

Louis “Chatka” Aagard Jr.

Louis Aagard Sr. was born before 1830 and died after 1870, at Fort Yates, North Dakota.

As a boy Aagard came to the upper Missouri country, about 1844, and stayed at Ft. Pierre the larger part of the time. He clerked at Ft. Clark during the winter of 1846-7, under Joseph des Autel, for the American Fur Company. In 1868, he was employed as interpreter by the U. S. Peace Commissioners at Ft. Rice. Later, he clerked for Chas. Galpin at Ft. Rice and Oak Creek, and had a wood yard below Standing Rock Agency. In 1870 he moved to Ft. Yates, where he died. [Basil Clement].

Welch notes dated June 23rd, 1923: Louis Aagard Jr. of Grand River Country.

This man is a half-breed. His father came into this country with the American Fur Company and was a hunter and trapper working into their fort at Pierre, S.D. He married three women of the Dakotah. The last one was of the Hunkpapa, and this Louis Aagaard was issue of that union. The father came to Pierre when he was but twelve years of age; he was 55 years old when he died in 1890— consequently he came to Dakota in 1847.

The family lived for years about nine miles south of Bismarck on the east side of the Missouri river, but finally moved to the Grand River, S.D., and the subject now lives about 16 miles south of the sub-agency at Bull Head. He is called by the Dakotah – Chatka - The Left Handed, as he is left handed and handles the lariat with that arm. He says he cannot rope well any more as he has broken his shoulder twice, while roping stock and getting tangled up.

I think he is about 65 years old now, as he has white hair, but it is hard to tell the age of a man who has faced the wind and sun of Dakota for years since childhood. He is a quaint character, soft-voiced, slow in speech as a Dakotah; crafty and strategic in his arrival at the point of discourse; polite as a full blood Frenchman; I judge that he would be relentless in hate, but a good friend – going the limit either in ‘peace or war,’ and every movement and gesture, showing the effete of a wild life in the open with the Indians.

In fact he is a splendid example of the old time hunter and pathfinder of the times which are now all but gone – such a man as Custer took for guides in his Black Hills Expeditions; one who can talk the language of the Dakotah and read the stories of the game trail or war path. “I ain’t been here for 16 years,” he said, “Your trees have got big and the houses have grown tall. The saloons are gone somewhere. I can’t find any now. Too bad.”

Later penciled note by Welch: Born Dec 1864, he is 59 years of age.

<http://www.welchdakotapapers.com/2011/10/indian-histories-from-aagard-to-burr-44-individuals/#louis-aagard>.



Compiled by Lawrence Barkwell
Coordinator of Métis Heritage and History Research
Louis Riel Institute