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## Today's Storage

Isabel McGibney

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# TODAY'S STORAGE



Agricultural Extension Service  
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



# TODAY'S STORAGE

By ISABEL MCGIBNEY, Home Management Specialist

Plans for a livable home provide for adequate storage. Plenty of good storage space will save time and energy for the family and will simplify home life.

Most houses built fifty or more years ago have very few closets. Many of these houses are still being used and need more storage space.

The trend is for more built-ins—many and different kinds of closets, cabinets, chests, and storage walls. Some of these storage walls are portable but look built-in.

Whether you are building new, remodeling, or trying to make your home more livable, plan for lots of good storage. It may mean as much as the addition of another room in your house.

This bulletin gives workable plans for closets and storage spaces. Basic dimensions are given. The dimensions may easily be adapted to suit individual cases.

## Advantages

Plenty of well planned storage—"a place for everything"—will

- \* help keep everything in place and ready for use.
- \* save time, steps, and energy frequently spent in picking up, putting away, and hunting for things.
- \* makes the house easier to clean.
- \* helps keep stored articles in good condition.
- \* helps teach children habits of orderliness.
- \* helps children acquire a sense of responsibility.
- \* helps promote respect and care for personal belongings of all family members.

also space will probably be more fully utilized. Closets should not interfere with the main areas of living activities. They should be accessible but inconspicuous. They should also be well lighted.

## Kinds of Storage Space Needed

The kind and amount of storage space needed will depend upon possessions and the interests of family members. Some people like to keep many things, others have hobbies that require special space. When planning storage spaces, start with what the family has and what they do.

## Plan Ahead

Whether the storage is for a new house or an old one the planning will take time. Regardless of who does the work, carpenter or family members, planning must be done well in advance of the work. This will allow for possible revisions, for consideration of location and size, and for looking around for any materials on hand which could be reused to hold down costs. Time will be saved by making a definite plan and

## Location of Storage

It is desirable to store items where they are used most frequently. Decide what kind of storage arrangements are best for each group of items. Look around the house for possible storage space. A floor plan of the house, drawn to scale, will frequently show unrecognized storage possibilities.

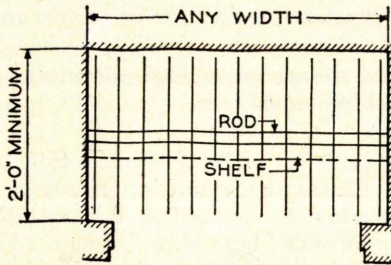
Make closets large enough to hold the things you now have and use. Discard articles not in use.

Locate closets and other storage spaces so they are:

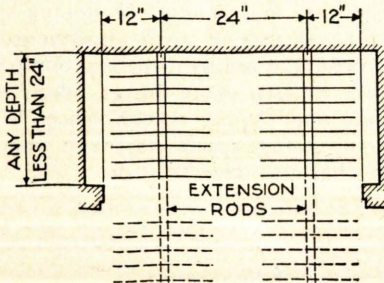
- \* easy to use.
- \* inconspicuous.
- \* not interfering with family activities.
- \* not taking up space otherwise needed.

## Garments

It is more convenient to locate the dressing and closet areas together. A chair placed close to the closet or chest of drawers is handy.



1. A shallow closet is a typical reach-in arrangement. The depth should not be less than 2 feet, inside measurement. That depth is necessary so that clothing on hangers will not brush against the wall.



2. For closets too shallow to permit hangers placed edgewise, the pull-out rod is best. In a very wide but shallow closet, two such rods may be used.

Plan the storage space so nothing sits on the closet floor and it will be easy to keep clean. Pull-out trays are used on shelves for underclothes, sweaters, and other clothing. When two people use a room, it is a good idea to divide the wardrobe so each has his own section.

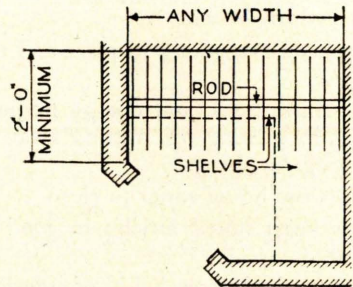
Shelf space for shoes, hats, and purses is

quite convenient since you can reach the articles easily and still keep the closet in order.

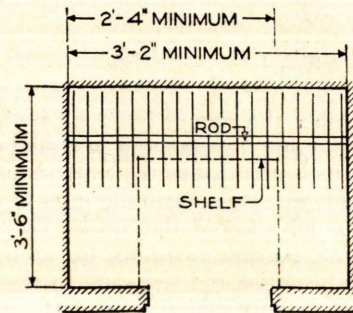
Ventilation is especially important in clothes closets to help keep the clothing free from odors. Air may be kept in circulation by openings in the top and bottom of the door.

All articles in the closet should be easily seen. Deep closets should have lights with the switch outside the door or a pull chain fastened to the inside of the door facing so it is easily reached.

All clothes closets are basically the same regardless of location. No matter what the shape of the space available, any of the plans illustrated here may be used. Minimum dimensions marked on the plans may be increased and the arrangement varied by adding hooks, trays, shelves, drawers, or



3. In adding closets to very small rooms, cutting off a corner may be justified. Two shelves may be added above the rod and a series of several at the right of the door.



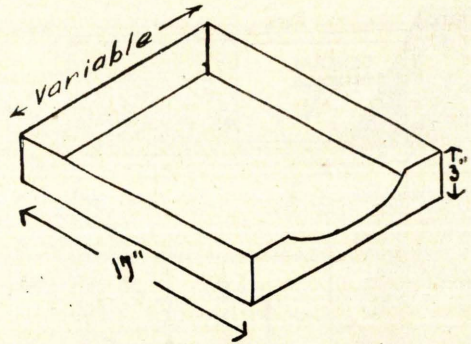
4. Deeper closets waste space unless the extra room is filled in with shelves.

racks for shoes. Openings more than two feet eight inches wide require two doors.

Clothing on hangers is indicated by the lines drawn at right angle to the rods.

Of the basic closet arrangements shown the shallow reach-in type is the most economical of space and the most convenient for removing articles.

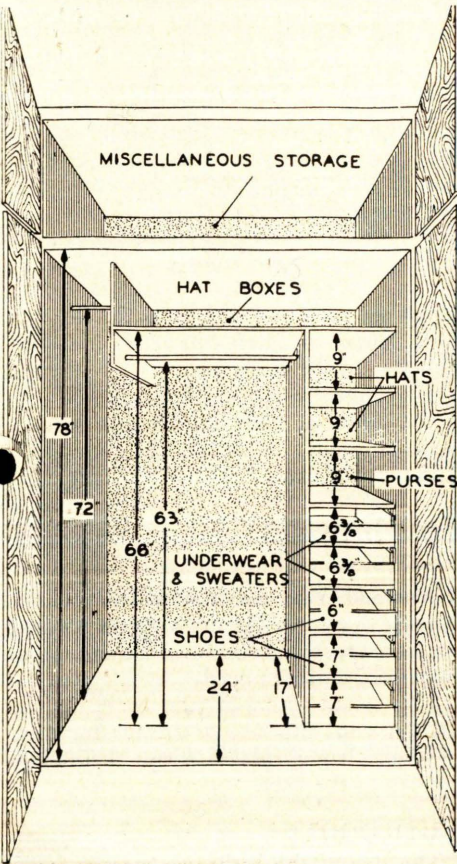
In the figure below is a closet designed for the wardrobe of one adult. In this closet a rod provides three feet of hanging space. On the right hand side is a section of shelves and drawers, 18 inches wide. The two lowest shelves for shoes are spaced seven inches apart. Drawers for ties, handkerchiefs and toilet articles can be four inches deep. Four movable shelves for



Tray for Closet Shelves

folded articles are spaced nine inches apart and have guards on the front to keep articles from falling off.

One of the closet doors is a handy place to put a full-length mirror.



Wardrobe Type Closet

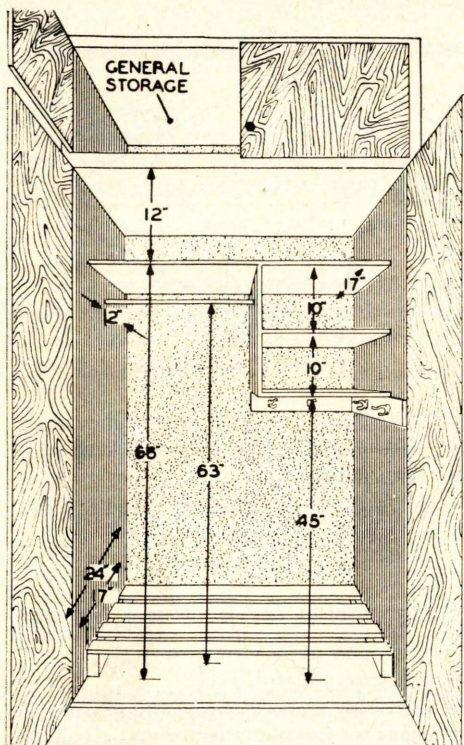
### Measurements for Clothing Storage

- From floor to rod—
- 63 inches for street dresses
- 45 inches for suits, blouses, and skirts
- 72 inches for floor-length dresses
- 30 inches for 3 to 5 year olds
- 45 inches for 6 to 12 year olds
- 3 feet minimum rod allowance per person
- 11 to 15 inches depth of shelf above rod
- 11 inches depth of second shelf above rod
- 9 inches between shelves for hat box
- 7 inches allowance between shelves for shoes.

### Coat Closets

It is easy to hang up a coat if there is a clothes closet handy. You will want one at the front door and one at the back door. And with low rods and hooks the children can reach so they too can hang up their own clothes.

A rod 63 inches from the floor is a good height for adult coats, while the height of the children's rod should vary with the ages of the children. Shelves above the children's hooks, for which a rod could be substituted, provide space for sweaters, caps,



Work Clothes Closet

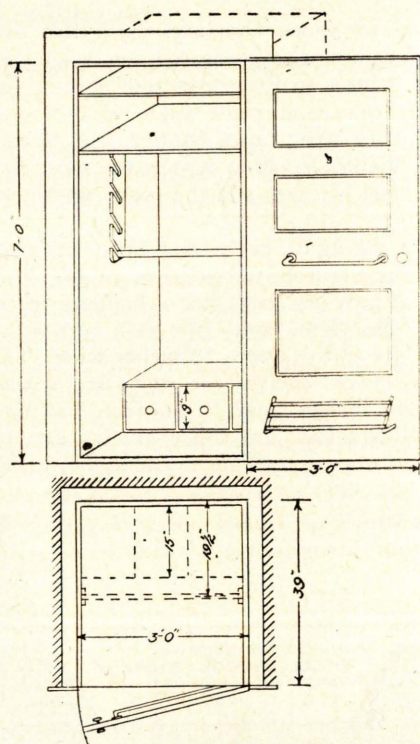
and mittens. A shelf above the high rod is a good place to keep hats and purses.

Plan a closet near the rear door for work coats and boots; a good size is two feet deep by three or four feet long. Work clothes dry better when hung on a hanger rather than on hooks. Slats or grills in the door speed up the drying. Notice the rack on the floor. It is removable for easy cleaning. Boots and rubbers dry more rapidly on this than when placed on the floor.

## Children's Closets

If children are to learn neatness and orderliness while they are still small they need storage space planned especially for them. Low rods and shelves make it easy for them to hang up their clothes and put away their toys. They especially like a place meant for them alone.

The closet should be planned so you may



Child's Closet

adjust the rods and shelves as the children grow. Small children can reach a rod 30 inches from the floor.

Two children may share a closet, divided in the center so each has his own section. Small children can use shelves more easily than pull-out trays.

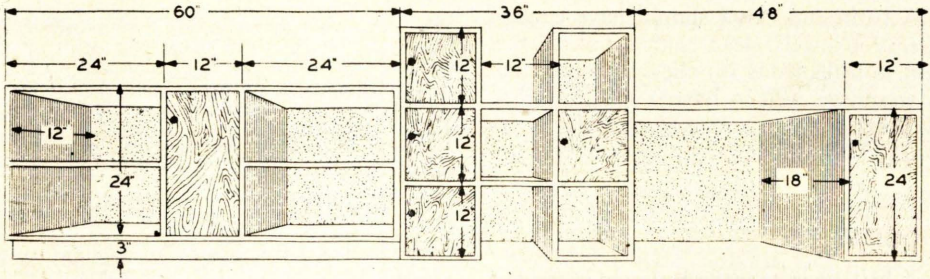
## Toy Storage

Storage for toys can be made from crates or plywood. You can build any one of the sections shown in the drawing, depending upon the space you have and the amount of room your children need.

Very small children like to be in the kitchen with mother. A drawer for their toys in a lower cabinet keeps them busy and out of the way.

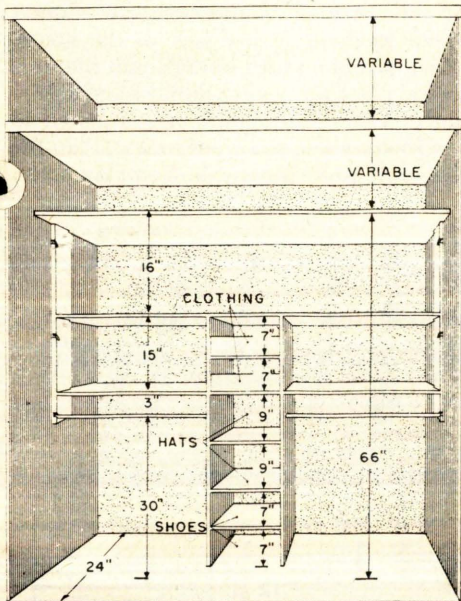
## Bathroom

The size of the bathroom storage facilities depends both on the space available, <sup>extra</sup>



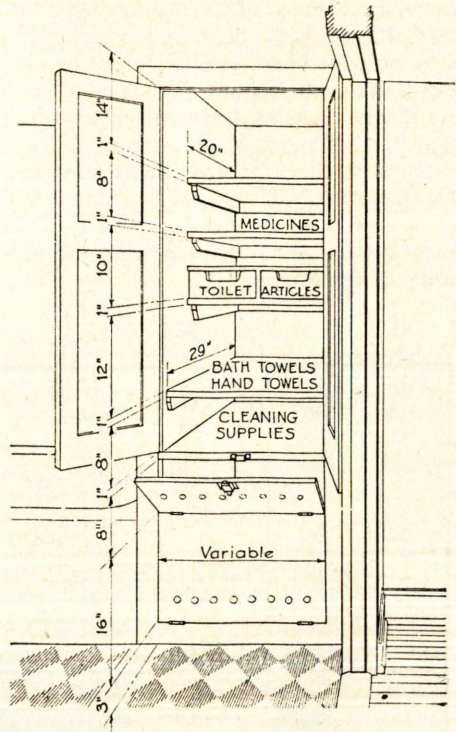
other nearby closets and on the purposes the bathroom is likely to serve. A small cabinet above the lavatory would hold articles such as soap, razors, and toothpaste. This cabinet could have a separate compartment for medicine and first aid supplies. This compartment should be out of reach of children.

The closet illustrated is 30 inches deep, which is about the width of the average bathtub. The lower section provides space for soiled clothes. The front of this compartment is double-hinged for convenience in removing the clothes.



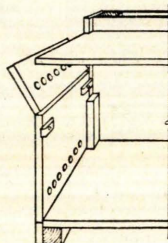
Closet for Children's Clothes

Children's Toy Storage



Suggested Arrangement for Bathroom Storage

Detail of Lower Section



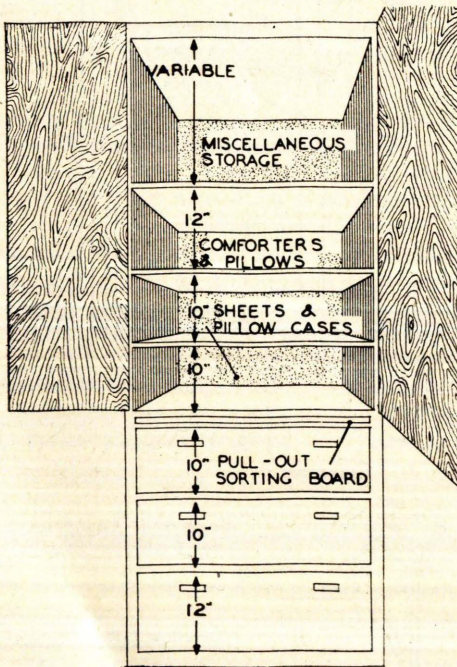


A bathroom closet should have enough space for towels, clean clothes, toilet tissue, and miscellaneous supplies. In some cases it would be well to have a place for shoe cleaning supplies and a few articles of infants' clothing.

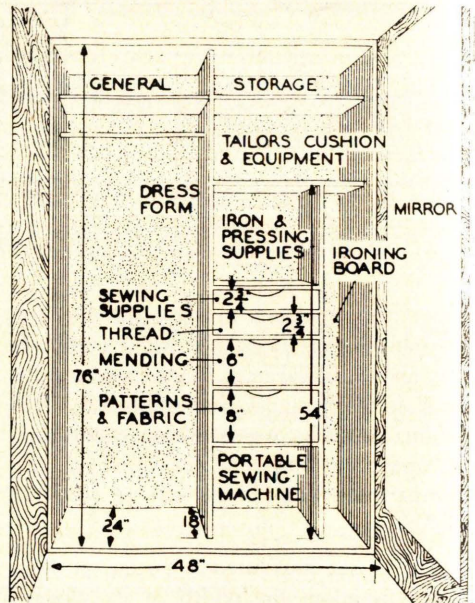
## Bedding

A hall closet near the bedroom is an ideal place for extra bedding. Put in enough shelves and make them adjustable so you can space them to fit the bedding. It is better not to stack the bedding too high.

A pull-out board similar to the one beneath the kitchen counter is a good place to set down stacks of bedding when storing and putting away. Measure your stacks of sheets and pillow cases to find the most useful size of shelf. Usually such a closet is 30 to 36 inches across the front and 18 to 24 inches deep to allow for putting the bedding away easily.



Storage for Bedding

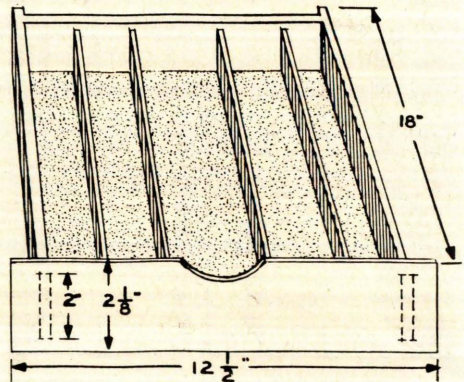


Sewing Cabinet

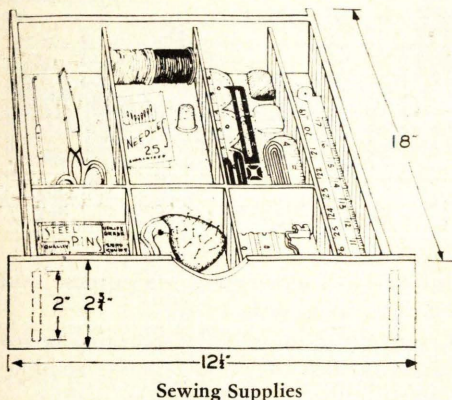
## Sewing

If you do much sewing you will want to have a special cabinet or cupboard. This may be located in the bedroom, dining room, kitchen, or any part of the house.

A central hall with storage built into it is a good place for sewing supplies and equipment. Then the supplies can be taken to any room where you want to sew. Plan the size to fit your equipment. You may prefer



Thread Drawer

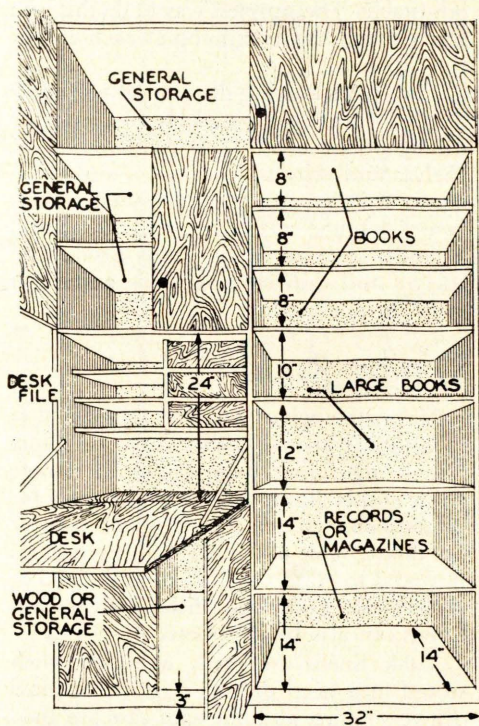


to keep ironing boards in the laundry area. Divided drawers are useful for storing small sewing equipment. Measure your tools and build the drawer so they will fit. A drawer for thread makes it easy to pick out the color you want.

## Living Room

If your living and dining area do not lend themselves to built-in storage, plan to use furniture that allows you the greatest amount of storage space. This furniture may include low tables with shelves, small chests of drawers, and lamp tables with shelves and drawers.

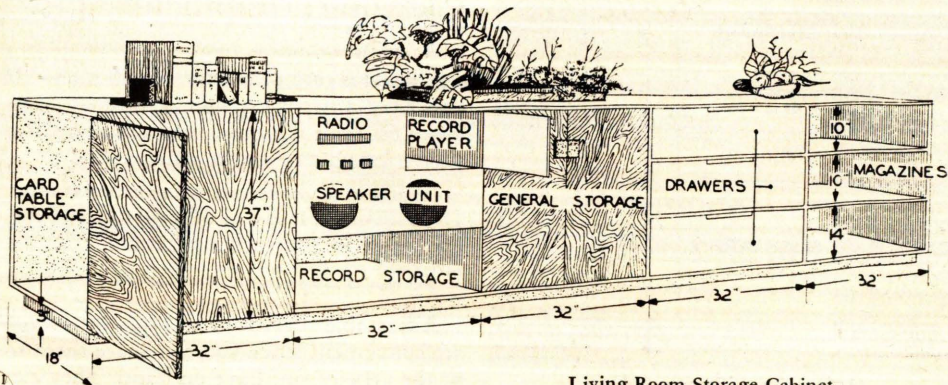
Each family likes to do different things. Some are musical, some are stay-at-homes. So plan your living room storage to fit your family.



Living Room Storage

Two types of storage can be used. One combines shelves for books, magazines, desk, and record storage. The other is low storage which often forms a division between living and dining rooms.

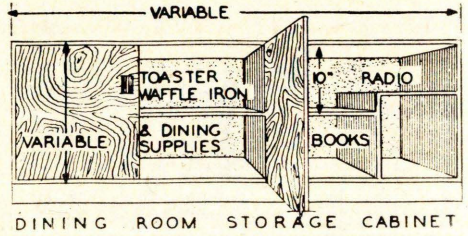
When you have book shelves make them



Living Room Storage Cabinet

adjustable. The simplest way to do this is to screw metal shelf stripping at each end of the cupboard.

The accompanying illustration on page 9 of good storage space could be in a living or dining room area. The combination of shelves and drawers is compact and efficient as well as attractive. An amateur carpenter or home craftsman could easily build a similar space to fit the family needs. The shelves and drawers should be adjustable to fit various needs.



DINING ROOM STORAGE CABINET

drawers will serve the same purpose and are easier to construct.

You will want a pull out sorting board similar to the one shown in the bedding storage section in this unit, too.

Good dishes are usually kept in the dining room but if there is enough storage space in the kitchen some homemakers prefer to keep them in the kitchen near the clean up center. It is handier for putting away.

Silver may also be kept in either of these areas. A divided drawer is best. It keeps the silver separated and easier to use. This drawer need be only three inches deep.

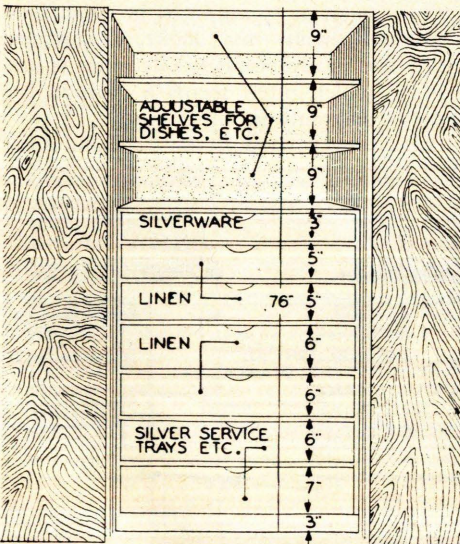
A low cupboard similar to the one illustrated above is useful in a dining room. It can be put under the window or made into a buffet type storage space. Be sure it is designed so you can use all the space and can reach things easily.

If the dining area is also the place where the children study, provide an adequate storage space for their needs.

## Dining Room

No matter where you eat, whether it is in a dining room, kitchen, or a combination living-dining room you need storage space in this dining area. Plan the space for table linens, electrical equipment used at the dining table and other things which do not need to go to the kitchen at the end of each meal. Your best dishes, silver, and linens can also be kept here.

Table linens are easily wrinkled when stored in a deep drawer or shelf. Shallow drawers which pull out with ease are good for storing linens. You will not stack the linens too high. Pull out trays or sliding



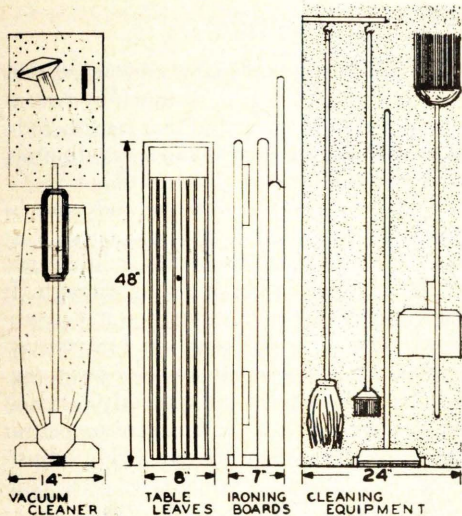
Dining Room Storage Cabinet

## Cleaning Equipment

A cleaning closet in the central area of the house is easy to reach from all rooms. If you have a two story house you may want space on both floors for this equipment to save trips up and down stairs.

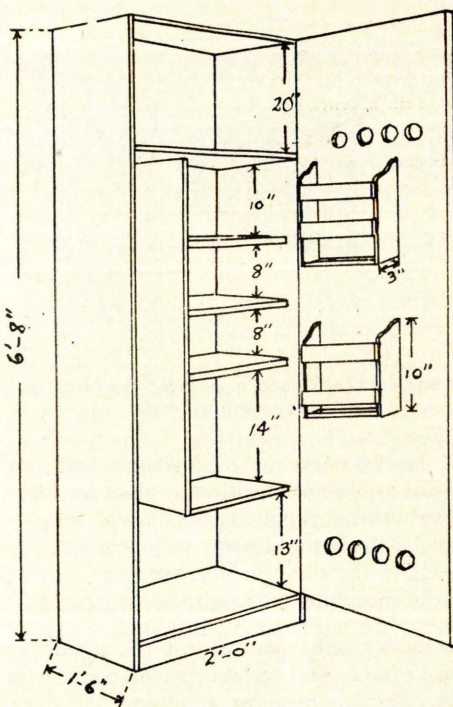
A cleaning closet can vary in depth from 18 to 24 inches. As in all types of storage, you need to measure equipment carefully to be sure it fits into the closet you plan for it.

Adjustable shelves in all types of storage are convenient since you can space them to fit the articles you have on hand. They carry



Cleaning Equipment Storage Measurements

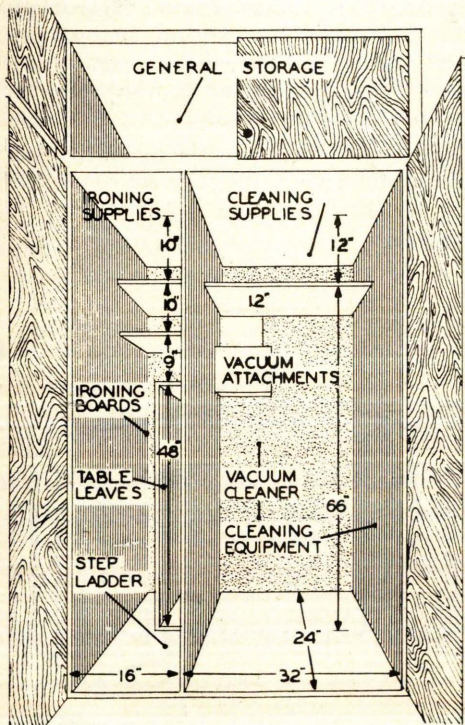
be adjusted to fit your needs as changes in your equipment occur.



Storage Cabinet for Cleaning Equipment

Use wardrobe type doors on the cleaning closet so you can open them wide to remove equipment. Ventilate with holes at the top and bottom of the door. If you keep things off the floor it will be easier to keep clean. Hang brooms and mops on clamp hangers. And store oily cloths in covered metal or glass containers; otherwise they are a fire hazard.

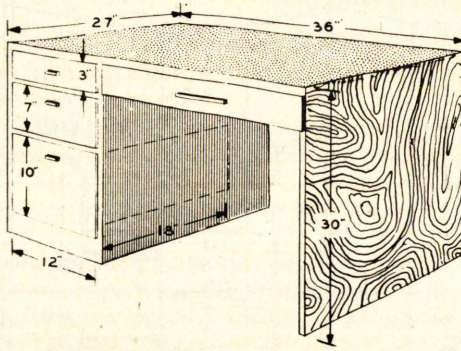
Bottles and other small articles may be stored in racks or pockets hung on the door. A light weight carry-all or basket may be used for storing or carrying small equipment or supplies.



Suggested Arrangement

## Family Business Center

Do you find that when you start to write a letter the stationery is in one place, the pen in another, and the ink some place else? By the time you have collected everything you are "out of the notion."



Suggested minimum measurements to look for when buying a desk.

An adequate business center will provide: a place for writing, a place for keeping writing supplies and current records, and a place for storing such items as records of income and expenses, tax returns, insurance, and other important papers.

Each family will differ in the amount of space and kind of equipment needed for carrying on business activities. The business center should be located where it will be most usable. This may be kitchen, dining room, living room, or a special business office.

No matter whether the furniture for this center is new, remodeled, or homemade, proper lighting is very important. The light should be free from glare, bright and dark spots. It should be near the work. When incandescent light is used a lamp should have at least a 100-watt bulb and be diffused.

Systematic filing is an important part of this activity. By having a good system, important papers, bulletins, and receipts can be kept so you can find them easily and quickly.

You will probably need to have a current file for materials you are now using and one for materials not being used but are keeping for reference.

The current file should be convenient and easy to maintain.

## Closet Fittings

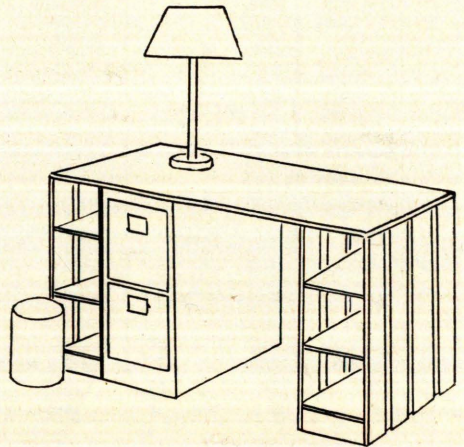
Existing storage space and wardrobes can often be increased as much as two or three times if shoe and hat racks, rods, hooks, shelves, drawers, and trays are properly utilized.

Steel rods or wooden dowel rods may be used. The wooden rod should be at least one and three-eighths inches in diameter. A broom handle is not strong enough. It will break with much weight on it. Galvanized rods are used and are inexpensive. Lead rods are too soft and therefore sag.

The rods may be permanently fastened to the wall or rest in brackets to permit their removal when desired. Being adjustable is particularly important in a children's closet. The rod can be moved up as the child grows taller.

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

Brackets that fit over the top of the door or are fastened to the door are convenient for hanging garments that have been re-



Here is an attractive homemade desk made from orange crates and a metal file.

cently pressed or day time garments placed there for the night.

Hooks are needed for night gowns, slips, and other garments not put on hangers. They should be easily reached but not closer than five inches to the door.

A minimum of four inches is needed between the hooks and the shelf above. In order to provide additional space for hooks a board four inches wide may be added above to set out from the wall. The hooks should be about seven inches apart. Hooks for children's clothes should be large and nine inches apart.

If hooks are staggered in a row arrangement it will be easier to remove garments.

Inexpensive wire or wooden hangers can be purchased. Those that fit the garments placed on them will decrease the need of pressing. Padded hangers aid in this respect. There are plastic pads which can be clamped on wire hangers. These serve the purpose quite nicely. Special shirt and pants hangers are convenient. An ordinary towel rack makes a satisfactory rack for ties and belts.

Garments seldom worn will be kept in better condition if covered with some kind of protector. These protectors should be made from closely woven materials. These can be homemade or purchased. Plastics of today make very good garment protectors. However, do not store acetate garments in plastic bags. Garment bags of cotton or plastic will not be moth proof unless all openings are sealed.

In a bedroom without a closet, a bag of this sort may be hung on a wall hook. It will keep the garments comparatively free from dust and smoke.

Plastic or cloth shoulder protectors should be used for garments not used every day.

Hats keep their shape better when placed on a stand. Some stands fasten to the shelf while others rest on the shelf. The latter need to have a broad base and be heavy enough to prevent tipping. Shelves on which hats are stored should be at least nine inches apart and 10 to 15 inches from front to back.

Hat boxes are essential for storing hats from one season to the next. The boxes may be made from sturdy card board and covered to match the other accessories in the closet. The box will be more convenient if it is made so that when the top is raised slightly the side will drop down. The hat can be reached without removing the box from the shelf.

Some provision for storing shoes is essential. 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, however homemade ones are quite satisfactory. The distance between shelves for adult shoes should be seven inches. For children six inches is sufficient. The width of the shelf from front to back should be 12 inches. Allow 18 inches for every two or three pair of shoes depending on the size of the shoes. Tilted racks or shelves make it easier to handle the shoes. A lath or single mold placed near the top will provide a place to catch the heel and prevent the shoe from slipping off the shelf or rack. Shelves or racks are more convenient for storing shoes than shoe bags. If the closet does not provide space for racks the shoe bag can be fastened to the closet door.

Shoes used occasionally or seasonally may be protected from dust by placing them in shoe mittens.

## Seasonal Storage

Seasonal storage for both summer and winter clothes is always a problem. A tightly constructed closet similar to the clothes closet will simplify housekeeping. The only difference will be that the rod should be 72 inches from the floor in order to take care of garment bags. Shelf room should be provided for storing other articles. Blankets, comforters, etc., may be placed in boxes or plastic bags and stored here.

A cedar lined closet would be especially convenient. An existing closet might be lined or it could be put in a newly constructed closet. Always clean garments and

bedding before storing for the summer months.

## Movable Storage

If at the present the family is not situated to add storage space, additional closets and portable closets will help. Portable closets may be made of orange crates. These should be temporary.

Commercial companies, some of them furniture makers, are making prefabricated closets. These are made standard sizes. They may be in units and may be added to as the need arises.

## Study Floor Plans

Does your house have enough storage in the right place? As mentioned previously you can see storage possibilities easier by making a scale drawing of the floor plan of your house and studying it. In the house plan on page 15 over 10 per cent of the floor area is devoted to storage space—most of it in the work and sleeping areas of the house.

Each of the storage areas is located for

accessibility. The cleaning equipment closet is in a central hall easily reached from any part of the house. Most sewing is done in the dining or kitchen area so it is located near this part of the house thus cutting down the traffic to and from the point of operations. The rest of the storage areas are as conveniently located. Store the articles where they are used first.

## Acknowledgement

"Storage For Your Home"—Extension Service, State College of Washington, Pullman, Washington

"No Space to Waste"—Extension Service, State College of North Carolina, Raleigh, North Carolina

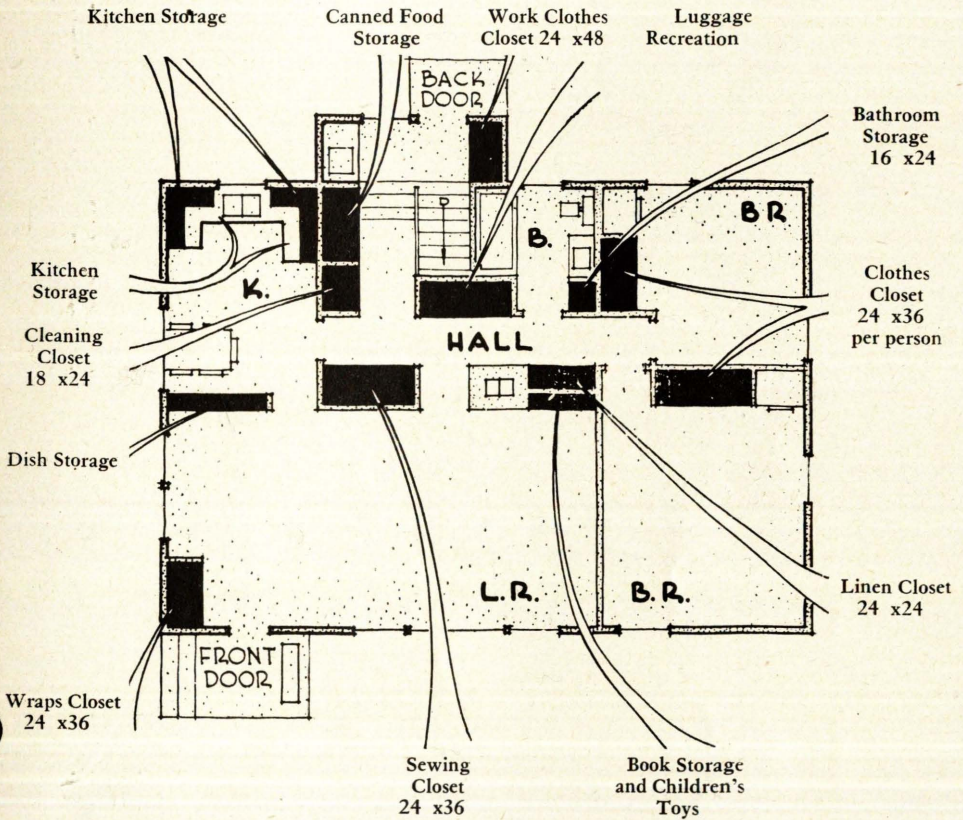
"Closets And Storage Space"—U. S. Department of Agriculture

"Storage For Cleaning Equipment"—Extension Service, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana

"Farm Home Business Centers"—Experiment Station, West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia

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## Floor Plan Shows Storage Possibilities

Measurements given are minimum.



