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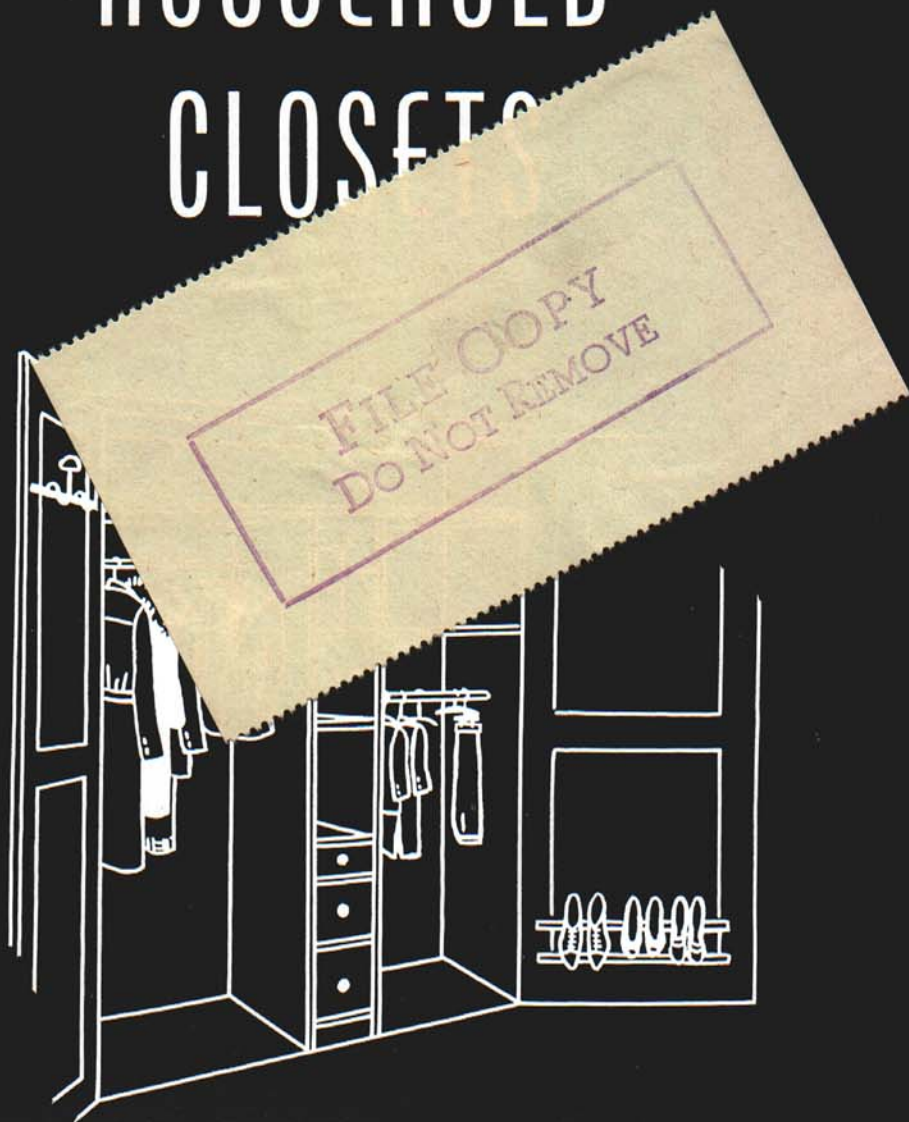
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Household Closets
Michigan State University Extension Service
Julia Pond, Helen Noyes
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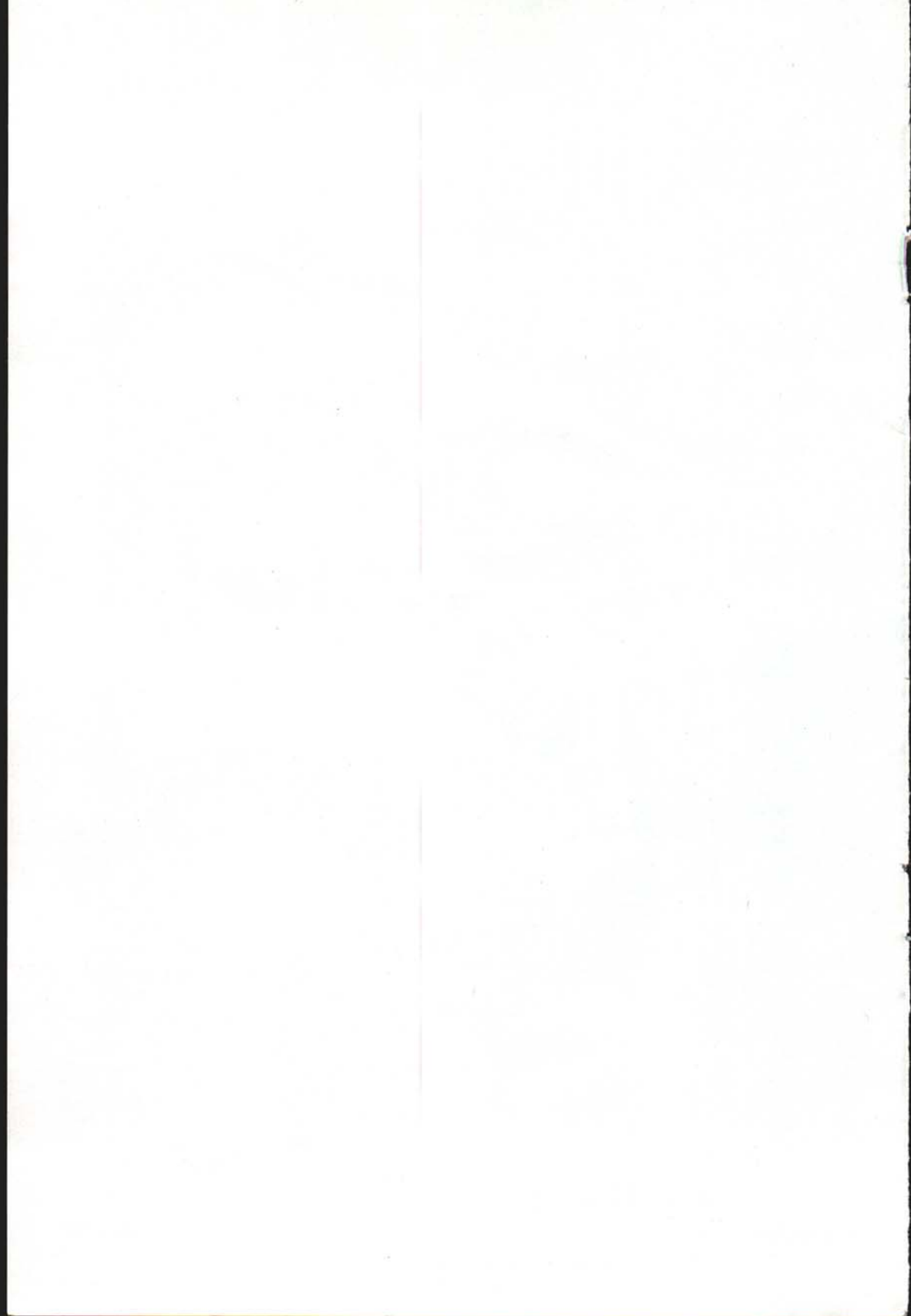


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HOUSEHOLD CLOSETS

JULIA POND AND HELEN NOYES

Sufficient and well-planned storage space is a necessity for a happy, smooth-running home. Family members learn habits of orderliness if convenient storage space is provided for their use. They also have a feeling of satisfaction and belonging in the family if permitted to have a place of their own in which to keep their possessions. Time, energy, money and confusion are saved by making it possible for one to locate articles without hunting for them, by keeping the house in order, and by protecting the articles to be stored from dust and dirt. These factors mean that the length of life is increased and the upkeep and cleaning costs of personal and household goods are decreased.

Sometimes the problem is not one of adding closets but that of making better use of the space in those they already have. An extra shelf or an additional rod will often provide the space needed. Shelves, rods for hangers, and hooks can be used where conditions will not permit other types of storage.

LOCATION OF CLOSETS

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 that does not furnish a closet or cupboard near the back entrance for outside work clothing. This closet is more convenient if located in the back service hall than in the kitchen. 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 should be provided in closets and placed so that they may be easily reached by both adults and children.

FLOOR PLANS

"All clothes closets are basically the same regardless of their location. No matter what the shape of the space available for a clothes closet, one of the six plans on pages 4 and 5 can be adopted. Minimum dimensions marked on the plans may be increased and the arrangement then varied by adding hooks, trays, shelves, drawers, and racks for shoes. Clothing on hangers is indicated by the lines drawn at right angles to the rods."*

*Wilson, Maud; Dodge, Robert J.; Edwards, Alma — Closets and Storage Space, U.S.D.A. Farmers Bulletin, No. 1865.

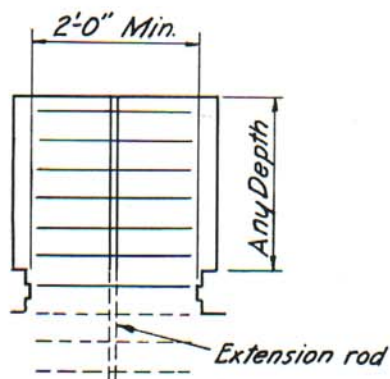


Fig. 1.

Fig. 1. The narrow closet with an extension rod is a good arrangement where there is a limited amount of space to use. It can be any depth. A minimum of 24 inches must be allowed for garments to hang on the rod. Because the rod is pulled forward for placing and removing articles, the door must be at least 24 inches wide to permit clearance.

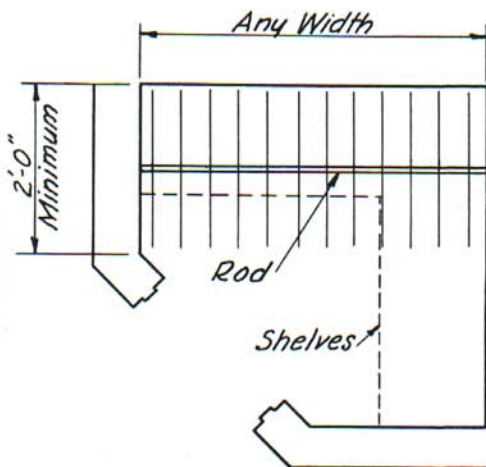


Fig. 2.

Fig. 2. A corner closet takes a small floor area and has no sharp corner to project into the room to interfere with the passageway through it. Allow a minimum of 24 inches for the garments to hang on the rod. Shelves may be placed above the rod and from the floor to ceiling in the space at the right of the door. See Figs. 9 and 10 for a suggested spacing of shelves for storage of shoes, hats, and garments in drawers.

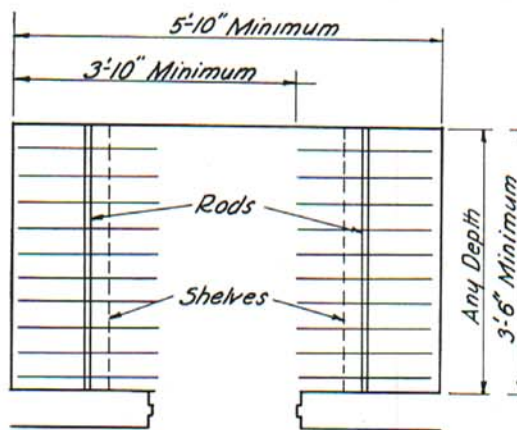


Fig. 3.

Fig. 3. The walk-in type of closet with two rods for hangers may be any depth desired. In this drawing, 24 inches is allowed for clothes hangers on each rod and 22 inches between garments for passageway. Hooks may be placed on the wall at the back or, if it is a deep closet, a series of shelves about 12 inches deep might be used. Shelves can be placed above the rods. If one rod is sufficient space for garments on hangers one side of the closet might be filled with shelves.

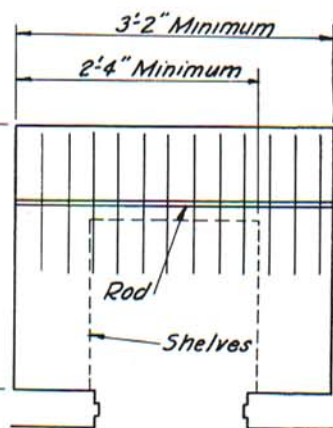


Fig. 4.

Fig. 4. A closet of the walk-in type with a single rod across the back should be at least 3½ feet in depth. This allows 24 inches for garments on hangers and 18 inches for either hooks or a series of shelves from floor to ceiling on each side of the door. Shelves may be placed above the rod and hooks. The door might be placed in the end of the closet, if desired. This would make an L-shaped shelf arrangement.

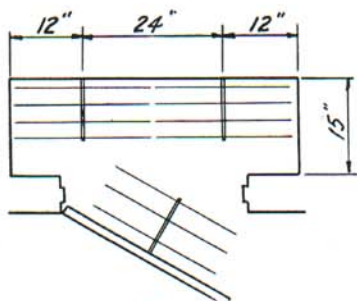


Fig. 5.

Fig. 5. When depth is too narrow to permit the use of a rod for hangers, large hooks approximately 7 inches long which accommodate 6 hangers may be used as indicated above. The space between the hooks must be at least 24 inches. If needed, a third hook may be placed on the door as shown.

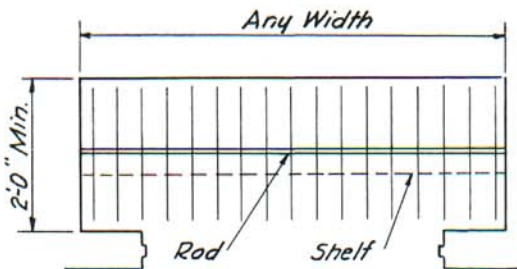


Fig. 6.

Fig. 6. Another possibility for the shallow closet. In order that clothes hung on hangers will not brush the wall or door, the minimum depth of this type closet is 24 inches. If possible, the opening should be about as wide as the closet. When openings of more than 2 feet 8 inches are needed it is best to have two doors.

BEDROOM CLOSETS AND WARDROBES

In homes in which bedrooms are small the wardrobe type of closet is the most economical use of space. It should be at least 24 inches deep or wide in order that hangers can be hung on the rods. Figures 6 and 7 (on this page) and Figs. 8

and 9 (on the following pages) are all examples of this type of closet. In Fig. 7 the wardrobe is built of wall board and inexpensive wood stripping. The doors are of the sliding type thus making it possible to utilize more of the floor space.

The built-in wardrobes, such as pictured on page 6 in Fig. 8 and on



Fig. 7. Wardrobe with sliding doors.

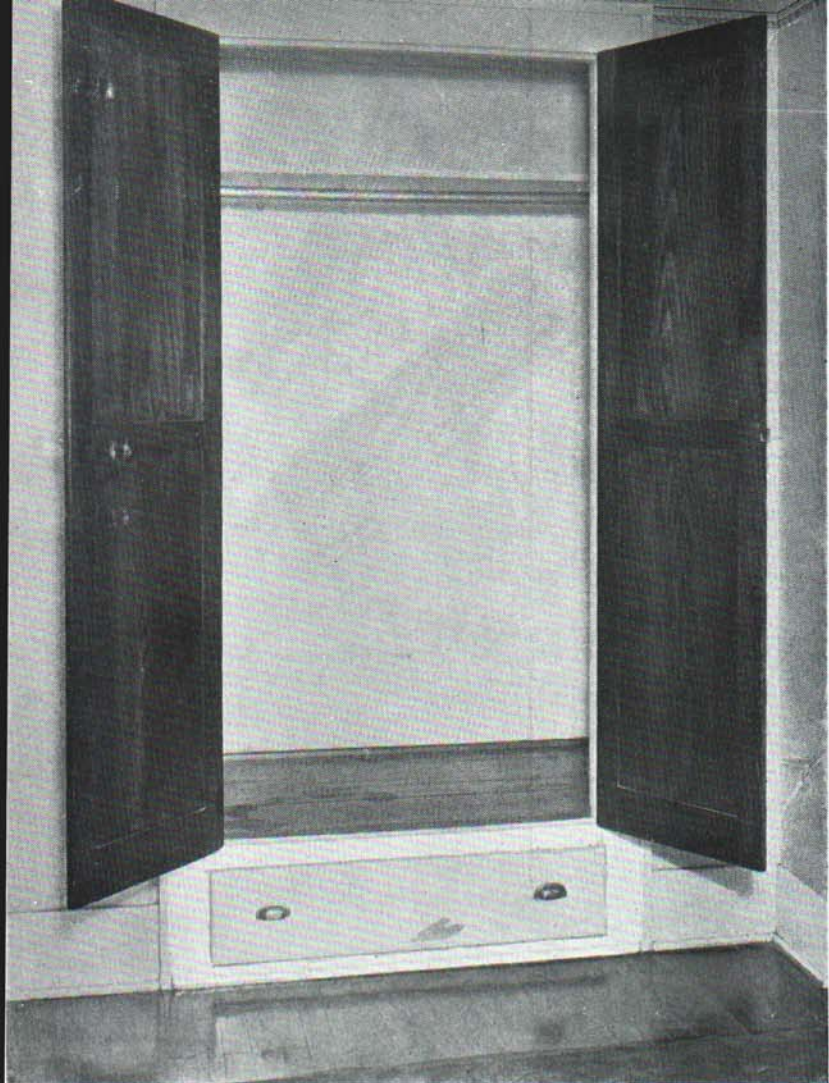


Fig. 8. Wardrobe built into wall.

the adjoining page in Fig. 9, make excellent use of the floor space. Because they do not extend out into the room they are less conspicuous and more attractive than the one on page 5. The one in Fig. 8 is 2 x 5 feet and extends from floor to ceiling. In both, the rods are placed 63 inches from the floor for adults clothing. The section of trays and shelves in Fig. 9 provides space for storing such articles as shoes, underwear, and hats.

Walk-in types of closets, such as in Fig. 10 (page 7), take more floor

space than the wardrobe closet does but they can be equipped to utilize most of the space. Rods can be placed as indicated in Fig. 10 or as in Figs. 2, 3, and 4. Shelves above the rods and in one end or side of the closet provide space for shoes, hats, etc. They should be spaced according to articles to be stored on them.

Few homes, if any, have more closet space than is needed or desired. In many instances, it is possible to utilize the space under the roof near the eaves or waste

attic space. Though the closet shown in Fig. 11 is small it is much better than none and, perhaps, two closets of this type might be possible in a bedroom where one large closet is out of the question. There are several desirable features: a rod for hangers, shelf for shoes and a light. Light is important in all closets. If electricity is available the problem is an easy one.

A wall switch near the closet door makes for ease in turning lights on and off. Pull-cords attached to the ceiling fixture can be used and are less expensive. Where electricity cannot be used, a flashlight hung in a convenient place is advisable. For the sake of safety provide some light other than matches, candles, or oil lamps. Light-colored walls reduce the lighting problem.

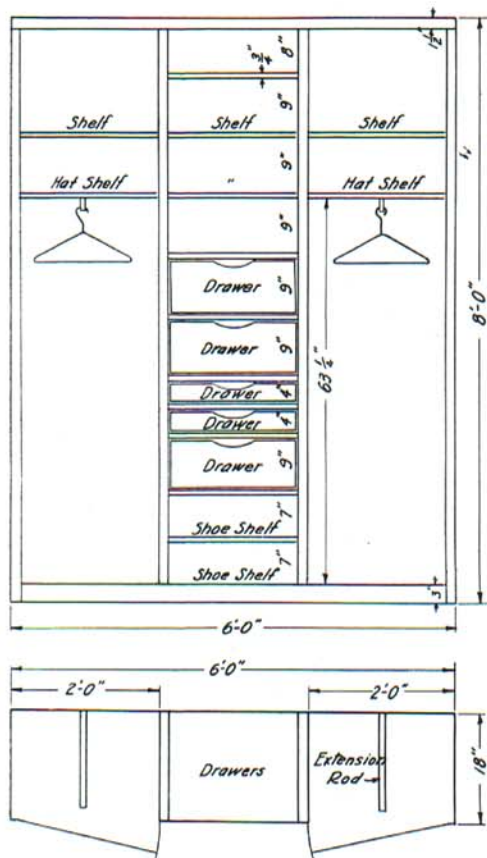


Fig. 9. Plan for built-in wardrobe.

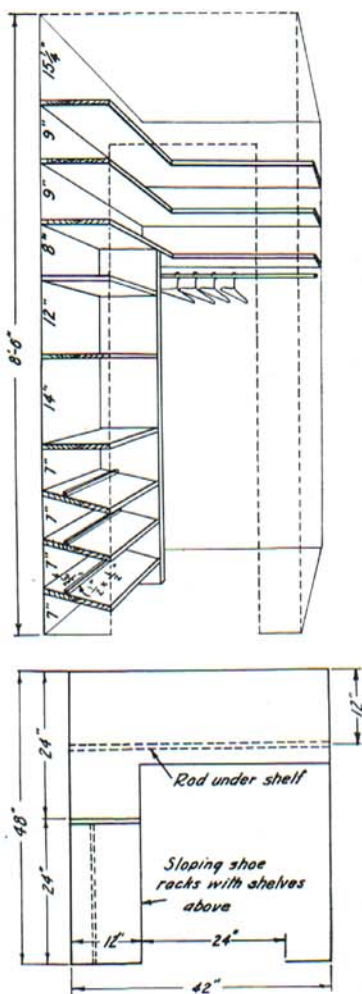


Fig. 10. Plan for walk-in type closet with rod and shelves.

CLOSETS FOR OUTDOOR CLOTHING

Provisions need to be made in every home for storing the good wraps and the work clothes worn by family members. These closets need to be located near the entrances where the coats are removed. Floor plans for such closets and wardrobes are basically the same as those shown on pages 4 and 5.

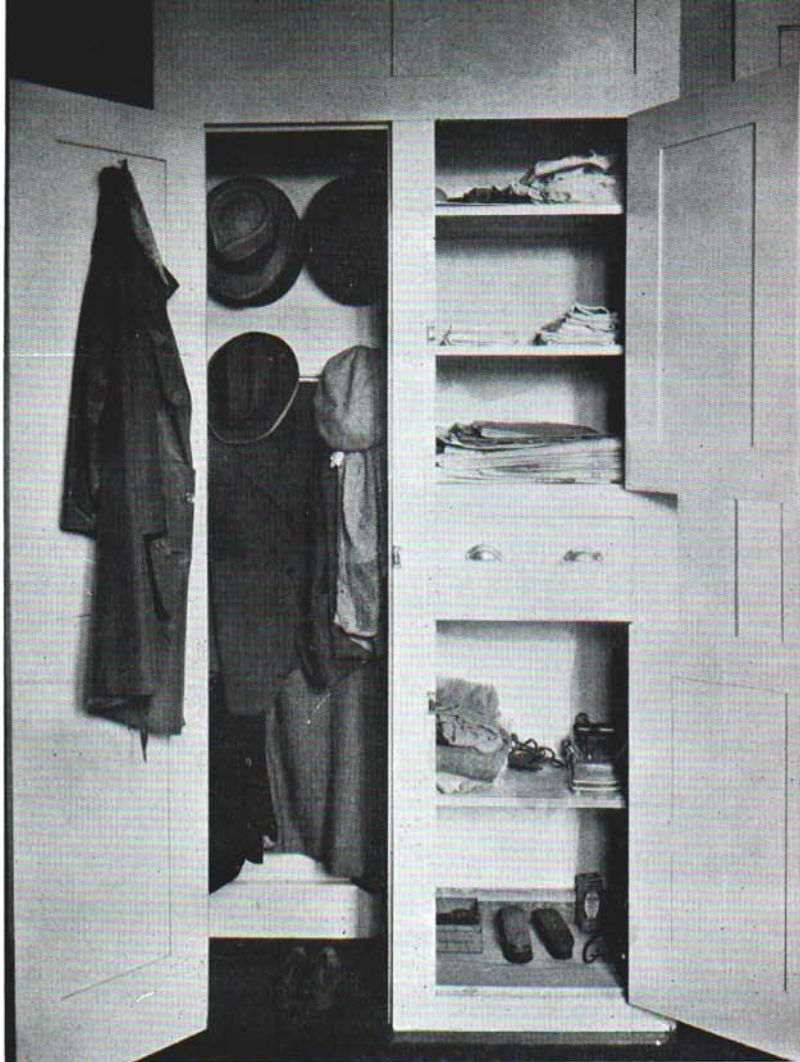
For good coats it is important to provide storage that will prevent the garments from crushing and wrinkling. The picture on page 10, (Fig. 13) illustrates a closet planned for the use of both adults and children. It may be of the shallow or walk-in type depending upon the space available.

The rod for the adults' clothing is 63 inches from the floor while that of the children's clothing is 45 inches from the floor. The lower



Fig. 11. Closet built under the caves.

Fig. 12. Storage for everyday wraps.



shelf is $48\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the floor and can be used by the children for their hats, shoes, etc. The second shelf, which is $66\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the floor, provides space for such articles as hats of the adults. The third shelf can be omitted if desired. It would, however, provide storage for seldom-used articles. The lower shelf and rod should be installed in such a way that they can be easily raised or removed.

Hooks, rather than rods, are often used in closets where every-

day wraps and chore clothes are stored. Hooks for coats and jackets for adults can be placed about 55 inches from the floor and for longer garments 60-65 inches. Hooks for overalls need to be about 68 inches high. Those for children may be about 48 inches from the floor. Hooks are usually set 12 inches apart and $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the corner (Fig. 12 above).

Ventilation is important in closets for outdoor clothing. Some provision for this can be made in the

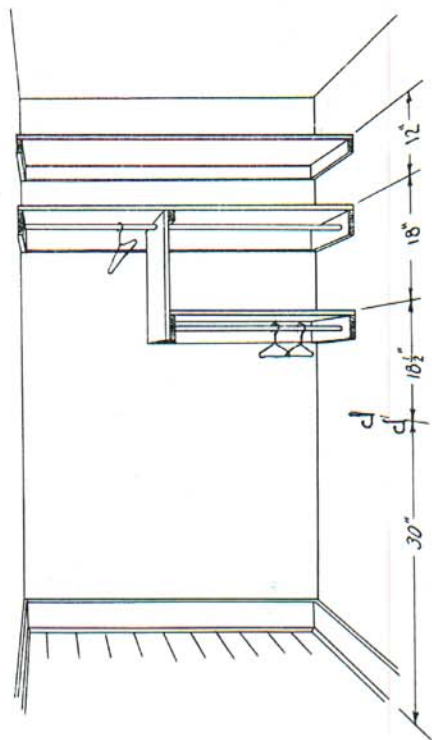


Fig. 13. Closet for outdoor wraps of adults and children.

door. Overshoes and rubbers may be kept on a rack set 3 inches from the floor. It can be made of slats or hardware cloth and should be removable so that the floor under it can be cleaned.

Storage space for children's outdoor clothing is provided in the portable cupboard in Fig. 20. The space at the top is for caps, mittens, and school books. Overshoes and rubbers can be kept on the removable slatted rack or on the suspended snap clothespins.

CLOSET FITTINGS AND EQUIPMENT

The usable storage space in closets and wardrobes often can be increased as much as two or three times if shoe and hat racks, rods, hooks, shelves, drawers, and trays are properly utilized.

Shoe Storage—Some provision for storing shoes is essential in bedroom closets and wardrobes. It is easier to keep the closet orderly and the floor clean if the shoes are not placed directly on the floor.

Racks of many types are available. They may be made of wood as in Figs. 15, 18, and 19 or of wire as in Fig. 17. They may be portable as is the one in Fig. 18 or the type that fits into or is built into the end of a closet as in Figs. 14, and 19, or fastened to a wall or door as in Figs. 15, and 17. All of the racks pictured are homemade ones but commercially made racks may be purchased.

Shelves, such as pictured in Figs. 9, 10, 11, and 16, may be provided for storing shoes. The distance between shelves for storing shoes for adults should be 7 inches. For children 6 inches is sufficient. The width of shelf from front to back should be 12 inches. Eighteen inches of shelf or rack space should be allowed for every two or three pairs of shoes depending upon size of shoes.

Drawers protect shoes from dust and are particularly desirable for storing those that are not worn very often or for seasonal storage. Drawer chests made especially for shoe storage can be purchased for a nominal sum.

Where floor space does not per-

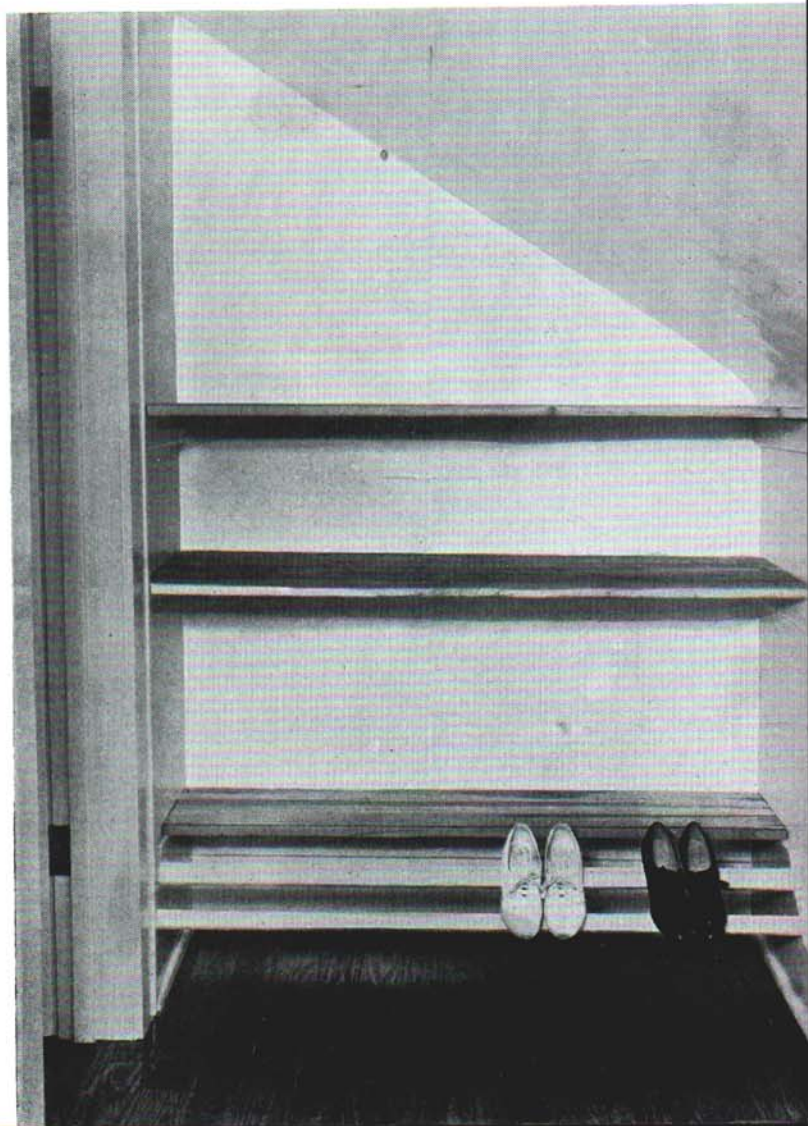
mit the use of racks, shelves, or drawers for shoe storage, a pocket shoe bag, similar to the one shown on page 5, Fig. 7, will prove satisfactory.

Hat Storage — Portable hat stands, or those fastened to the wall or shelf, add to the orderliness of the closet and to the life of the hat. If the stand is of the portable type, one should make certain

that the base is broad enough or that the stand is heavy enough to prevent tipping. Shelves on which hats are to be stored should be at least 9 inches apart and 12-15 inches from front to back. Allow 12 or 14 inches of shelf space for each hat or box.

Hats may be kept in boxes. In fact, boxes are essential for storing hats from one season to another.

Fig. 14. Shelves and shoe rack in one end of closet built under eaves.



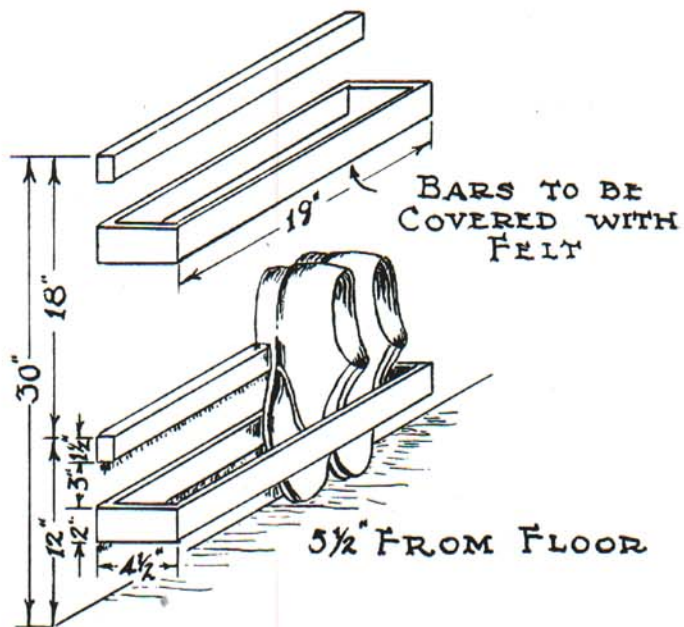


Fig. 15. Shoe rack.

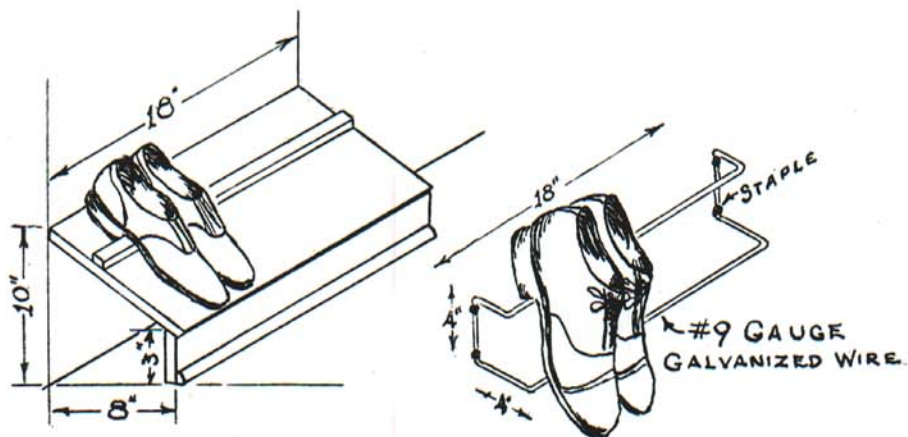


Fig. 16. Shoe shelf.

Fig. 17. Wire rack for shoes.

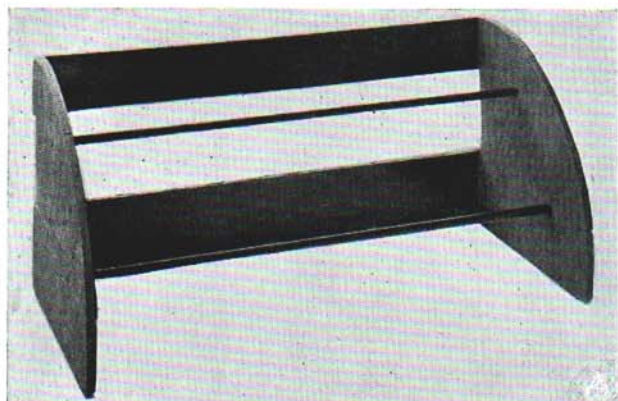


Fig. 18.
Portable
shoe rack.

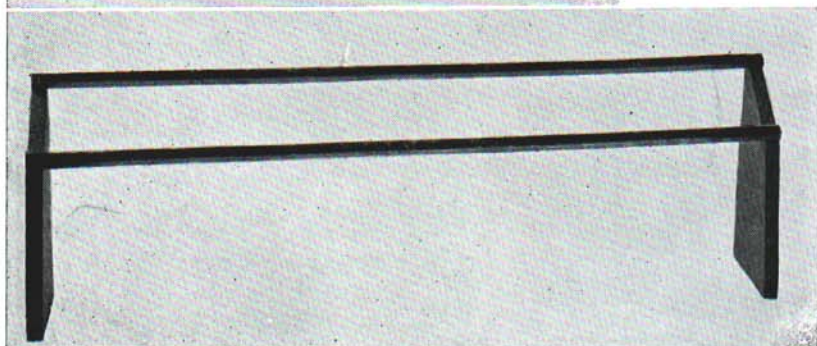


Fig. 19.
Built-in
shoe rack.

Rods and Hooks

Rods in a closet make good use of space and keep clothes from becoming crushed. They may be permanently fastened to the wall or rest in brackets to permit their removal when desired. Wooden curtain poles, galvanized pipe, sturdy broom handles, and commercially made rods may be used.

For shallow closets use extension rods that pull out into the room for removing and placing garments. Stationary brackets or long hooks can also be used in a shallow closet or in one where the slant and height of the ceiling will not permit a long rod. These hooks should be at least 24 inches apart to provide space for garments hung on hangers.

Space Allowances for Hanging Clothes on Rods—

Minimum allowance on rod per person—24 inches.

Minimum distance from top of rod to floor:

- 63 inches for coats and dresses for adults.
- 45 inches for skirts, jackets, shirts, suits and trousers for adults.
- 72 inches for floor length garments for adults.
- 45 inches for children's garments, 6-12 years.
- 30 inches for children's garments, 3-5 years.

Minimum distance from center of rod to wall—12 inches.

Minimum space to allow for garment on hanger—24 inches.

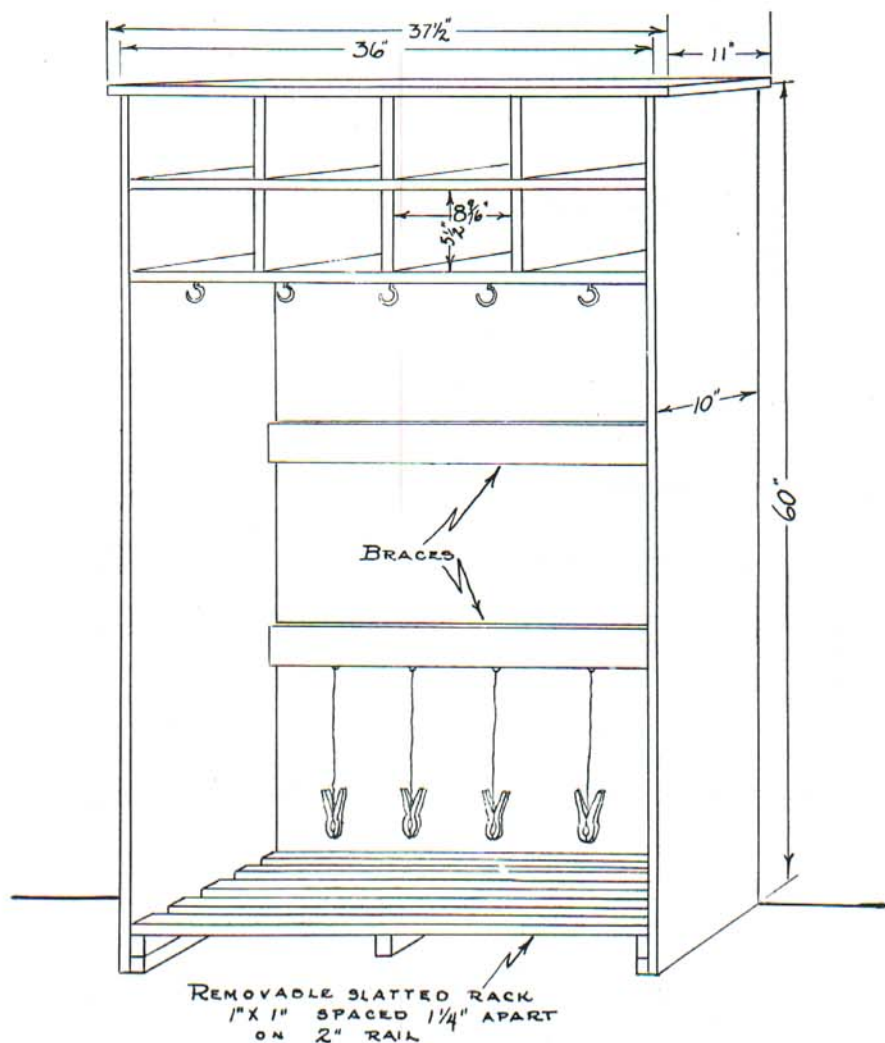


Fig. 20. Rack for children's outdoor clothing.

Allowance on Rods for Garments—

- 2 inches for skirts and suits.
- 1½ inches for shirts and dresses.
- 3 inches for jackets, trousers, and articles stored in moth proof bags.
- 4 inches for overcoats.
- 3-6 inches for coats with fur collars.

2-5 inches for coats without fur collars.

Allow 2½ inches between top of rod and shelf above.

Allow 24 inches space on wall for long hook to hold hangers.

Space Allowances for Clothes on Hooks—

Place hooks at least 5 inches from door.

Place hooks 12 inches or more from rod.

Allow 4 inches between top of hook and bottom of shelf above it.

Door should be 30 inches wide if hooks for hangers are placed on it.

Long hooks 63 inches from floor may hold several garments on hangers.

Hangers, Dress Protectors, and Garment Bags—Hangers for garments should always be provided. Inexpensive wire or wooden ones can be purchased. Those that fit the garments placed on them will decrease the need for pressing. Special skirt and pants hangers are convenient to have. An ordinary towel rack makes a satisfactory rack for ties or belts.

Garments seldom worn will be kept in better condition if covered with some kind of a protector. A discarded sheet makes a good covering, or protectors can be made from closely woven materials such as cretonne, gingham, or seersucker.

Garment bags, large enough to hold several dresses or coats, may be purchased in a variety of materials. While not dust-proof, many

of the materials will keep garments comparatively free from dust and smoke. For that reason, they are useful for storage of garments used only occasionally and for seasonal storage. In a bedroom without a closet, a bag of this type may be hung on a wall hook to provide storage for a few garments. Garment bags are not moth proof unless all openings are sealed.

Trays and Drawers—Trays and drawers in closets are useful for storage of such things as folded clothing, ties, belts, and toilet articles. A satisfactory depth for drawers for clothing is 9 inches. For ties, handkerchiefs and toilet articles, a drawer 4 inches deep is satisfactory. If desired, shelves may be used instead of drawers. They are less expensive to build and will provide sufficient protection for many things.

Mirrors—Full-length mirrors may be placed on walls or doors. The top should be at least 5 feet 11 inches from the floor and the bottom should not be more than 14 inches from the floor.

SPACE ALLOWANCES FOR GARMENTS ON HOOKS

Garments	Distance between hooks	Distance to floor	Distance from hook to corner
Children's Clothing.....	9 inches	30-48 inches	4½ inches
Clothing in Bedroom Closet.....	7 inches	55-65 inches	3½ inches
Men's Outdoor Clothing.....	12 inches	55-65 inches	6 inches
Overalls.....	12 inches	68 inches	6 inches

Closets in which the foregoing principles and suggestions have been followed will be found to have these essential requirements:

- 1. Correct apportionment of space as determined by articles to be stored.*
- 2. Use of all available space through a properly equipped closet.*
- 3. A floor that can be cleaned without moving articles.*
- 4. Convenient access to every garment or article.*
- 5. Adequate light for both day and night.*
- 6. Ventilation, if possible.*
- 7. Adequate protection against dust, insects, and mice.*

Acknowledgment is made to the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture for Figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17; and to the Kellogg Foundation for Fig. 20.