



# THE MONOGRAPH SERIES

RECORDS OF EARLY AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE  
AS SOURCE MATERIAL

EDITED BY RUSSELL F. WHITEHEAD, A·I·A

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VOLUME XX

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MONOGRAPH TWO

## EARLY BRICKWORK IN NEW ENGLAND

BY FRANK CHOUTEAU BROWN

*Measured Drawings by the Author*

*Photographs by Arthur C. Haskell*

One of the first references to brickmaking in New England occurs in "New England's Plantation; or a short and true Description of the Commodities and Discommodities of that country. Written in the year 1629 by Mr. Higgeson, a Reverend Divine, now there resident." In that year he writes of the "clay soyle—all about our plantation at Salem, for so our towne is now named, Psal 76.2." He continues, "It is thought here is a good clay to make bricke and tyles and earthen-pot as need to be. At this instant we are setting a brick-kill on worke to make bricke and tyles for the building of our houses."

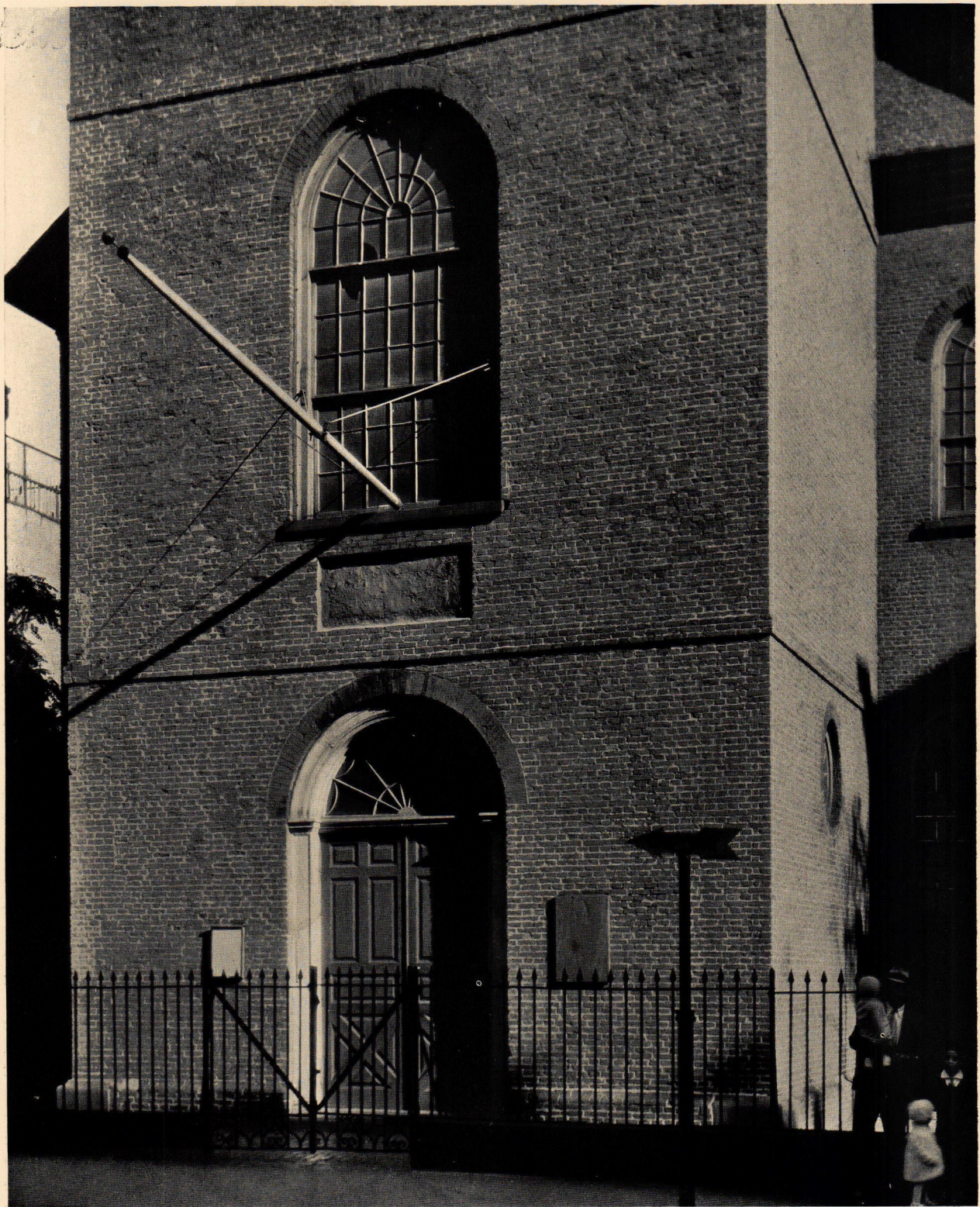
On the 23rd of August, 1630, "at the First Court of Assistants holden at Charlton (Charlestown), it was ordered that carpenters, joyners, bricklayers, sawyers and thatchers shall not take about 2 s/ a day, nor any man shall giue more, under paine of 10 s/ to taker and guier." (This from the Records of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay in New England.) In Boston, in 1636, Thomas Mount was granted a piece of marsh "for the making of brick in," and "to Jaspas Rawlines," in 1644, was granted "use of a rood of upland for the making of Brickes." Of William Coddington's Boston house, which was probably patterned after some building in his own home town of Boston in Lancashire, he says, "Before Boston was named, I built the first good house," and of it Winsor writes, "Nor were there lacking mansions of more pretensions at the early time. When Coddington went from Boston to found his Colony of Rhode Island he had already built there a brick house, which, when

old, he still remembered as a token of his former magnificence."

An order issued on the 31st day of the 3rd month of 1658 by the General Court has especial interest in this connection; "Whereas Jno Conny was prohibited to burne bricke in his lott behind his house, and yett notwithstanding hath presumed to sett his kilne, Itt is ordered that in case he fire the kilne he shall pay ten shillings a day as a fine during the fire being in itt." In 1660 another order of the General Court is recorded, to give "Richard Gridley and ye rest of ye brickmakers in town . . . with what land may bee fitt for their use in ye most convenient place"—on Boston Common!

On May 28, 1679, an order of the General Court was enacted, in Boston, as follows:—"It is ordered by this Court & authority thereof, that clay to make bricks shall be digged before the 1st of November, & turned ouer in the moneth of February & March ensuing, a moneth before it is wrought, and that no person temper their bricks with salt water or brackish, and that the size of bricks be nine inches long, two & one quarter inches thicke & fower & a halfe inches broad, and that all moulds vsed for making bricke be made according to these sizes, and well shod with iron, & what person or persons soeuer shall make bricks in any respect contrary to this oeder, in the seuerall particulars of it, shall forfeite the one halfe of such bricks to the vse of the beauty of the toune where they are made." The law enacted in England in 1625, the first year of Charles I, established the

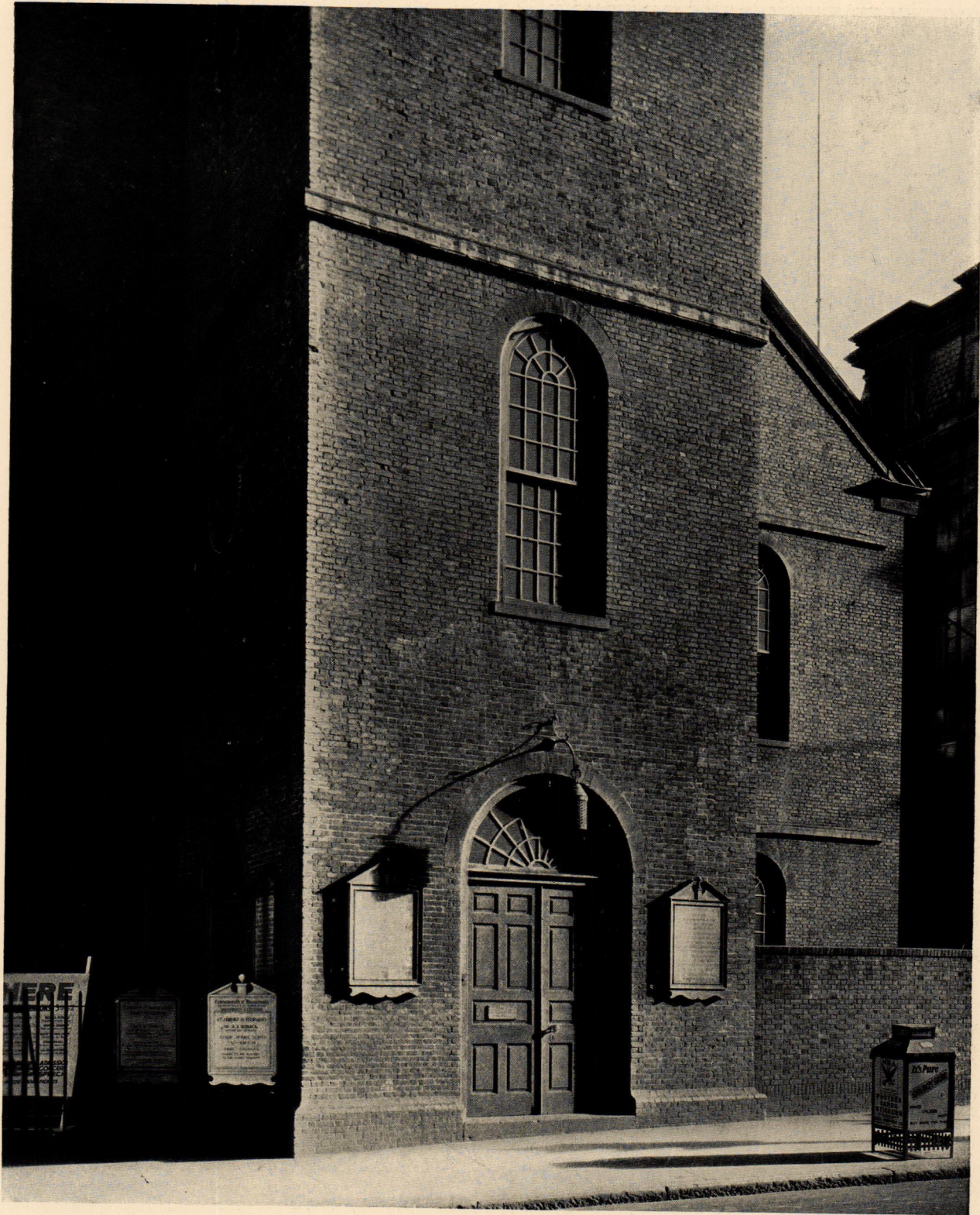
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CHRIST CHURCH—"THE OLD NORTH"—1723—SALEM STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

*The bricks vary from  $7\frac{3}{4}$ " to  $8\frac{1}{4}$ " x  $3\frac{5}{8}$ " to  $3\frac{7}{8}$ " x  $1\frac{3}{4}$ " to  $1\frac{7}{8}$ ", laid English bond with joints about  $\frac{3}{8}$ " wide.  
5 courses to 11 inches of height*

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THE "OLD SOUTH" MEETING HOUSE—1729—WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

*The bricks are 8" x 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 2", laid Flemish bond with  $\frac{3}{8}$ " joint.  
5 courses to 12 inches of height*

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