

# A Brief History of Nehring Branch and the Lone Cedar School

by Rhonda Nehring

## Nehring Branch

In 1859/60, Prussian brothers Sebastian and Gottfried Nehring each claimed 120 acre farmsteads in what was then the Kansas Territory. Sebastian, along with a third brother Christian, had been in the United States for a number of years. Gottfried, with wife Anna, and their two children, Dorothe Marie and Joachim Gothelf, had just arrived.

Early accounts from the county include multi-day wagon trips for supplies, regular visits from nearby Indians, and numerous hardships. The Nehrings, along with a small handful of others in newly platted Mill Creek Township, were the quintessential European settlers—with all that this entails. They were truly pioneers on the western frontier.

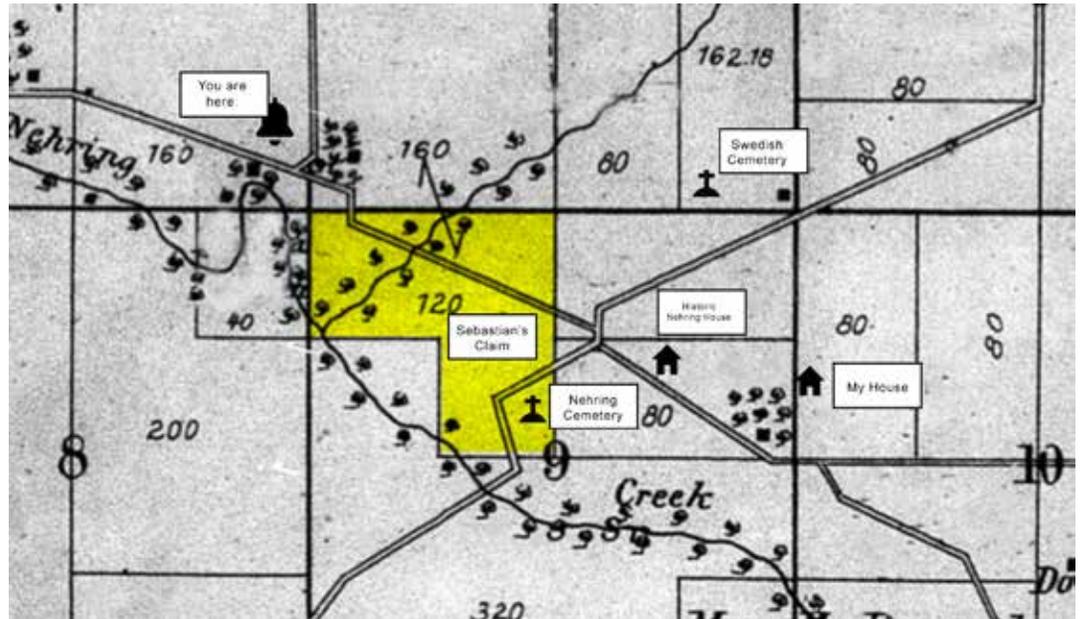
Just two years later, in 1862, Sebastian, a soldier by trade, enlisted in Company K of the Kansas 11th cavalry regiment (perhaps as a source of income). He would see action along the Kansas/Missouri border—including operations against Quantrell's infamous 1863 raid of Lawrence. In 1865, at the close of the war, the Company was repositioned from Fort Riley, to Fort Kearney, and then on to Fort Laramie (Wyoming Territory), for "...duty guarding telegraph lines and operating against Indians." For lack of horses, most of the men walked—more than 500 miles. Sebastian was forty-six.

On July 26, 1865, Private Sebastian Nehring was killed at the Battle of Platte Bridge Station near present day Casper, Wyoming.

Gottfried and Anna prospered along the branch of the Mill Creek that bears their name. Daughter Marie would marry Henry Saffry and have a son. After being widowed, she would remarry and have two daughters. Son Gothelf married Sarah Krienitz, the daughter of another early settler. They would have ten children (that survived). The ninth, Arnold, was my grandfather.

Where his father had been a blacksmith by trade, Gothelf was raised on the farm/ranch and this is where he excelled. By 1885, he would build the operation to more than 3000 acres. At its apex, Gottfried's descendents would occupy more than 10 sections of ground—all built around Sebastian's original 120 acre claim. These families, the Nehrings, Saffrys, Andersons, Siecgrists, Johnsons, and Redmons, would form the core of what became known as the "Nehring Branch Community."

Today four descendants, including myself, own bits and pieces. My cousin Matt Anderson, who runs a widely respected cow/calf operation up and down Nehring Creek, is the largest landholder, including most of the "old home place."



## The Schoolhouse

The Lone Cedar School was built in 1890 in the one-room, stone-built, style that was typical of the era and area. There were two doors—one for boys and the other for girls. There would have been two outhouses and a loafing shed for horses. The land for the school was provided by Joseph and Louisa Feiden.

My grandfather and his siblings attended primary school here—as did most of their children. My dad and his brother were in the last class. The school was closed in 1950. It served as a community center for a number of years and then sat vacant until purchased by my aunt who used it as an artist's studio. In 1990, I acquired the property and made my home here until moving onto the small farmstead where I live now. Renovating and sharing the schoolhouse with others is the realization of a long-held dream. I hope that you enjoy your stay.



## Appendix



This picture of the old Nehring house includes my great-grandparents and great-great grandparents. The house is not presently owned by a family member.



A historic photograph of the farm.



The Nehrings were originally from Magdeburg, village of Biere, Kingdom of Prussia. Gottfried and family sailed to America aboard the S.S. Bavaria. They landed in New York in 1859.



Sebastian Nehring in Prussian uniform.



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Wonder if anybody yesterday decorated the grave of poor Sebastian Nehring, killed on picket the night of July 26th, 1865, whose body lies buried at Platte bridge, in the far off wilds of Wyoming Territory. Nature, more kind than the hand of man, has probably not forgotten the neglected spot, and above the decaying bones, has spread a verdure, green and fresh with her latest touch.

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It is to be hoped that the chaplain of Lines' Post has not been unmindful of poor Sebastian Nehring, killed July 26th, 1865, at Platte Bridge, Wyoming Territory, and that he has sent to some friend in that locality, a proper supply of flowers to suitably decorate his grave; and when he invokes the divine blessing, let him ask, in his own behalf, that he may never be forgetful of the memory of the one who died that he might live.

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#### OBITUARY.

NEHRING:—At his home in this county, on Monday, August 29, 1887, of heart disease, GODFREY NEHRING, in the 65th year of his life.

Mr. G. Nehring was born at Schonebeck, Germany, June 18, 1823. In 1857 with his family, he emigrated to this country, first settling in St. Louis, Mo., and went to work at his trade (blacksmithing.) At the time he had a brother living on the farm which Geo. Mogge now owns. In 1858 Mr. G. Nehring left St. Louis and came out to the frontier, and took a claim joining his brother, (the same farm on which he died.) A short time afterward his brother enlisted in the regular army and was stationed in some of the western territories, and was afterwards killed at the renowned skirmish at Platt's Bridge, by the Sioux Indians.

Mr. G. Nehring has ever since the time of his arrival been one of our most honorable and progressive farmers. He was the first blacksmith on Mill creek, and worked a little in the shop only a few minutes before he died.

During the Price raid excitement he was one that went to Topeka to defend the capitol if necessary.

He was a peaceful man never had a law suit or any quarrels with his neighbors. His death was very sudden, a few minutes before his death he was walking in the garden when a little shower of rain came up, he went into the house seated himself in a rocking chair and was reading a newspaper, and without any warning dropped his paper, leaned back in the chair and was dead.

At the funeral many of his associates, early settlers, were present, and the feeling and expression was, "There lies one of our comrades and early veterans who has lived and shared the hardships of the early days."

Mrs. G. Nehring died at her home on the Nehring branch Friday, Nov. 3, and was buried in the home cemetery. Mr. and Mrs. Nering were among the oldest and highly esteemed settlers of the county. One by one they are passing from this life, but their usefulness still remains green in our memories. A large number sympathizing friends attended the funeral.