

Stein Building

For more than 30 years after the turn of the century, the Stein Brothers Store provided quality merchandise from all over the world to south central Nebraska shoppers. Stein's buyers made regular trips to Europe purchasing goods, like Belgian lace and Bohemian crystal, directly from manufacturers. Old-timers who knew the store say that neither before nor since has any single store in Hastings provided the quality, volume, and variety of goods that the Stein store supplied.

The Steins-Herman and Edmund-were among the first advertisers in local newspapers to list goods in stock and state their prices. They were also known for their elaborate Christmas window displays.

Located at 620 West Second Street, the Stein building is easily identifiable by the unique lions' heads on the brick facade. It was built in 1906 by former Nebraska Governor and U.S. Senator Charles Dietrich after fire destroyed an earlier Stein's Store at the same site. In 1925 the Steins purchased the building from the Dietrich estate.

Stein's closed on November 17, 1933, in the midst of the Great Depression. Montgomery Ward's occupied the building from 1934 to 1968 .

The building is a two-story structure whose mottled brick facade fronts the north side of West Second Street for 110 feet. Exterior alterations to the 1906 building have been limited to the side walk level. Four identical stone lion heads are between floors in the building's center. Originally these elements served as chain supports for a flat entrance hood. The second level contains ten transomed windows. Alternating between these openings are broad pilasters of brick embellished with stone cartouches and narrower stone pilasters adorned with lion heads. The brick parapet contains a band of terra-cotta rosettes with decorative brick corbelling below. The building's proportions are low, and there is a strong horizontal emphasis.

The Stein building was appointed to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 as an outstanding example of Prairie-style commercial architecture.