

It takes smart kitchen cabinet to pass test

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- Strange taste or odors in your drinking water.
- Stiff, gray, not quite clean towels and sheets.
- Spots on dishes, glasses and silver.
- Lime spots on chrome fixtures and utensils.
- Bathtub rings.
- Rusty water that stains fixtures and clothing.
- High Soap and detergent bills.
- Lime scales and deposits that foul up pipes, automatic washers, dishwashers and water heaters.

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In most kitchens, the cabinets work as hard as the cook.

Kitchen cabinets do a variety of jobs—from providing storage and countertop space to setting the room's decorative tone. A sufficient number of accessible cabinets makes a kitchen more convenient. Not surprisingly, new cabinets rank as a key factor in kitchen remodeling.

A recent survey by the Bureau of Building Marketing Research reports that 75 per cent of professionally-remodeled kitchens feature new cabinets. Cabinet installation is also included in about 40 per cent of kitchens remodeled by do-it-yourselfers. Either way, cabinet selection can play a big part in successful upgrading.

A basic factor in kitchen cabinet selection—and one no remodeler should overlook—is the cabinet's performance ability. The National Kitchen Cabinet Association points out that kitchen cabinets must provide long-term daily service in the home's toughest "workroom."

How well the cabinets are constructed, the amount of storage they hold, their strength, ease of operation, and resistance to staining should all be considered. NKCA suggests that cabinets be chosen to withstand a variety of kitchen "trauma"—from normal slams and spills to extraordinary abuse—such as children

standing on cabinet doors to reach high shelves.

Although style, color, placement and size of kitchen cabinets may vary, performance shouldn't, says NKCA. Therefore, the Association recommends use of kitchen cabinets that carry an NKCA certification seal. The seal certifies that the cabinet meets stringent construction and performance standards of American National Standards Institute (ANSI) for kitchen and vanity cabinets. The standards apply to manufactured, factory-finished kitchen and vanity cabinets.

Before they can carry the NKCA seal, cabinets must pass endurance and quality tests conducted by an independent testing laboratory. The tests cover a wide range of performances. For instance, it's required that shelves be sufficiently supported, that swinging doors be properly aligned and operate freely, and that the cabinet finish be clean and free of disfiguring marks.

In addition cabinets must be able to withstand above-average weights on shelves and in drawers, as well as the impact of dropped cans and other objects.

There is even a test for the special abuse suffered by base cabinet doors—from being closed by adult knees to being hit with children's tricycles.

Remedy growing pains by enclosing the porch

You may have the basic structure for that extra room you need without even realizing it. If you own an older home that has a porch, enclosing it could give you year-round, extra living space.

Some basic essentials such as a roof, floor, supports and one wall already exist. A porch enclosure, therefore, should be a more economical home improvement than an add-a-room project in terms of material, time and labor.

All-year porch

To make a porch enclosure liveable year-round, insulation will have to be added to the floor, walls and ceiling, a method devised to heat the room—such as baseboard heating—and windows installed.

Ample use of windows can retain the advantageous qualities of broad views, fresh air and sunshine that a porch offers.

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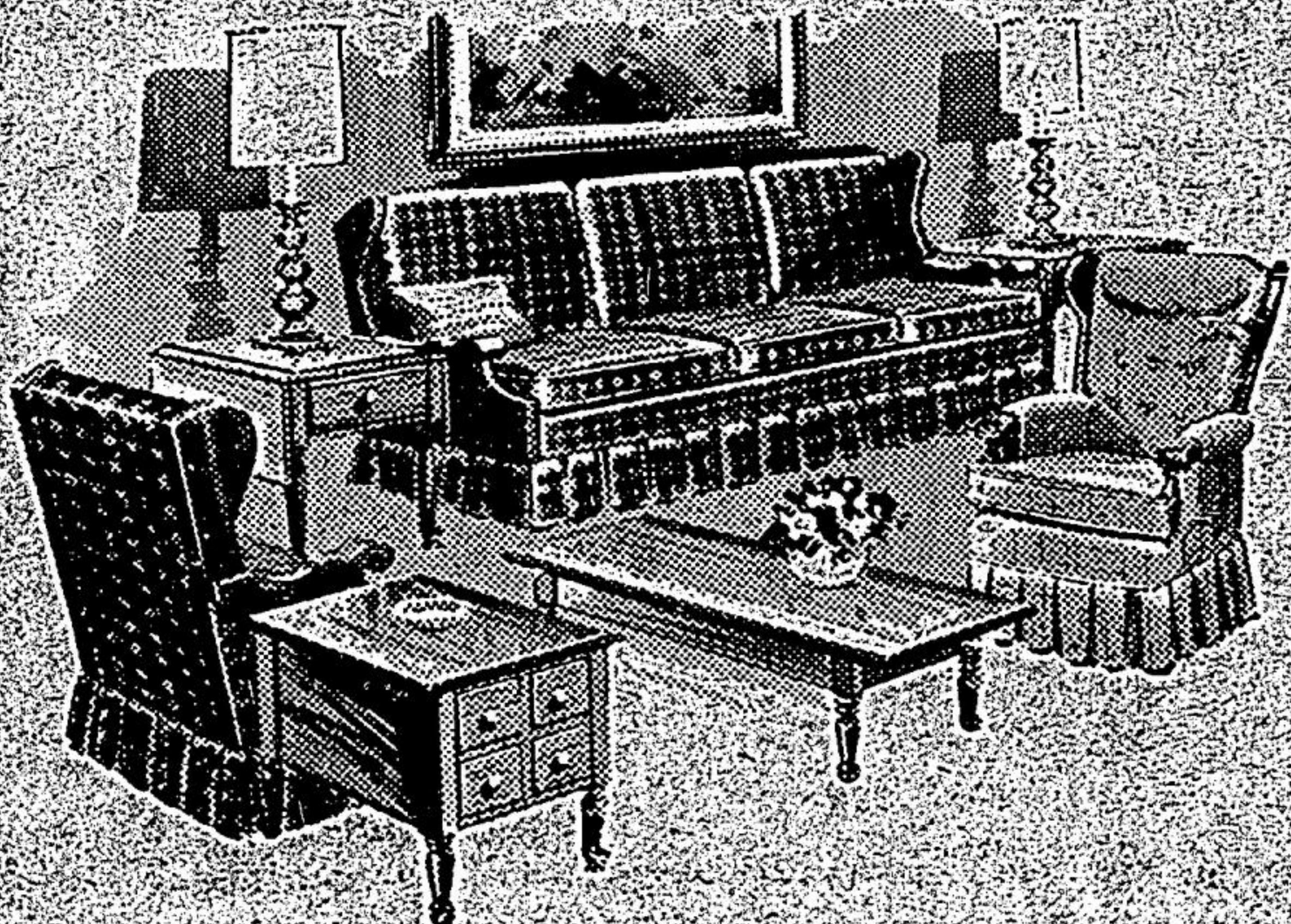
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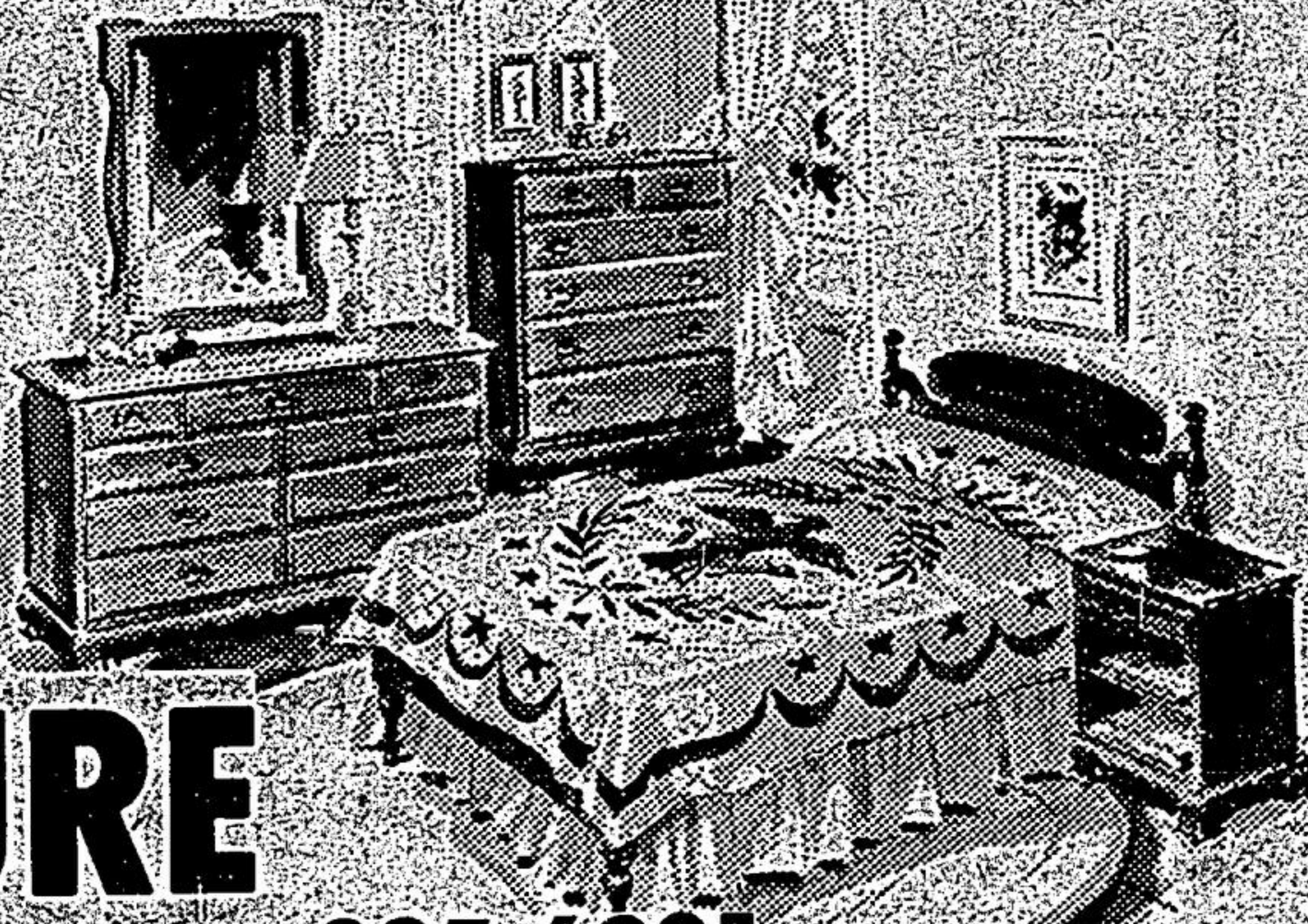
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