

Four Persons and Choteau, Montana.

In 1868, Captain Nat Pope, special Indian agent, established an agency just north of Choteau, called “Four Persons” or “Four Men,” because four Native Americans were killed there in 1857. Two trading posts were located near the agency, the licensed post of the Northwest Fur Co.

In 1868 Eli Guardipee’s family¹ left Turtle Mountain along with nine other Métis families and 30 Red River carts. Some settled at Fort Benton whereas the Guardipees settled near Four Persons on the Teton River near present day Choteau.

The first fort (stockade) and Indian agency, known as "Old Agency," was referred to as the “Four Persons” Agency by the Blackfeet Nation. It was located from 1868-1876 near the Teton River three miles north of the present city of Choteau.

Businessman A.B. Hamilton built a little trading post on the Teton River in 1873 and became the first postmaster in 1875. His trade was almost solely with the Native Americans of the Blackfeet reserve. The following year, for convenience sake, he moved to within half a mile of the agency. Old Agency was abandoned in 1876 and the post office name changed from Old Agency to Choteau in 1882.

The community is located in the Teton River bed about 50 miles northwest of Great Falls on U.S. Highway 89 and is about 90 miles south of the Canadian border, as the crow flies.

By 1876 the Blackfeet Reservation boundary was changed and the agency was relocated north of Birch Creek on Badger Creek, as the Running Crane Agency.

In 1880, Old Agency was a hamlet of white men who had married Native American women, some Blackfeet, and some Métis who lived there with their children. In 1883, the land around Old Agency was sold and Isaac Hazlett platted the townsite of Choteau three miles south and moved the Hamilton and Hazlett store there.

The Post Office opened as Old Agency in 1875 and the name changed to Choteau in 1882.

¹ Elie’s parents: Jean Baptiste Gariepy was born on July 7, 1832, at St. Francois Xavier, the son of Louis Marie “Awistoyus” Gariepy (b. 1771) and: Josephte Suzette “Nahasthay” Ducharme (b. 1806, died 1871 on the Marias River). His father, Louis was a voyageur first with the NWC then after amalgamation with the HBC. He retired to St. Francois Xavier in 1824.

Baptiste received Half Breed Scrip (#262) under the Treaty of April 12, 1864 with the Red Lake and Pembina Half Breeds.

Baptiste married Judith Cardinal on June 4, 1855 in St François Xavier. She was the daughter of Antoine Cardinal and Marie DeMontigny Comtois. Baptiste’s wife Julia was born in Montana in 1828.



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