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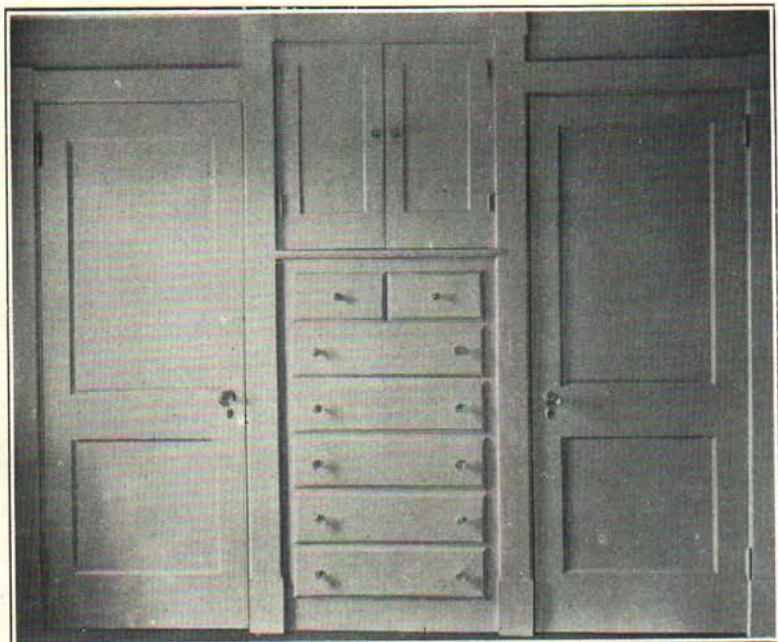
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Household Closets and Storage Spaces  
Michigan State University Extension Service  
Julia Pond, Evelyn Turner  
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**HOUSEHOLD CLOSETS AND  
STORAGE SPACES**



**MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE  
Of Agriculture and Applied Science**

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**EXTENSION DIVISION  
R. J. Baldwin, Director**

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Acknowledgment is made to "The Farmer's Wife" for Figure 6, to the General Electric Co. for Figure 5, and to U. S. Dept. of Agriculture for Figures 1, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21A, 21B, 22, and 23.

## HOUSEHOLD CLOSETS AND STORAGE SPACES

JULIA POND AND EVELYN TURNER

Every home should provide convenient and ample storage space for all personal and household goods which are not in use. Closed storage space always decreases the amount of time and effort needed to keep the room orderly and to protect unused belongings. Adequate storage space eliminates unnecessary cleaning and dusting. Where conditions will not permit built-in cupboards or closets, the following substitutes can be used, portable wardrobes or cupboards, corner cupboards, rods for hangers, shelves, and hooks.

The various goods and equipment for which closets and cupboards are needed are clothing, bedding, household linen, cleaning and laundry supplies, food, utensils, dishes, medicines, reading material, sewing supplies and equipment, recreation equipment, and garden tools.

### SUGGESTED CLOSETS AND CUPBOARDS

#### **Clothing:**

A closet located near the front entrance and large enough to hold some of the outside clothing of the family and guests of the household is desirable. No farm home is complete which does not furnish a closet or cupboard near the back entrance for outside work clothing. Such a closet is most convenient if located in the back service hall rather than in the kitchen. A rack such as the one shown in Figure 9c can be hung in a convenient place and used for rubbers, skates, and mittens. It saves much hunting for such articles. The other clothing closets are best if located adjacent to the bedrooms, and no bedroom can meet the essential needs without at least one fair sized closet or wardrobe. Hooks, racks, and rods for children's clothing should be provided in closets and placed so the children can reach them easily.

#### **Bedding and Linen:**

Bedding storage space should provide shelves deep and wide enough for blankets, quilts, and pillows. Linen closets for bed, table, and bath linens are needed in every home. Often, a sufficiently large closet can be located in a central hall and it will provide convenient storage for all household linens. Careful spacing of the shelves will decrease the necessity of stacking the linens and will make placing and removing them easy. Drawers may be provided for storing some of the linens.

#### **Cleaning Equipment and Supplies:**

Cleaning equipment and supplies used on the main floor can be stored in a space in the kitchen or a hallway. Such a cupboard should be constructed



to take care of long handled brooms and mops, sweepers, dusters, dust cloths, and supplies such as soap, waxes, and polishes. Where the house is large and some cleaning materials can be duplicated, a second cleaning closet on the upper floor is practical. The cleaning materials used at the sink or in the bathroom are most convenient if stored near their places of use. A small shelf or shallow cupboard will provide ample space. The laundry supplies may be kept in the lower part of the sorting table, on shelves over the table, or, if the laundering is done in the kitchen, in the cleaning closet just mentioned.

**Food:**

Cupboard space in the kitchen should provide for storage of perishable and non-perishable foods, dishes, silver, cutlery, cooking utensils, and equipment. These cupboards should be so arranged that the worker takes the least possible number of steps in the preparation, cooking, and serving of the food. Daily supplies of food should be kept in the kitchen and space for storing a week's food supply is desirable. The dumb waiter as pictured in Figure 16, makes it possible to keep food cool and to avoid going to the basement for it. The canned food, storage products such as potatoes, and apples, and the yearly or monthly supply of flour and cereals, are best stored in the basement or food cellar on shelves, on racks or in bins built for that purpose.

**Cooking Utensils:**

Cooking utensils and equipment are most easily stored in a rather deep cupboard equipped with hooks for hanging those utensils that can be suspended. Vertical shelves or racks lessen the difficulty of storing of pie, muffin, and cake pans, and covers. The upper less accessible sections of the cupboards should be used for storing seldom used dishes or equipment.

**Dishes:**

Dishes used for meal service can be kept in a cupboard in the kitchen or a built-in dish and silver cupboard can be located in the dining room. A cupboard similar to the one shown in Figure 15 saves steps and can be very attractive.

**Books-Magazines:**

Books and magazines are more apt to be used and enjoyed if stored on open shelves or racks. The book shelves may be located on either side of the fireplace, in one corner against one side of the room or wherever space permits. See Figures 20, 21A, 21B, and 22.

**Miscellaneous:**

Under materials needing miscellaneous cupboard and closet space; sewing, recreation or play equipment, and garden tools might be listed. A very compact ironing and sewing center is pictured in Figure 23. The children's toys should be kept in a space the child can reach easily and if possible near the play center. Often, an extra drawer or section of the kitchen or hall cupboard can be used for such a purpose. Space for garden tools and lawn mower can be provided in the garage, wood house, or basement.

Every well planned closet will meet these essential requirements.

- Correct apportionment of space as determined by articles to be stored.
- Convenient access to every garment or article.
- Adequate light.
- Ventilation if possible.
- Adequate protection against dust, insects, and mice.

### GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR CLOSETS AND CUPBOARDS

Wide shallow closets are better than deep narrow ones. Twenty-four inches in width will permit a rod for coat hangers but 30 inches is better.

Doors should fit tight enough to prevent dust from entering.

Cracks in walls and floors should be filled, if insects and dirt are to be kept out.

Walls should be of a light color which will harmonize with color in room.

A small window provides light during the day and furnishes a means of ventilation. Provide a ventilator for all clothing closets.

Light is important. If electricity is available, the problem is an easy one. An automatic switch which operates with opening and closing of the door is the most desirable. A wall switch or pull cord just inside the door may be used. Where electricity can not be used, a flash light hung in a convenient place is advisable. For the sake of safety, provide some light other than matches or oil lamps.

Do not use the closet floor for storage space. Equip the closet with shelves, hooks, rods, or racks, depending upon the needs. Decide first of all what each particular space is to be used for and plan accordingly.

Space the shelves to meet particular needs of articles to be placed on them. Deep shelves are difficult to use unless they are intended for boxes, luggage, or bedding. Do not waste space or make it necessary to stack articles by spacing shelves too far apart. Do not have the lower shelf so near the floor that cleaning under it is difficult.

Vertical shelves or partitions are convenient for storing articles that stand on end such as trays. See Figure 17.

Have doors of a size convenient to open.

Several small drawers, unless used for bulky articles, make for ease in finding articles and keeping drawers orderly. Large drawers may be divided.

Build all cupboards to the ceiling. Use the upper space for seldom used articles. The doors for the upper space should be separate from those for lower part of cupboard.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR BUILDING A NEW KITCHEN CUPBOARD

Have work table top correct height for worker.

Allow for toe room by extending top beyond base three inches or make top flush with base and push in board at base of cupboard three inches.

Have work table top as narrow as possible, 22 or 24 inches.

Allow 14 to 16 inches between table top and upper cupboards.

Have upper cupboard as shallow as convenient for storage.

Doors should not be too wide. Doors on upper cupboard should not swing out beyond the edge of the work table.



Have drawers as shallow and small as possible for convenience.

Floor of lower cupboard should be four to six inches above floor of room.

Shelves that can not be conveniently reached, when standing on floor, should be inclosed with separate doors.

## EQUIPMENT FOR CLOTHING CLOSETS

### **Shoe Racks:**

Shoe racks are essential. See Figures 6, 7, 8, 9A, and B.

### **Hat Stands:**

Portable hat stands or those fastened to wall add to the orderliness of the closet and to the life of the hats. Hat stands can easily be made at home from the following materials:

Round cereal box of sufficient height, weighted and covered with paper or fabric.

Paste board made into a funnel shape.

Heavy wire bent to shape and fastened to wall or shelf.

Hats may also be kept in a hat box in which there is a pasteboard collar to support the hat and to prevent it from becoming crushed. Boxes are essential for storing hats from one season to another.

### **Rods:**

Rods in a closet increase space and keep clothes from becoming crushed.

Broom sticks, heavy curtain poles, and iron pipes will serve for stationary rods. Half of a pipe flange nailed into place at either end of the closet makes a very inexpensive bracket for holding rod in place.

If the closet is shallow, a clothing carrier for hangers can be purchased and fastened to back of closet. It is telescopic and can be pulled out into room when placing or removing garments.

Stationary brackets or long hooks less than 12 inches in length can also be used in a shallow closet or one where the slant and height of ceiling will not permit a long rod.

### **Hangers:**

Hangers should always be provided. Inexpensive wire or wooden ones can be purchased. Cardboard cut the desired shape or paper cut the proper length, tightly rolled, with a string loop fastened in the center make satisfactory substitutes for commercially made hangers. Hangers should fit the garments hung on them. Those for children's clothing will have to be smaller. Special skirt and pants hangers are convenient to have. An ordinary towel rack makes a satisfactory rack for ties or belts.

### **Dress Protectors:**

Dress protectors should be procured for garments seldom worn. A discarded night gown or sheet will inexpensively meet this need. Protectors may be made from cretonne or gingham or one of the commercial ones can be purchased. See Figure 6.



Fig. 1. A cupboard and closet of this type can be built in the kitchen, hall, or back entry for the storing of every day wraps. The shelves and drawers are used for miscellaneous storage. The shelves and drawers the entire lower section used for hanging the children's clothing. A rack for rubbers and overshoes could then be built into the back of the full length cupboard. The size depends upon space available.

Cover picture. Drawers and cupboards for linen and bedding built between a closet door and the door into hallway. A wise use of what would otherwise be waste space.



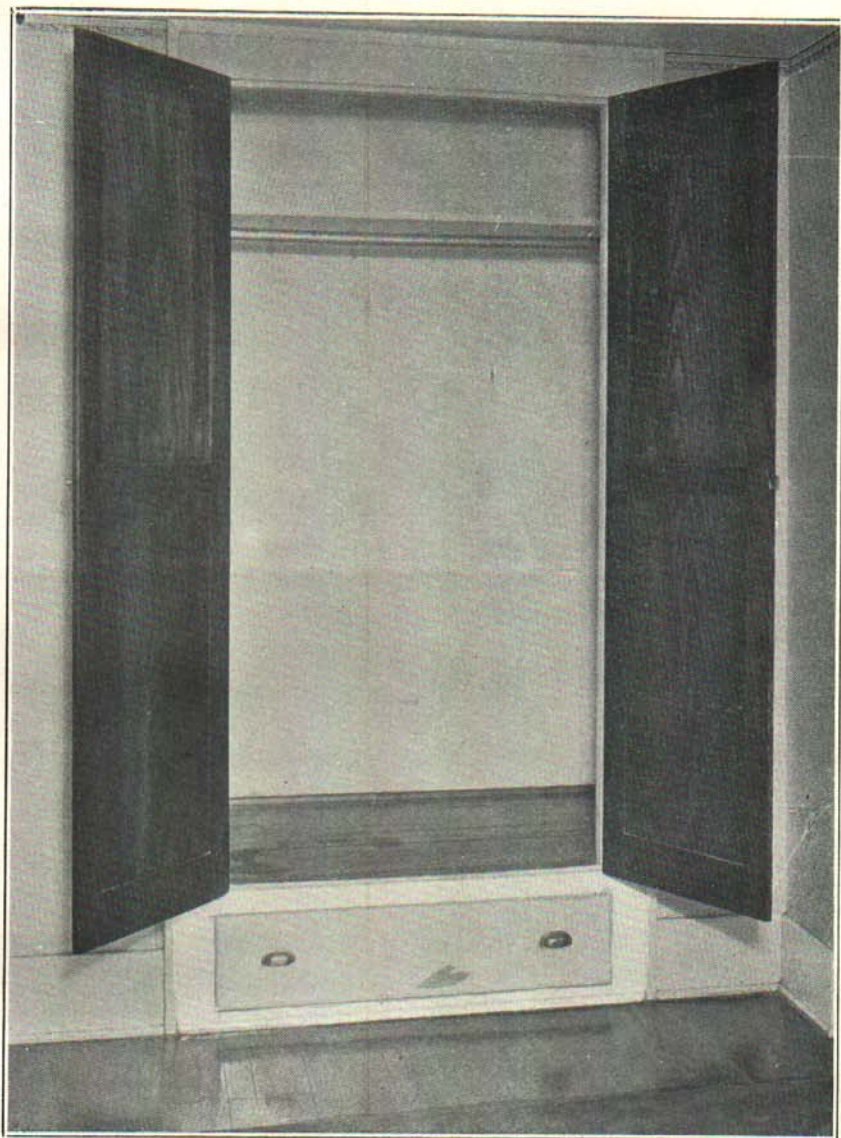


Fig. 2. The wardrobe pictured here measures two by five feet and is an example of what might be done between two bedrooms. A similar wardrobe opens into the adjoining room. Note the shelf, rod for hangers, and drawer at the bottom.

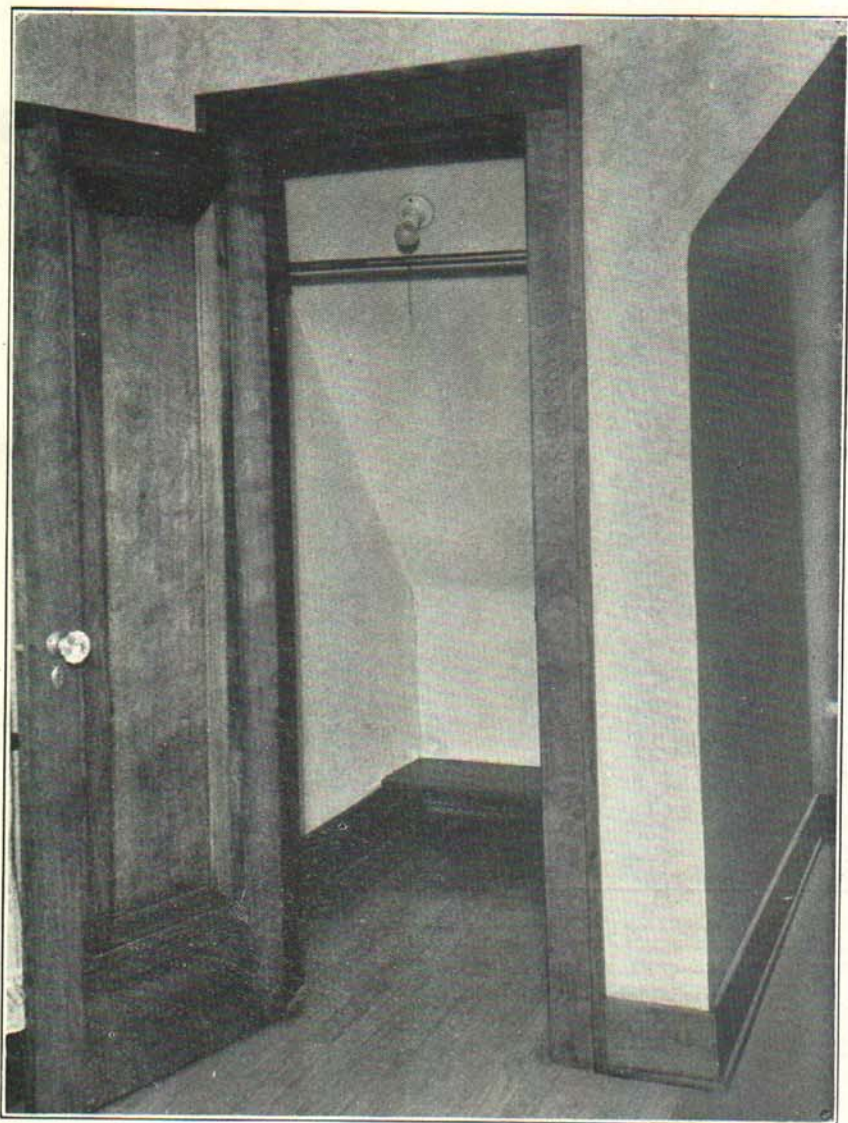


Fig. 3. This shows very clearly the use of space under the roof near the eaves. Note these particularly desirable features: a rod for hangers, shelf for shoes or boxes, and the light.





Fig. 4. The narrow attic stairway which is seldom used offers another possibility for two closets in this bedroom. The closet at the foot of the stairway is equipped with a rod for hangers and hooks for clothing. Due to the slant of the staircase, only hooks could be used in the other closet. This might also have been divided into shelf and drawer space.



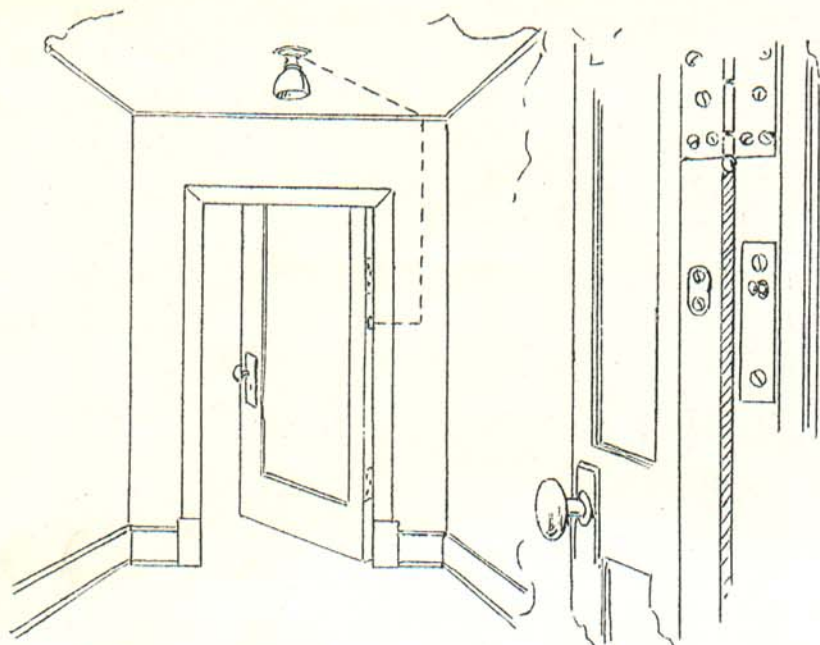


Fig. 5. The deluxe method for operating the closet light is shown here. The automatic switch controls the closet light by the opening and closing of the door. Contact is made and broken on the hinged side of the door. The above sketch shows the light as it appears from the inside of the closet.

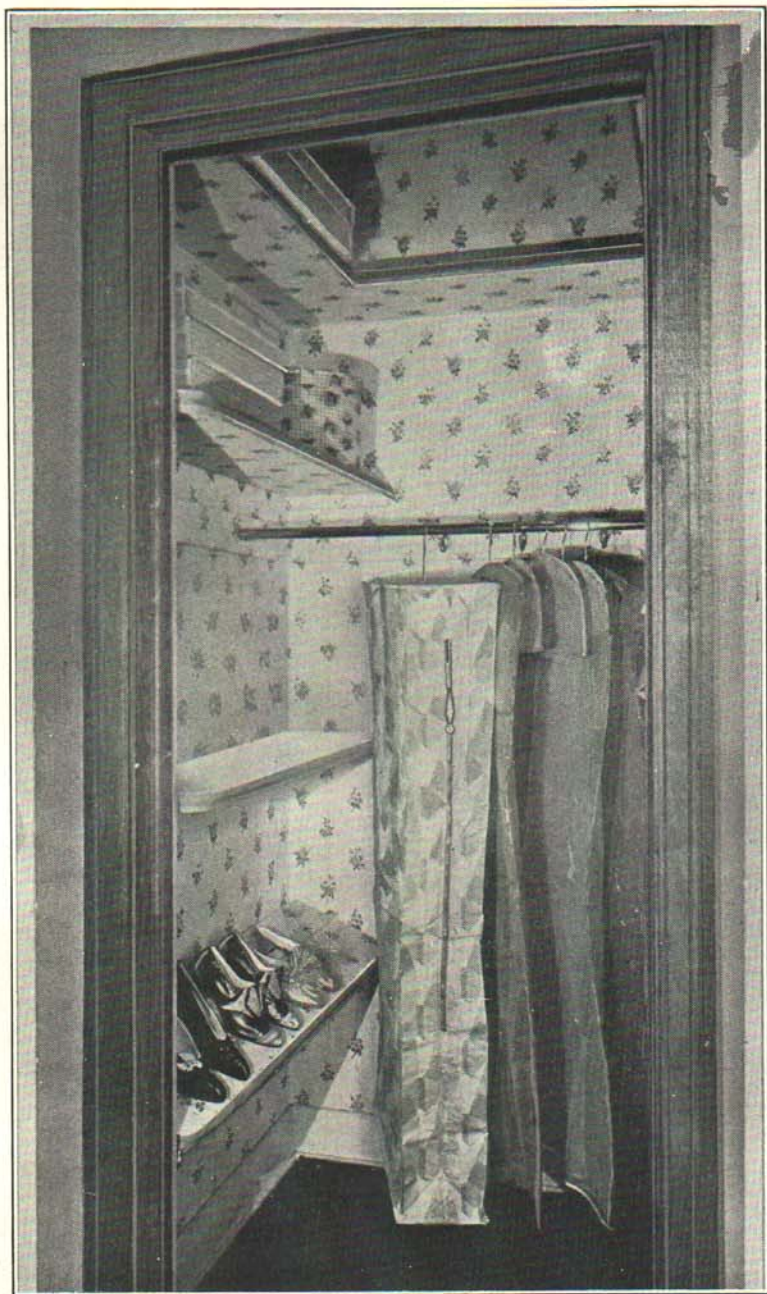


Fig. 6. An excellent utilization of space. There are shelves for shoes, hats and boxes, and a rod for hangers. It is a closet without anything on the floor to be moved when cleaning is done.

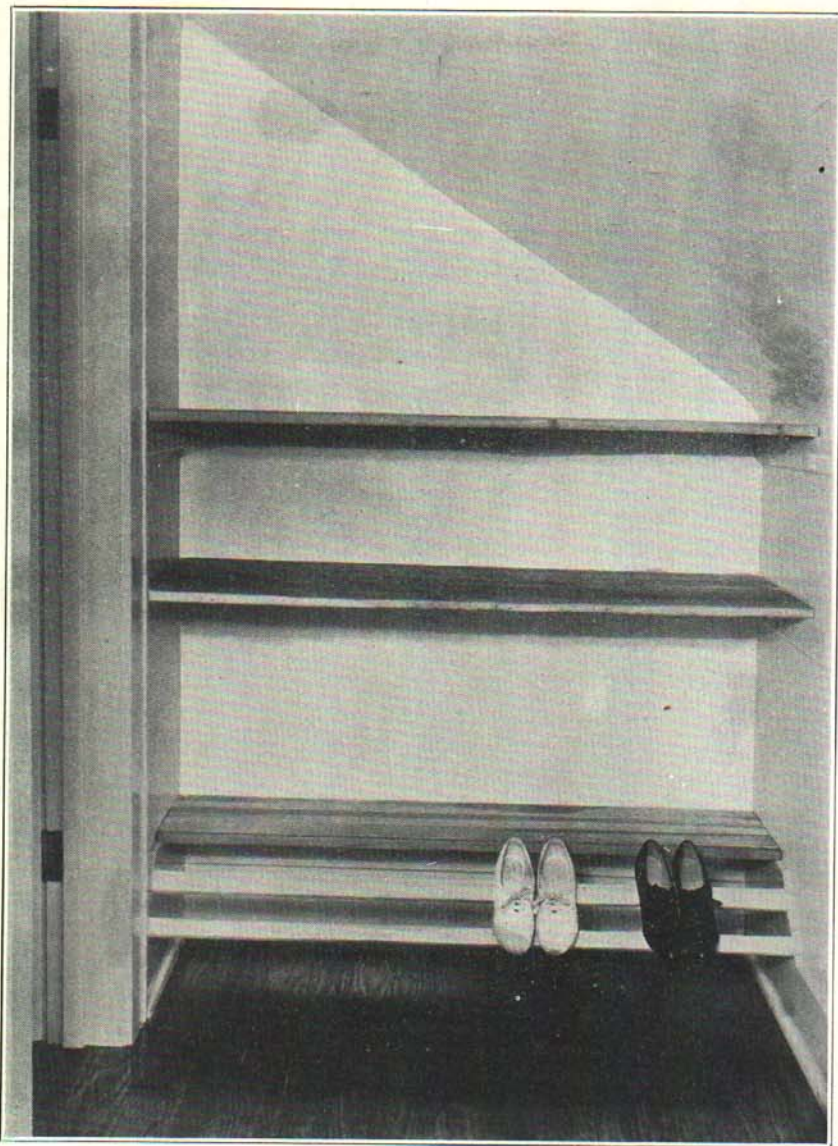


Fig. 7. This spacious closet, only the one end of which is pictured here, measures 5 by 10 feet and was built of waste attic space. Note the very convenient shelves which can be used for storage of luggage, and extra bedding. The shoe rack enables one to keep shoes off floor and it is high enough that dusting can be done without removing shoes from rack.



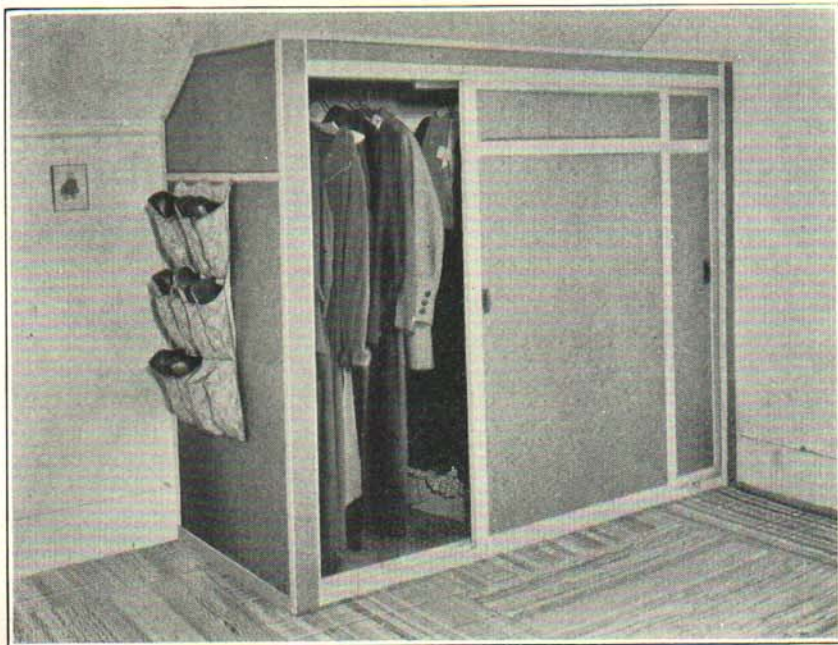


Fig. 8. When no other arrangement can be made for closet space in the top floor bedroom, a wardrobe of this type will prove very satisfactory. It should be at least 24 inches wide in order that hangers can be hung on the rod which extends the full length of the wardrobe. It is built of wall-board and very inexpensive wood stripping. The doors are of the sliding type thus making it possible to utilize more of the floor space near the wardrobe. Building the wardrobe to the ceiling would eliminate a dust catcher. The shoe bag does not add to the attractiveness of the room and should, if space permitted, be hung out of sight.

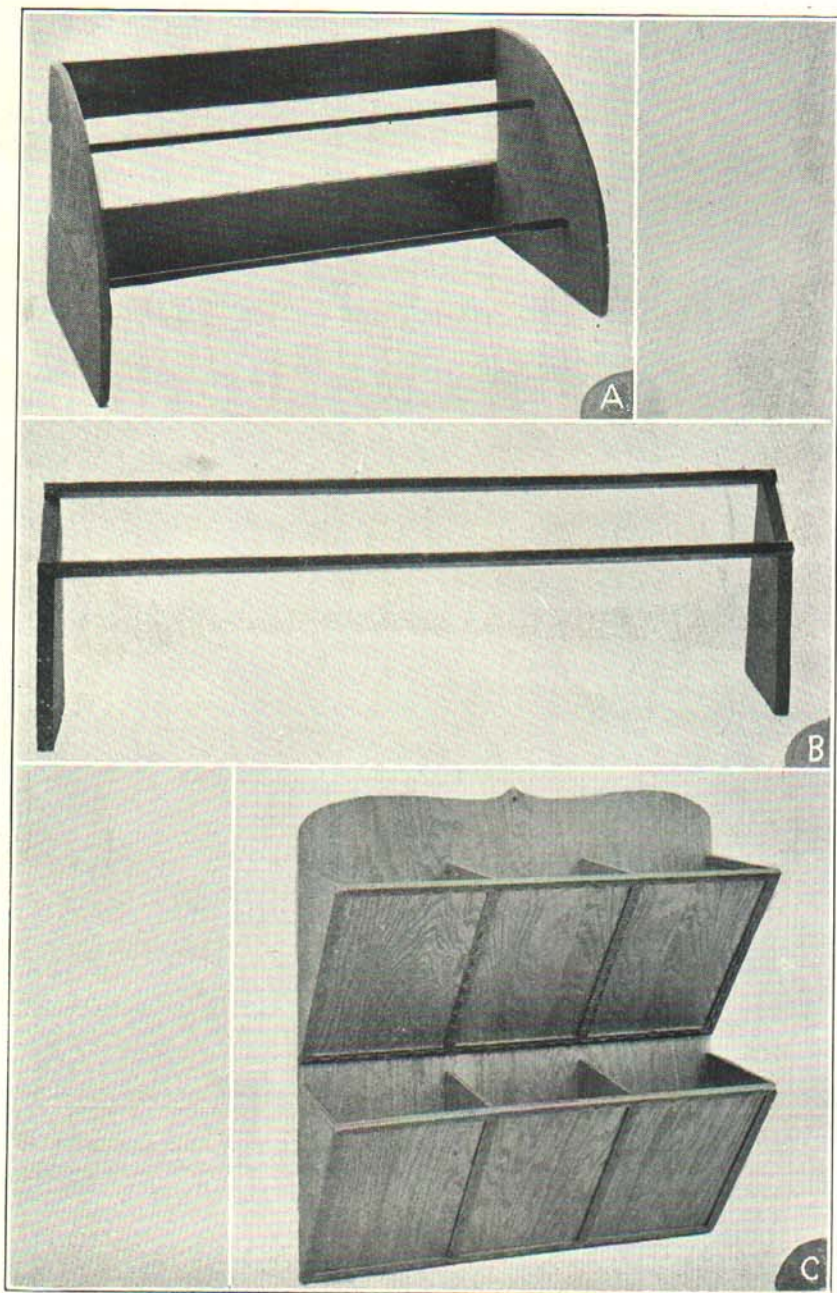


Fig. 9A and 9B. Two very easily constructed shoe racks. Because the rack in 9B is not braced it should fit snugly into the end of a closet.

Fig. C. A rack to be hung in the back entrance and used for rubbers, overshoes, skates, and mittens.





Fig. 10. A linen and bedding closet conveniently located in the central hallway of the second floor. The broad deep shelves and drawers are particularly convenient for storing bulky articles. There is a ceiling light fixture which operates by a pull cord.



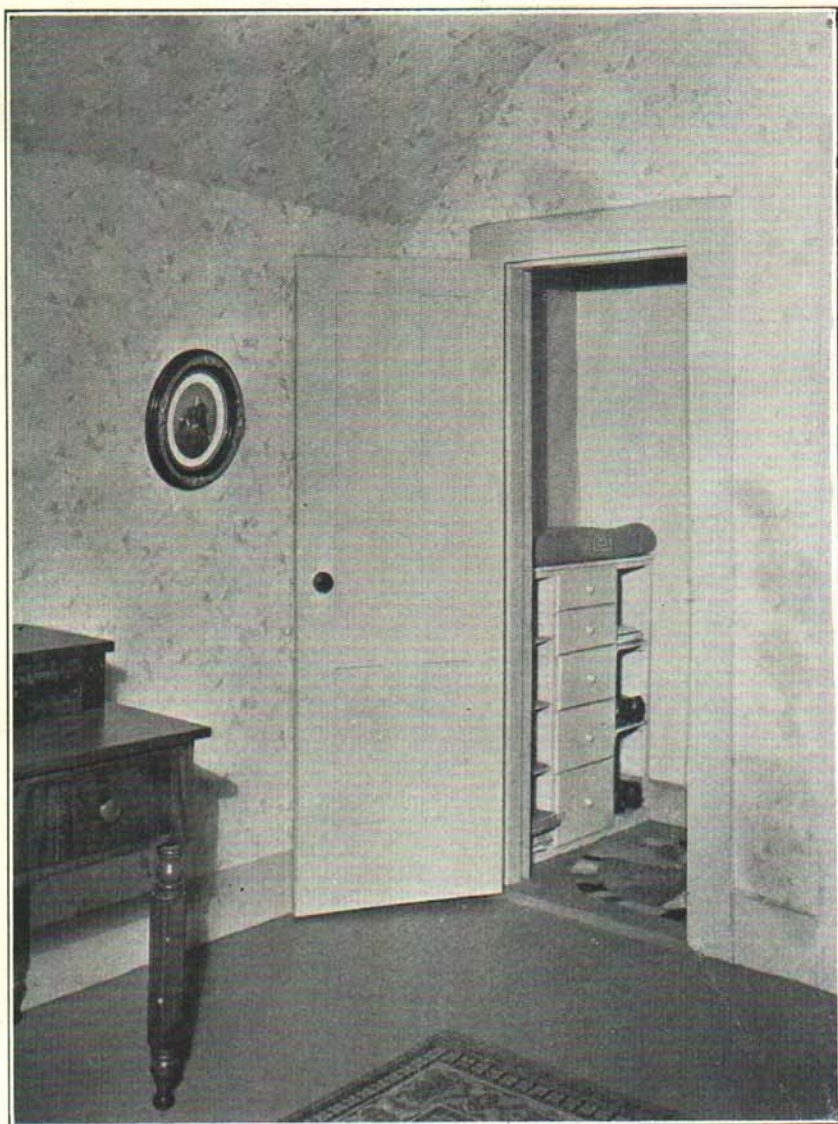


Fig. 11. Wise utilization of the end of a closet. The lower section of drawers and shelves can be used for storing clothing or smaller articles while on the upper section the extra bedding can be kept. Shelves could be built to the ceiling and thus increase the storage space.



Fig. 12. A bedding and luggage cupboard which extends into the attic. Sliding doors are used to conserve room space,



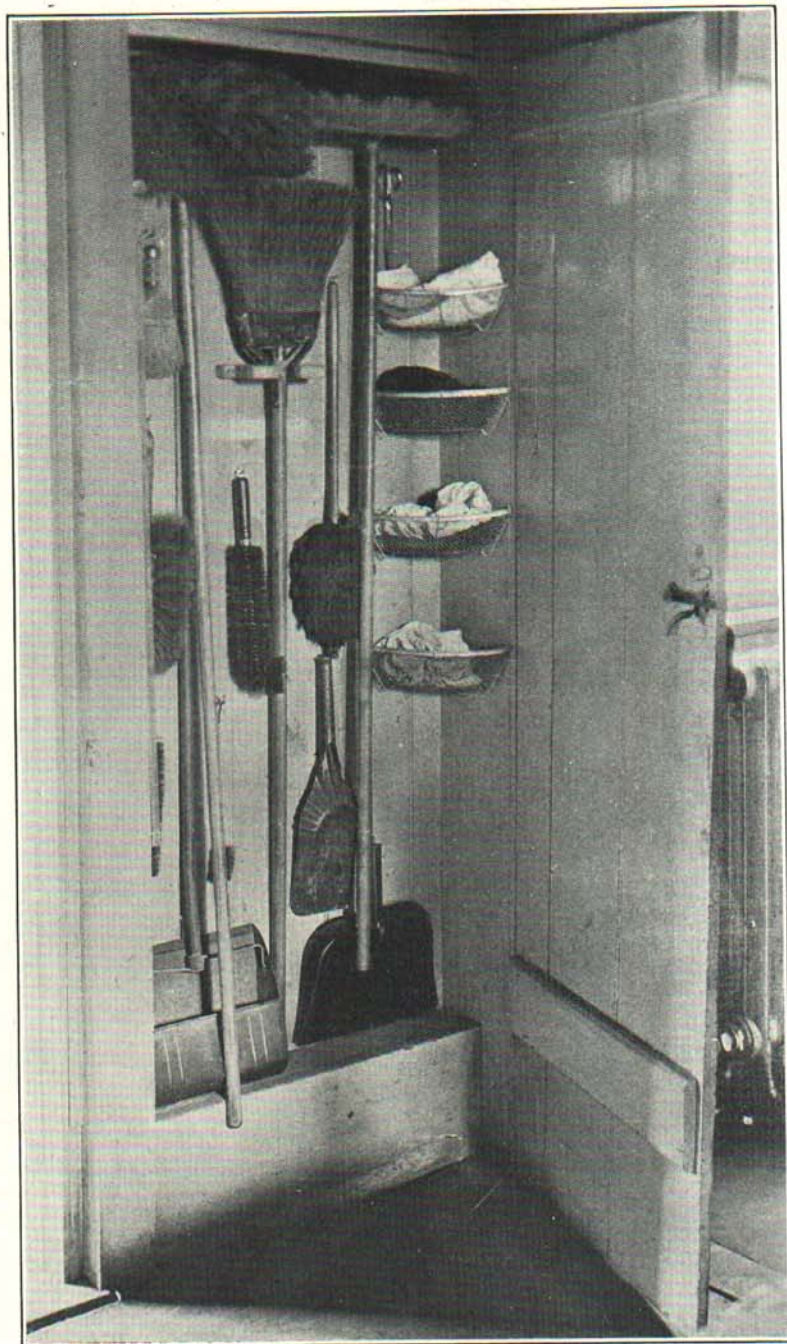


Fig. 13. Cleaning closet built in between studs. There is a hook for everything. The wire sink strainers make practical shelves for dusters.

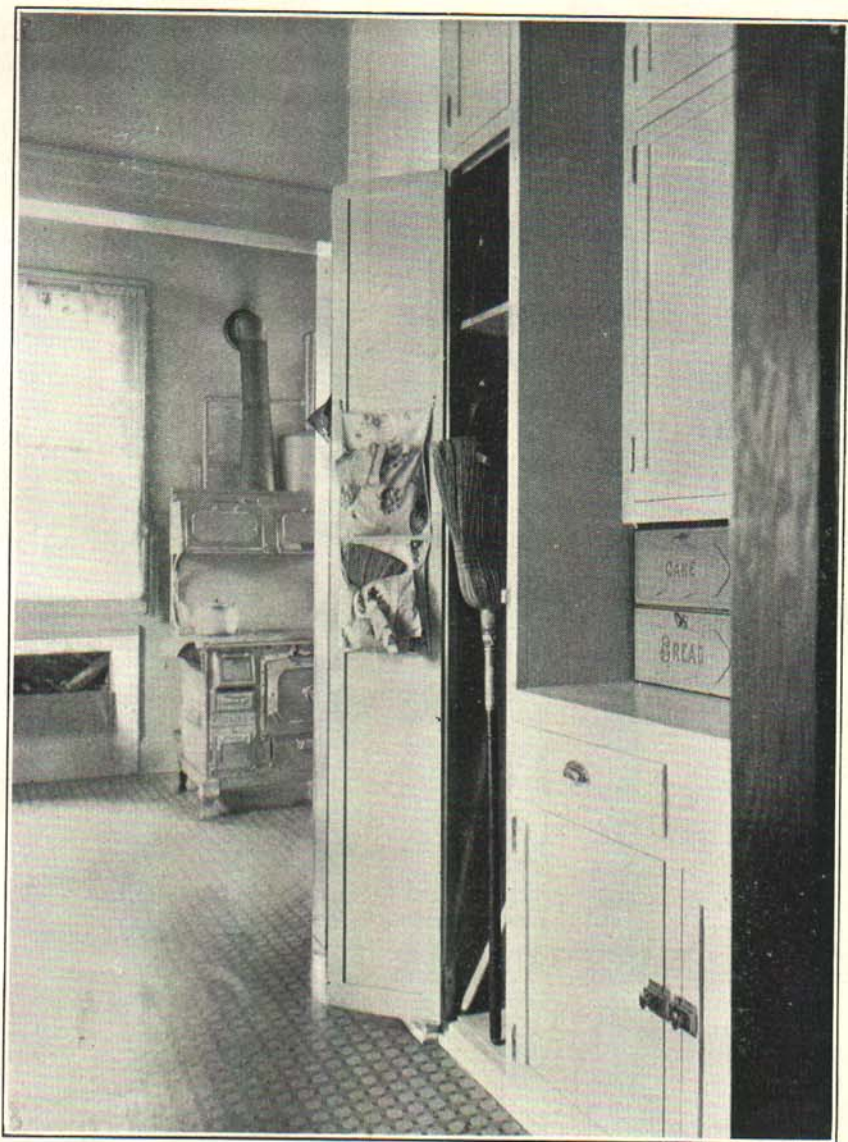


Fig. 14. Cleaning equipment is stored in one section of the built in kitchen cabinet. The height makes it possible to store long handled equipment. The shelf can be used for cleaning supplies. Note the handy wood box built into the wall next to the kitchen range. It is filled from the outside.



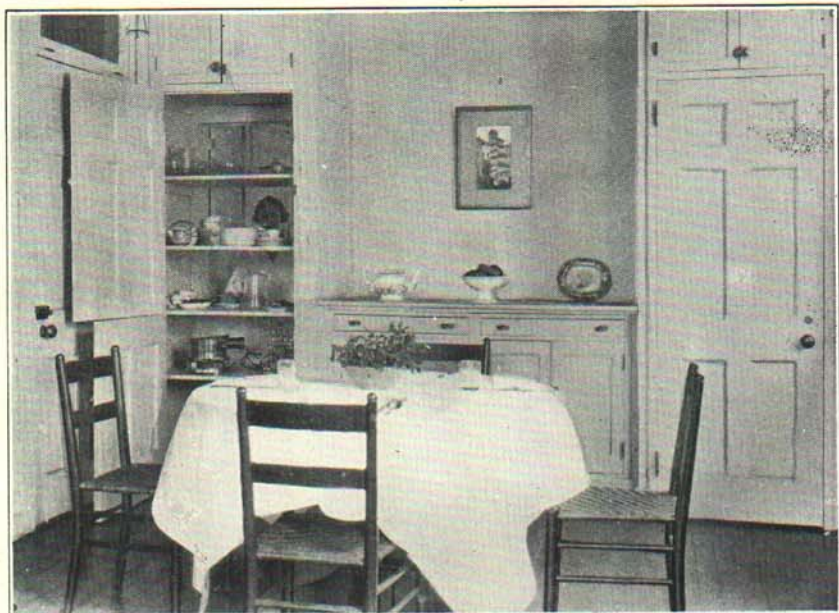


Fig. 15. An attractive built in pass cupboard and buffet for the dining room. Though spacious it is not heavy looking as so many cupboards of this type are. Note the storage cupboards above the hall door and pass cupboard.



Fig. 16. A dumb waiter such as the one pictured here saves many steps to the basement and is a satisfactory substitute for a refrigerator except during the extreme hot weather. It should be built so it is easily pulled up and can be securely fastened into position.





Fig. 17. A kitchen cabinet such as this one adds much to the efficiency and attractiveness of the kitchen. To increase storage space additional shelves should be added to the dish section of the cabinet. Note the rack in lower section for storing lids and pie tins in upright position. Vertical shelves might be used in place of this rack. The hooks for frequently used small articles facilitate ease in food preparation.

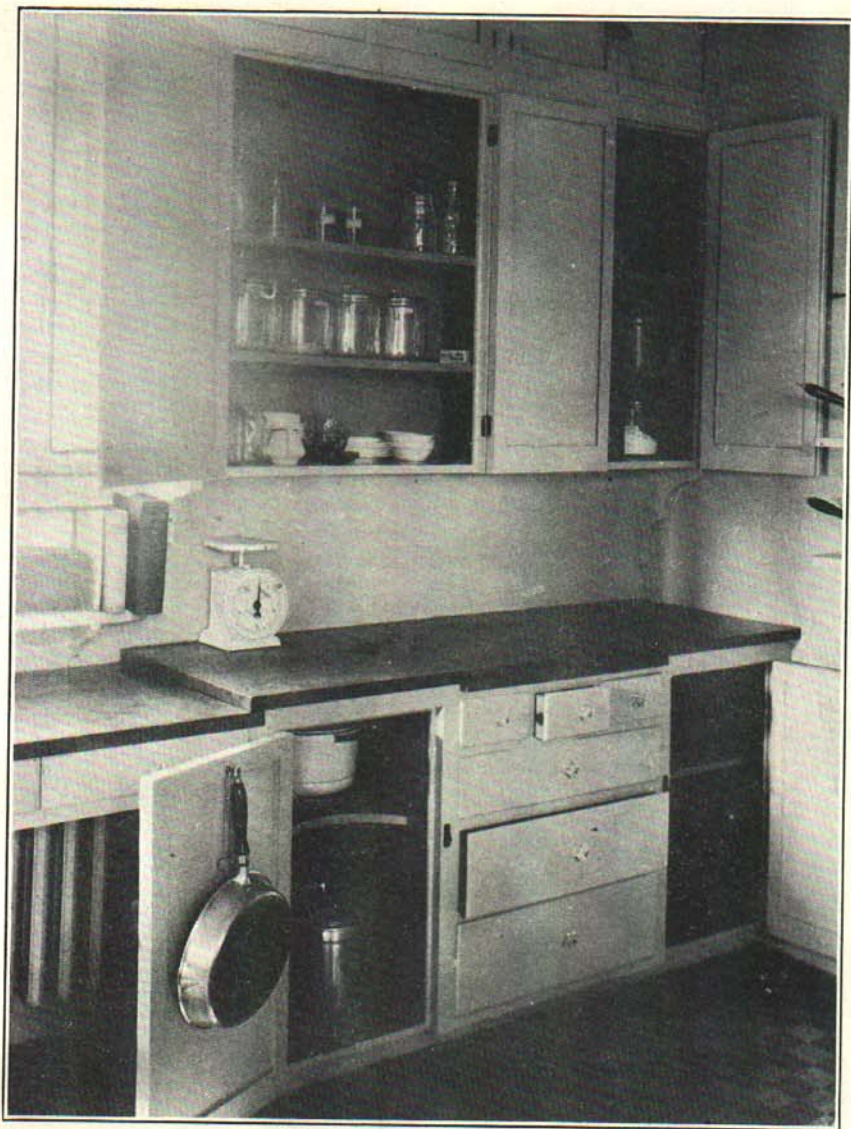


Fig. 18. This kitchen cabinet has several particularly desirable features—  
toe space at the base, graduated drawers, cupboard for storing large cooking  
utensils, space over radiator utilized, shelf for cook books, and cupboard ex-  
tends to ceiling. Observe the shape of the shelf in lower left hand cupboard  
which makes it possible to hang frying pan on door. The dish cupboard should  
have additional shelf at top.



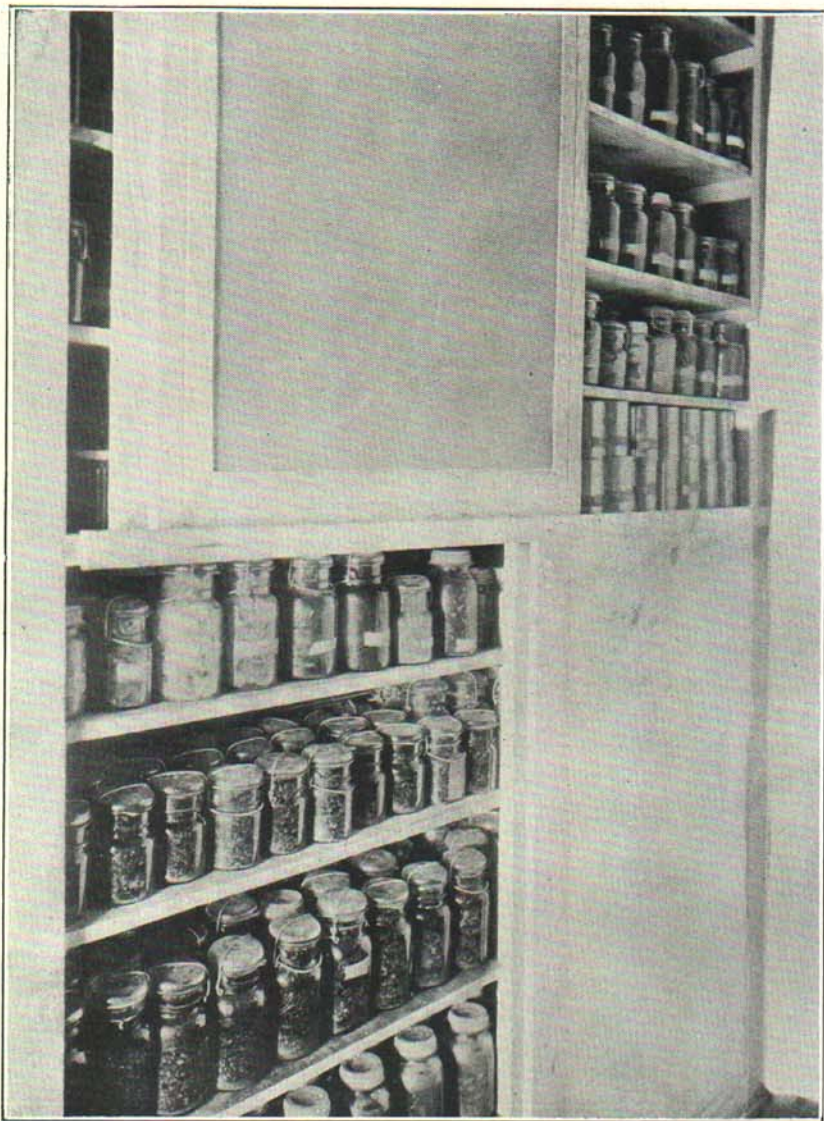


Fig. 19. The arrangement pictured here for the storage of canned products protects them from light and dust by the addition of sliding doors to the shelves. If the groove is kept waxed the doors slide easily and do not require floor space when being opened.



Fig. 20. Wise utilization of a corner for open book shelves. It is a cheerful part of the room where any one would enjoy spending time reading. Note the very excellent source of daylight.



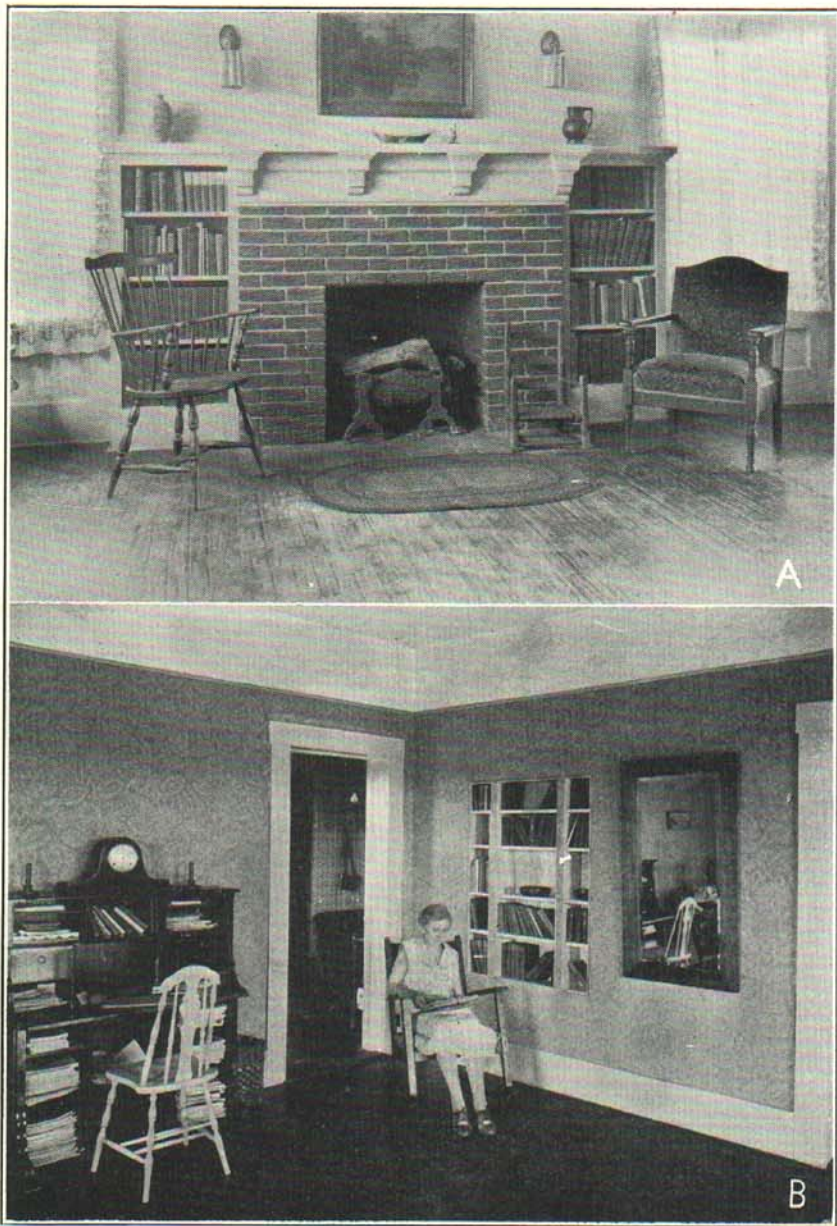


Fig. 21A. Open shelves for books on either side of the fireplace frequently invite people to take a few minutes for reading. The large windows insure good light during the day but two floor lamps or small tables and table lamps are needed to make night reading the most comfortable.

Fig. 21B. When the depth of the partition permits open shelves such as these can be built into the wall and make an additional storage space for books. Magazines are stored in lower part of desk.



Fig. 22. An inexpensive yet attractive and roomy space for both books and magazines. The shelves and rack could be very easily constructed by an amateur carpenter.





Fig. 23. The combination of the ironing and sewing center has many advantages. In sewing, the ironing board is often used, and when ironing it is convenient to change work by mending part of the time. Behind the ironing board are shelves for storing sewing supplies. The drawers below the ironing board can be used for sewing and ironing equipment. The electric sewing machine is placed in a hinged shelf. When the machine is not in use it can be removed and stored away and the shelf fastened up on the wall. This shelf would also be convenient for stacking clothes or holding the clothes basket when ironing. This unit has good lighting and ventilation which is very important for such a center.



Fig. 24A. When no other opening for a clothes chute can be made the method used in illustration 24A will prove satisfactory. The small door is on hinges and though one must stoop to open it many trips to the basement are saved. A small rug can conceal the opening.

Fig. 24B. This device for catching the soiled clothes as they come down the chute is built of  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch hardware cloth and 1 by 4 lumber. It is large enough to hold a fair sized washing, well ventilated, and convenient to reach when removing the clothes. A sorting table placed directly under it eliminates unnecessary stooping while sorting the clothes.





