

# Storage

FOR MUSEUMS

## HIGH COST OF TECHNOLOGY-DRIVEN FACILITY JUSTIFIES SPACE-SAVING MOBILE SYSTEMS

Mystic Seaport — The Museum of America and the Sea — located on the banks of the legendary Mystic River in Mystic, Connecticut, is the nation's leading maritime museum. Founded in 1929, the Museum uses its re-created coastal village, tall ships, exhibit galleries, preservation shipyard and knowledgeable staff to tell stories of the sea.

Before Mystic Seaport opened its \$16-million Collections Research Center, the Museum's storage areas were becoming overcrowded and the storage needed to be upgraded to provide proper environmental controls.

The Museum had already acquired an old textile factory that offered enough space to develop state-of-the-art storage facilities, administration offices and educational and research areas. The building was completely renovated and updated with the latest preservation technology.

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John Rutchick, director of facilities management, explained that collection preservation is always a priority at Mystic Seaport. He also said that as technology dictates advances in environmentally controlled storage space, the cost per square foot can be as much as 22 percent higher than typical space. Special air handling equipment, humidity and temperature control systems, fire and theft protection, as well as demanding maintenance and utility needs all contribute to a higher cost per square foot.

"These factors make space-saving products easily justified in the expensive, high-tech facilities concerned with proper collection and preservation management," Rutchick said. "By reducing storage space by 50 percent and enhancing collection safety, mobile storage was an obvious solution. We not only fit the Museum's vast collection in this space, we also have enough space for 15 years of growth."

### Curatorial

Six mechanical assist mobile systems were placed in the curatorial room for housing a wide range of maritime collections. Drawings and maps are housed in preservation quality map folders and stored in oversized flat-file drawers that are specially designed to protect from dust and ultraviolet light.



Creative solutions by Spacesaver, Delta Designs Ltd. and the local sales organization, Spacesaver Systems New Jersey, house a unique collection of maritime artifacts, nautical collections and other media.

# Solved



Rolled textiles and art are stored on cantilever textile racks. Large, oversized ship models, preserved ship figureheads and navigation equipment are stored on expansive wide span shelving. Ship half models are hung on racks designed to support a heavy weight load, while nesting together to save space.



Large whale bones requiring 16-foot extra wide expansions are stored on pallet racks with specially designed galvanized shelves to protect from chemical off gassing. Underneath the pallet racks, oversized drawers house scrimshaw, whalebone art and ivories.

Lockable preservation cabinets mounted on mobile carriages store a valuable collection of silver trophy cups. A manual art rack system stores hanging paintings.



## Photography, film and video

The Rosenfeld Collection room of maritime photography includes two mechanical assist systems storing photographic prints, negatives and camera equipment, as well as one compact art rack for storing framed prints. The Rosenfeld Collection features historical coverage of the America's Cup and totals nearly 1 million photographs. Three separate vaults, maintained at 35 percent humidity and temperatures ranging from 25-35 degrees, incorporate a mobile system for storing film, video and silver nitrate film and negatives.

*"The systems were flexible enough to design a solution that met our diverse needs."* — John Rutchick, Director of Facilities Management

## Ships plans

A separate room in the Collections Research Center houses a Spacesaver system loaded with hundreds of flat files for storing ships plans.

"The Spacesaver systems provide the most effective way to load this building and yet still manage and access the collections in a systematic way," concluded Rutchick. "The systems were flexible enough to design a solution that met our diverse needs."



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Art rack systems carefully store valuable paintings and hand-carved half-ship models. Preservation cabinets store a rare collection of silver trophy cups.