



Alaska State Museums Bulletin 76

May 2014

Editors Note: Due to the time constraints involved in the move of our collections, the ASM Bulletin will go on hiatus for the summer. The next issue will be published in September.

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Crate Ideas

Last month's post was about using corrugated plastic sheeting to create lightweight, sturdy temporary enclosures or crates for moving objects from one location to another.

Like these:



This post will show some ideas and tips for crating large objects with stronger, wooden crates and platforms. This is not meant to be instructions on how to construct wooden crates. These are just things to keep in mind when building crates or instructing others who build crates for you.

Wooden crates are usually for larger, heavier artifacts that will be in the crates for a longer period of time.



If the object will be in the crate for a really long time, the inside can be lined with aluminized Mylar to keep the wood from off-gassing to the inside.



Or holes can be drilled in the sides to keep the volatile organic components (VOC's) from building up inside the crate.

If constructed properly, wooden crates are sturdy enough to stack or can be used as a platform for stacking other things on top of them.



Moving around large objects in crates generally means using machines rather than relying solely on human effort. A machine can be as simple as a 4 wheel dolly



or as complex as a forklift.



Note that this dolly is held in place with pallet wrap. The pallet wrap keeps the dolly from slipping when moving over uneven surfaces. Pallet wrap is a stretchy plastic that sticks to itself in the same manner as kitchen plastic wrap. It is a great materials for

wrapping and attaching a great number of things. However, you never want to put pallet wrap in direct contact with an artifact. This can cause surface damage due to the plasticizers (the stuff that makes it stretchy) in the pallet wrap.

One essential piece of equipment for moving large crates is called a pallet jack.



This wonderful tool allows large and heavy crates to be placed with surprising maneuverability.



If you are using a pallet jack, it is important to build skids onto the bottom of the crates with enough room to slide the forks of the pallet jack under them. This means about 3 1/2 inches of room. Keep in mind this is more than is required for a regular forklift. So crates that were designed to be fork-lifted may not be pallet jack-able.



It is also a good idea to put handles on the sides of crates so they can be lifted onto a dolly if necessary.



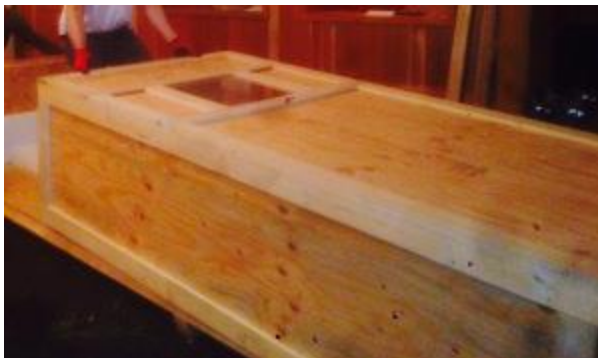
Another important thing to keep in mind with crates is to label crates with their content so people know what is in them.



Taping a quick digital printout to the lid is even better.



What we found was most effective, though, was to include a window in the lid if possible.





This sounds like a lot of extra work but we found that it created a much different relationship between the movers and the object inside the crate. If the movers were able to actually see the artifact they were much more careful with the crate. Without the window, the crate is just another heavy wooden box to shove around. And you never have to open a crate to see if it is empty or not. We used an old scrap of Plexiglas for the window and hot-glued it in place.

Padding in the crate is important. Ethafoam can be hot-glued directly to the crate wall or bottom.



You don't need a lot but it should be used judiciously so that it does the job of cushioning and holding the object in place.



Ethafoam can be hot-glued to the lid to secure the object with a little pressure when the lid is screws down.

Instructions written on the inside and outside of the crate can be important to those who will be de-installing objects or opening the crates. Think of them as kind messages to the future so leave nothing to chance. Yes they could probably figure it out but it is so much easier for them to know what you were doing or thinking when you crated the object up.



These are just a few of the things we have learned crating large objects for our big move.

Ask ASM



Question: So here's the issue: I just started a complete inventory and in the second box I noticed that a lot of the tissue used to wrap objects was yellowed and oily looking. Sure enough, in the middle of the box was small hand-pump oil can. There was probably a teaspoon of oil left in the can that was slowly leaking and being absorbed by the tissue wrapping the adjacent objects. I have no idea how old the oil is or what kind of oil it is, or even what the oil was used for, but the oilcan has been at the museum for about 4 years, and in that box for at least two. I used cotton balls and q-tips to absorb what I could, wrapped up the can and the spout (separately) in paper towels, stuck them in a separate box - which is now next to my desk- and replaced the oily tissue paper on the other objects. The fur and leather native masks that were also in the box were not affected (from first glance anyway), and the objects that were wrapped in oily tissue were ceramics, metals, and plastics, and they didn't *seem* to have any oily residue. (There are appropriate notes in all of their PastPerfect files).

My questions to you are: What do I do now? What should I have done? And how do I store the oil can?

ASM: Historical objects can be messy. That's OK, its what the stuff is.

Here's what you should do:

Wipe the excess oil off the oilcan as best as you can, and if you can easily make the oil come out so you can remove it, that's good too. Sop it up in paper towels and get rid of it in a trash can outside. Then store the oil can in a secondary plastic container of some

sort (perhaps a Tupperware? A plastic bag?). And include MORE tissue paper in there to sop out what might continue to leak. This will allow you to continue monitoring what comes out, as well as control the mess. This is pretty hands-off and non-interventive,. Putting it on exhibit could be tricky if it oozes a lot, but that's another bridge to cross. This method keeps all the options open and does not make anything worse.

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Shaking the Money Tree

Reminder: Grant in Aid applications are due June 2, 2002. You can find information about this program from our Grants webpage <http://museums.alaska.gov/grants.html>

Spotlight on Grant in Aid

Ahtna Heritage Foundation

The goal of our project was to raise the quality and lower the cost of lighting in the exhibit room of the C'ek'aedi Hwnax-the Ahtna Cultural Center-- by replacing the unattractive, outdated, ill-chosen lighting with attractive high-quality, cost-efficient LED lights and hardware. The museum coordinator purchased track light and troffer hardware and LED lamps according to a list and price agreed to beforehand by Brown's Electric, a lighting outlet located in Anchorage. Mr. Tim Willis, a local licensed electrician installed the purchased fixtures and lamps. Long sections of track replaced the existing short, choppy lengths. Three LED troffers replaced the single overhead fluorescent shop light.

Since the new lighting has been installed, the cost of electricity at the C'ek'aedi Hwnax has decreased 10.5% from the same time period the year before, in spite of the fact that usage and cost of electricity has risen. The savings are augmented by the fact we no longer purchase incandescent bulbs, nor dedicate staff time to monitor and change light bulbs. The new LED lamps are cool in temperature, which was a blessing this last above-average heat summer. The improved color and distribution of the light and better-looking fixtures have resulted in more attractive displays and exhibits. Finally, the new lights in the exhibit area are better on the eyes for visitors and staff. The C'ek'aedi Hwnax fills a large gap in our community as a place where Ahtna Athabascan People can display and interpret their culture, history and language for themselves and for the visiting public. The center also fills a need for a community gathering place for conferences, workshops, and meetings. The improved appearance and better lighting gained from this project benefits the exhibits and gathering space that are the very heart of the Ahtna Cultural Center.



Alaska Museums in the News

One Chance at Last Chance

http://juneauempire.com/local/2014-05-18/one-chance-last-chance#.U3ppF_ldV8E

Museum Bill Dies in Legislature

<http://www.thetundradrums.com/story/2014/04/24/local/museum-bill-dies-in-legislature/1260.html>

Professional Development/Training Opportunities

In honor of May being preservation awareness month, watch the recording of The Supercharged Management System.

<http://www.connectingtocollections.org/ics/>

Professional Time Wasting on the Web

Mapping Quiet Spaces

<http://futureofmuseums.blogspot.com/2014/05/monday-musing-mapping-quiet-spaces.html>

Getting the big picture of training

<http://engagingplaces.net/2014/05/05/getting-the-big-picture-of-training/>

Developing new methods for recoloring faded taxidermy

<http://intheirtruecolors.wordpress.com/>

Rare Eskimo Shaman's Mask sells for Record-Breaking \$2.5 Million

<http://www.cnn.com/2011/US/01/19/surreal.yupik.masks/>

Preservation Myths Debunked

<http://collectionsconversations.wordpress.com/2014/04/29/preservation-myths-debunked/>

Our Museums Are Broken--These 5 Fixes Can Make Them Fun Again

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/sethporges/2014/04/26/our-museums-are-broken-these-5-fixes-can-make-them-fun-again/>

Why Study History

<http://engagingplaces.net/2014/05/15/video-why-study-history/>