking plows, Case and Minneapolis threshers and barbed fence wire.<sup>26</sup> At the time it competed with three other local firms which sold farm machinery, stoves and tinware.<sup>27</sup> Newspaper ads and oral history accounts of the store and its products reveal the changing tastes and new products available throughout the life of the Heins hardware business: Hibbard and Ajax bicycles in 1897,<sup>28</sup> shoe drills and tanning mills about 1902,<sup>29</sup> electric irons in the 1950s.<sup>30</sup> In the 1950s Heins and Byers sold RCA Victrolas and records. Warren Heins allowed shoppers to listen to the records in a booth in the store before deciding whether to buy them.<sup>31</sup>

A tin shop, where the tinsmith "could fix anything,"<sup>32</sup> was located at the southwest corner of the first floor of the building, adjacent to the rear entrance of the hardware store.

The celebration of Heins and Byers' 60th anniversary (its 42nd year in the Heins Block) was a front page story in the local newspaper in 1938. The store was described as the oldest store in Oliva and a place whose history corresponds with the history of Oliva.<sup>33</sup>

The longest lived business in the Heins Block was the Heins and Byers (later Heins and Arndt) hardware store, but the building was also home to two banks, Peoples National Bank and, later, the Citizens State Bank. The basement was home to a barber shop. Second floor offices included the Freeman and Lane law firm, which represented the Milwaukee Road railroad;<sup>34</sup> Eric L. Winje law firm;<sup>35</sup> Dr. George H. Mesker, a physician; Dr. B.L. Maertz, a dentist; the Tri-State Telephone Company, and someone identified in a newspaper notice as "Johnson the tailor, Heins Block."<sup>36</sup>

The telephone company switchboard employed about twelve people. Operators asked callers whom they wanted to speak with and manually attached wires to the switchboard to make the connections.<sup>37</sup>

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Other tenants in the building in its early years were the Trojan Seed Company, the Renville County attorney, the Renville County engineer and Olivia's first chiropractor.<sup>38</sup> Before its own building could be constructed, Episcopal services were held in the Heins Block on Sunday evenings.<sup>39</sup> The Olivia Times newspaper was located for a time on the second floor of the Heins Block. Its job office sold letterheads, note cards, envelopes and business cards to the local business community.<sup>40</sup>

Olivia's public library was started in the Heins Block. The local Women's Improvement Committee planned the library and began fundraising with a twenty-five cent lunch in the lodge hall in 1913. Fundraising for the library continued with a series of ten-cent teas. The library was located in the Heins Block before it moved to the local armory.<sup>41</sup>

P.W. Heins built the third story of the Heins Block to accommodate local chapters of fraternal organizations.<sup>42</sup> The Masonic Temple is located in the southeast corner of the third floor of the Heins Block. Established in Olivia in 1880, the Masonic lodge was the first fraternal organization in town.<sup>43</sup> The third floor was originally built for lodge meetings of several fraternal organizations, including the Masons, Eastern Star, the Catholic Order of Foresters, the Woodmen and the Oddfellows. Fraternal organizations reinforced and supported community values, conferred status on individual members and provided fellowship to their members. In the early 1900s the Eastern Star in Olivia had more than 100 members. About sixty attended each meeting. Members carried food up to the third floor so it could be served in the dining room next to the temple.<sup>44</sup> The dining room eventually became part of an apartment at the south end of the building for Ivan Jacobson, a local clothing store owner.<sup>45</sup>

The Heins Block was a social center for town folks and farmers who came into Olivia on Saturday night. Children of the owner of the barbershop in the basement of the Heins Block recalled in an oral history of Olivia, "When Dad started out in the barbershop there wasn't (sic) bathtubs, and he had a shop where he put in a tub. Saturday night, it was a place for those guys to gather and take a bath and slick up....those baths cost a quarter, and you got a towel and soap and hot water."<sup>46</sup> The barbershop was also the place in town where "everybody"<sup>47</sup> got shaved. Customers had their own shaving mugs with pictures to represent their profession or occupation: a watch on a jeweler's mug and some law books on a lawyer's mug.

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In the same volume of local history, the daughter of Warren Heins recalled that her father closed his hardware store on Saturday evening only after certain customers had been in "even if it was well past 11 [o'clock]." <sup>48</sup>

In more recent years Renville County Art Center, which was organized in the 1960s, had two locations in the Heins Block. Its first space was on the second floor above the hardware store. It later moved to the bank's location once the Citizens State Bank had moved to its new building. <sup>49</sup> Olivia's Chamber of Commerce office was also located in the bank space after the Art Center left it.

***Bank failures in the town of Olivia***

Olivia and the surrounding area had many sloughs before the land was drained in a massive ditch building project in the 1920s. The Kircher Brothers, who would first establish their engineering offices on the third floor of the Heins Block, spent ten years building what local residents called "the million dollar ditch." <sup>50</sup> The success of their engineering business allowed them to start the Citizens State Bank after the failure of the Peoples Bank.

At a time when bank failures were common, the Peoples First National Bank failed in early 1927. It was one of three banks in Olivia to close in a five-year period. There were 608 bank failures in the United States in 1926. One of those failures was the Farmers State Bank of Olivia. The town's third bank, the Olivia State Bank, failed in 1931. <sup>51</sup>

In 1927 the Kircher family of Olivia founded the Citizens State Bank, which was located in the Peoples First National Bank space in the Heins Block until 1968. The announcement of the opening of the new bank was on the front page of the Renville County newspaper. <sup>52</sup> Because the residents of Olivia had endured two bank failures in two years, the Citizens State Bank tried to assuage local concerns in its first newspaper ad which said, "...right now at the beginning we want to tell you that we will appreciate every business courtesy extended to us. Our distinct aim is to make this bank active and progressive...." <sup>53</sup> A newspaper editorial opined that the "bank opened under favorable circumstances and has the good will of the community...The local field is large enough to

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support another bank, and its opening marks another step in Olivia's progress." <sup>54</sup>

At the time of the founding of the Citizens State Bank, the Heins family sold the bank space and the portion of the basement beneath the bank of the Heins Block to the Kircher family. Ownership of the building has been divided since that time. In 1968 the Citizens State Bank moved to a new building with a drive-in banking facility and off-street parking. The bank's current location is also in downtown Olivia, a few blocks from the Heins Block. The Citizens State Bank retains its ownership of the bank portion of the Heins Block.

The Heins family owned the hardware store, the remainder of the basement and the two upper floors until its part of the building was sold to Balcer Hardware in 1970. Balcer Hardware liquidated its operations in 1982. The hardware store portion of the building, its portion of the basement and the two upper floors were sold to Eckert Supply Inc. in 1997.

***Conclusion***

The Heins Block has played a significant role in the commercial development of the town of Olivia. It has been a commercial and social center for the residents of Olivia since its construction at the end of the 19th century. It has been a place of business for banks, hardware stores, professional offices and a barbershop. It has been a place of residence for apartment dwellers. It has been a place of meeting for members of fraternal organizations. During its period of significance the building was a crossroads for residents of Olivia whose lives intersected with the businesses and community organizations which were located in the Heins Block.

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- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> Olivia Times-Journal, June 25, 1953, p. 4.
- <sup>21</sup> Olivia Times, 60th anniversary edition, 1932, p. 4.
- <sup>22</sup> Renville County Journal, September 4, 1938, p. 4.
- <sup>23</sup> Fischer, Renville County History 1980, p. 256.
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- <sup>28</sup> Olivia Weekly Press, April 14, 1897, p. 5.
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**Verbal Boundary Description**

The nominated property occupies the South Ten Feet of Lot 8 and all of Lots 9 and 12, Block 3, Original Plat of the City of Olivia.

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary includes the two city lots and portion of a third lot which have historically been associated with the property.