

Nov. 3, 1942.

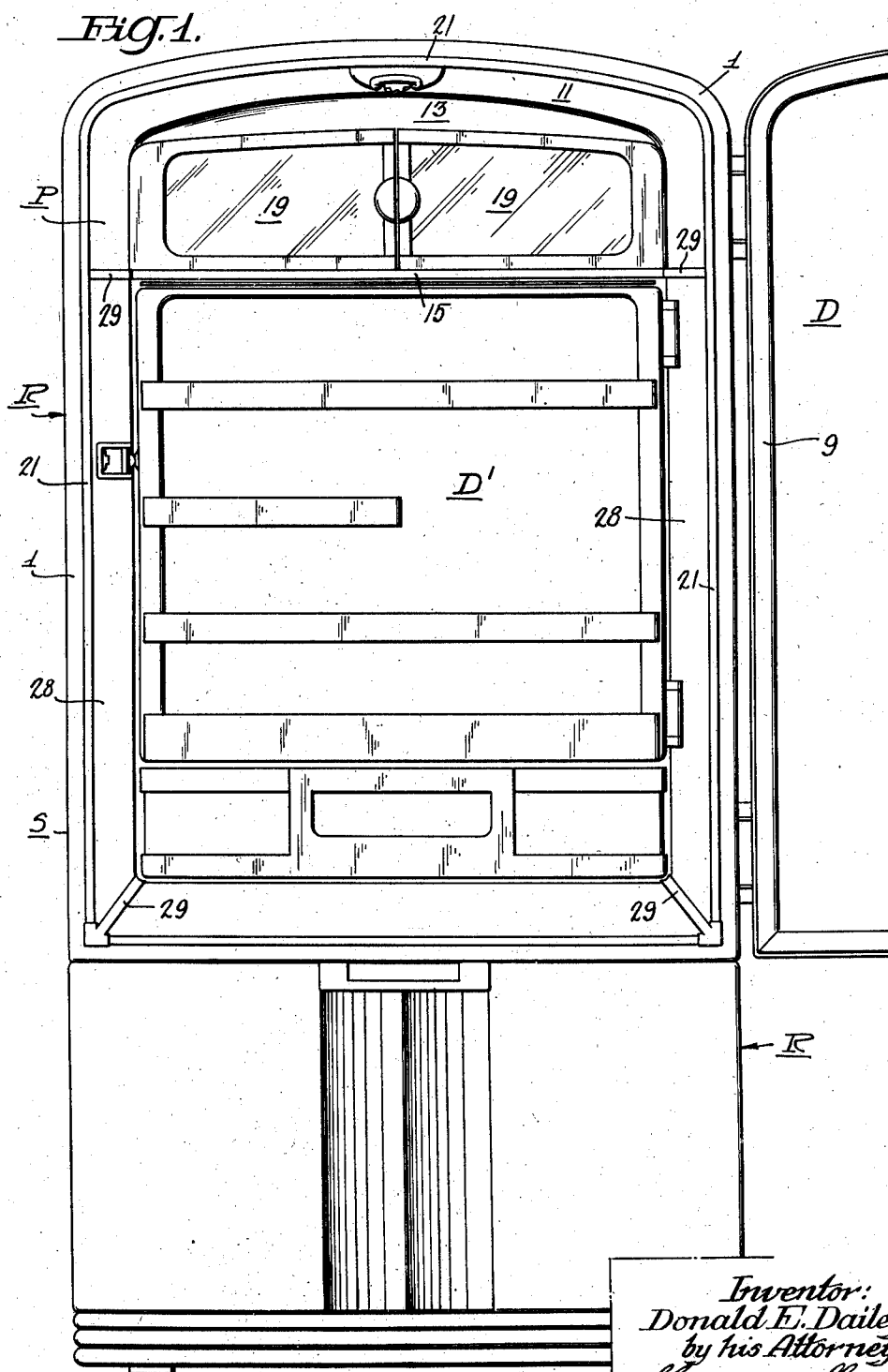
D. E. DAILEY

2,301,020

REFRIGERATOR CONSTRUCTION

Filed June 12, 1941

4 Sheets-Sheet 1



Nov. 3, 1942.

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REFRIGERATOR CONSTRUCTION

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4 Sheets-Sheet 2

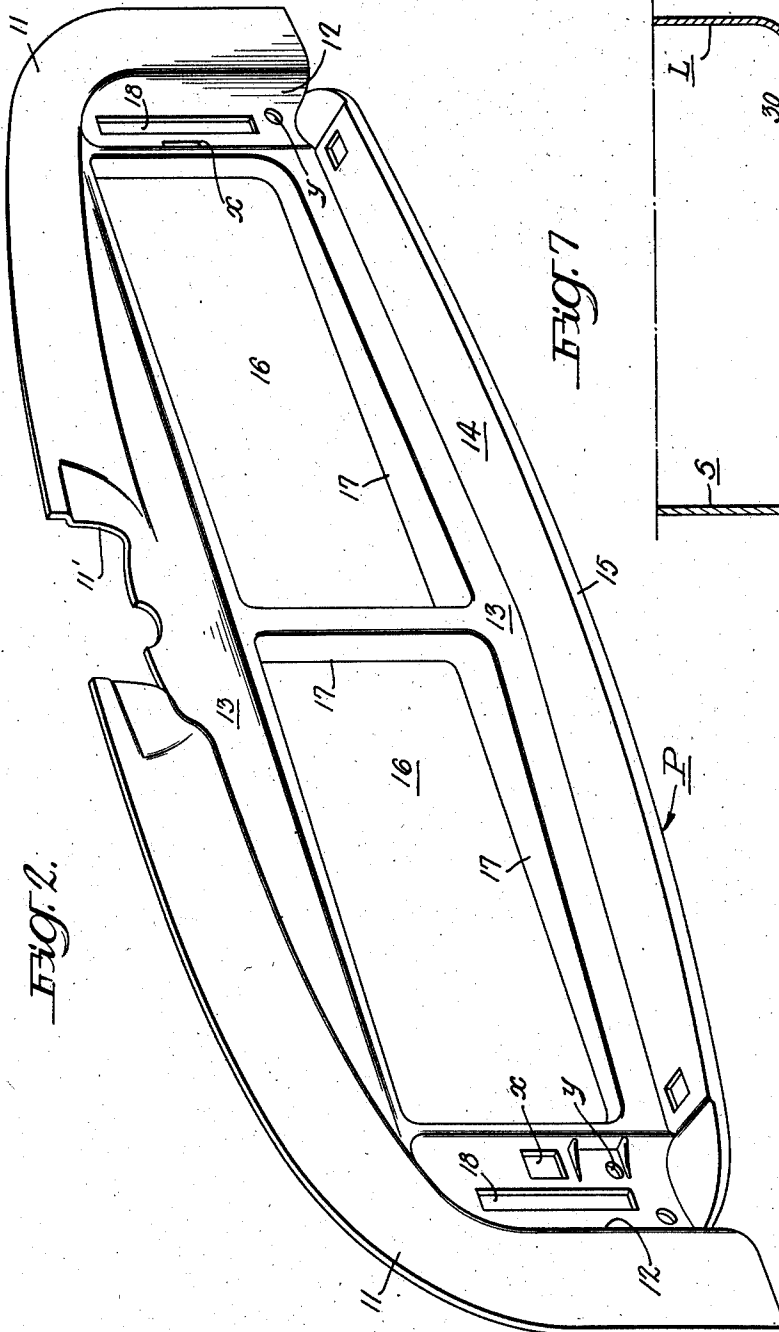
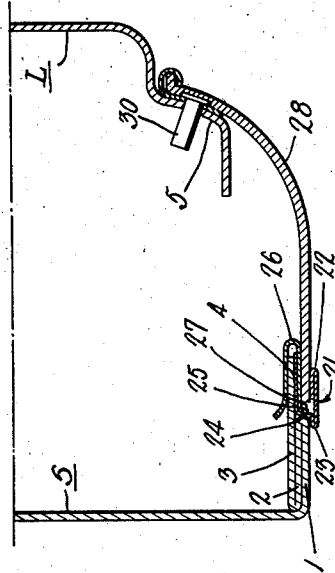


Fig. 7



Inventor:
Donald E. Dailey
by his Attorneys
Howson & Howson

Nov. 3, 1942.

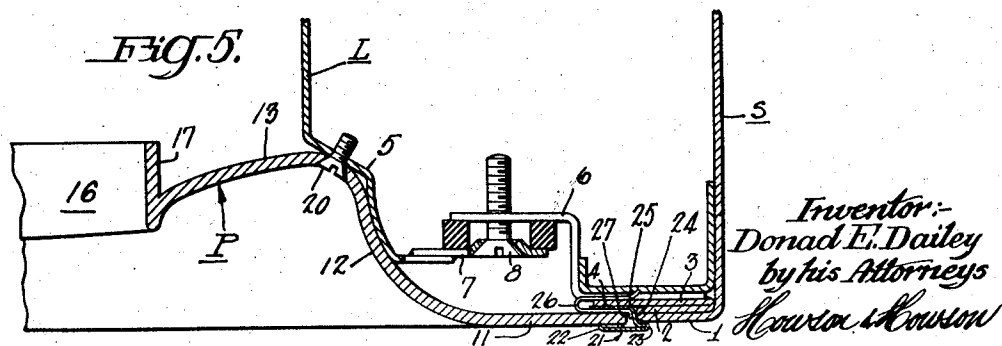
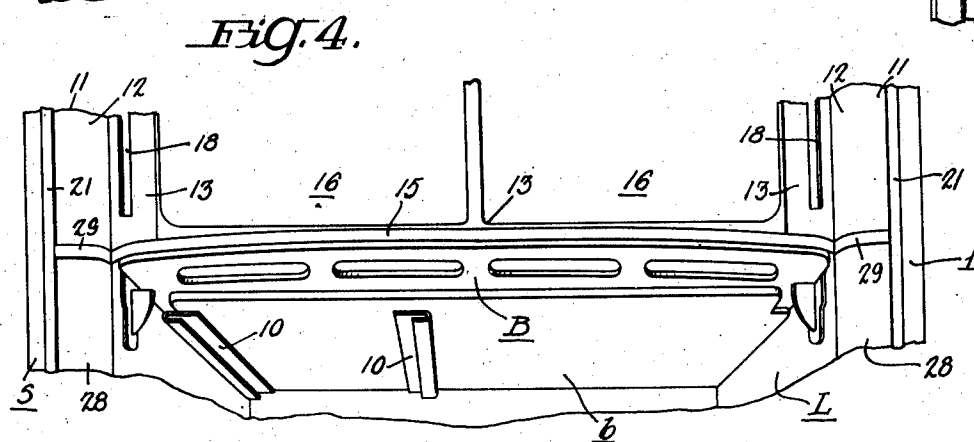
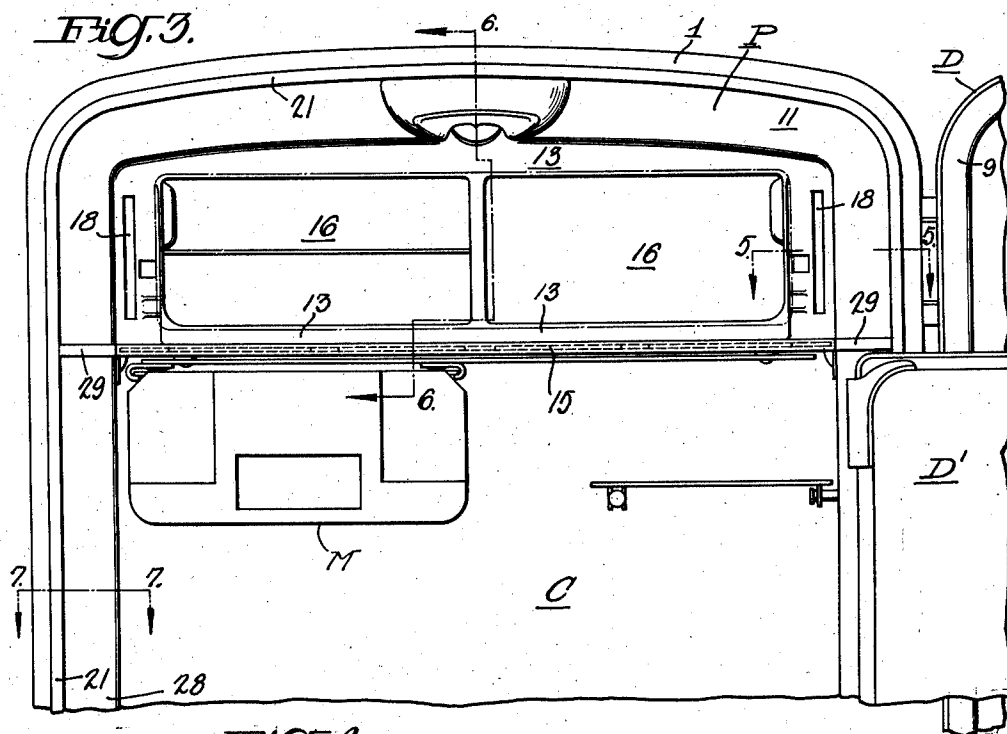
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4 Sheets-Sheet 3



*Inventor:-
Donad E. Dailey
by his Attorneys
Houson & Houson*

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,301,020

REFRIGERATOR CONSTRUCTION

Donald E. Dailey, Toledo, Ohio, assignor to Philco Corporation, Philadelphia, Pa., a corporation of Pennsylvania

Application June 12, 1941, Serial No. 397,792

18 Claims. (Cl. 62—89)

This invention relates to new and useful improvements in domestic refrigerator construction and, particularly, to a new and novel construction arranged to provide a seal for the front of the usual evaporator and, at the same time, provide a breaker-strip between the outer shell and lining members of the cabinet in the top portion of the latter.

More specifically the present invention relates to a novel front closure member of the character set forth which is adaptable especially for use in conjunction with refrigerators embodying the top wrap-around type of cabinet construction having in the upper portion of the food storage compartment thereof a relatively shallow evaporator which extends substantially entirely across the food storage compartment, and has a depth substantially the same as that compartment so as to occupy substantially the entire top portion of said compartment. One suitable construction and arrangement of this type is shown and described in the copending application of Frank D. Peltier, Serial No. 347,526, filed July 25, 1940.

Bearing the foregoing in mind, the principal object of the present invention is to provide, in a domestic refrigerator construction of the type described, a novel unitary front closure or panel member, which serves as a front closure and seal for the space surrounding the evaporator, and which serves also to provide the necessary thermal insulating breakerstrip or closure for the outer shell and the food compartment lining at the front of the refrigerator.

Another object of the invention is to provide a novel front closure panel member of the type described which is constructed and arranged to provide a tight seal between the evaporator and the doors opening thereto, thereby serving to exclude air circulated within the food storage compartment from the evaporator interior and effecting more efficient directed circulation of air within said food storage compartment.

Another object of the invention is to provide a novel front closure or panel member of the character set forth which is fabricated in one piece of suitable thermal insulating material and which is constructed and configured to provide an unbroken flowing surface from the evaporator doors outwardly to the shell of the refrigerator cabinet, thereby greatly enhancing the appearance of the refrigerator.

A further object of the invention is to provide a novel closure or panel member of thermal insulating material as set forth which serves as a seal between the evaporator and its doors and because of its low thermal conductivity operates to minimize frosting and clouding of the transparent windows in said evaporator doors, and freezing of the latter to the panel.

A still further object of the invention is to pro-

vide a refrigerator construction comprising a closure or panel member of the type described and embodying a novel construction and arrangement of parts whereby assembly of said member in the refrigerator is rendered sufficiently simple and inexpensive to comply with the requirements of quantity production thereof on a commercial basis.

These and other objects of the invention and the various features and details of the construction and function thereof are hereinafter fully set forth, described and claimed, and shown in the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a view in front elevation of a domestic refrigerator embodying the present invention, the main door of said refrigerator being open.

Figure 2 is a view in perspective of a unitary front closure or panel member for the evaporator and upper part of the refrigerator cabinet made in accordance with the present invention.

Figure 3 is a partial front elevation view of the refrigerator with the main and inner doors open showing the closure or panel member embodied therein, but with the evaporator doors removed.

Figure 4 is a fragmentary view in perspective looking upwardly from below the evaporator and the front panel member showing certain features and details of the construction and arrangement of parts in the refrigerator.

Figure 5 is an enlarged view in section taken on lines 5—5, Figure 3.

Figure 6 is an enlarged view in section taken on line 6—6, Figure 3, with the top of the inner refrigerator door shown in its closed position in dotted lines; and

Figure 7 is an enlarged view in section taken on line 7—7, Figure 3.

Referring now more particularly to the drawings, reference character R designates generally a domestic refrigerator of the mechanical type comprising an outer metal shell S and an inner metal shell or lining L, the interior of which provides the usual food storage compartment C.

In the present instance, the outer metal shell S of the refrigerator cabinet may be formed of a single piece of sheet metal of inverted U-shape, to provide the outer top and side walls of the refrigerator and the front edge portion of said shell preferably is bent inwardly at right angles to the remainder of the sheet as shown at 1 (see Figures 5 and 7), then bent back upon itself as at 2 and then again bent as at 3 reversely upon itself in a direction inwardly and parallel to the first bent portion 1 to provide a flange of triple thickness which extends continuously about the sides and top of the refrigerator. The last bent portion 3 of the shell S is of such length that it extends inwardly beyond the bent portions 1 and 2, as shown in the drawings, to form an inwardly

projecting flange edge portion extending about the sides and top of the refrigerator, thus providing a somewhat rearwardly offset or recessed seat 4, the purpose for which will later appear.

The food liner L has its front edge portions flared generally outwardly to provide a flange portion 5 which extends continuously thereabout and is positioned slightly rearwardly of the plane of the front of the shell S, but in the general direction of and spaced from the shell flange seat 4, as shown in Figures 5 and 7 of the drawings. The space between the shell S and lining L is filled in the usual manner with suitable insulating material (not shown), and the lining is supported in said spaced relation within the shell by means of a plurality of pairs of correspondingly positioned bracket members 6 and 7 secured, respectively, to said shell and lining at suitable points about the front edges thereof and secured together by screws or the like 8, one suitable construction and arrangement of such parts being disclosed and described in the copending application of Theodore W. Rundell, Serial No. 397,972, filed June 13, 1941.

The refrigerator is provided with the usual type of door D for closing the front access opening to the food storage compartment C and this door embodies the conventional sealing gasket 9, the said door D and its gasket being constructed and arranged so that the door entirely overlies the front of the refrigerator from side to side and to the top thereof with the gasket 9 impinging or seating upon the outer bent edge portion 1 of the shell S. The refrigerator may also be provided with a shelf-lined inner door structure D' of the type shown in certain figures of the drawings.

In refrigerator construction of the present type, an evaporator E (see Figure 6) is mounted at the top of the food storage compartment C and this evaporator is relatively shallow and of generally U- or rectangular shape extending substantially entirely across the top of the food storage compartment for the full width thereof. Too, the evaporator E has a depth approximately equal to that of the food storage compartment with the result that said evaporator substantially occupies the entire top portion of said compartment, although there is provided sufficient space between the evaporator E and lining L to permit of the formation of frost on the evaporator exterior surface.

To effect a directed or controlled circulation of air within the food storage compartment C, and thereby accomplish most efficient cooling and preservation of foodstuffs therein, there is provided, and spaced just below the evaporator E, an air directing or baffle member B of sheet metal. Spaced below the baffle B is a sheet metal plate b which functions to prevent contact of the circulating air directly with the underside of the baffle B and also to minimize sweating on the underside of said baffle and to prevent any condensed moisture from dripping into the food storage compartment C. Suspended from this plate b, as by runner members 10, is a meat receptacle M and this, as well as the construction and operation of the baffle B and the particular details of the evaporator E, may be, for example, in accordance with the disclosure in the copending application of Frank D. Peltier previously referred to herein.

Now the present invention, inter alia, consists essentially in providing for the front of the evaporator E, and for the adjacent space between the

lining L and shell S, a suitable closure or panel member that will serve to provide for the front openings to the evaporator a seal against the entrance of air thereto, and to provide also the usual thermal insulating breaker-strip or connection between the front edge portions of said lining L and outer shell S, while at the same time serving to enhance considerably the appearance of the refrigerator.

One suitable form of such a closure or panel member is shown in Figure 2 of the drawings and generally designated by the reference character P. As shown, the member P is of unitary construction and essentially is composed of a material of low heat conductivity, for example, a suitable plastic or like material such as polystyrene that is non-moisture absorbing and capable of being formed in a unitary member by molding or like processes.

Referring particularly to Figures 2, 5 and 6, it will be seen that the member P comprises, at its top and sides, an outwardly directed flange portion 11 of generally uniform width having a shape or contour conforming to the shape or contour of the top and upper side portions of the refrigerator cabinet, and the member P and its flange portion 11 are so dimensioned and proportioned that the latter will reside or extend beyond the lining L into and forwardly of the recessed seat portion 4 of the outer shell S substantially to the inner edge of the doubled portions 1 and 2 thereof. As shown in said Figure 2, a suitably shaped cutout 11' may be provided in the central top portion of the panel P to accommodate the usual cold control mechanism.

Proceeding inwardly from this outer flange portion 11, the member P curves or contours rearwardly as at 12 into a main body portion 13 which is surrounded on its top and sides by the said flange portion 11 and has its bottom edge portion formed to provide a forwardly extending flange portion 14 having at its outer edge a depending lip 15 arranged, when the panel P is in place, to reside forwardly adjacent the front edge of the baffle B (see Figure 6) and to cooperate therewith in a manner hereinafter set forth. Formed in the body portion 13 are two laterally spaced, relatively large rectangular openings 16. Through these access is had to the interior of the front openings compartments of the evaporator E, and the edge portions of the body portion 13 surrounding said openings 16 are formed as indicated to provide rearwardly extending flange portions 17, arranged to engage and seal snugly against the front edge portions of the evaporator E which surround and define the access openings in the front thereof, for example, as shown in Figure 6. In addition to the large access opening 16, there are also provided, along with others, vertically elongated openings 18 through which extend hinges (not shown) for the evaporator door 19, the hinges after passing through said openings 18 being secured to the lining L. The doors 19 preferably have transparent panels bounded by suitable frames, and are mounted so as to close tightly against the front of the panel P thereby sealing the evaporator interior against the entrance of air, and providing a thermal break between the portions of the evaporator and the frames of the said doors 19. In addition, other openings x and y may be provided in the panel member P for accommodating a suitable defrost indicating mechanism.

As best illustrated in Figures 1, 5 and 6 of the drawings, the panel member P is mounted across

the front of the evaporator E with the flanges 17, which surround the openings 16, sealing against the front edge portions of the walls of said evaporator, so that the said openings 16 in the panel member P register with the front access openings to the evaporator. With the panel thus positioned, the contoured portion 12 thereof between the body portion 13 and flange portion 11 engages against the diverging or flared flange portion 5 of the lining L, as shown in Figure 5, and the said outer marginal flange portion 11 extends outwardly and into the recessed seat portion 4 of the outer shell S substantially to the inner edge of the doubled portions 1 and 2 thereof as aforesaid.

The panel member P may be secured in the position described by any suitable fastening means such as screws or the like at several locations, for example, to the flange portion 5 of the lining L by screws 20 and, in addition, a suitable connection between the outer edge portion of the marginal flange 11 thereof, and the intumed flange seat portion 3 of the outer shell S may be provided. Preferably this connection is provided in the form of a suitable trim strip 21 constructed and arranged to conceal the adjacent edge portions of panel flange portion 11 and the intumed portion 1 of the shell S.

As shown in Figures 5 and 7 of the drawings, such a trim strip 21 is shaped generally to conform to the contour of the recessed seat portion 4 of the shell S in which it is disposed. More particularly, the trim strip 21 comprises portions 22 and 23 which extend in opposite directions and overlie the exposed front surfaces of the adjacent edge portions of the flange 11 of the panel member P and the edge portion of the shell S, and, comprises also, shank and tail portions 24 and 25 which extend respectively inwardly between the edges of the intumed portion of the said shell and the flange 11, and then inwardly between said flange 11 and the shell flange edge portion 3. This trim strip 21 may be held in the position described by means of a plurality of clips 26 which engage over the tail portion 25 thereof and the flange edge portion 3 at a plurality of spaced points about the sides and top of the cabinet, and these clips 26 preferably are provided with a lip 27 which engages forwardly over the edge of the panel flange portion 11, thereby serving to hold said clips 26 against displacement.

Mounting of the panel member P in position in the refrigerator may be accomplished by first securing the trim strip 21 to the intumed front edge portion of the cabinet shell S by means of clips 26, as aforesaid, and then sliding said panel vertically upward into place. In this connection, it is pointed out that the trim strip 21 extends continuously about the sides and top of the cabinet shell S and when securing said strip in place preparatory to mounting the panel member P in the refrigerator, the strip 21 is secured to the shell S only at the top and upper portions of the sides thereof; the remaining side portions of the strip 21 below the evaporator E being left free of the shell S. With the top and upper side portions of the trim strip 21 thus secured to the shell, the edges of the panel flange portion 11, at opposite sides of the panel member P may be inserted between the trim strip portion 22 and the flange edge portion 3 at a point where the strip 21 has been left free of the shell (below the line of the evaporator bottom). The panel P thus posi-

tioned may be then slid upwardly into its proper position across the front of the evaporator E with the entire length of the peripheral edge of its marginal flange portion 11 tucked behind the portion or leg 22 of the trim strip 21 in the recessed seat 4 of the shell S, as previously described and shown in Figures 3 and 5 of the drawings. Thus positioned, the panel P may be secured in place by the screws 20 previously mentioned.

With the panel member P secured in place as aforesaid, the lower free portions of the trim strip 21 may be secured to the opposite side wall portions of the outer shell S in the manner previously described, by means of clips 26 and suitable breakerstrips 28 of material of low thermal conductivity then applied to close the front opening or space between the shell S and lining L. These breakerstrips 28 may be assembled and removably secured in place first by inserting their outer edges behind the inwardly extending leg 22 of the trim strip 21 into the recessed seat portion 4, and then securing their inner edges to the flange portion 5 of the lining L by means of suitable snap fasteners 30, for example, in accordance with the invention disclosed and described in the copending application of Theodore W. Rundell, Serial No. 371,945, filed December 27, 1940. After this, the joints between the breakerstrip sections 28, and between them and the panel member P, may be connected by means of suitable trim strips 29 constructed, for example, as shown and described in another copending application of the said Rundell, Serial No. 348,593, filed July 30, 1940.

From the foregoing, it will be observed that the present invention provides in a refrigerator construction of the present type, a front panel member of neat attractive appearance which serves to seal the front of the evaporator E and to cooperate with the baffle B to restrict the circulation of air about the exterior top and sides of said evaporator, as well as interiorly thereof. Too, the extension of this panel member P from the evaporator out to the food liner prevents the inrush of air about the outside of the evaporator, and resulting condensation of moisture thereon, when the main refrigerator door is open. Furthermore, this panel member serves also to direct substantially all of the air circulating within the food storage compartment C rearwardly between the baffle and the underside of the evaporator, and in addition provides the necessary thermal breakerstrip between the lining and shell of the cabinet in the regions immediately adjacent the evaporator.

Too, the provision and position of the lip of the panel member forwardly adjacent the front edge of the baffle serves to exclude circulating air from the region in front of the panel member and its transparent doors to the end that frosting and condensation on the latter is minimized and, furthermore, the construction of the invention is comparatively inexpensive and readily installed, and imparts to the upper portion of the refrigerator an unbroken flowing surface from the evaporator doors outwardly to the outer shell of the cabinet, thereby greatly enhancing the appearance of the refrigerator.

While a particular embodiment of the invention has herein been illustrated and described, it is not intended that said invention be limited to such disclosure but that changes and modifications may be made and incorporated within the scope of the annexed claims.

I claim:

1. A refrigerator comprising an outer shell, a food compartment liner mounted within said shell and spaced therefrom, an evaporator disposed in the top of the food compartment liner and having a front access opening thereto, and a unitary panel member of low heat conductivity secured across the front of said evaporator and having therein an aperture registering with the front access opening in the evaporator, said panel member extending outwardly beyond the food compartment liner to the outer shell and providing a thermal breakerstrip between said liner and shell.
2. A refrigerator comprising an outer shell, a food compartment liner mounted within said shell and spaced therefrom, an evaporator disposed in the top of the food compartment liner and having a front access opening thereto, a unitary panel member of low heat conductivity secured across the front of said evaporator and having therein an aperture registering with the front access opening in the evaporator, said panel member extending outwardly beyond the food compartment liner to the outer shell and providing a thermal breakerstrip between said liner and shell, and a door overlying the panel member to close the opening therein and seal the front access opening of the evaporator.
3. A refrigerator comprising an outer shell, a food compartment liner mounted within said shell and spaced therefrom, an evaporator disposed in the top of the food compartment liner and having a front access opening thereto, a unitary panel member of low heat conductivity secured across the front of said evaporator and having therein an aperture registering with the front access opening in the evaporator, said panel member extending outwardly beyond the food compartment liner to the outer shell and providing a thermal breakerstrip between said liner and shell, and means connecting the outer edge of the panel member to the outer shell of the refrigerator.
4. A refrigerator construction comprising an outer shell including side and top wall portions provided at their front edges with an intumed flange having a recessed seat portion in the plane of the front of the refrigerator, a lining providing a food storage compartment spaced inwardly from the outer shell and having its front edge portions flanged in the direction of the flange of the outer shell, an evaporator disposed in the top portion of the food storage compartment and having a front access opening thereto, and a unitary front panel member of low heat conductivity extending across the front of said evaporator and having an opening therein registering with front access opening of the evaporator, said panel member extending outwardly over the flange of the lining member and across the space between said lining and outer shell into the recessed seat of the latter.
5. A refrigerator construction comprising an outer shell including side and top wall portions provided at their front edges with an intumed flange having a recessed seat portion in the plane of the front of the refrigerator, a lining providing a food storage compartment spaced inwardly from the outer shell and having its front edge portions flanged in the direction of the flange of the outer shell, an evaporator disposed in the top portion of the food storage compartment and having a front access opening thereto, a unitary front panel member of low heat con-

ductivity extending across the front of said evaporator and having an opening therein registering with the front access opening of the evaporator, said panel member extending outwardly over the flange of the lining member and across the space between said lining and outer shell into the recessed seat of the latter, and means fastening the panel member both to the flange of the lining member and to the outer shell.

6. A domestic refrigerator comprising a cabinet providing therein a food storage compartment, a cooling evaporator mounted in the top of said compartment and having a front access opening thereto, a baffle member spaced below said evaporator and operable to direct the circulation of air rearwardly across the bottom surface of the evaporator, and a panel member fitted snugly across the front of said evaporator and having therein an opening registering with the front access opening of the evaporator, said panel member including a depending transverse lower edge portion disposed forwardly adjacent the forward edge of said baffle member and cooperable with the baffle to direct the circulation of air between the latter and said evaporator.

7. A domestic refrigerator comprising a cabinet providing therein a food storage compartment, a cooling evaporator mounted in the top of said compartment and having a front access opening thereto, a baffle member spaced below said evaporator and operable to direct the circulation of air rearwardly across the bottom surface of the evaporator, a panel member fitted snugly across the front of said evaporator and having therein an opening registering with the front access opening of the evaporator, said panel member including a depending transverse lower edge portion disposed forwardly adjacent the forward edge of said baffle member and cooperable with the baffle to direct the circulation of air between the latter and said evaporator, and a door overlying the panel member and arranged to seat snugly thereagainst and close the opening therein thereby closing and sealing the front of the evaporator, the said panel member and its door being constructed and arranged to restrict the circulation of air over the top, sides and interior of the evaporator, and the depending lower edge portion of the panel member serving to keep circulating air from the region of said door.

8. A domestic refrigerator comprising a cabinet including an outer shell and an inwardly spaced lining providing a food storage compartment, a cooling evaporator mounted in the top of said compartment and having a front access opening, a baffle member spaced below said evaporator and operable to direct the circulation of air rearwardly across the bottom surface of the evaporator, and a panel member fitted snugly across the front of said evaporator and having therein an opening registering with the front access opening of the evaporator, said panel member extending outwardly from the evaporator beyond the food compartment lining to the outer shell to provide a thermal breakerstrip therebetween and said panel member including a depending transverse lower edge portion disposed forwardly adjacent the forward edge of said baffle member and cooperable with the baffle to direct the circulation of air between the latter and said evaporator.

9. A domestic refrigerator comprising a cabinet including an outer shell and an inwardly spaced lining providing a food storage compart-

ment, a cooling evaporator mounted in the top of said compartment and having a front access opening thereto, a baffle member spaced below said evaporator and operable to direct the circulation of air rearwardly across the bottom surface of the evaporator, a panel member fitted snugly across the front of said evaporator and having therein an opening registering with the front access opening of the evaporator, said panel member extending outwardly from the evaporator beyond the food compartment lining to the outer shell to provide a thermal breaker-strip therebetween and said panel member including a depending transverse lower edge portion disposed forwardly adjacent the forward edge of said baffle member and cooperable with the baffle to direct the circulation of air between the latter and said evaporator, and a door overlying the panel member and arranged to seat snugly thereagainst and close the opening therein thereby closing and sealing the front of the evaporator, the said panel member and its door being constructed and arranged to restrict the circulation of air over the top, sides and interior of the evaporator, and the depending lower edge portion of the panel member serving to keep circulating air from the region of said door.

10. In a refrigerator comprising an outer shell, an inner lining, and a cooling evaporator disposed in the top of said lining, a front closure member for the top portion of the refrigerator comprising a unitary panel of material of low heat conductivity extending from the top and side front edges of the evaporator outwardly beyond the lining to the outer shell and providing both a seal about the front edges of said evaporator and a breakerstrip between said lining and outer shell.

11. In a refrigerator comprising an outer shell, an inner lining, and a cooling evaporator disposed in the top of said lining, a front closure member for the top portion of the refrigerator comprising a unitary panel of material of low heat conductivity extending from the top and side front edges of the evaporator outwardly beyond the lining to the outer shell and providing both a seal about the front edges of said evaporator and a breakerstrip between said lining and outer shell, and means fastening said front closure member to the lining and to the outer shell.

12. A refrigerator construction as claimed in claim 10 wherein a baffle member is spaced below the evaporator for directing air across the lower surface of said evaporator, and wherein the front closure panel member has a depending portion residing forwardly adjacent the front edge of said baffle to substantially exclude circulated air from the region of the front of the evaporator.

13. In a refrigerator, the combination of an outer shell, a food liner mounted in spaced relation within said outer shell, an evaporator having a front access opening disposed in the top portion of said liner, a one-piece non-metallic panel member fitted against the front of said evaporator and having an opening therein registering with said evaporator opening, said panel member providing a unitary finish piece substantially entirely covering the top portion of the front of the refrigerator, and a door for said access opening of the evaporator carried by the liner and arranged to seal tightly against the panel member thereby providing a thermal break between said evaporator and the door.

14. A refrigerator construction comprising a cabinet, an evaporator disposed in the top portion of said cabinet and having therein a plurality of laterally adjacent compartments open at the front, and a unitary panel member of insulating material entirely covering the top portion of the front of the refrigerator, said panel member having apertures therein registering with said evaporator compartment openings and having rearwardly extending flange portions arranged to seat snugly against the front edges of the evaporator about the compartment openings therein.

15. A front closure panel, for an evaporator and adjacent cabinet structure of a domestic refrigerator comprising a unitary member of material of low heat conductivity, said member having a relatively flat marginal flange portion extending about the top and sides thereof and being contoured rearwardly from said flange to a main panel portion lying in a plane approximately parallel to and offset rearwardly from said marginal flange portion, and said main panel portion having therein at least one opening for registration with the access opening of an evaporator.

16. A front closure panel for an evaporator and adjacent cabinet structure of a domestic refrigerator comprising a unitary member of material of low heat conductivity, said member having a relatively flat marginal flange portion extending about the top and sides thereof and being contoured rearwardly from said flange to a main panel portion lying in a plane approximately parallel to and offset rearwardly from said marginal flange portion, and said main panel portion having at its lower edge a forwardly extending flange portion terminating at its outer edge in a depending lip.

17. A front closure panel for an evaporator and adjacent cabinet structure of a domestic refrigerator comprising a unitary member of material of low heat conductivity, said member having a relatively flat marginal flange portion extending about the top and sides thereof and being contoured rearwardly from said flange to a main panel portion lying in a plane approximately parallel to and offset rearwardly from said marginal flange portion, and said main panel portion having therein openings defined by rearwardly extending flanges portions arranged for engagement with the front edge portions defining the access opening of an evaporator.

18. A front closure panel for an evaporator and adjacent cabinet structure of a domestic refrigerator comprising a unitary member of material of low heat conductivity, said member having a relatively flat marginal flange portion extending about the top and sides thereof and being contoured rearwardly from said flange to a main panel portion lying in a plane approximately parallel to and offset rearwardly from said marginal flange portion, said main panel portion having at its lower edge a forwardly extending flange portion terminating at its outer edge in a depending lip, and said main panel member having openings therein defined by rearwardly extending flange portions arranged for engagement with the front edge portions defining the access openings of an evaporator.

DONALD E. DAILEY.