

Original OK Corral papers rediscovered in Bisbee

On March 31st, Cochise County clerks Bonnie Cook and Michelle Garcia were cleaning out an office when they found an envelope in a storage closet marked "keep."

"It was buried in a corner. We dug it out, it was dirty," Cook said.

Inside were 36 pages of firsthand accounts of the legendary shootout that occurred on October 26, 1881. An excerpt from an eye witness account provides details from the moments just prior to the gunfight:

"Mr. Holliday was standing next to the buildings," the witness is quoted as saying. "On the inside he had a gun under his coat. He had a long coat. The way I noticed the gun is that his coat would blow open, and he tried to keep it covered."

State librarian GladysAnn Wells says it's a huge discovery: "I would bet you your next lunch, if you were to handle them and touch them, with your white gloves on, that you would feel the magic of history," she said....

Wells said the fragile paper will be stabilized and scanned and will be made publically available on the Arizona Memory Project, <http://azmemory.lib.az.us/cdm4/index.php>.



Photo by Ross D. Franklin, AP

The documents are hand written and time has turned the pages yellow and brittle. However, as can be seen from the above photo, they are clearly legible and capture the intimacy of the court reporter's handwriting.

The Arizona Memory Project provides access to a wealth of primary sources in Arizona libraries, archives, museums and other cultural institutions. In addition to the OK Corral papers, visitors to the site will find some of the best examples of other original documents, photographs, maps, and objects that chronicle Arizona's past and present.

The following pages are just a sample of the worldwide press the find generated. In addition to print media, GladysAnn wells was interviewed by ABC Television, NPR Radio, Radio Ireland and the BBC Broadcast Network, among other media outlets.