

Rain

(Complete forecast, page 2)

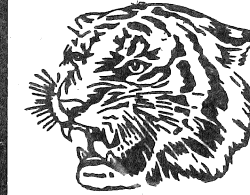
**Friday: Chance for rain;
high around 70**

Opinion

**Hard
work**

**Thanks to those who made
sure the levee would hold**

— Page 4



**Lady Tigers
capture meet**

— Page 5

Atchison Daily Globe

118th Year No. 127
Atchison, Kansas

A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing good

Thursday, May 11, 1995
8 Pages 50¢

Museum boss looks for a sunken steamboat

*Salley sank on way
to Doniphan in 1869*

by **CHRIS TAYLOR**
Staff Writer

Below what is now a farmers field along the muddy River Road on the way to Doniphan lies the Steamboat Salley.

If Dan Fitzgerald, Atchison's museums director, can find her and raise the money to bring her out of the ground, Salley may one day find a new home along the riverfront in Atchison.

Salley was a sternwheeler, three stories high, her dual stacks towering above the about 200 foot long body.

If Salley is intact like Fitzgerald thinks she may be, when excavated

life because she sank slowly. It took about two hours for the boat to go down.

"Salley sank on Oct. 22, 1869 and, from the rough listing of cargo, I've an idea what was on board. There were wagons, personal belongings, trunks and, it was mentioned on three different occasions, \$90,000 in gold.

"I don't expect the gold to be on the ship," Fitzgerald continued. "They had diving bells to extract valuable cargo and they were pretty persistent about things like that. But the other stuff is intriguing enough, the wagons alone and a chance to find a wide variety of cargo and if the gold happens to be on there ..."

Fitzgerald said he had explored several sunken steamboats looking for one prime for excavation and the



CHRIS TAYLOR/Globe

Dan Fitzgerald, Atchison museums director, points out the general area where he believes the Steamboat Salley went down. The area that was once a bend in the Missouri River heading into Doniphan is now a farmers field. Fitzgerald has been told that using the special "metal detector" that will be used to find the exact spot the Salley went down will likely take only four or five days to cover the area described in accounts of the 1869 wreck.

Salley was a sternwheeler, three stories high, her dual stacks towering above the about 200 foot long body.

If Salley is intact like Fitzgerald thinks she may be, when excavated, she could make an awesome sight and an important historical find.

"She was loaded with cargo, that's probably what sunk it," said Fitzgerald.

The steamboat was part of a packet line, a series of boats bound from St. Louis to Sioux City, Iowa. The boat had just made a stop in Atchison and was steaming toward the next landing in Doniphan when she struck a snag.

"It hit something as it rounded the bend going to Doniphan," said Fitzgerald. "There was no loss of

chance to find a wide variety of cargo and if the gold happens to be on there ..."

Fitzgerald said he had explored several sunken steamboats looking for one prime for excavation and the Salley certainly fit the bill.

"There were about five or six sunken boats on the stretch between Doniphan and Atchison," said Fitzgerald. "The Salley has the greatest potential to be intact. One of the other had a boiler explode breaking it apart. Another burned to the water line, and the others were very vague about where they sank.

"Salley sank in 1869. There were more reporters then and it caught more interest and there was much more reported on the location."

Dan Fitzgerald, Atchison museums director, points out the general area where he believes the Steamboat Salley went down. The area that was once a bend in the Missouri River heading into Doniphan is now a farmers field. Fitzgerald has been told that using the special "metal detector" that will be used to find the exact spot the Salley went down will likely take only four or five days to cover the area described in accounts of the 1869 wreck.

The Salley went down in the midst of what was then a fairly deep channel. Fitzgerald estimates it to be from 40 to 60 feet below the ground to the bow of the ship. Since the sinking of the Salley, the Missouri River has switched course, leaving the ship and Salley's destination, the town of Doniphan, about a mile from the river today.

Fitzgerald has some advantages others who have brought up similar boats have not. He will have the

advantage of modern technology and he will draw on other's experience, including the Hawley family, the people who brought up the Steamboat Arabia, now on display in Kansas City.

"I'm going to work closely with the Hawley family and rely on the expertise they learned in their excavation," said Fitzgerald.

He said members of the Hawley family have told him that if they knew what they know now, they could have cut their costs of

excavation in half.

Fitzgerald hopes to locate the exact location of the steamboat this year, most likely in August or September if the boat lies in an area that is actually being farmed.

After that, he said it will be a lot of organizing before any steps to bring the ship to the surface can begin.

"I'll need to get organized, find funding and get people interested and, until that, it has to be on hold," said Fitzgerald.

He hopes the boat can be

brought out of its burial spot intact so it can be displayed as a complete unit. He is already thinking of the details involved and dreaming of what this could become.

"The whole goal is to start a museum down by the waterfront in Atchison and have the ship and cargo displayed. But that is a long way off," he said.

Fitzgerald asks that anyone with information on the Salley or anyone who would like to be part of a recovery team next year contact him at 367-4878.