



THE MONOGRAPH SERIES

RECORDS OF EARLY AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE
AS SOURCE MATERIAL

EDITED BY RUSSELL F. WHITEHEAD, A.I.A.

VOLUME XIX

MONOGRAPH SIX

THE COTTAGES OF CAPE ANN—PART I

BY DANIEL O. BREWSTER

Research and Measured Drawings by Frank Chouteau Brown

Photographs by Arthur C. Haskell

The early Colonial cottage, wherever it may still be found unspoiled by later additions and changes, possesses a charm and attraction that is not always conveyed by its larger and more formal dwelling associate. Usually of only one story, or a "story and a half" in height, it generally contains only two to three rooms upon the first floor, and its plan is of the simplest—an entrance near one end, a room along what remains of the front, and the rear space divided into two rooms in width.

When the plan is of less depth than that required for two rooms, the entrance may be nearer the middle of the front, and a room at either side; or, if the door and stairs remain near one end, there may be an ell extended at one side, instead of at the rear, as is more likely to be the case with a larger type of plan. And frequently these ells are either built on at later dates, or even a shed moved up against the cottage and connected with it—usually performing the function of a service or kitchen addition.

The upper story may be left unfinished, or divided into a couple of rooms—rarely more, as the dormers now found in the sloping roofs are almost invariably of a date subsequent to the original construction. The chimney—overlarge for its diminutive plan—was generally placed back of the hall and stairway, as was the custom with the larger houses of the period. In that location it could serve the two larger rooms, of which one was the kitchen—or combined kitchen and living room—and the other a sleeping room off the kitchen, found in so many of the larger dwellings of that time.

The earliest type has already been shown in the

original Riggs House (Vol. XIX, Monograph One), a three-room structure of squared logs with a pitch roof. And the same dwelling shows, in its later addition, the gambrel-roof type that came into local fashion just about the end of the Seventeenth Century, and continued to be the almost invariable arrangement until well past the middle of the Eighteenth. Between about 1690 and 1760, almost all the smaller dwellings on "the Cape" were of either the steep or flat gambrel design; by far the larger number being of the comfortable squat outline seen in so many of these accompanying illustrations.

This early squat gambrel roof gradually became steeper and sharper in pitch, until it was succeeded by a flatter single-slope pitched roof near the end of the Eighteenth Century, which, with its smaller chimney, soon came to mark the cottage of the early Nineteenth. Perhaps the dormers covered by a simple extension of the upper roof slope may have been the earlier type—though even they are seldom to be found occurring in the original construction of the Cape cottage. They were probably soon succeeded by the gable-fronted dormer treatment, of which the most authentic and earliest example to be seen in this group of illustrations is the dormer on the "Cottage at the Head of the Cove" in Annisquam.

And so, too, the very modesty of these early cottage dwellings makes it difficult to find many whose early history and exact date of construction are known. Usually one is dependent upon some family legend, or the stories carried down to some existing "early inhabitant" by his elders, for a clue to the early ownership or records of these simple dwellings.

[81]

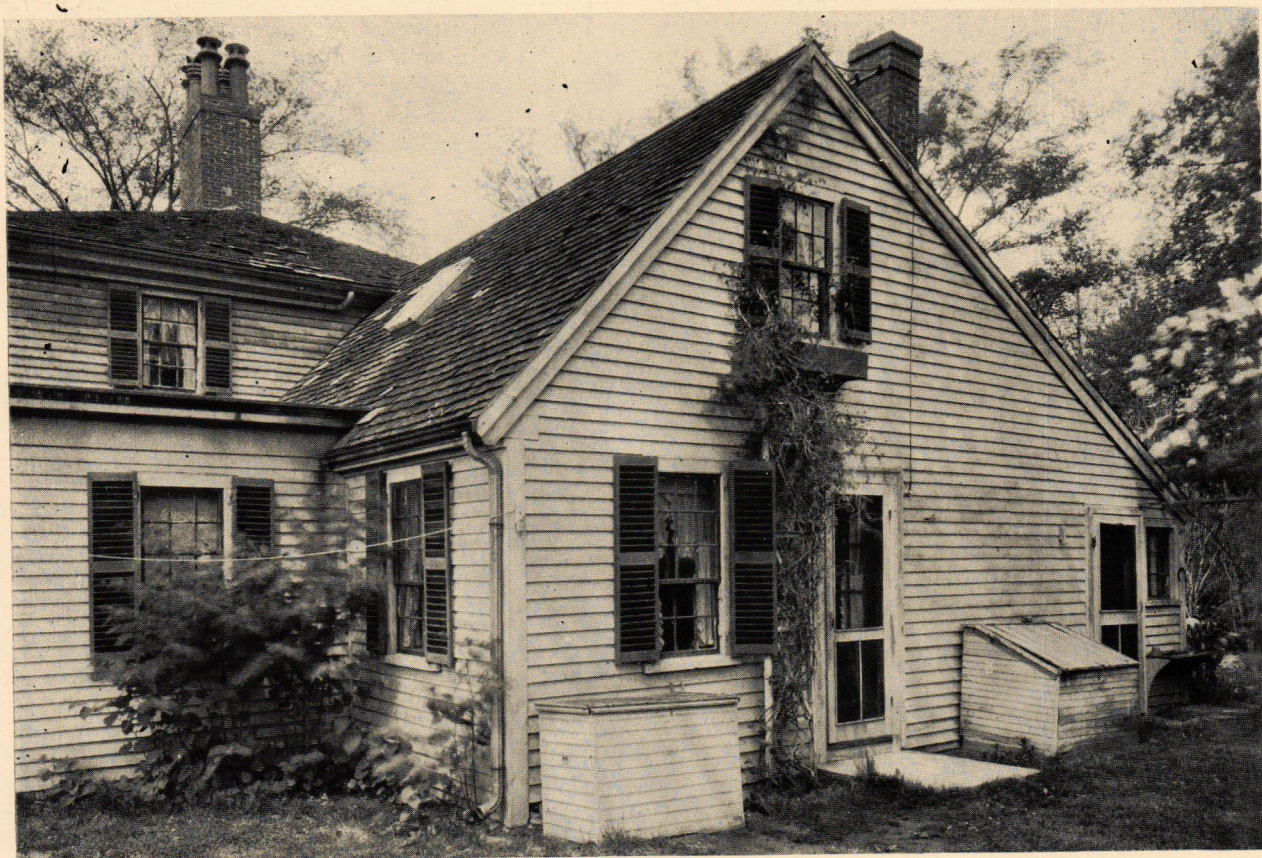
Cape Ann—named by Prince Charles after his mother, Anne of Denmark, wife of James I—extends about eight miles into the Atlantic, separating Massachusetts and Ipswich Bays, and has an area of about forty-three square miles. The entire coast line is very irregular, and starting at "The Cut"—a short canal cut at an early date to connect the tip of Squam River with Gloucester Harbor—its margin is occupied by a continuous settlement, the principal sections of which are known by many descriptive local names, such as, Riverdale, Annisquam, Bay View, Lanesville, Folly Cove, Pigeon Cove, Sandy Bay (now Rockport), Straitsmouth, Land's End, Long Beach, Bass Rocks, East Gloucester, and the Harbor. On the interior are the Farms and the legendary ruins of Dogtown Common, while a considerable area of land upon the mainland is also known as West Gloucester, extending toward Essex and Ipswich and along the Magnolia Shore.

About 1700, or soon thereafter, one Joshua Norwood came and settled on Gully Point, Straitsmouth, near Land's End, where he built a log cabin, which was afterwards removed to Dock Square, where it now stands at one side of Atlantic Avenue; with the Hannah Jumper house upon the other, the two being

among the oldest cottages in Rockport. The rough log construction of the former may still be seen inside.

Nearby, the gambrel-roofed cottage of Francis ("Red Cap") Norwood still overlooks the harbor from its old location back from the more modern Atlantic Avenue. It was built about 1720, and its large central chimney contains the two largest fireplaces in the town. From Dock Square, the main road to Land's End is first known as Mt. Pleasant, then as South Street, and this section is usually called Cove Hill, and leads to the "South End." "No. Six South Street," built well before 1750, probably about 1725, is a typical gambrel-roof cottage, which has been unusually well cared for and preserved. While just across Prospect Street is another old cottage, originally belonging either to an early Poole or another Tarr family offshoot, which has been recently restored. Farther along South Street is a veritable *congerie* of Smith, Poole, and Tarr family dwellings, all dating from about 1750 to 1775.

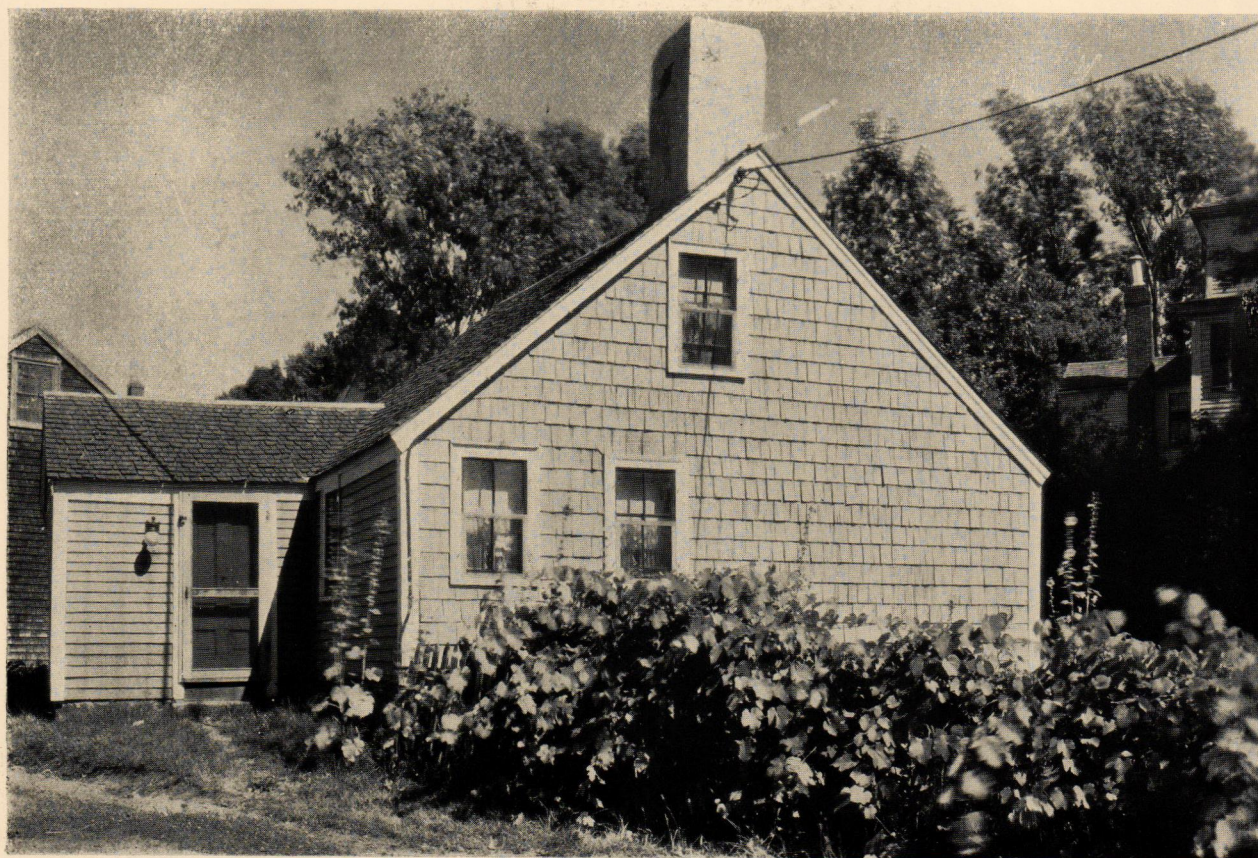
Most of the small dwellings that once crowded the lanes and streets of Gloucester and Rockport have been replaced by the newer buildings and "improvements" called for by the prosperity and growing business of these centers, but a few still remain tucked away



OLD WOODBURY HOUSE—ABOUT 1665-70—ANNISQUAM, MASSACHUSETTS

Now Kitchen Ell Back of Main House

[82]



JOSHUA NORWOOD'S CABIN, ROCKPORT, MASSACHUSETTS

Known as "The Oldest House in Rockport"

in the older streets and back corners of the towns, where business has not yet come to disturb them.

As was so often the case, these little cottages were originally built facing to the south, at a time when there were no established streets—and even the main travelled roads were an informal and movable element in the community, the houses being most usually approached across fields or woodlands by means of a footpath. It has been the fate of many of these original homesteads to be later turned into the kitchen or service portions of larger houses, later built to front the streets—as in the old Woodbury cottage at Annisquam (page 82). Again and again, their compactness has made it easy for their owners to remove themselves, with bag and baggage, and almost bearing their "cot" upon their backs, to a new and more convenient situation. This is a pilgrimage that has happened to more than a few of the houses illustrated in this present group.

Most frequently—where still upon their original foundations—they now stand at all angles to later-day streets, which—particularly upon "the Cape"—wind their way about, while avoiding the sturdy ledge outcroppings and irregular boulder-droppings left by the

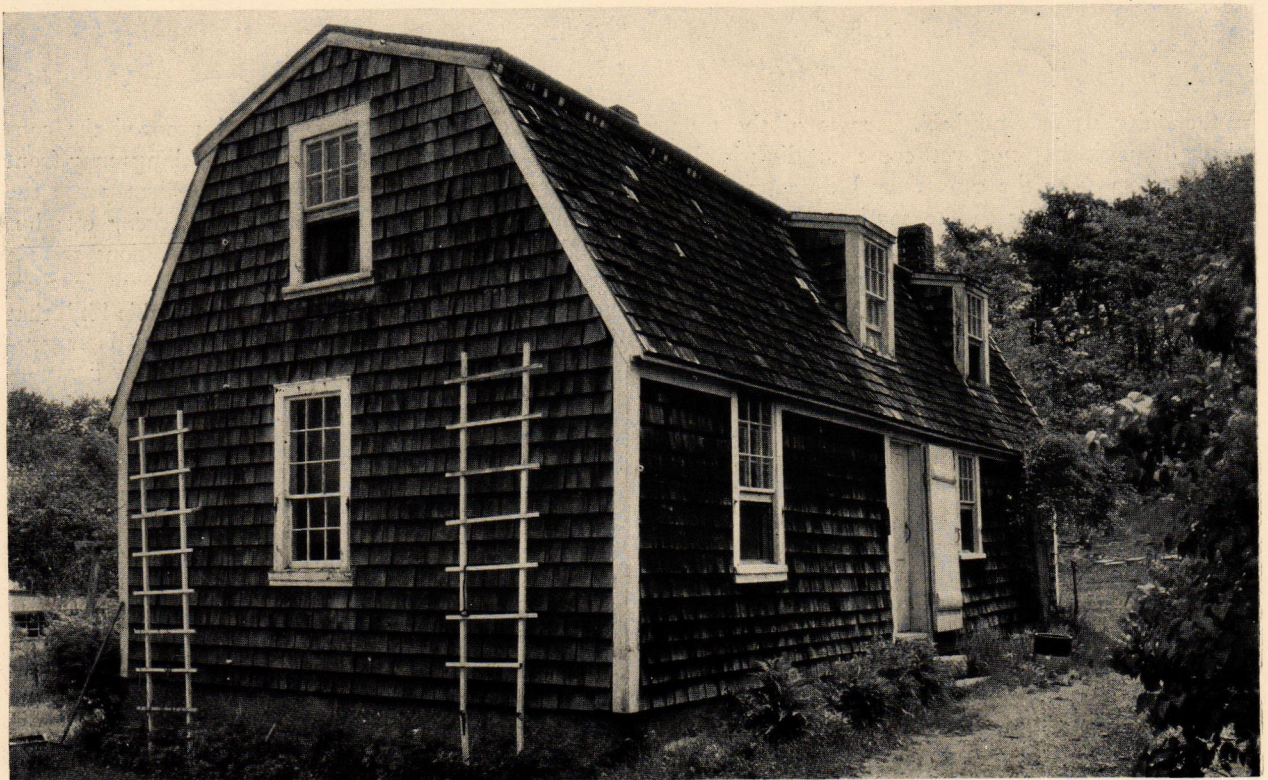
terminal moraine that scarred and grooved the contours of the township. Latter-day dwellings may front primly upon street and square; and often jostle the corners of their older associates in the doing o't; but the little dwellings of the earlier generations remain undisturbed and placid among them, secure in their possession of that same vague but unescapable "it," that is so woefully lacking in the construction of later generations, particularly the houses—of whatever size—built from about 1830, or during this last century "of progress."

In fact, one rather suspects that some part of their compositional charm may come from this very informality of relation to the street lines before them; forcing that glimpse of the front at an angle that shows the spectator also a considerable part of the house-end gable—this being rather an advantage than a disadvantage in the general appearance and appeal made by these unpretentious dwellings.

But so many have been irretrievably spoiled by ill-advised and crudely undertaken alterations and additions! For every one photographed, at least a dozen have been passed by because of the unfeeling treatment, rather than the neglect, to which they have been



COTTAGE BACK OF OLD BURYING GROUND—1750—ROCKPORT, MASSACHUSETTS

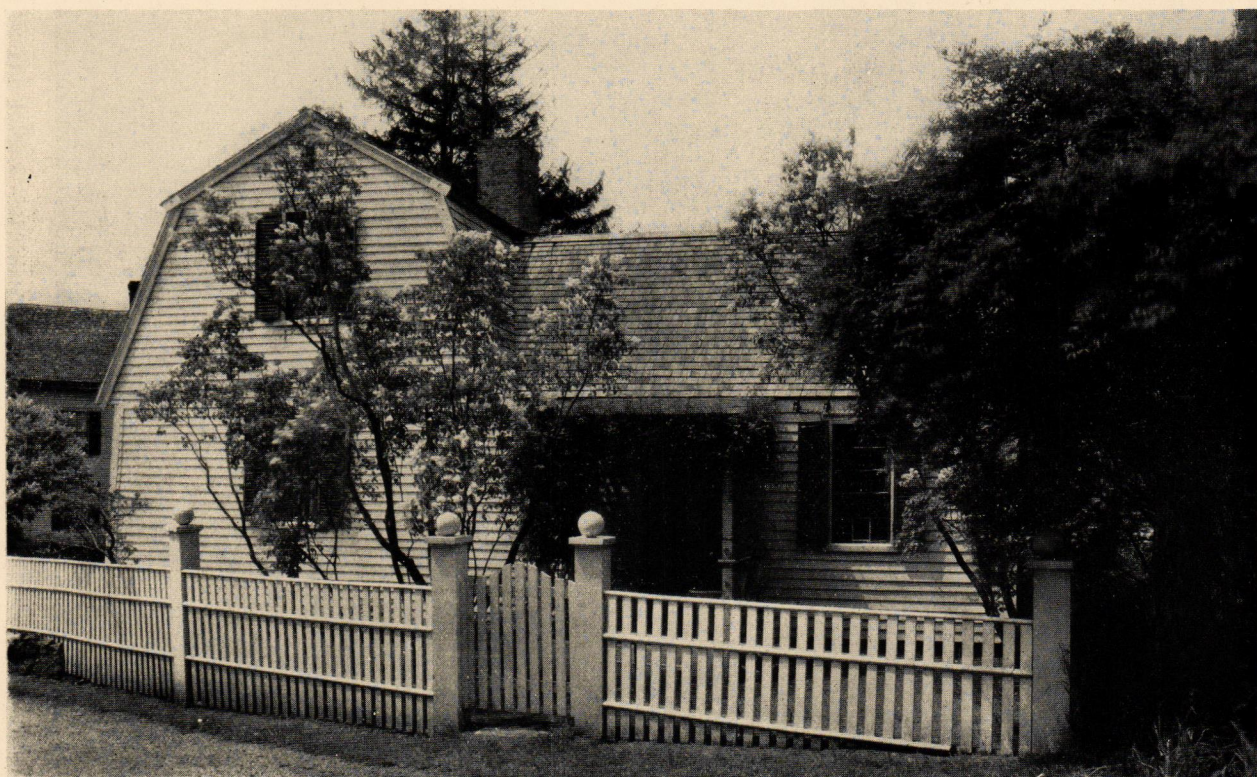


OLD COTTAGE BACK FROM ROAD—1720—ANNISQUAM, MASSACHUSETTS

[84]

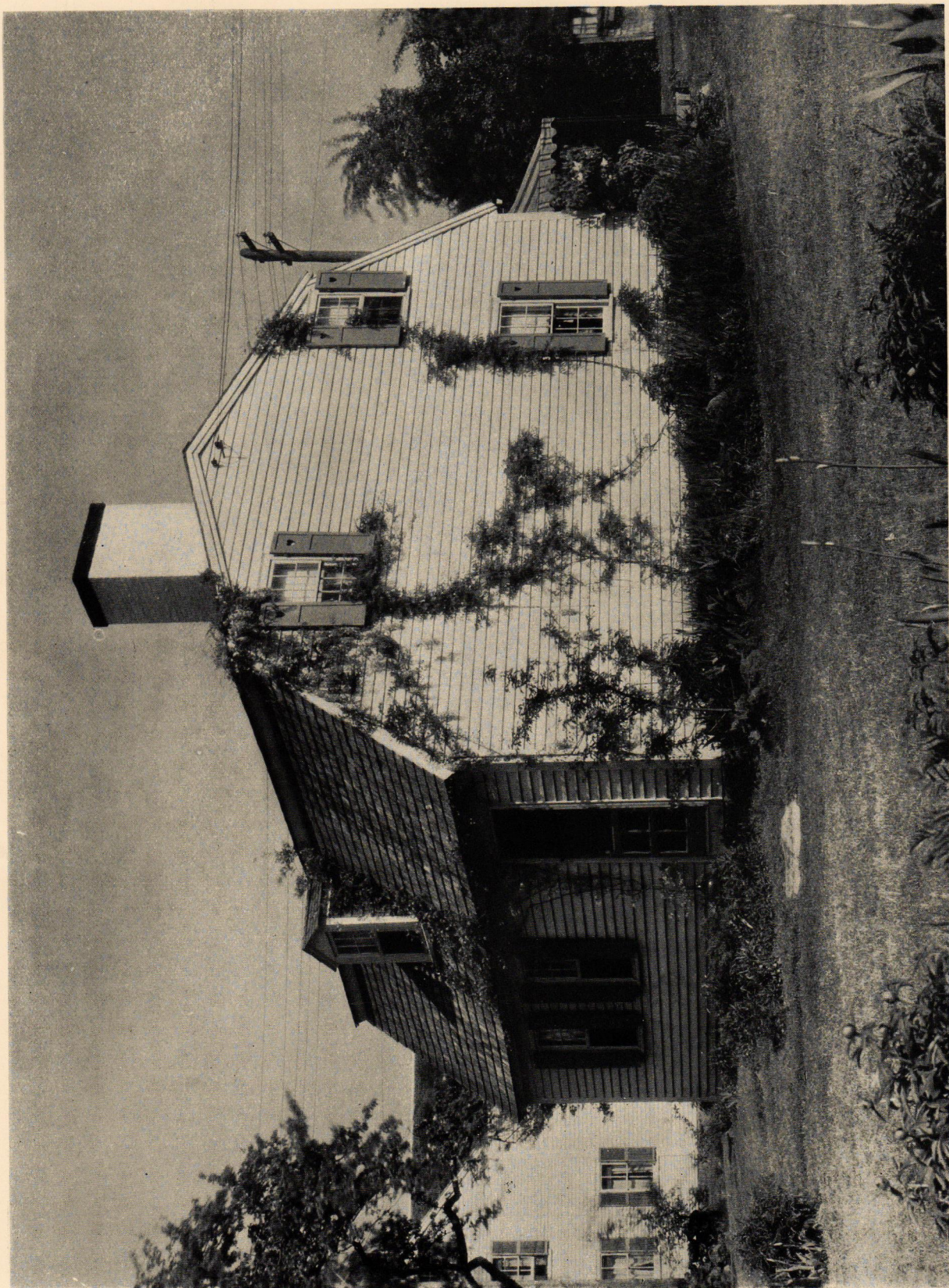


OLD COTTAGES BESIDE ROAD TO EAST GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS



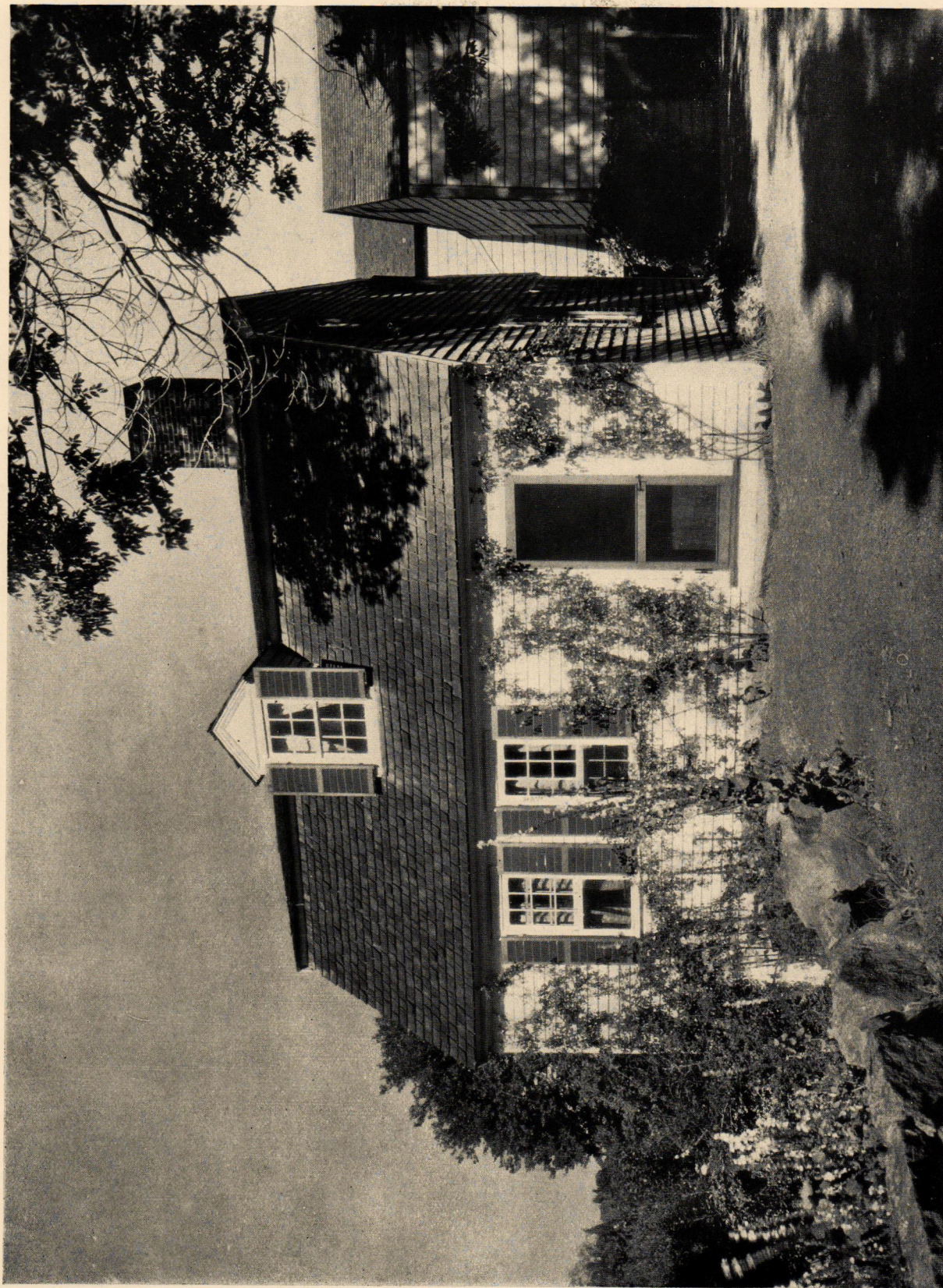
COTTAGE ON WALNUT STREET—LAST HALF 18TH CENTURY—ANNISQUAM, MASSACHUSETTS

[85]



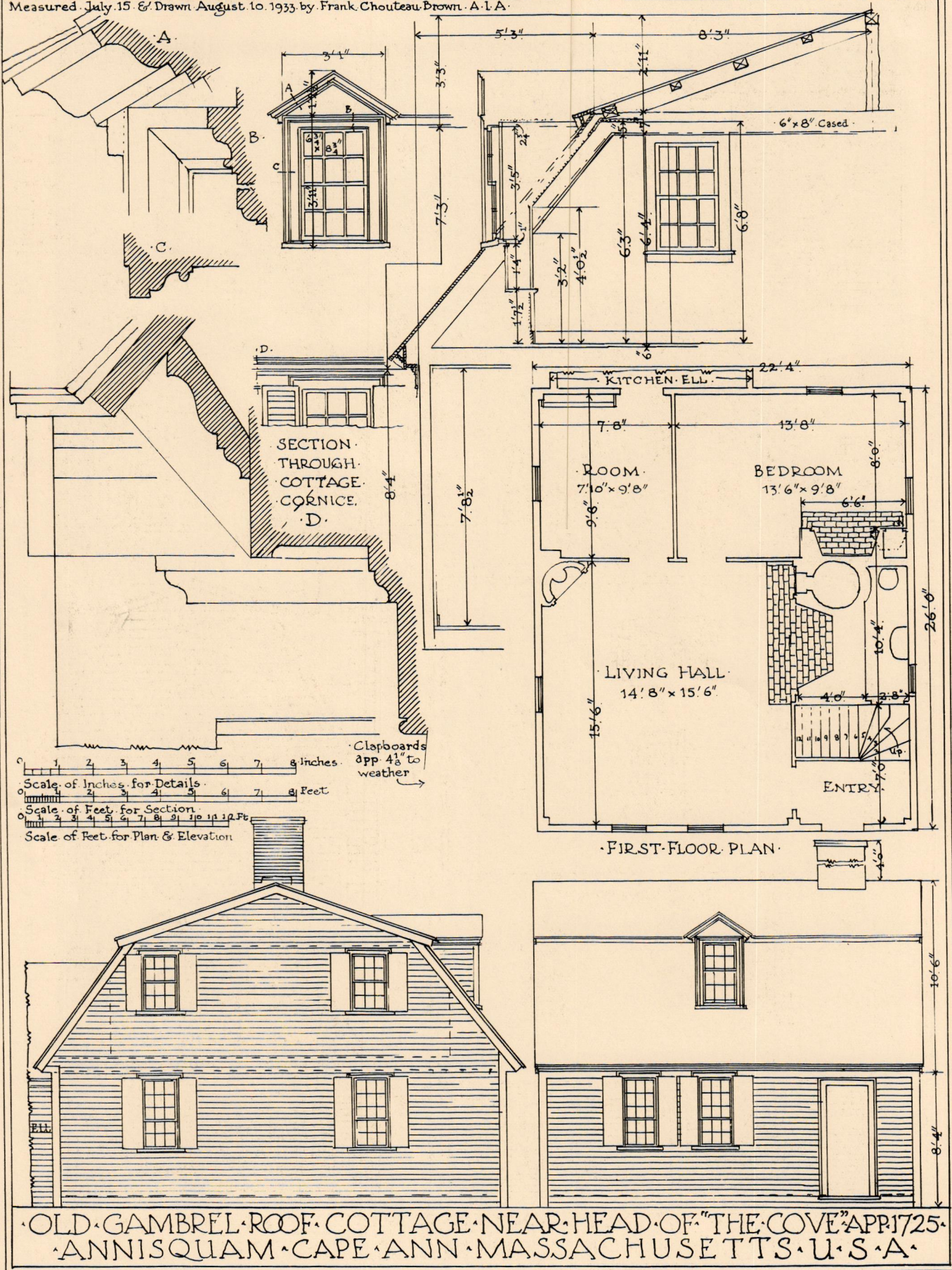
"OLD TARR HOMESTEAD"—6 SOUTH STREET, ROCKPORT, CAPE ANN, MASSACHUSETTS

[86]



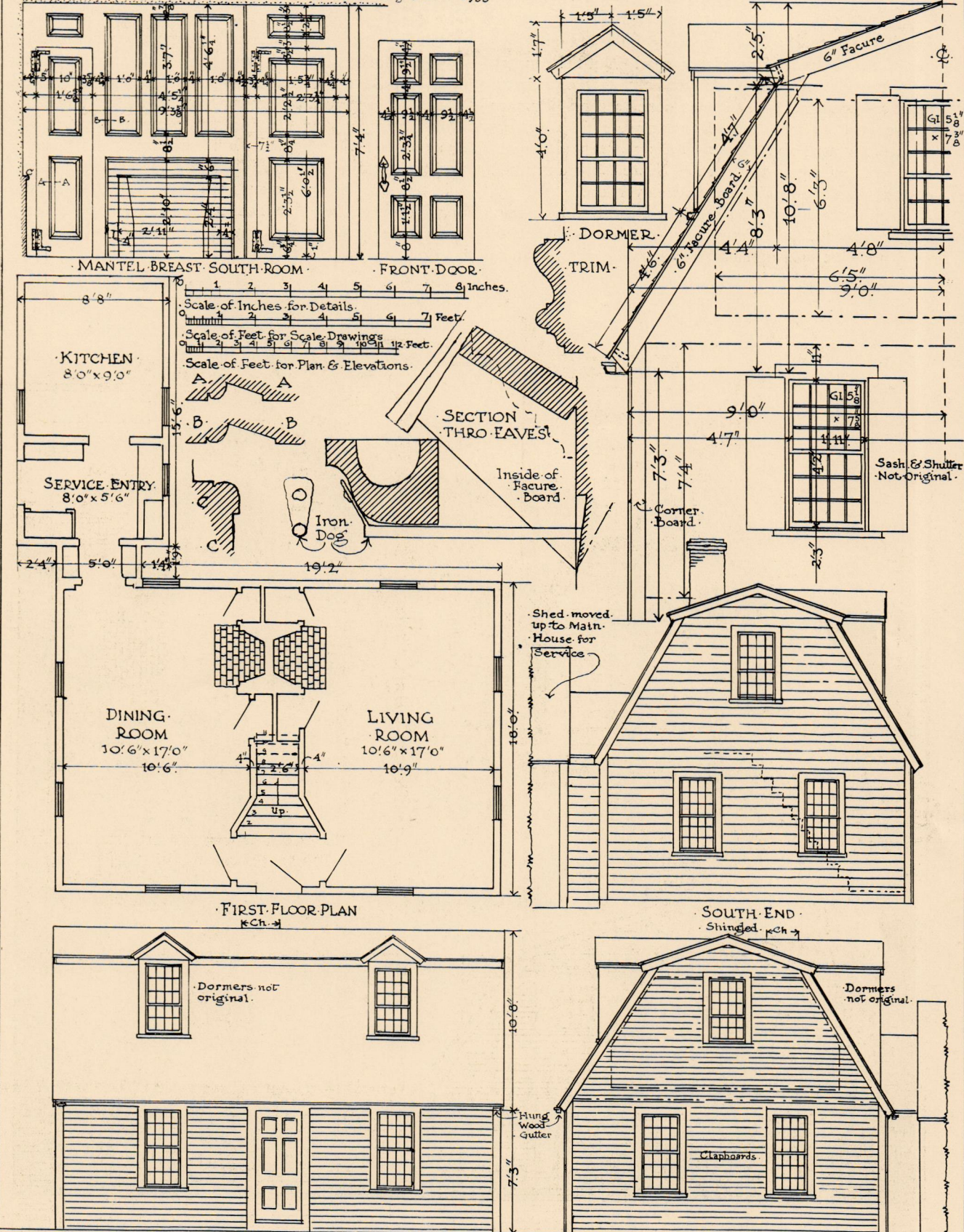
"OLD COTTAGE AT HEAD OF THE COVE"—APP. 1725—ANNISQUAM, CAPE ANN, MASSACHUSETTS
Measured Drawings on Page 88

Measured July 15 & Drawn August 10, 1933 by Frank Chouteau Brown A.L.A.



OLD GAMBREL ROOF COTTAGE NEAR HEAD OF "THE COVE" APR. 1725.
ANNISQUAM CAPE ANN MASSACHUSETTS U.S.A.

Measured & Drawn by Frank Chouteau Brown Architect. July 9 & 10 1933



OLD POOLE COTTAGE PROBABLY BUILT ABOUT 1750-1760
ROCKPORT CAPE ANN MASSACHUSETTS U.S.A.

forcibly subjected! Mere neglect usually but adds illusion to the element of the picturesque. But the country carpenter—even possibly the city architect of general practice—may not possess that delicate sensibility that is necessary to take over these simple little survivors of an early age, and continue their charm and beauty, in a little enlarged and perhaps more fully dormered—and, possibly, also plumbed!—version.

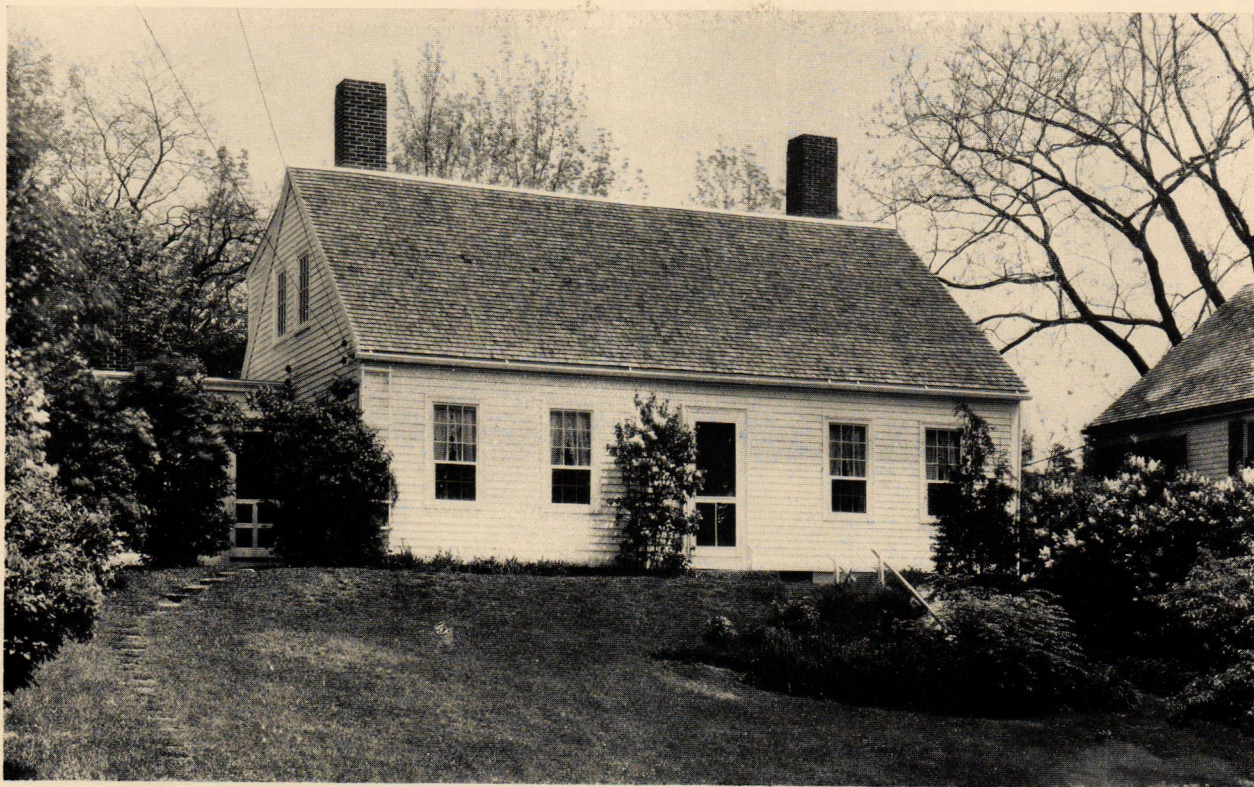
Even some among the cottages illustrated here may be remembered by a fortunate few “early inhabitants” in a previous and more charming state than that to

which they have now attained—especially where they are now to be seen in a snugly washed and starched Sunday best. To many their older, more ordinary, workaday appearance, may have been preferable! One can understand the Puritan’s aversion to paint, as one recalls their vanished picturesqueness. No “paint up” and “clean up” campaigns in those days, we may be assured. And nowadays we have to suffer from our inordinate belief in neatness, cleanness, sanitation and efficiency, being the very be-all and end-all desired of our day and generation!



OLD POOLE (CAPT. TARR) COTTAGE—1750-60—ROCKPORT, MASSACHUSETTS
Measured Drawings on Page 89

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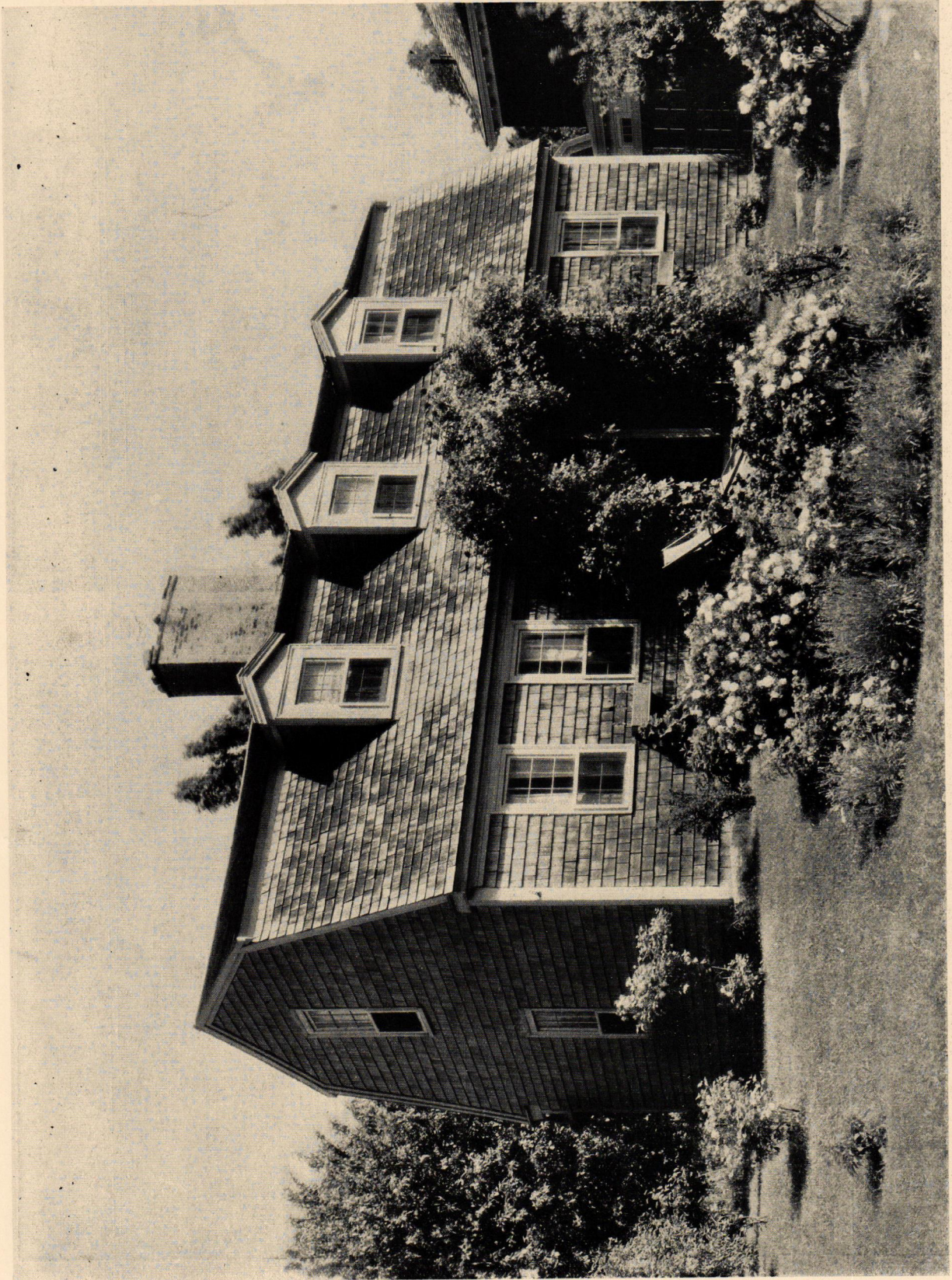


LANE HOMESTEAD—ABOUT 1825—ANNISQUAM, MASSACHUSETTS



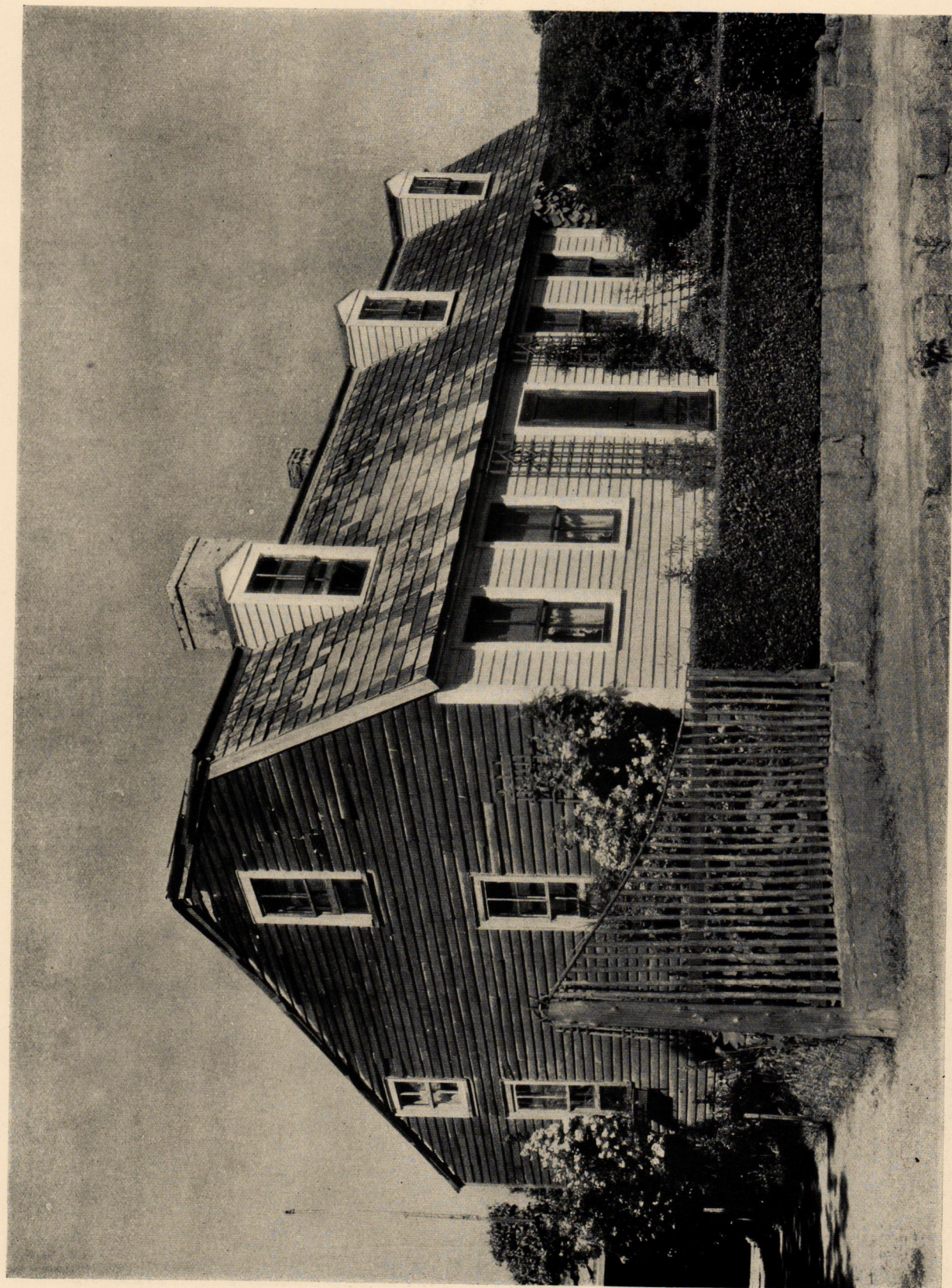
CAPT. WOODBURY HOUSE, FOLLY COVE, CAPE ANN, MASSACHUSETTS

[91]



FRANCIS ("RED CAP") NORWOOD HOUSE—1700-20—OVERLOOKING HARBOR, ROCKPORT, MASSACHUSETTS

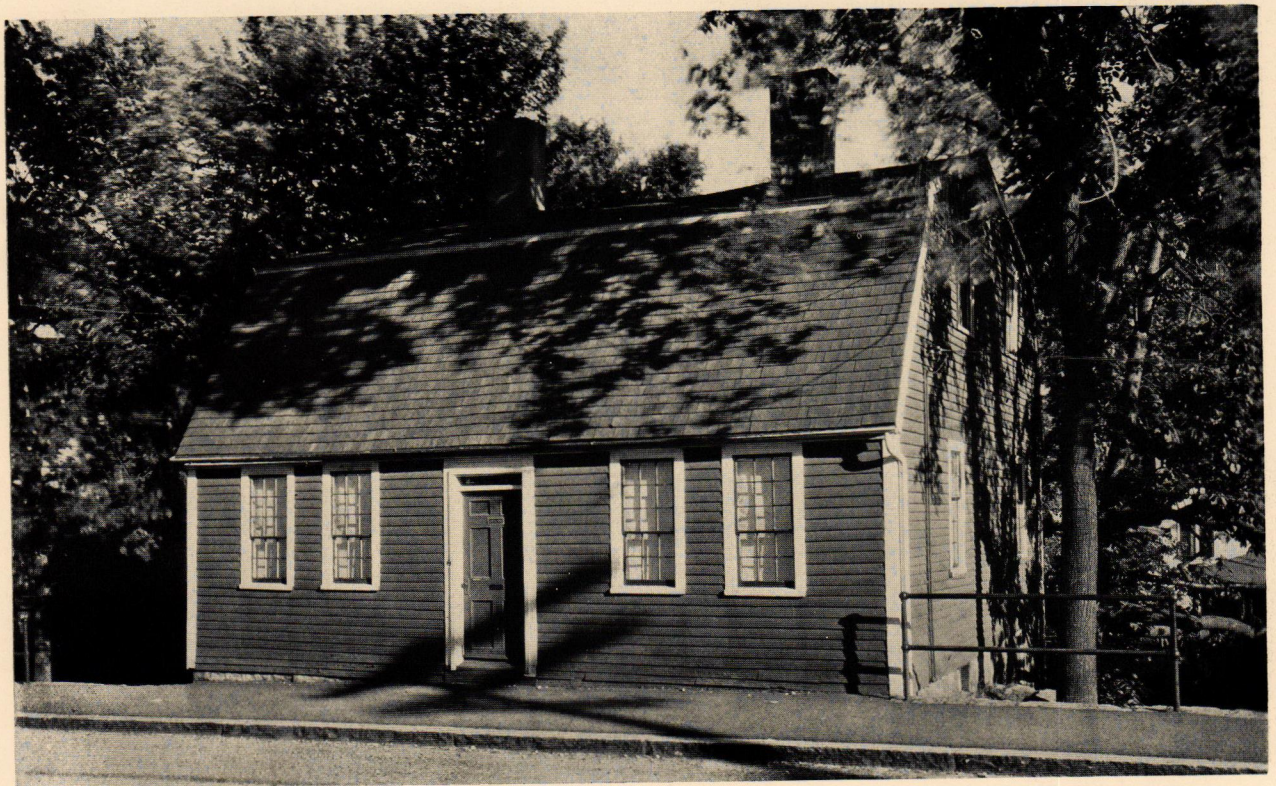
[92]



GAMAGE HOUSE, HIGH STREET—ABOUT 1725—ROCKPORT, CAPE ANN, MASSACHUSETTS

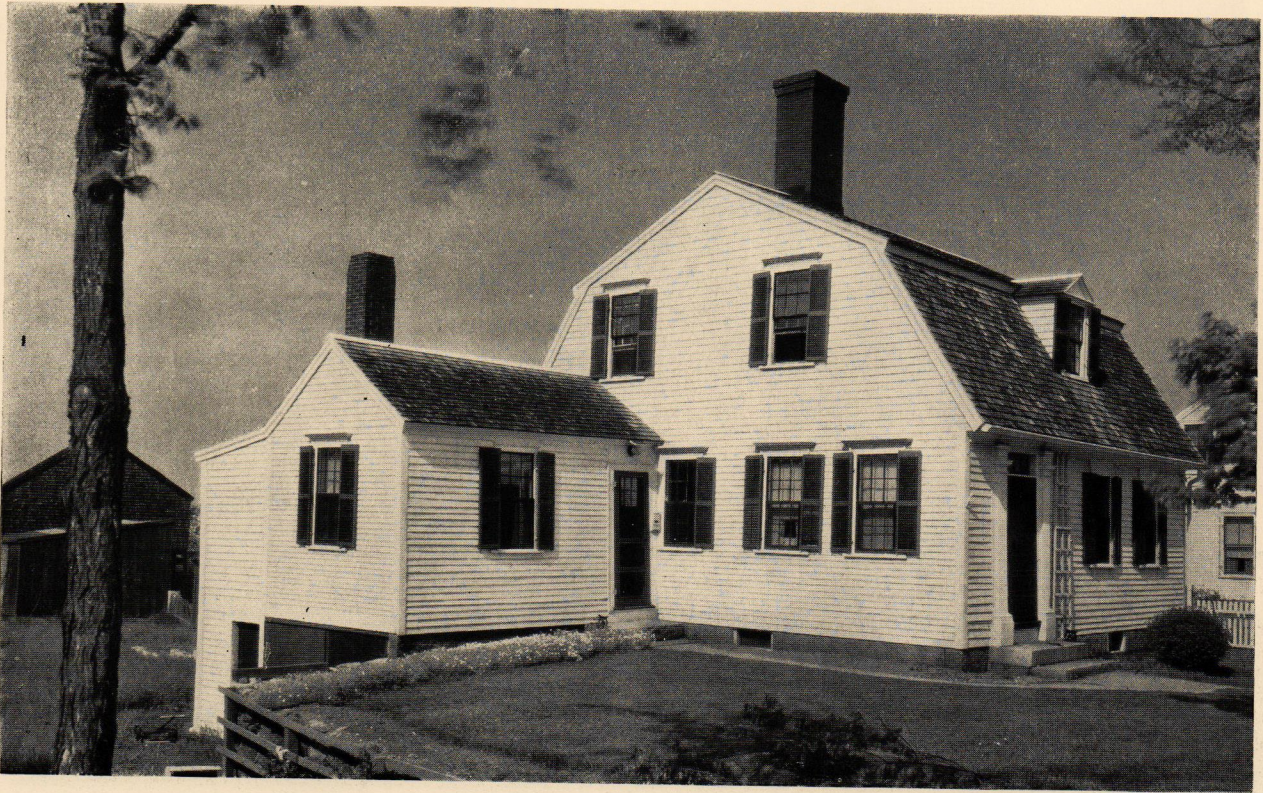


LANGFORD HOMESTEAD—ABOUT 1760—LANESVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

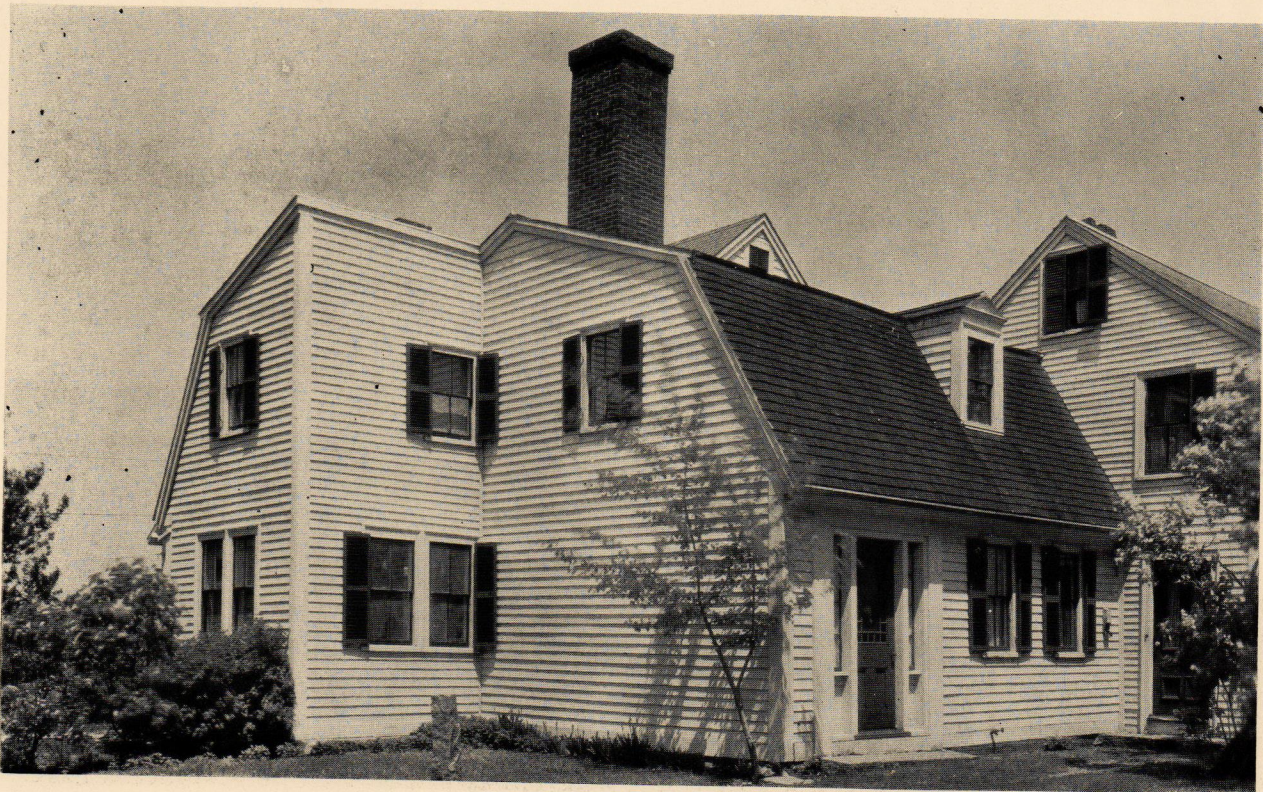


CLARK COTTAGE, 8 BEACON STREET—ABOUT 1750—GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

[94]

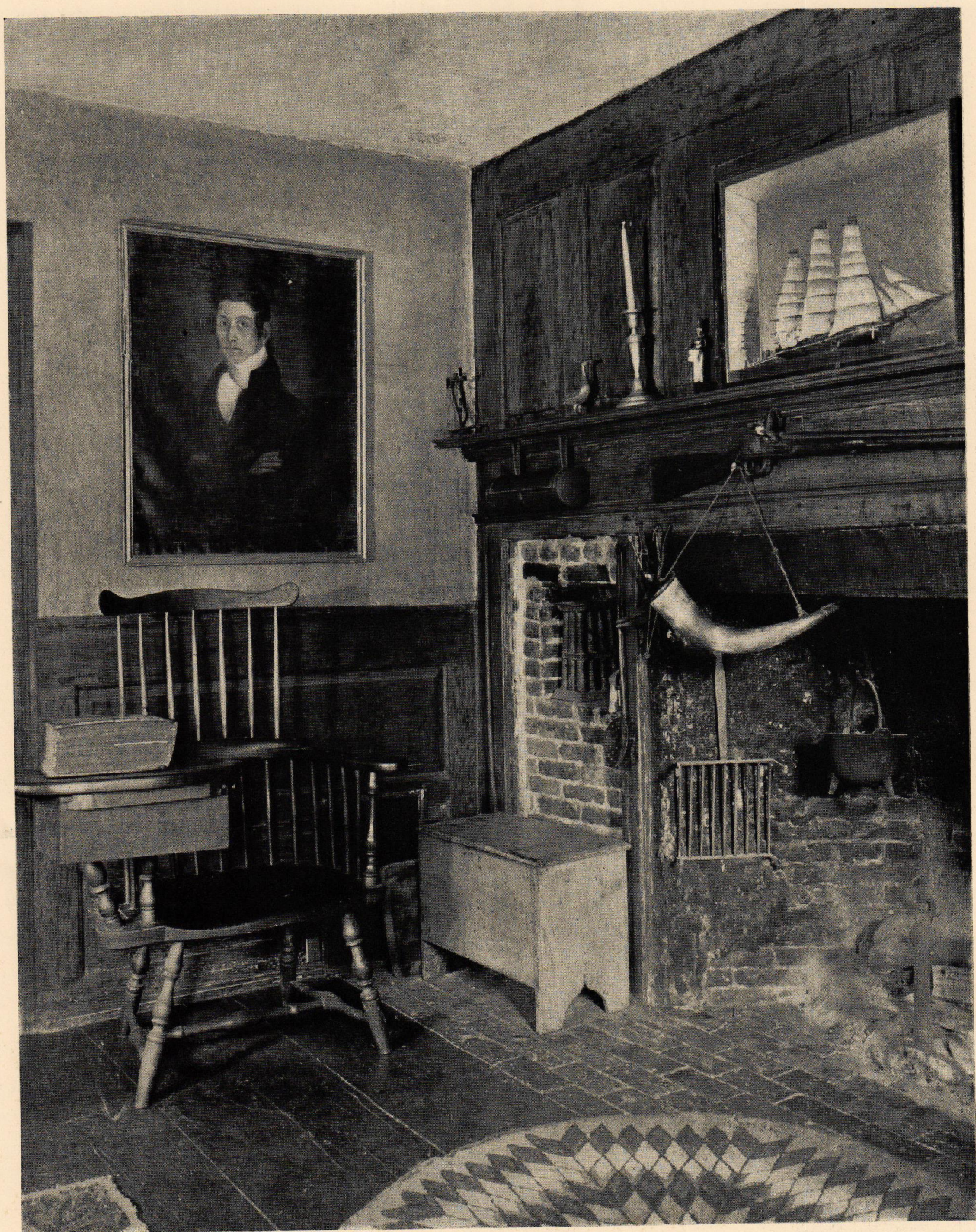


BUTMAN HOUSE—1760—ROCKPORT, MASSACHUSETTS



GAMBREL END COTTAGE WITH "JUTBY"—MAIN STREET, PIGEON COVE, MASSACHUSETTS

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Detail of Living Room-Kitchen
 "OLD COTTAGE AT HEAD OF THE COVE"—ANNISQUAM, MASSACHUSETTS
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THE MONOGRAPH SERIES

RECORDS OF EARLY AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE
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VOLUME XX

MONOGRAPH ONE

THE COTTAGE INTERIORS OF CAPE ANN

BY M. S. FRANKLIN

Research and Measured Drawings by Frank Chouteau Brown

Photographs by Arthur C. Haskell

After having recognized all those elements that go to make up the picturesqueness and informality of appeal possessed by the simpler types of early dwellings that we usually recall by the use of the term "Cottage"; one must as well realize that these same factors may be extended within doors to help render these same dwellings as reposeful and satisfying to their occupants as they appear to the casual visitor or passer-by from without. Many of the elements remain the same. Always is there evident simplicity and informality; the lack of pretense or any attempt at artifice or intentional assumption of superiority. Instead they radiate an atmosphere of homeliness; of everyday comfort and use; of simplicity and friendliness. All this becomes evident from the first glance at the low and inviting entrance; the low-lying roof, set close over the first floor windows; the windows themselves, broken up into many small and beautifully-proportioned panes widened by their open shutters of heavy blinds and narrow intervening wall spaces. The first floor itself is set close down upon the ground. Even if the plan is more spacious than at first seems possible, the depth of the house is not felt because of the flattened gambrel that is so consistent and frequent a part of their design; and has so much to do with making them appear intimate and hospitable.

Deriving, as so many of them do, from an early period—when the conventions of village life were simple and its conveniences slight, they reflect upon their exterior the low ceiling heights and close-grouped windows that in turn do so much to make their small—yet usually ample—interiors seem cosy and home-

like; shutting out the outdoors sufficiently, while making its human occupants comfortable beside the warm hearth and wide fireplace that so dominates the principal living room.

The very spacing of the windows themselves—usually set farther away from the house corners upon the exterior than would at first seem pleasing or necessary—upon the interior show that this suggestion of clustering, not only gives better wall space backing for the customary furniture of the family, but also tends to increase the atmosphere of comfort and seclusion.

And that small, almost minuteness of, scale! A scale that takes cognizance of the necessities of the human form—and but little more. Doors of a bare six feet of needed height! (Often one wonders what became of the large and gangling Yankee of tradition—and, for that matter—of established fact and record, as well!) Windows whose tops but barely permit the standing human visage to peer forth without an humbling of the body—if not the spirit!—and leave no room whatever for the continually lowered and hiding shades of but a few generations ago.

Yet the moldings are never small and petty, as is so frequently the case in modern work. Their sections are satisfyingly full bodied, and restfully ample, sturdy and mannish in feel. They are never nervous or disturbing; and especially when they have been allowed to remain without paint, toned only by exposure to the light, and warmed by the patina of time and use, they possess such individuality as warms the owner's life and gives rest to his soul.

Certainly, no one can visit many of these dwellings,

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STAIR WELL—COTTAGE AT HEAD OF
"THE COVE," ANNISQUAM, MASSACHUSETTS

however cursorily, without being forced to accept the persisting legend that they must have been built and occupied in large part by the same owners and builders as worked upon the sailing vessels of the time. They still reflect the compactness and details of the pinks and pinnaces, the sloops and schooners, brigs and barks, that were then being built and outfitted along the shores of these landlocked coves and harbors.

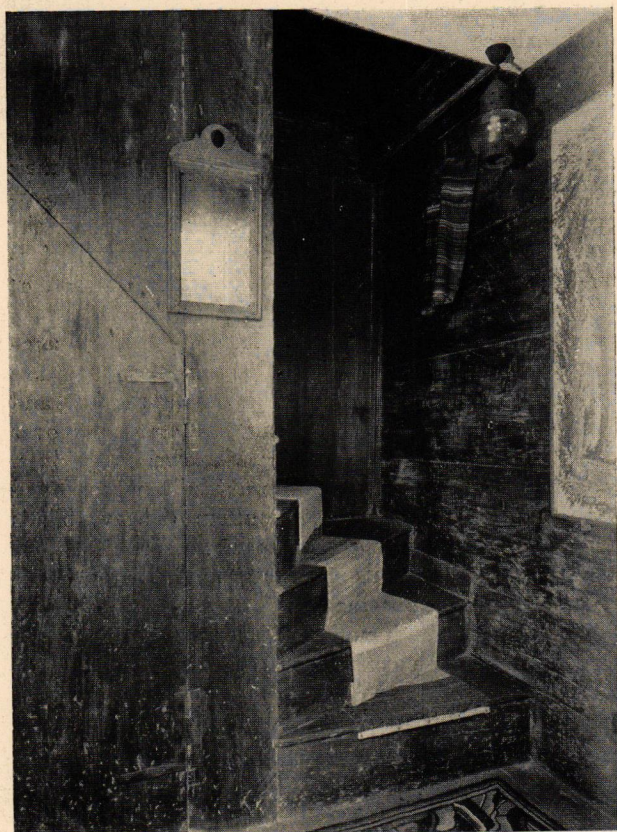
In proof of this conclusion, one has merely to regard the careful workmanship and expert joining to be found in the paneling and dado sections, the doors and mantels, of any of these older cottage dwellings. Who but an owner-carpenter, delighting in the problems of his trade and the use of his hands during long winter days and evenings, would work out so lovingly the charming moldings and ornaments of these interior details, the soft flowing outlines of the cupboard standards, the handworked—almost to say "hand carved" and enriched—moldings along mantelshelf and cupboard cornice? Who else would think out such minor refinements and conveniences as the "transom panel" over the Kitchen-Living Room door in the Annisquam Cottage, for instance—to give added ventilation and circulation in both hot summer days and nights, or in the long cold winters.

And, again, the heavy latticing of the second-story stair well guards—with irregularly cut and fitted cross

pieces, set at no uniform or established degree of slope; but yet proportioned with exceptional feeling for the scale of its surroundings and a nice adaptation to place.

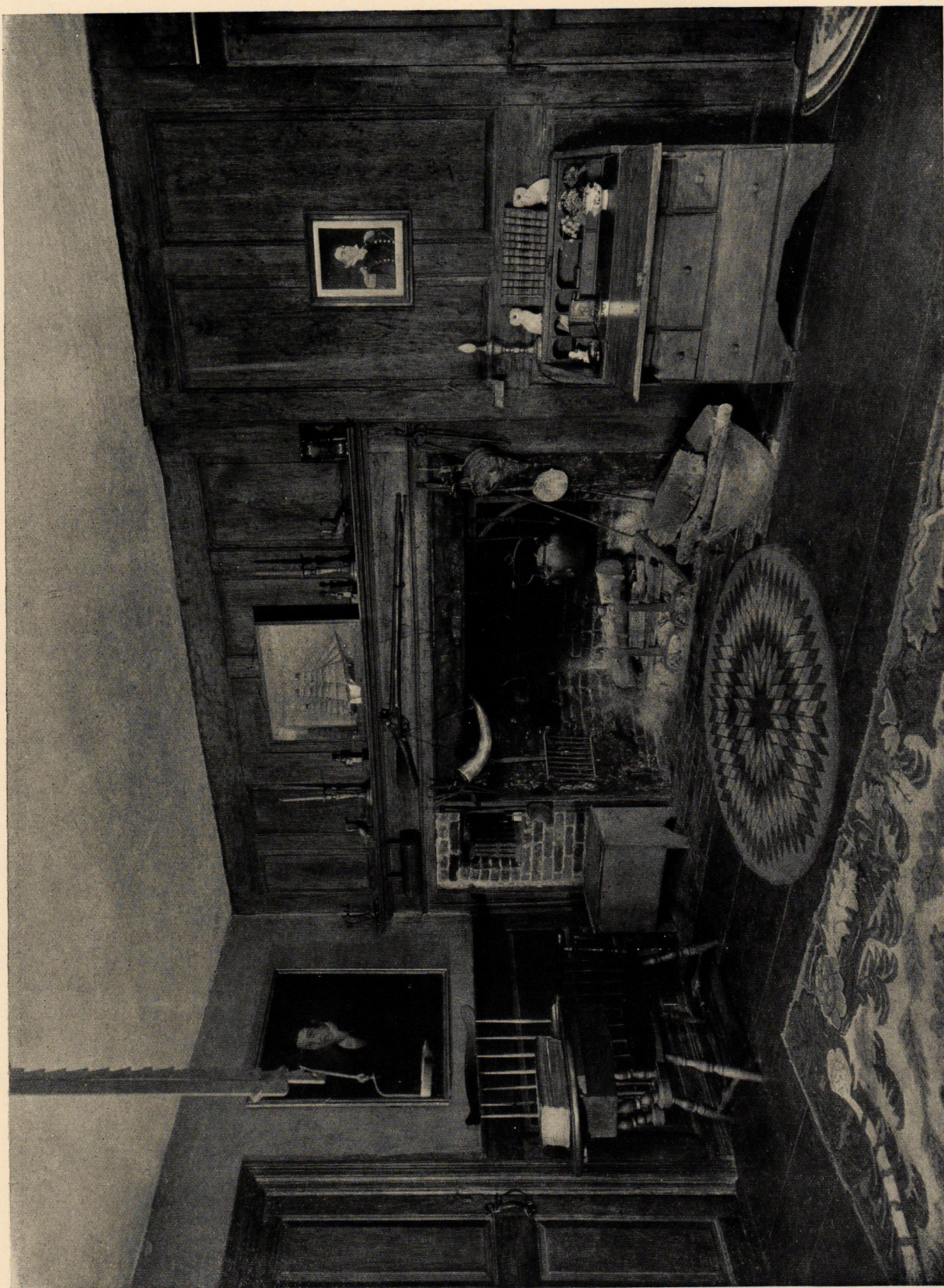
In this same house may be found, in the upper story, an end paneled into the gambrel slope of the roof; while the Francis Norwood cottage in Rockport provides two similar second-story paneled ends, of which a few other examples also still exist about the neighborhood—all evidently dating well back into an early and primitive "Cape" period previous to 1750. And in these unpretentious types of cottage building, again, only a notable pride of craftsmanship along with an owner's innate interest—combined with a certain proportion of leisure time—would seem to warrant such unusual expenditures of labor, time, thought and pains upon comparatively unimportant rooms in these unpretentious and modest homes.

Often the marine customs of their builders and inhabitants is evidenced by the informal stair guidance supplied by a piece of rope or cable, reeved through a ring at top and bottom of a steep stair flight, and held in place by some elaborately knotted device worked out upon the separated strands of the rope's ends. This sort of handrail is sometimes locally found, in conjunction with a steeply rising flight of steps such



ENTRY—COTTAGE AT HEAD OF "THE COVE,"
ANNISQUAM, MASSACHUSETTS

[98]



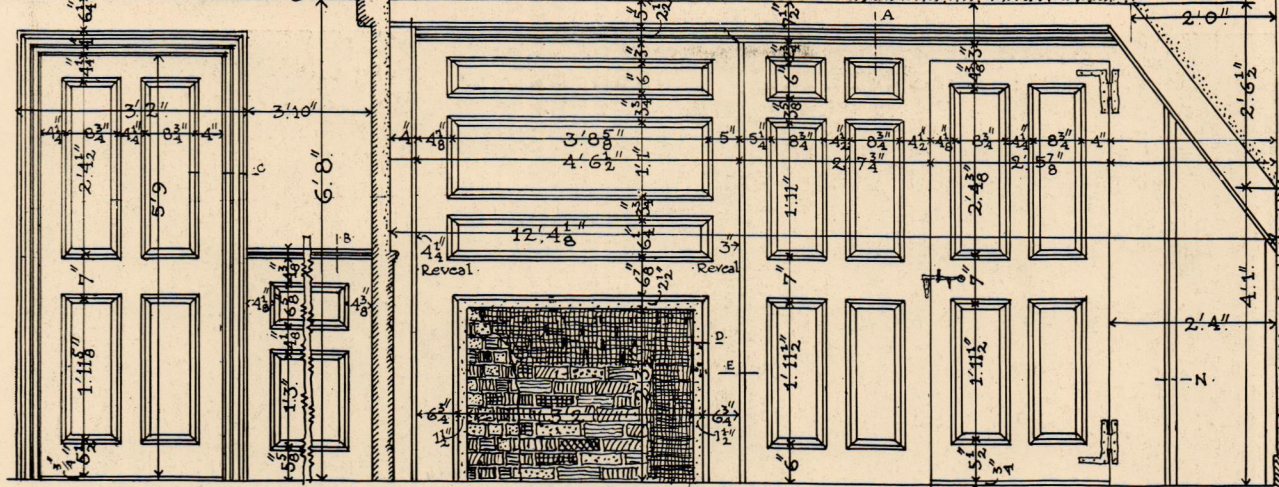
Mantel and Paneled End of Living Room (Measured Drawing Shown on Page 101)
COTTAGE AT HEAD OF "THE COVE"—1700-25—ANNISQUAM, CAPE ANN, MASSACHUSETTS



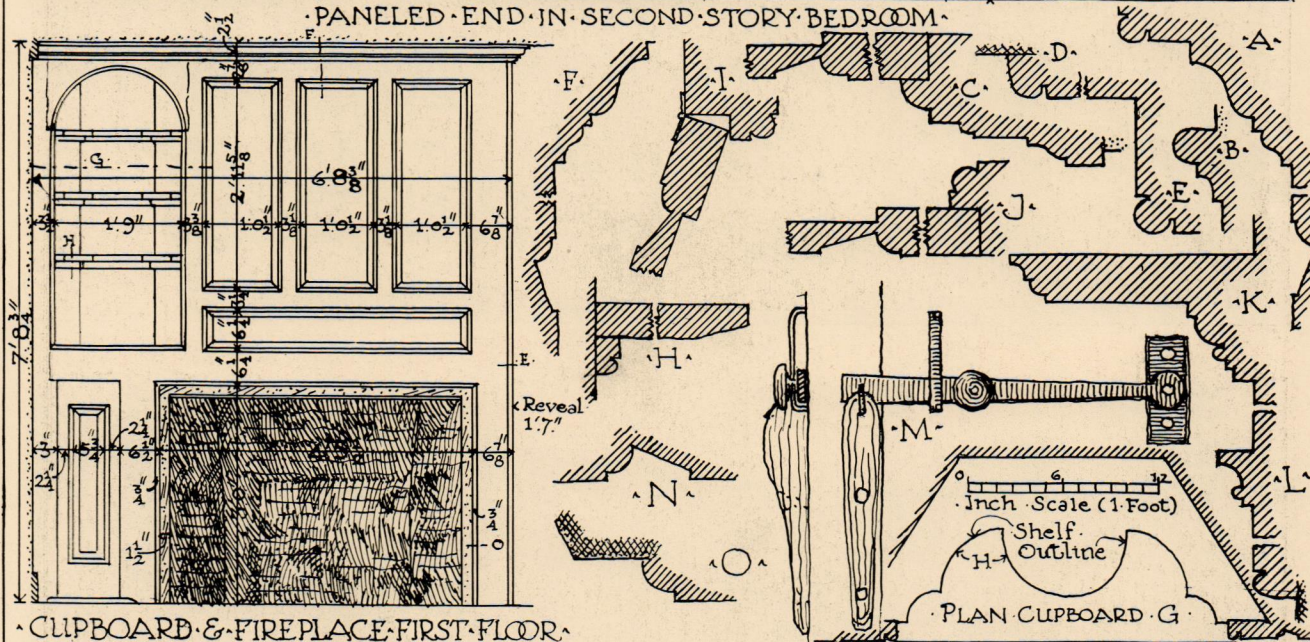
Living Room (Floor Plan Shown on Page 88)
COTTAGE AT HEAD OF "THE COVE"—1700-25—ANNISQUAM, MASSACHUSETTS

[100]

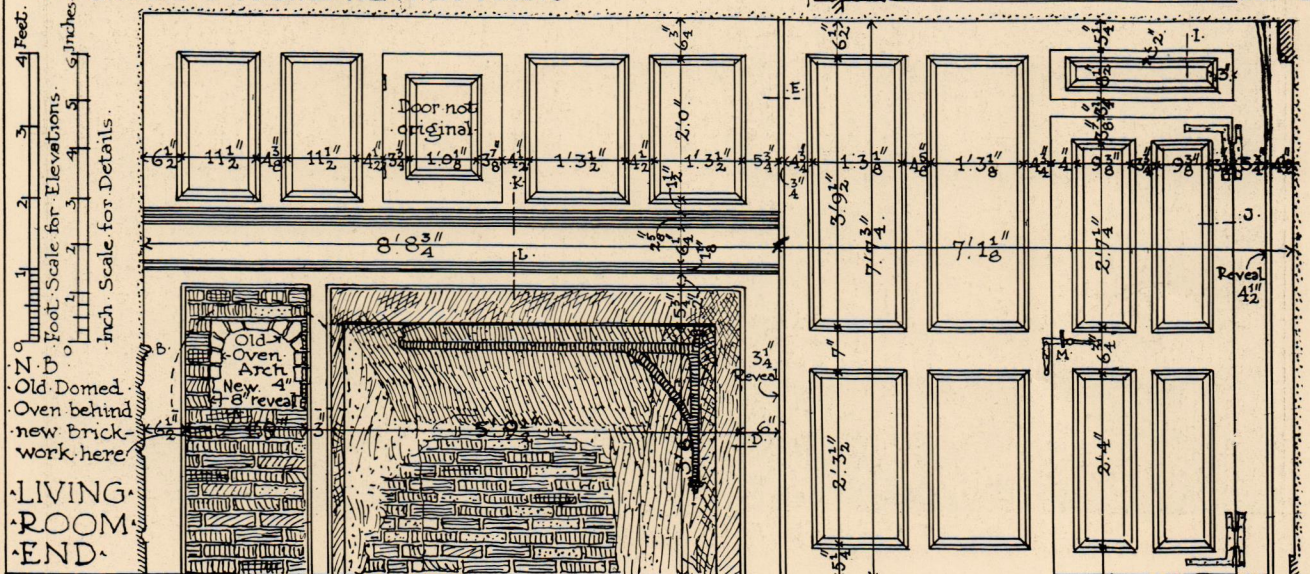
Measured July 15 & Drawn August 2-3 1933 by Frank Chouteau Brown Architect A.I.A.



PANELED END IN SECOND-STORY BEDROOM

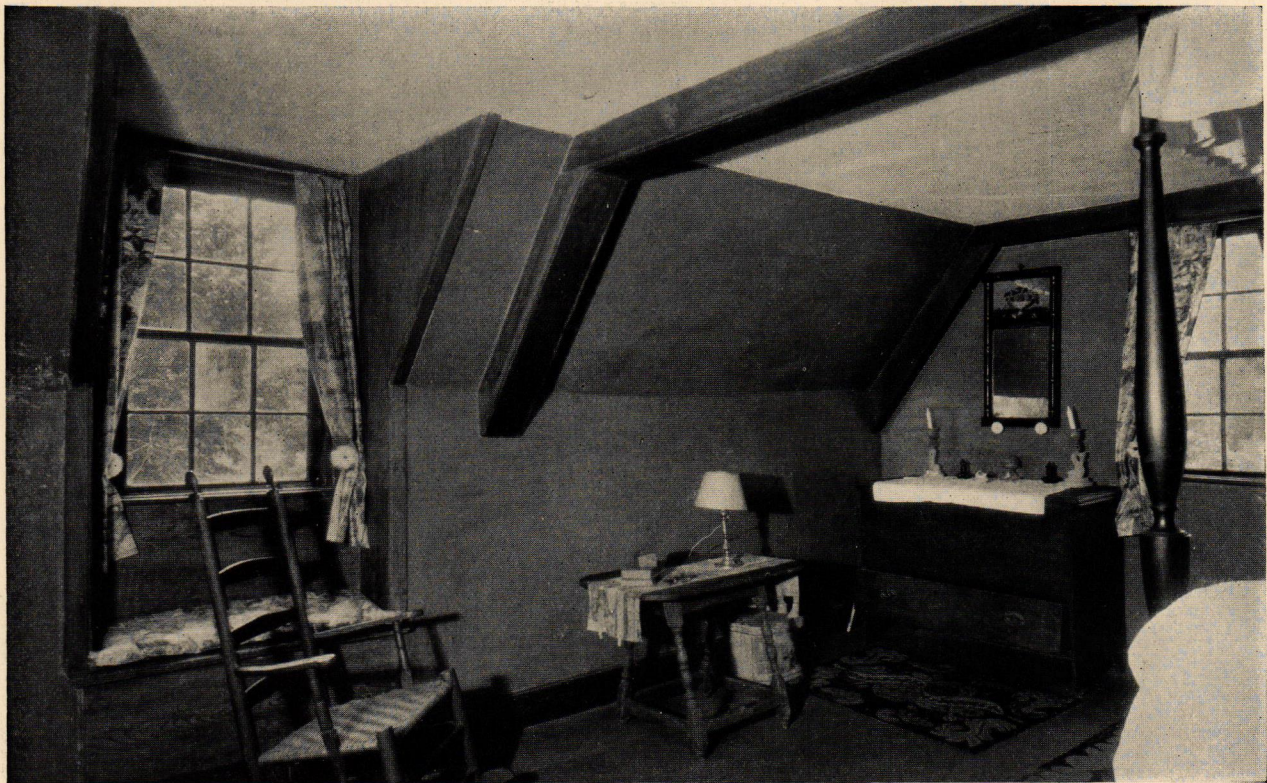


CUPBOARD & FIREPLACE FIRST FLOOR



LIVING ROOM END

THREE MANTELS OR PANELED ENDS COTTAGE HEAD OF THE COVE
1700-25 ANNISQUAM CAPE ANN MASSACHUSETTS U.S.A.



Second Story Bedroom



*Paneled End in Second Story Bedroom
(Measured Drawing Shown on Page 101)*

COTTAGE AT HEAD OF "THE COVE"—1700-25—ANNISQUAM, MASSACHUSETTS

[102]



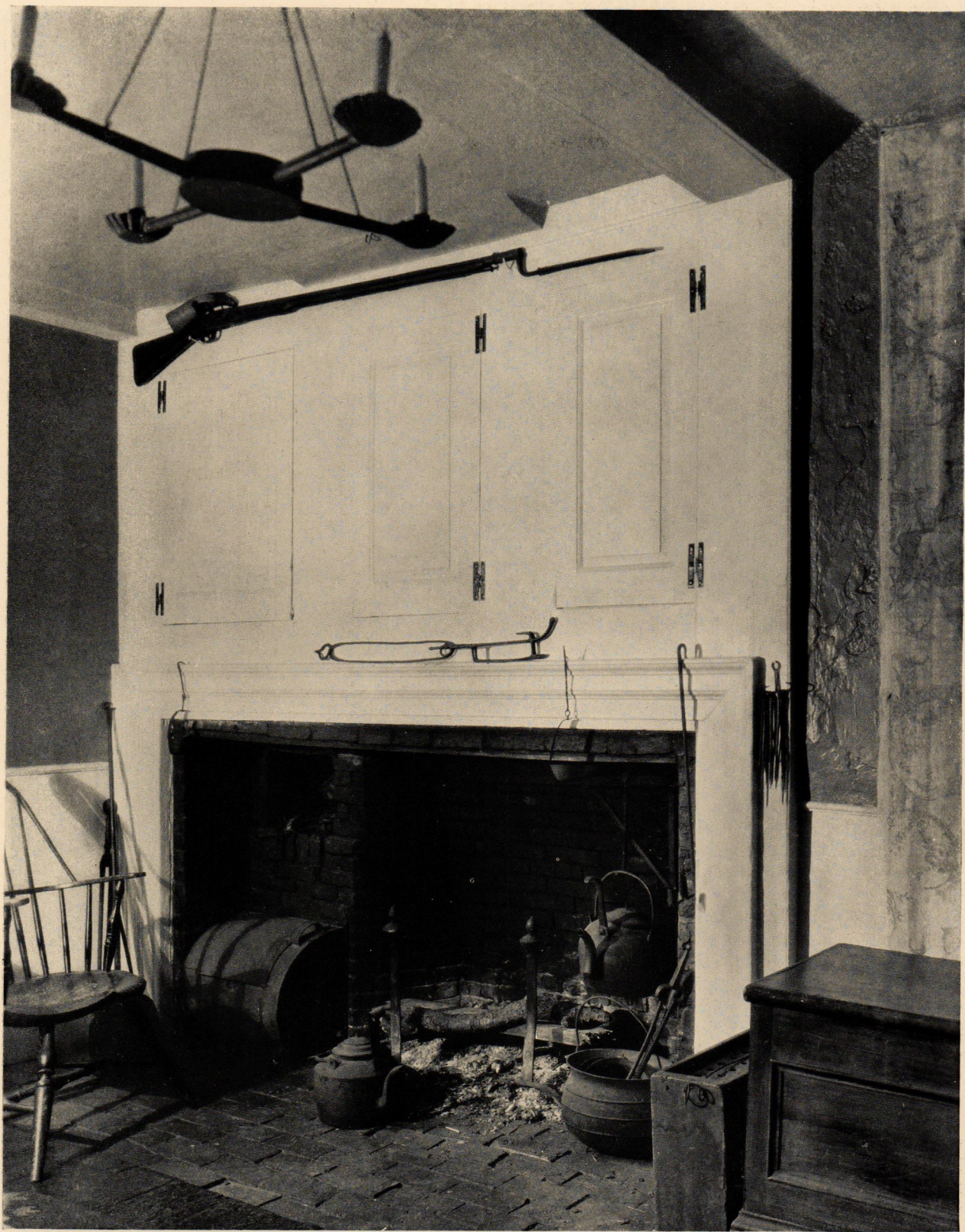
*Cupboard and Fireplace—First Floor
(Measured Drawing Shown on Page 101)*

COTTAGE AT HEAD OF "THE COVE"—1700-25—ANNISQUAM, MASSACHUSETTS

[103]



Fireplace and Mantel in Living Hall
OLD TARR HOMESTEAD—1750—ROCKPORT, CAPE ANN, MASSACHUSETTS
[104]



Fireplace in Dining Room (Old Kitchen)
OLD TARR HOMESTEAD—1750—ROCKPORT, CAPE ANN, MASSACHUSETTS
[105]



STAIRWAY—FRANCIS NORWOOD HOUSE,
ROCKPORT, MASSACHUSETTS

as could only have been inspired originally by some compact and shipshape schooner's cabin scuttle.

Sometimes the staircases pile steeply upward, in one short steep run, from entrance floor to dormered rooms above; sometimes they make the single winding turn of the old Tarr Homestead, against the large buttressed chimney of the early century. If so, the earlier examples may often be as simple as this instance; where the only change has been the insertion of a single wide board to fill in the space between the running rails that were originally open; and are also often found with added later balusters as has been done in the Francis Norwood House.

The Tarr Homestead has been far less disturbed than most of its sister dwellings, and so still provides the several charming views that go to illustrate some of the several elements claimed in these accompanying words, to make these cottages distinctive over their more formal brethren.

The interiors of both this Tarr Homestead and the Annisquam Cottage, however, are rarely interesting from the success with which the owners have found and arranged fittings consistent with the early period and use of these homes.

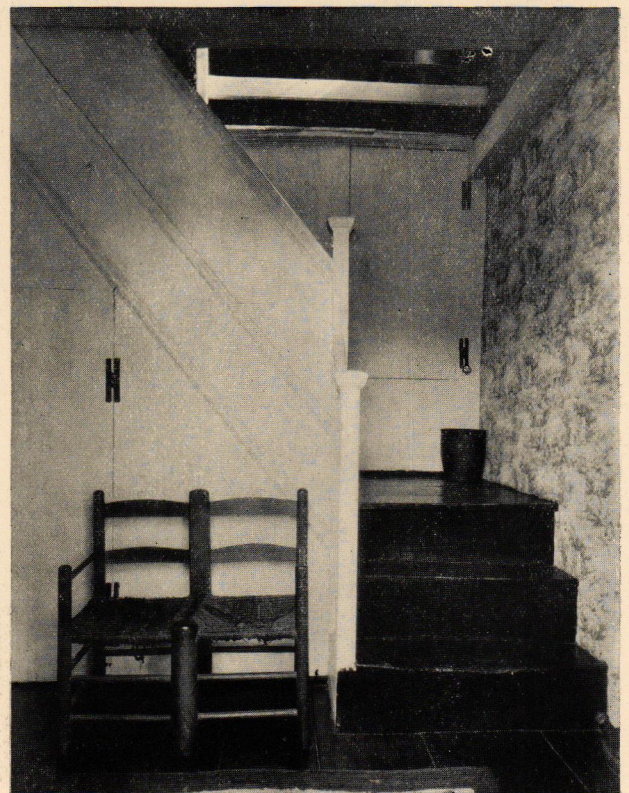
In Annisquam, the "Cottage at the Head of the Cove" (and while there are several "coves" in Annisquam, there is only one "THE Cove"!) gains in atmosphere by still displaying the tone and charm of its early pine natural woodwork. From the very moment one steps inside the simple doorway, to glimpse the winding stair turn disappearing round the bend back of the original wide brown boards that

shelter it—till one leaves it again with a last backward look, this hallway entrance—which is here reduced to its ultimate minima of attributes—remains nevertheless wholly gratifying merely from its inherent structural integrity, straightforwardness, and obvious fitness and fineness of proportion throughout.

The adjoining Living Room-Kitchen is equally satisfying—and even more appropriate and perfect in its fittings and equipment; rugs, furniture, ironwork, cupboard—taken down from upstairs in this same house. The old "sinkroom," has been changed into a more modernly useful "Breakfast Room," with the gleam of pewter furbishing up its old wall dresser; and beside it the tiny yet satisfyingly proportioned and detailed small bedroom, off the main Living Room, from beside the fire.

And then upstairs, the more dignified and almost pretentious comfort of a Guest Bedroom, with its own paneled end, vying in beauty and completeness with its lower floor counterpart—and with a cornice mold even to better it, belike! And it is here, where the interior aspect of the simple dormer is so consistently simple and satisfying, that it is born in upon the beholder that it can hardly have been so well carried out if it had not been original to the house—as they so seldom are.

How sad it is that so few have come down to our time unaltered and unchanged. Their very simplicity and apparent humbleness has made them peculiarly the victims of circumstance, and the unintelligent owner. They have so often fallen into most unfeeling hands. No record of their existence and history has usually been kept. Only occasionally have we exact knowledge of their early owners, or their dates of origin.



STAIRWAY—OLD TARR HOMESTEAD,
ROCKPORT, CAPE ANN, MASSACHUSETTS

Line of First Story Ceiling

Second Floor

This Space Originally Open

Door

Door

Door

Landing

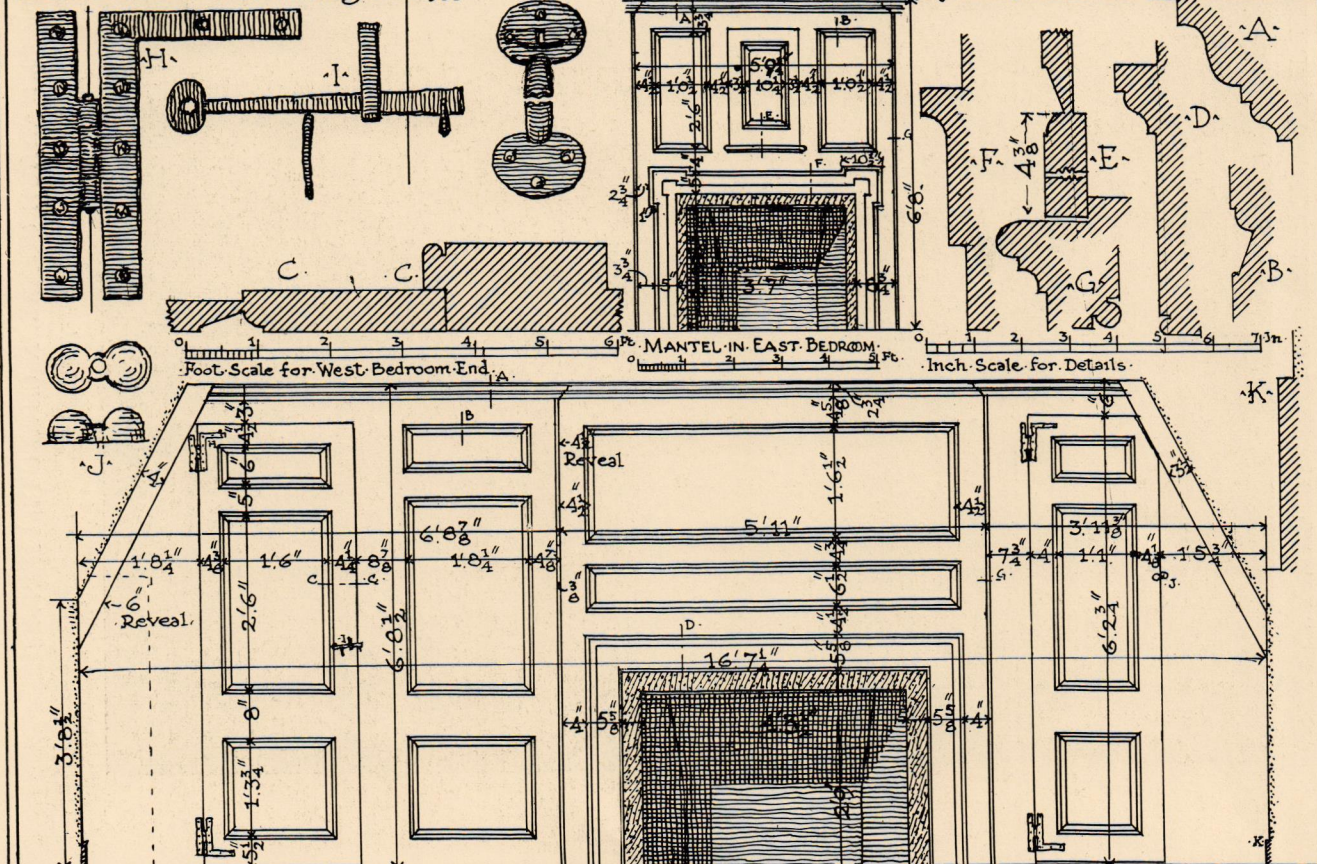
First Run to Landing

Scale of Feet for Elevations

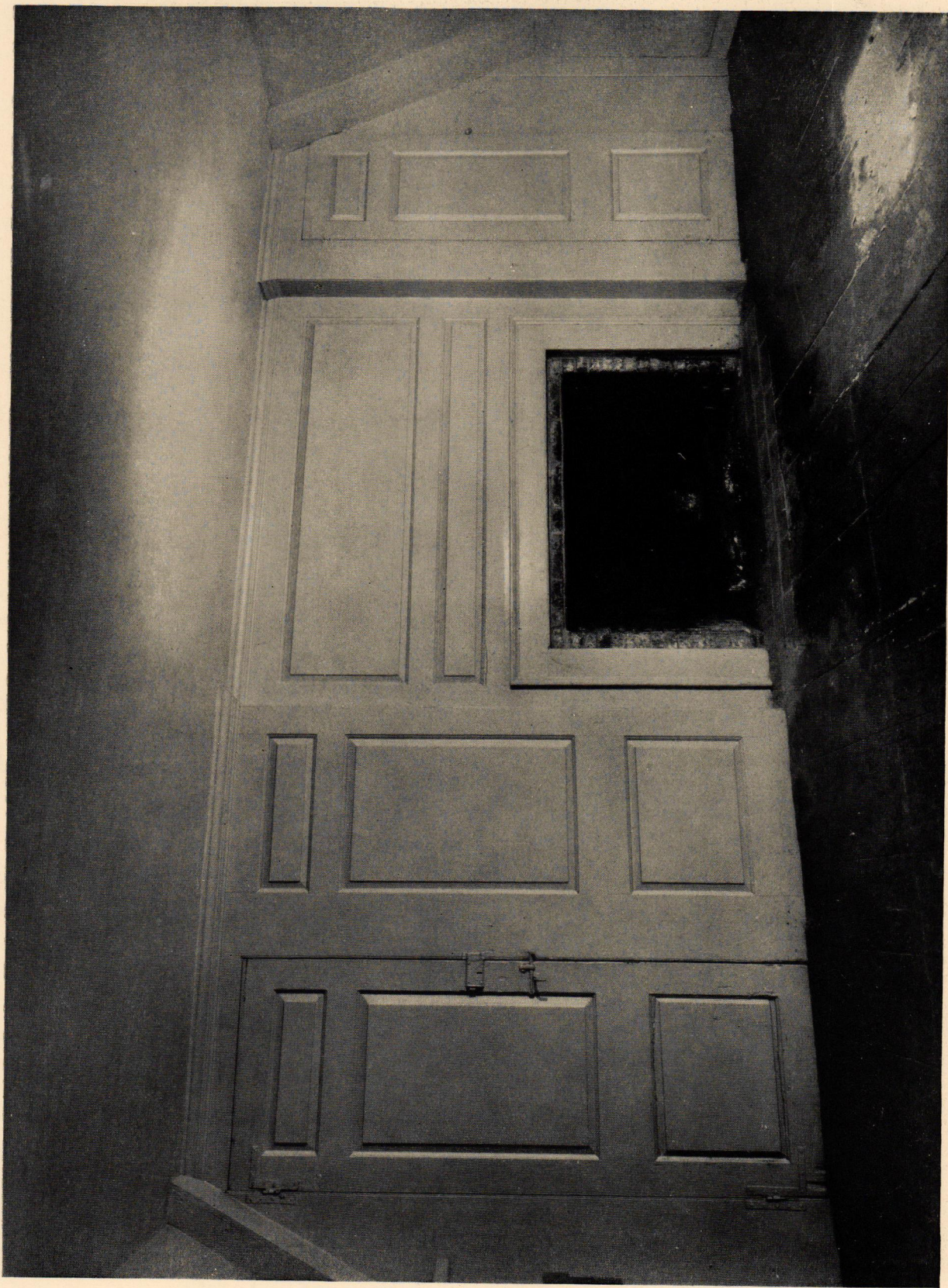
Scale of Inches for Details

Measured June 16 & Drawn August 11, 1933.

by Frank Chouteau Brown, Architect. A.I.A.

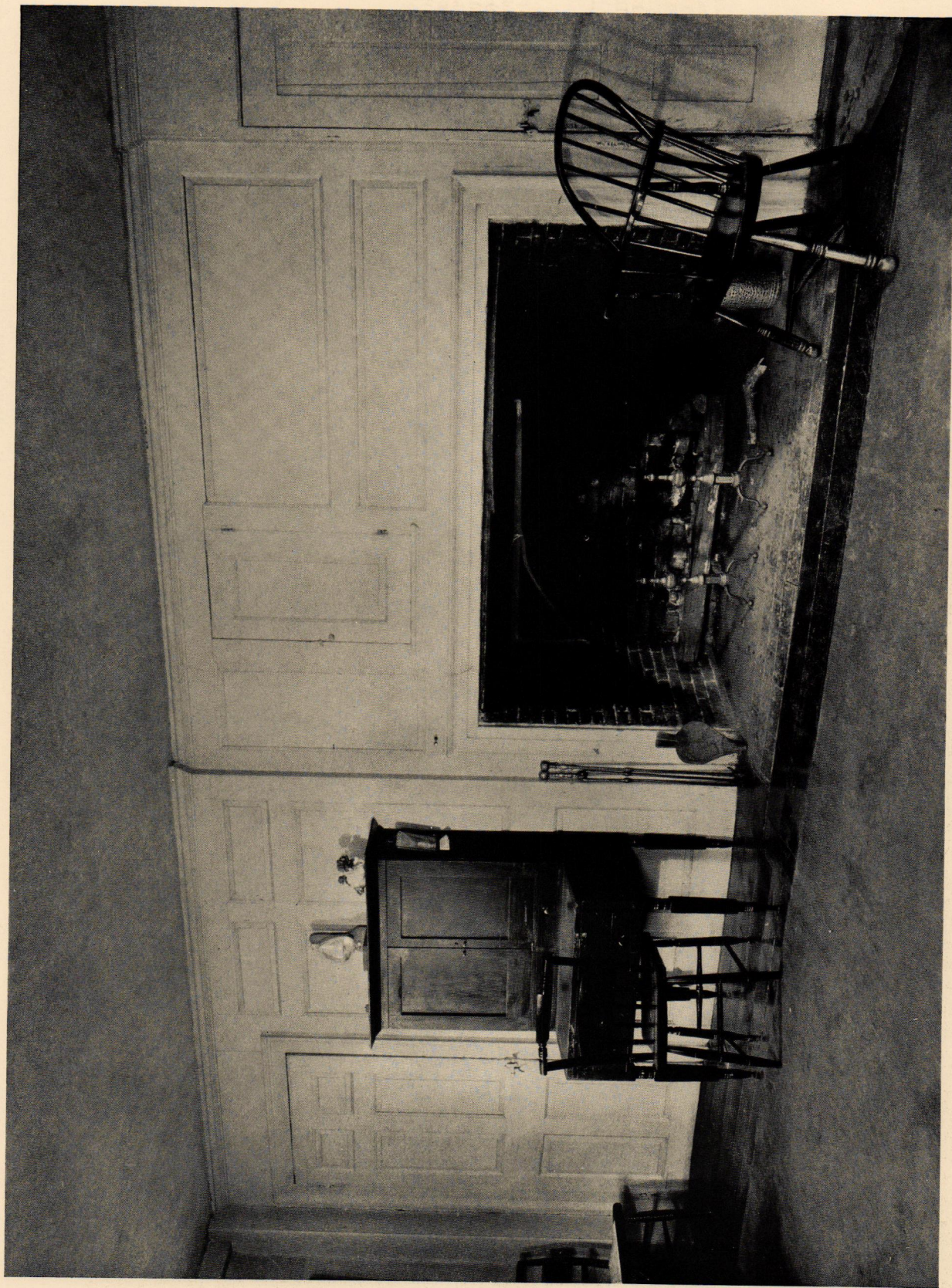


[107]

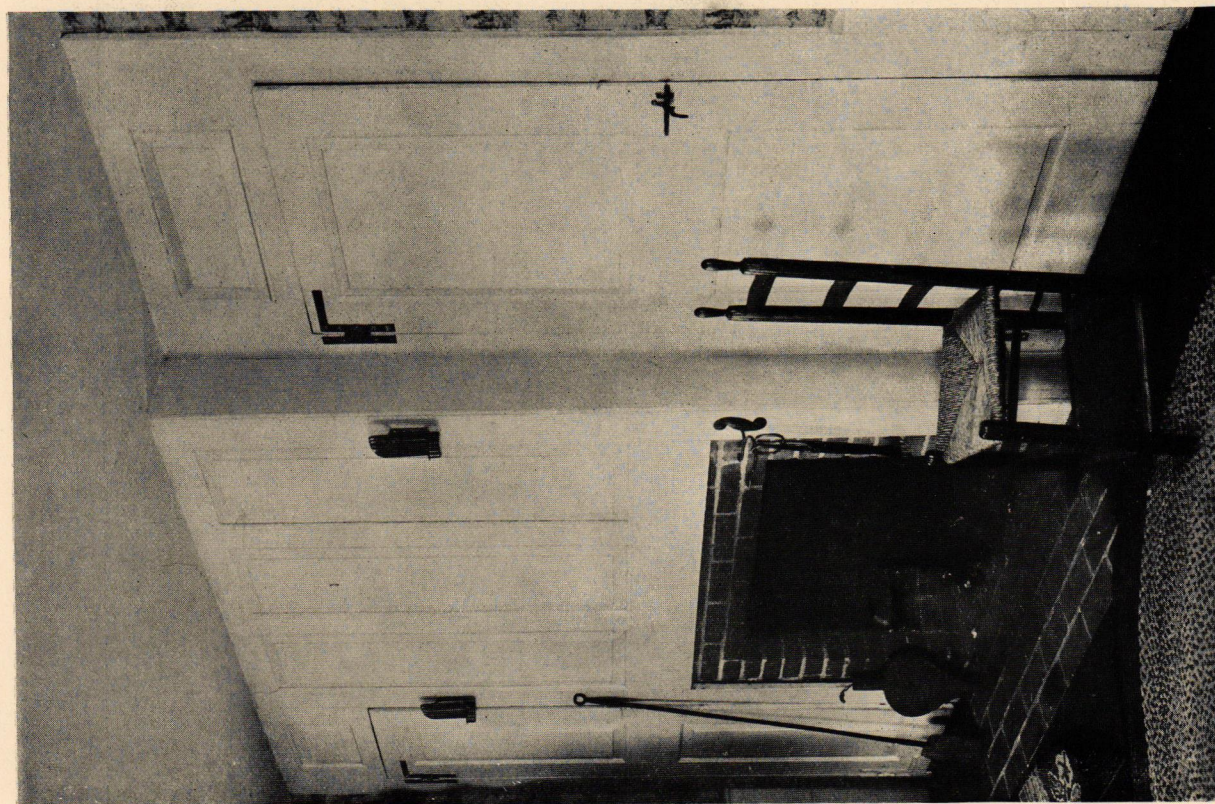


Paneled Inner Side of West Bedroom (Measured Drawing Shown on Page 107)
 FRANCIS ("RED CAP") NORWOOD HOUSE—1700-20—OVERLOOKING HARBOR, ROCKPORT, MASSACHUSETTS

[108]

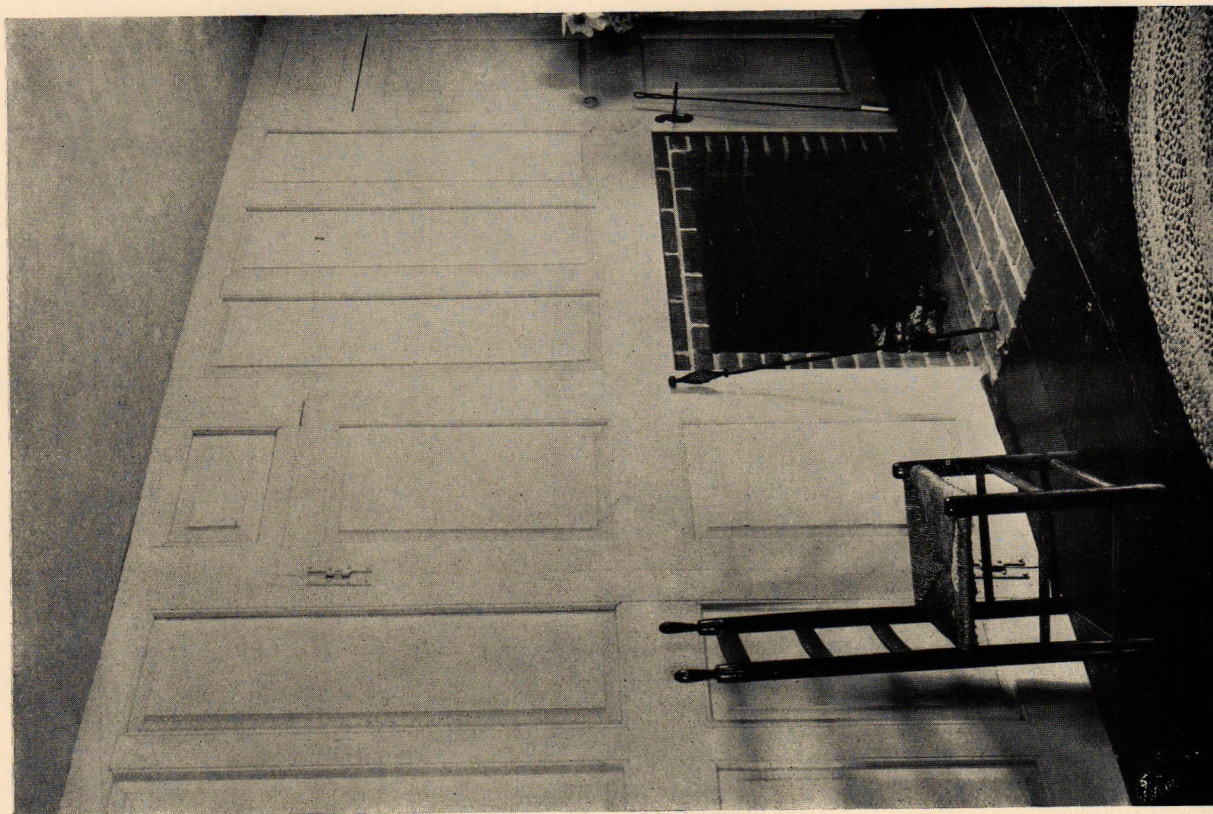


Paneled End of Living Room
FRANCIS ("RED CAP") NORWOOD HOUSE—1700-20—ROCKPORT, CAPE ANN, MASSACHUSETTS



Mantel Breast—South Room
(Measured Drawing Shown on Page 89)

OLD POOLE COTTAGE—1750-1760—ROCKPORT, CAPE ANN, MASSACHUSETTS



Mantel Breast—Living Room
(Floor Plan Shown on Page 89)



LIVING ROOM—"OLD TARR HOMESTEAD"—6 SOUTH STREET, ROCKPORT, CAPE ANN, MASSACHUSETTS

[III]



Entrance Detail
McPHEDRIS-WARNER HOUSE—1718-23—PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
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