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THE COLLECTIONS RESEARCH CENTER

You can call it a collection. You can also call the Great Wall of China a fence.

Imagine 43,000 square feet filled with 1.4 million maritime photographs dating back to 1840, 1.5 million feet of film, 1,120 maritime paintings, 500 historic vessels, 100,000 sheets of ships plans, 2,000 ship models and thousands upon thousands of figureheads, tools, carvings and other items spanning hundreds of years of the history of man and the sea.

It's hard to imagine, but fortunately, you no longer have to. Because in November 2002, after 30 months and more than \$16 million, Mystic Seaport celebrated the grand opening of its Collections Research Center (CRC) – the nation's leading maritime research facility, located across the street from Mystic Seaport and designed to house the Museum's more than two million maritime artifacts while offering safe and easy access to maritime researchers and scholars.

The only better way to view maritime history? A time machine.

The first completed element of Mystic Seaport's American Maritime Education Research Center (AMERC), the CRC represents the largest expansion in Mystic Seaport's history, and a much larger leap forward for maritime research.

Instead of hopscotching the country from facility to facility, or spending hours searching for items throughout Mystic Seaport's many attics and cellars, researchers can now quickly and easily access everything they need under just one roof – the maritime research community's first "one-stop shop." Besides the one-of-a-kind collection, the CRC also boasts audio/video production suites and extensive photo processing and digitizing labs.

Designed to meet national museum standards. And set new ones.

The CRC was painstakingly designed to exceed national museum standards for conservation, preservation, accessibility and safety. The research center provides cutting-edge temperature and humidity control for the Museum’s artifacts. And every organic item – anything made of wood, paper or textiles – brought in to the CRC must remain in a carbon dioxide “bubble” for three to four weeks to avoid the threat of insect infestation.

Preserving the past. While ensuring a bright future.

Staffed by more than 30 employees and 50 volunteers, the CRC will help sustain growth in Mystic Seaport’s collections of art, photography, vessels and artifacts. Future plans call for the completion of the AMERC facility, including renovating the remaining two-thirds of the former velvet mill into a giant hall which will showcase 500 boats now in storage. And while the CRC is currently open only to researchers and scholars, public galleries and other components are planned – potentially making millions of pieces of this remarkable collection available for public viewing for the first time ever. And adding to an already overwhelming maritime experience for every Mystic Seaport visitor.

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