

Crate yields historic documents

SHERIDAN (AP) — A crate found in a storage room at the local YMCA is yielding a time-capsule look at the life of one of Sheridan's early business leaders in the 1880s.

The crate contains passports, steamboat and railroad tickets, bank ledgers, receipts from around the world and a buffalo coat. All the items appeared to belong to Edward Whitney, who established the town's first bank.

The partially concealed crate was found last year but a thorough examination of its many contents did not begin in earnest until last month after an archivist from the University of Wyoming advised how to handle and store old documents, some of which date back to 1886.

Among the items is a 1886 memorandum of agreement between Whitney and John Loucks, founder of Sheridan, for Whitney to purchase what is thought to be the first building in the town. Purchase price was 40 head of 2-year-old heifers from West Union, Iowa, where Whitney lived before coming to Sheridan.

Whitney, who died in 1917, later converted the building to the town's first bank. Many papers found so far in the crate relate to the Sheridan Banking Co., including the Bank of Sheridan organization agreement.

The disposition of the crate's contents has not yet been decided, McWilliams said.

"First, we'll have to see what's here," she said.