



# ELECOMPACK

## CASE STUDY

PARAMOUNT STUDIOS  
HOLLYWOOD, CA



When Paramount pictures decided to build a state-of-the-art archive building to house one of the world's largest libraries of motion pictures and television programs, their goal was to preserve what they acknowledge is the studio's single most valuable asset. As they started planning their needs, they realized space was a major consideration since the studio had limited footprints available and height limits were imposed by local building codes.

Planning was under the direction of Milt Shefter, Paramount's Director of Library resources and designated curator for the new building. Paramount's Planning and development Department became intimately involved in the construction, design, contracting and supervision. Mr. Shefter then focused on the basic inventory to determine how many items needed to be housed in the new structure.

Several hundred thousand cans of film and tape, some dating back to the studio's inception, were located worldwide, identified, bar coded, and were to be consolidated in one central location on the Paramount Pictures Hollywood studio lot. A brand new forty-thousand square foot archive building was designed and built, incorporating in its four stories, nine climate controlled vaults, editing rooms, offices and a distribution center. This state-of-the-art facility, complete with Halon fire protection systems, will house virtually the entire Paramount film and tape library. The most important elements of the library were split, some copies stored underground in an undisclosed location in another state for safe keeping.

To house this massive collection, they knew a high density mobile shelving would be required to maximize the space utilization in this unique archive. David Wexler, President of Hollywood Vaults, Inc., was brought on board as a consultant to design the storage system layout and assist in the selection of a vendor to provide the storage equipment. Mr. Wexler reviewed twelve proposals from competing manufacturers, and worked with Paramount's planning and development staff to narrow the manufacturers down to four finalists.

These four companies were then asked to install full size working prototypes for evaluation on one of Paramount's Hollywood sound stages. "This is the first time I am aware of that four manufacturers actually installed their products side by side for evaluation in front of a prospective client," said Wexler. "This competition was designed to minimize pushy salesmanship, letting the products and craftsmanship speak for themselves"

Upon completion of the prototypes. Paramount then invited each manufacturer and their local dealer to give a two hour presentation on the merits of their respective systems. The Paramount selection team then evaluated the four systems using a comprehensive set of criteria which included construction, movement and durability, as well as price, terms, company strength and capabilities. Mr. Wexler, along with a team of Paramount executives, then had the option to inspect manufacturers factories to further evaluate their products and operations.



The outcome of this unique evaluation and selection process was Paramount's awarding the largest high-density mobile shelving contract in the entertainment industry to Automated Storage & Retrieval Systems of America, New York.

The ELECOMPACK high-density mobile storage system passed Paramount's careful scrutiny with its unique design, flexibility and high quality construction. Along with ASRS's dedication to solving the client's problems. ASRS's V.P., Dick Farrell, served as project coordinator, custom designing special shelving for storing Paramount's motion picture film cans and video tapes. The installation, one of the largest in California, was handled by ASRS's dealer in Los Angeles, skillfully executed by Ken Romanek Installations.

The project was best summarized by Shefter in saying, "Dave Wexler told us that if we watched how the prototype was set up, we'd know the quality of the product and the installation procedure. He was right. ELECOMPACK had no competition. The design took earthquake (seismic) considerations into account. ASRS devised an excellent solution for the storage of our film items in the horizontal slot configuration. Others merely tried to 'tech screw' existing storage units to their carriages.

The installation may be seen on the movie or TV screens one of these days. Several directors have already shown interest in shooting the rows of high-density mobile shelving as "atmosphere". But that's no surprise- That's show business.