



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Karen Mokrzycki of UCSC's McHenry Library helps check earthquake damage to county historical archives.

Quake damage to county archives was light

By GUY LASNIER
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SANTA CRUZ — Earthquake damage to the county's historical archives formerly stored in the old County Bank building was surprisingly light, an initial survey has revealed.

A group of experts "loaned" to the Santa Cruz County Historical Trust sorted through about a quarter of the archives believed to have suffered damage. The damage assessment will help in providing an estimate of the cost and time necessary to restore the collection, said Micki Ryan, collections manager for the Historical Trust.

"We were extremely fortunate," Ryan said.

One of the experts, Stan Stevens, map librarian at the UC Santa Cruz McHenry Library, said the historical collection "is basically intact. It needs general repair and cleaning done."

The archives, which include old

county records, personal diaries and photographs, were dumped onto the floor of a second-floor office and buried beneath bricks and other debris when a parapet, interior wall and the building's roof collapsed. Rain water that followed soaked some portions of the office. But Ryan said some of the most valuable materials were protected when they fell first onto a table then were covered by a toppled bookcase.

The collection is being stored in four locations in the county. It was rescued about a month ago in an operation involving 23 volunteers, three trucks and dozens of boxes.

Ryan said the spines of old books separated from the contents when they fell. In some cases the different pieces were found across the office from each other.

A fine dust from powdered mortar covers the collection and must be re-

moved.

Artwork suffered from pigeons who roosted inside the office after the roof fell in, Ryan said. Also, some photographs now have "big Vibram foot prints," Ryan said. Teams of engineers have trooped through the building since the earthquake, most not realizing what the office contained. It also is dark inside the building.

Ryan said the close look revealed damage is "surprising light." But it is still a "tremendous blow for a small historic society."

She is preparing a grant request for conservation funds administered by the Smithsonian Institution and is "competing with the big leagues" such as Harvard University.

Stevens and other UCSC experts in conserving historical materials will bolster the grant request. Their work paves the way "for continual work in a professional manner," Ryan said.

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