Elmer and Addie (Olhausen) Neebel

(Presented at a Cemetery Walk by Dean Peterson;

added information from Wayne Rossman and Lavon Anderson)

Elmer Neebel was born in Illinois or Indiana. At about age 18, he moved to Hartley, Iowa where he lived for a few years before moving to South Dakota. After two years, he moved back to Hartley where he married Addie Olhausen. They spent their lives managing four different businesses in Hartley.

Elmer has been described as a likable, laid back person. It seems that Addie was a great business partner, and together they operated Neebel's Café on the west side of Main Street where Dennis Cmelik's Law Office is now located. Elmer also operated an ice cream parlor, where he made ice cream from his own recipes. That business was located on the site of the present day Hartley Fire Station.

Neebel's Danceland was his most well-known business. Several big bands played in Hartley during the 40's and 50's. Guy Lombardo, Lawrence Welk, and Tiny Little were some of the better-known entertainers who came to our town. Friday night dances with old time music drew good crowds and good times. Addie, who was known to walk with a bit of a limp, enjoyed those Friday nights and danced nearly every dance.

Danceland had other uses. At times the floor was also used as a roller rink. Elmer also had a tire chain factory located at the west end of the building. He had invented a certain type of chain link that remained tangle free when not in use. Later Sid Terpstra and Wayne Tibbetts operated a welding business on that site.

Danceland was torn down and a beef packing plant was built in its place. That building is presently used as offices.

The Neebels were faithful members of Trinity United Church of Christ. Elmer served many Hartley City Council positions. He was a main force in establishing the park by the swimming pool. Hartley citizens recall seeing Elmer carrying buckets of water for the young trees planted there. Those trees are now well-established in the town's aptly named Neebel Park.