

## Ages on the *Bertrand*:

- John: Not Aboard
- Mary: 24
- Charles: 5
- Emma: 4



USFWS Photo by Kristina Campbell

## The Atchison Family

### Parents:

- John Atchison  
(was born in Galena, Illinois on December 13, 1835.)
- Mary S. Atchison  
(was born in the District of Columbia in the year of 1839.)

### Children:

- Charles H. Atchison  
(was born in 1860 in Winona, Minnesota.)
- Emma Atchison  
(the youngest of the family, was born in 1861 in Winona, Minnesota along with Charles.)

## After the *Bertrand* Wreck:

- All of their baggage was lost in the sinking of the Steamboat *Bertrand*. They only had one, maybe two boxes of belongings.
- In 1870 (Federal Census in Montana Territory):
  - Mary was a housewife.
  - John was a banker.
  - Charles was 10 and Emma was 9.
  - They had \$25,000 in personal property and a 25-year-old domestic servant from Prussia; Barbara Newman (who was possibly a passenger on the *Bertrand*. Unknown).
- John moved to Mentone, California to live with Charles around 1884/1885 (after Mary passed away) and lived there for about 13 years before dying at the age of 97.

For more information about the *Bertrand* and/or the Atchison family, please visit our websites at [www.fws.gov/refuge/DeSoto/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/DeSoto/) and [www.fws.gov/refuge/boyer\\_chute/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/boyer_chute/)

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge  
1434 316<sup>th</sup> Lane  
Missouri Valley, IA 51555  
(712) 388-4800

## U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



DeSoto & Boyer Chute  
National Wildlife Refuges

## Passengers of the Steamboat *Bertrand*:

### The Atchison Family (Mary, Charles and Emma Atchison)

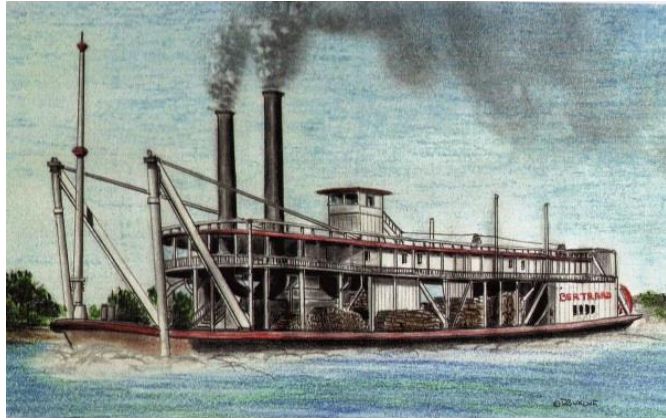


USFWS Photo by Kristina Campbell

The story of the Steamboat *Bertrand*, along with other historic periods like the Lewis and Clark Expedition, heralded dramatic changes to the natural environment in the Missouri River Valley, impacting the wildlife and natural habitats of the area. Refuge resources and stories foster an appreciation for the refuges' role in conserving the river's unique natural history.



The Steamboat *Bertrand* was bound for Fort Benton, Montana Territory, carrying cargo and passengers. Many of those passengers were headed up the Missouri River to start a new chapter in their lives. The Atchison's were travelling there to re-unite with John Atchison, who arrived in the Montana Territory in 1864. Mary and the children also add a personal touch to the story of the sunken Steamboat *Bertrand*.



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## Events Before the *Bertrand*:

- Around 1864, John Atchison moved to Virginia City to take a new position.
- John arrived in Montana in May of 1864. In September, he was appointed Notary Public at Virginia City by Governor Edgerton.
- He was partnered with Joseph Millard (president of Omaha National Bank) and B.F. Allen of Des Moines to establish a gold exchange near Alder Gulch.
- Within a year, they sold it and established a bank in Helena named *Allen and Millard Bank*; John ran the bank.

# The Atchison Artifacts

## Pony Cart:

Perhaps the most well known of the Atchison's possessions was this child's toy: a tin trotting pony with a two-wheeled tin cart attached to it. Sadly, only one wheel was located. The pony came from two pieces of tin and was painted a dark gray color with red-orange spots on the horses back and nose. The cart was only one piece of tine with folded edges and painted a red-orange color. It was a well used toy indicated by the dents and scratches found on the exterior of it.



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## Fur Stole:

This stole was a soft, brownish-black color (perhaps mink) in a shoulder style with a rounded oblong shape. Silk lines the cloth where the stole would touch the shoulders; no silk is located on the central section.



USFWS Photo

There were also some loose buttons and beads found attached to the stole.

## Knitted Wool Cap:

This wool cap was made out of reddish-brown and black colored yarn and was semi-circular in shape with a stripped socket pattern of knitting. The cap had been stretched, indicated it was well worn. This style of hat was meant to be tied on the head with two hanging tassels, but only one tassel remains.



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## Drake's Plantation Bitters:

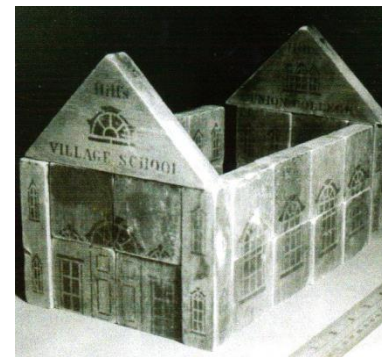
One of the rather unique items found on the *Bertrand* would have to be the amber colored, cabin shaped bottles known as Drake's Plantation Bitters. They first appeared during the American Civil War and contain 17% alcohol; it is a St. Croix Rum. Twelve of these bottles were found in the Atchison belongings.



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## School Building Blocks:

Another of the children's toys was the thirty light-weight blocks; one side being gray and the other side a pale red. Both sides of the blocks had black building patterns painted on them along with the word HILL'S painted over three small windows. The gray side, though, contained the words VILLAGE SCHOOL underneath HILL'S, while the red side said UNION COLLEGE under it.



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