Built-In Bedroom Closets for the Farm Home

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Lack of sufficient closet space for convenient housekeeping, and closet space that was unwisely planned, are found not only in farm houses built 50 years ago but also in many of those houses more recently built. In most farm houses there is a real need for more clothes closets opening from the bedrooms, and planned for the convenient storage of wearing apparel. To help meet this need there are offered in this circular several practical types of clothes closets that may be constructed in the house already built, as well as the arrangement of storage in each type, and suggested materials for placing closets in the house already built.

The closet should have conveniently arranged space sufficient for any person or persons likely to occupy the room. The needs of each average adult farm dweller are met, it has been found, by a closet containing: 6 garment hooks on which to hang articles that have been worn since being laundered (nightgowns, pajamas, slips, aprons, or bathrobes); a rod 24 inches long for hangers on which dresses, shirts, suits, coats, and overcoats are to be kept (work wraps are not included); a hat shelf 14 inches wide and 4 feet in length; and space for two to six pairs of shoes.

Sizes, Shapes, and Arrangement

Of the various shapes possible, the shallow closet (with a minimum depth of 24 inches, or a more satisfactory depth of 30 inches) is the most economical of space and can be conveniently arranged, provided the door opening is nearly as long as the closet itself. A 30-inch door can be used in a closet up to 4 feet long. Double doors that open up the full length of the closet are preferable, however. (Fig. 1).

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When closets are needed for adjoining bedrooms and where one bedroom is large enough to spare the necessary space, a new partition built in the larger bedroom, 36 inches from the original partition wall, will provide maximum closet space at a minimum cost of money and labor. If there was a connecting door centered in the original wall, it can serve as the door to one closet. If a connecting door is still needed between the bedrooms, the closet space can be shortened by 2½ feet, to leave room for a new door at one end of the original partition. (Fig. 2).

The walk-in type of closet is best suited to the use of two people who share a closet. Two rods, one on either side of the door, make it possible for each person's clothes to be kept separate, so that garments are more easily found.
Fig. 2.—Shallow Type Closets for Adjoining Bedrooms. A closet, size 30"x48", added to each bedroom by the construction of one partition. If the size of the bedrooms permits a closet more than 48" in length, double doors should be used.

Fig. 3.—Walk-In Type of Closet For Use of Two Persons. Closet size, 42"x64". Individual rod space 24". Individual tier of shelves, trays or drawers 14"x18" may be built in space indicated for clothes pegs. Free floor space 24"x30" allows easy access to rods and shelves.
If the closet of this type is shared by adults and children, the rods, hooks and shelves on one side can be adjusted so that the children can reach them easily, while those on the opposite side can be adjusted for the adults. (Fig. 3.)

Where adjoining bedrooms are small, floor space may be conserved by building deeper closets of the walk-in type, with a recessed nook between for a piece of furniture, such as a chest of drawers or a dresser.

If the bedrooms are of equal size, and neither is large enough to permit a closet arrangement as in Fig. 2, the old partition can be removed in the space designed for closets and a new partition set out approximately 2 feet in each room, so that the closet wall is in a line with the front edge of the piece of furniture placed in the recess. In very small bedrooms, such an arrangement allows almost as much space in which to move around the bed and to dress as was usable before closet space was taken off. (Fig. 4.)

When there is no adjoining bedroom, closet space may be taken from one end of the large bedroom. Two closets balance the shape of the room. The space below the windows may be used for a built-in window seat or as a place for a low chest. (Fig. 5.)
Clothes Closet Equipment

To equip the closet so that it offers a convenient place to store all the articles, with an economical use of space, deserves special study. A few general measurements and suggestions for equipment are given below.

Coat Hangers are essential accessories. Inexpensive wire and wooden hangers serve the purpose. When drawer space is limited, more hangers can be used and garments, such as shirts, may be put on hangers instead of being folded away. Garments on hangers take up the minimum amount of storage space.

Rods in a closet utilize space to good advantage. Heavy curtain poles, small iron rods, or gas pipe, can be secured in any length and are small enough to allow hangers to be hooked over them easily. Half of a pipe flange makes an inexpensive and easily installed bracket for the rod, or two wooden brackets may be made by using a bit the size of the rod to bore a hole in the center of a small board and then sawing the board in half. Clothing carriers or hangers may be purchased ready to be installed, if desired.

The minimum distance between the rod and the wall should be 12 inches. The distance between the wall and the floor should average, for adults, between 5 and 6 feet; for children 6 to 12 years of age, about 3½ feet; for children 3 to 5 years, about 2½ feet.

Special attention should be given to planning the height of any hooks, rods, or shelves that are to be used by children. If movable
rods and shelves are installed, and if hooks are moved up from time to time as needed, the height of the closet fixtures can easily be changed to correspond to the height of the child as he grows up.

Shelves in the closet are as necessary as rods and hooks. For the storage of men's or women's hats in boxes, the shelf should be 14 inches wide and one foot of length allowed for every box. Several shelves of moderate width, placed one above another approximately 10 inches apart, will provide more convenient storage than does a deep shelf where some articles must be stored behind others and stacked several deep (Fig. 1). A shelf placed above a rod should allow 2½ inches of space between, so that hangers may slip over the rod easily, and two shelves 10 inches apart are all that can be reached conveniently.

**Shoe Storage.** A place for shoes is essential. Where space permits, a set of shelves is desirable. For men's shoes, the shelves should be 13 inches wide, and one foot in length is required for each pair of shoes. For women's shoes, a shelf 8 inches wide is sufficient, with a length of 10 inches for each pair of shoes. For children's shoes shelves may measure only 6 to 10 inches in width. Where closet space is limited, the entire space on the inside of the closet door may be utilized for shoe pockets. Smaller, shallow pockets on the lower section of the door could be used by small children, while adults will find the top section more convenient. Various types of shoe racks as well as many other convenient accessories for clothes closets may be purchased ready to install, at a minimum cost.

**Garment Hooks.** A few well placed garment hooks are necessary for hanging garments that are not placed on hangers, and such articles as the laundry bag and umbrella. Hooks back of rods or placed too close together are practically useless. Hooks should be spaced approximately 7 inches apart to allow hanging space without crowding.

**Construction of Closets***

There is a large variety of materials from which to choose in building closets. The final choice will probably depend upon the amount of money to be spent and the type of finished job desired.

**Wall Board** is probably the least expensive material available. It comes in 4 foot widths and in lengths from 6 to 10 feet. It is fairly rigid and will take paint very well. This material is satisfactory for small closets where strength is not very important.

**Insulation Board** for this purpose is made in ½ inch thickness, it is slightly more expensive than wall board, but has more strength. It may be obtained sized ready for painting.

*For the section on construction of closets the author is indebted to K. D. Huff, extension agricultural engineer, Missouri College of Agriculture.
Tempered Presswood in $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thickness has more strength and a better surface for painting, than either the wall board or insulation board, but is more expensive.

Clear Ceiling in $\frac{3}{8}$ inch thickness by 4 inches in width is a very satisfactory and economical material when a wood finish is desired.

In building the frame for a closet 2" x 2" lumber is very satisfactory except for large closets where a greater strength is desired. Light weight inside doors may be purchased from lumber dealers at a very reasonable cost in the following sizes: 2' and 2'6" widths in 6', 6'6", and 6'8" lengths.

If desired, doors may be made up of the same material as the closet if care is taken to build them so that they will not warp or sag.

**Temporary and Portable Clothes Closets**

In rented houses the cheapest of closet construction might be impractical, and to buy pieces of furniture to provide clothes storage is expensive. The locker type of clothes closet that can be purchased is one solution for a less expensive type of clothes storage furniture. Plans for the construction of portable closets (Mimeo No. 173) are available from the Agricultural Extension Service. Many temporary closets have been made by ingenious women from made-over pieces of furniture.

Closets made from boxes may be satisfactory for temporary needs. A radio box fitted up with rods, shelves, and hooks will serve for the small child's clothes closet. A large temporary closet may be constructed from four orange crates and a rod 2 feet or more in length. Each end of such a closet has a set of shelves made by nailing two orange crates together, end for end, and these two sets of shelves are connected at the top by the rod for hanging garments on hangers. A curtain placed across the front conceals both shelves and hangers. Although clothes are not adequately protected, the temporary closet provides a storage place for clothes and makes for a more orderly bedroom.