

MUSEUM

AMERICAN TEXTILE HISTORY MUSEUM

LOWELL, MA



Prestigious textile museum consolidates and preserves important collections

The American Textile History Museum, which houses the most significant, publicly-held, integrated textile collection of clothing, fabrics, tools, spinning wheels and hand looms in America, acquired two large coverlet collections and curators sought to develop a premier storage solution specially designed for its unique needs. Also, the textile collection reached maximum storage capacity, requiring an improved and space-saving solution. By partnering with an ASA member, the museum was able to improve preservation methods and increase storage capacity, allowing for additional space to expand the collections and provide staff with improved accessibility to stored objects.

“Having the ability to expand storage space provided staff with greater access to the collection, improved preservation and, ultimately, brought in more collections that we wouldn’t otherwise have been able to acquire.” - Karen Herbaugh, Curator

PRODUCTS / SERVICES PROVIDED

HIGH-DENSITY MOBILE

ROLLED TEXTILE RACKS

HANGING GARMENT STORAGE

HAT & ACCESSORY STORAGE

4-POST SHELVING

SPECIALTY DRAWERS

SPACE PLANNING

STORAGE CONSULTATION





CHALLENGE As the American Textile History Museum expanded its cultural reach, the number of museum artifacts broadened with the acquisition of its first clothing and coverlet collection, which created new and unique storage needs for staff members. Also, as the museum's textile collection expanded, curators had concerns with existing storage space constraints and preservation methods. Fabrics were typically packed in archive boxes that allowed potential exposure to environmental elements and required undesirable folding of fabrics and stacking of archive boxes. Locating items was often difficult, and museum staff had to search through multiple locations and stacks before finding a specific item.

SOLUTION The ASA member provided consultation for space planning and archival storage solutions to maximize on-site storage, allowing for consolidation of all collections and providing room for growth. Minimizing the storage footprint and increasing capacity enabled the museum to expand its collections and accept additional items that it wouldn't have been able to otherwise.

The coverlet collection storage is drastically improved with the use of a high-density storage system specially designed to accommodate hanging garments, including top shelves and lower drawer storage for accessory items. Museum cabinets with pull-out drawers were selected to store the museum's premier hat collection.

To accommodate the expanding collections and accommodate growth, boxed textile storage methods were converted to rolled and hung racks, which improved cloth preservation, minimized handling and made items easily visible and located. With textile rolls condensed on two high-density mobile systems, the museum is able to accommodate its current and future object acquisitions.

To account for each item in the collections, objects are assigned a storage location and entered into a museum artifact database. Items are retrieved and returned to its assigned location after use, minimizing excessive handling and ensuring collection integrity.



7621 Rickenbacker Drive, Suite 400 ♦ Gaithersburg, MD ♦ 20879
t 800.840.6264 ♦ f 301.840.0243
info@nosinc.com
NOSINC.COM

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