

CHARNY

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Two etymologies are given for the toponym *Charny*. One; the name derives from the Carnutes, a tribe that spread into Gaul from the Danube, where Caesar named their city *Carnuntum*; from which some towns in France, before 1000 A.D., in Latin documents are called *Caarnetum*. Two; the name more probably derives from the Latin *charniacum* (from *carnis*, meat), designating a pasture land or a ranch where cattle were raised for Caesar's occupation troops during his campaign in Gaul.

The Charny from which Geoffroy took his cognomen certainly derives from *charniacum*. About 14 miles south of Mont Auxois, where Julius Caesar built his camp to besiege Vercingetorix, lies the town of Vitteaux (from *vitulus*, vitello in Italian, veau in French, veal or calf in English). Charny is a few more winding miles to the southwest, across lush pastures where herds of the beautiful white cattle, the Charolais, highly esteemed for their meat, placidly browse. There can be no doubt that the area was a *charniacum*.

There are other towns in France which derive their name from *charniacum/caarnetum*; Charnay-les-Macon, Seine-et-Loire, in a document of 739 was called *Carnacus*; it was still so named in two documents of the X century. Four other Charnay are found: in the Doubs, the Jura, the Rhône and another in the Seine-et-Loire near Châlon-sur-Saône. Variants are: Carnac, Charnat, Carné, Cernay in Alsace and Cernay-la-Ville, 12 miles from Rambouillet, where ruins remain of the Abbey of Vaux, founded in 1118.

There are Chagnat, Chagnac, Charnaut, Charnoy, Charneux near Liège, Charigny; and Chagny at the southern tip of the Côte-d'Or.

A Charny in the Meuse was totally destroyed in World War I; from a Charny northeast of Paris, canton Claye, Seine-et-Marne, Jean de Charny fought his way into history, in 1385, for his role in the overthrow of Etienne Marcel.

In the Yonne, a Charny has been a market town from feudal times. Some of the Charny family from this town emigrated to Canada and founded Charny on the Chaudiere River, about 8 miles south of Quebec City. Jean de Lauzon, Seigneur of Charny (Yonne) became governor of New France in 1651. Crusaders named Charny were from the Yonne, vassals of the

House of Courtenay. There was no relationship between these and the Charny of the Côte-d'Or, from which Geoffroy took his cognomen.

Geoffroy de Charny was a great-great-grandson of Ponce de Mont-Saint-Jean, who founded the Charny branch in 1198. In the XIII and XIV centuries, Charny was a dependency of the barony of Mont-Saint-Jean, and Geoffroy's father, Jean de Mont-Saint-Jean, retained the family name; his title was Seigneur de Charny († between 1318-1323).

The domain was in the parish of St.-Germain-d'Auxerre, archdiocese of Sémur. The castle of Charny was demolished by order of Louis XIII (ca. 1614); around its ruins, a cluster of 54 souls gradually and serenely wend toward extinction.

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