

MEET THE LEVERINGS

This family tree is not comprehensive. Some Leverings have minimal or no criminal history. The 50 individuals named include the clan's worst criminal offenders and others who are important to telling the family's story.

- Levi Levering's connection to Nikko Jenkins
- Picture unavailable
- Conceived children

Compiled by World-Herald staff writers Roseann Moring and Alissa Skelton, based on Nebraska criminal and juvenile court records, U.S. District Court records for Nebraska, other public records, World-Herald files and family interviews.

ROOTS OF A CRIME FAMILY

A name that was respected in Nebraska 100 years ago has become synonymous with lawlessness as generations of Leverings succumbed to alcohol, drugs and violence.

BY ROSEANN MORING AND ALISSA SKELTON • WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITERS

Levi Levering was the respected face of his family a century ago, when he earned an impressive reputation as an Omaha tribal leader and advocate. His influence extended from Macy, Neb., to Washington, D.C., where he successfully lobbied Congress in 1920 to protect tribal members' rights to their land. Now the face of the family is Levi's great-great-grandson: Nikko Jenkins. Jenkins stands accused of a 10-day killing spree in Omaha last August that left four people dead. And five other relatives — two of Nikko Jenkins' sisters, his mother, a cousin and an uncle — have also been charged in connection with the killings. A World-Herald examination of the Levering history shows that 38 descendants of Levi Levering have been convicted of 633 crimes in Omaha since 1979. Those cases have cost taxpayers at least \$2.8 million in prison and jail costs, not counting the price tag of law enforcement, juvenile cases, prosecution or public defense.

Family members have been involved in at least 150 other cases during that period that ended in acquittals, mistrials and dropped charges. "That family is notorious," said William Gallup, a defense attorney who has represented some of Nikko Jenkins' relatives. "This is one of a handful of families that Omaha police recognize as habitual lawbreakers, said John Wells, president of the Omaha police union. "What sets (the Leverings) apart is a few very, very high-profile incidents," he said. Public records and interviews with the family, acquaintances, law enforcement officials and academic experts paint the portrait of a family that has deteriorated through escalating violent crime, drug and alcohol abuse and child neglect. Authorities have removed at least 20 children from various Levering family homes. Many families struggle with poverty without resorting to criminal activity. The Leverings are an extreme example. See Family: Page 10

OMAHA.COM/LEVERING
View an interactive timeline of the family's history.

OMAHA.COM/JENKINS
Read more stories about the crimes tied to Nikko Jenkins.

