

Louis Baptiste Chartran. (ca. 1795-1854)

Metis fur trader Louis Chartran was the eldest son of Jean Baptiste Chartran Jr. and Marguerite Desrosiers *dit* Dutremble. Louis married Therese Compagnot at Cahokia (Western Illinois) on November 17, 1823. Their son, also Louis was born in Cahokia on January 26, 1831. The Chartran family had left Montreal in the mid-1800s to move to the Cahokia area.

Louis Baptiste was an employee of the American Fur Company's Western Division, working for the Kikapoo Outfit and the Otto Outfit in 1883-1836. This time period was filled with tragedy. A son, François, born 1883, died in January 1835, another son Pierre Phillipe, born in St. Louis in 1835, died there in October 1836. His wife Therese and infant daughter Marguerite died in June of 1837.

In 1839 Louis was transferred to the Upper Missouri Outfit at Fort Pierre. He continued to summer in St. Louis and in the summer of 1840 was enumerated on his farm at St. Clair County, Illinois. By 1841 he was trading out of an Oglala village on the Cheyenne River. According to the Chouteau accounts the final American Fur Company (A.F.C.) payment to Chartran (Chartrain, Chadron or Shatran in the records), was made in May of 1842. In 1843-44 he was on the Upper White River and was in charge of the Sibille and Adams Post, which was vigorously trading against his friend James Bordeaux who had an A.F.C. post on tributary to the north. Chartan's post was located on what became known as Chadron Creek and then the present day town of Chadron, Nebraska. There is no trace of Louis B. in the fur trade records after 1846. It is said that he married the daughter of Bull Tail, the Brule (Oglala Sioux) Chief and had a son George (b. 1848) who later spent his life on the Rosebud Reservation and used the Indian name, Plenty Horses.

When Louis was killed near Fort Laramie in 1854, his body was laid in state in Bull Tail's teepee. He was an accomplished trader, and interpreter. All who knew him described him as "a very good man."

The little town of Chadron in the Pine Ridge area of Nebraska was named after fur trader Louis Baptiste Chartran. Just east of the town is the Museum of the Fur Trade, located on the site of an original trading post that was established by the American Fur Co. in 1837 and operated until 1876.



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Reference

Hanson Jr., Charles E. and Veronica Walters, "The Chadron Creek Trading Post," *The Museum of the Fur Trade Quarterly*, Summer 1976, vol. 12, No. 2: 1-20.