

# 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 FIVE

## The Later Dwelling Architecture of Cape Ann, Part II

BY STUART BARTLETT

*Research and Measured Drawings by Frank Chouteau Brown*

*Photographs by Arthur C. Haskell*

The better houses still to be found upon the tip of the Cape—or in the region about Rockport harbor—fall into two general divisions. There is one group about which the legend of “Pirate Gold” persists as the explanation of the source from which the wealth to build them derived—but, alluring as these syllables always are in their appeal, there seems little reason for believing such easily acquired wealth to have been used in their construction—or, if such was actually the case, the dwellings themselves remain as evidence that the source to which their being is still ascribed was hardly as prolific and profitable a one as is usually believed; for they remain as examples of a very simple, direct type of architectural design; quite such as might have been made from the slower and more hardily earned wealth secured from the early fishing fleet that formerly sailed from Rockport and Pigeon Cove; which the buildings themselves would seem to prove to be products of the busy and skillful handiwork of the boatbuilders of that section, as well.

As a matter of actual fact, the better houses of the later period—from about 1760 to 1825—today to be seen in Rockport; are far more expressive of the simplicity and reserve of the New Englanders that created and paid for them, than of any exuberant and flamboyant Pirate spirits! Their interior finish is also of the simplest. Mantels with delicately molded and sometimes chisel-cut ornament upon a few surfaces. Staircases with simple square posts of small size, the balusters usually only of the plain seven-eighths or inch-

and-an-eighth square type, with a simple but delicate end bracket, are rather the rule. Thin six panel doors, with small molded panel edges, and a simple mitred architrave. Occasionally a reeded dado-cap above a single wide pine board appears briefly—but the full paneled ends, with sturdy molded-edge panels, have gone with the earlier period work; and have not persisted into the later period upon this side of the Cape.

Then there are a few unusual examples of a still later style; expressive of the wealth that was briefly derived from the granite quarries that were for some years worked extensively along this coast. This period has expressed itself best perhaps in the several dwellings built of split granite—usually laid up in courses. There remain some barns and out-buildings, a few houses, and one “double cottage”; all built in granite, between about 1825 to 1850. And the interior finish of these houses also continues in carrying on the later simple traditions, established in the immediately preceding period. And within this same time-period lie the few “Neo-Grec” houses scattered about the region; of which four almost exactly alike in design still remain—two in the Rockport-Pigeon Cove region and two in Gloucester.

Turn to the later settlements, built along the Gloucester Harborside, and a quite different story is to be found. Here the lumber industry that had first brought wealth to the settlers upon the rough shores of the Cape, had been supplanted by the fishermen who took up and followed that industry when the earlier



fleets of smaller vessels that had previously sailed from Annisquam and Rockport harbors were supplanted by these larger vessels with their homeport in the well protected and deeper waters of the Gloucester bay.

The old buildings of Gloucester have suffered, particularly, by its prosperity and continued business importance. It remains the "shire" town of the region; and so it has been inevitable that as its business has continued to prosper, its older houses have been more and more altered, or adapted to other uses. Many have been turned into stores; others in not quite so busy a neighborhood have merely fallen into disuse or been made into tenements; while still others, in what have remained better neighborhoods, are now owned by wealthy families—or "summer people," and as such, have often been "improved" or "modernized" beyond repair or even sometimes recognition!

Of all these dwellings, the house that was for years the most pretentious and beautiful, was probably that now used as the Sawyer Free Library. Unfortunately, even before it came into the possession of the Library, it had already been much changed and "modernized." The old fence of high wooden pickets that at one time surrounded it, has been taken down and replaced with a costly (and most inartistic) arrangement of cut granite blocks in large sizes; the old paneled and recessed windows have had their sizes enlarged, the sills cut down, and some of the finish changed or removed. The two rooms at the left of the entrance have been entirely torn out, with the old chimney between them, and the finish lost. But of the other front room enough remains to make it an imposing and interesting interior still; though the mantel has been changed. The old staircase is also in place, with the former elaborate landing window, although new rooms have been built behind it.

Across the side street the Mackenzie House still possesses two beautiful paneled ends, on the two right-hand rooms, one above the other; both very similar in design. The second floor room is the one shown as the "frontispiece" to this Monograph, published on the last page of the preceding issue. Again an unusual staircase, and other nice mantels and paneling, remain. Another house "across the street" (this time across Middle Street) from the Library, is the Murray-Sargent-Gilman-Hough dwelling. It has been preserved as the home of the founder of Universalism—the first church used by John Murray's congregation having been a small building upon another part of this lot, later replaced by the beautiful church built in 1806 that is still standing nearby. This house also has—in two second floor rooms—paneling nearly alike in design along the fireplace sides of the rooms; which are against the outer walls; the end windows occurring only in what are closets, back of the doors shown in

the panelwork! The parlor mantel is quite different from anything else upon the Cape; while the staircase, although painted, is one of the best examples of the elaborate twisted type in New England; although not done in mahogany—as in the Lee Mansion at Marblehead. The hallway and front rooms of this house were built, along with the kitchen ell and the odd corner fireplace upon the second floor over it, in 1768.

Both these houses are of rather an early date; as is even more true of the well known Babson House, which contains one of the most beautiful all-paneled rooms in the State (and one of the two still remaining upon Cape Ann!) with a most interesting staircase. This house also exhibits three old vestibule entrances, and a modern porch upon the garden front.

The "Old Collins House"—now descended to use as a tenement and a storehouse of odds and ends of fishing tackle—had once seen better days as the home of a ship owner facing down upon the heel of the Harbor. It still stands in its old location, now closely hemmed in with stores upon right and left, huddled up against the rocky hillside, as always. A sturdy old staircase and the dominating vigor and boldness of its best rooms are worthy of better things.

Just as Rockport boasts of its "twin" Gott Houses, so has Gloucester also a pair of "twins"; and also built—according to the legend—by two brothers. These two buildings on Pleasant St. were, however, being carried along at the same time—and a certain amount of rivalry was in evidence between both the workmen and the owners; each striving to in some way better the design or workmanship over its competitor (a somewhat different spirit than nowadays dominates the thoughts and ideals of the members of our building "Unions"! ) and the story goes that, one morning, the owner of one house, having already nailed up his cornerboards, and rushed the wall clapping along ahead of his competitor, arrived upon the scene to find that Col. Jacob Smith "housewright"—his apparently slower neighbor—had been spending the time more elaborately grooving his corner boards into a sort of elaborate "quoining"—rather unusually small in scale—and was even then setting them up into place! "And," as the story goes, dramatically, "he gave one look at them and turned away and never spoke another word to him, from that day to this!" And it is this—the more elaborate of the two houses—that is now the home of the "Cape Ann Scientific, Literary and Historical Association" (all of which is merely long for "Historical Society"). This house dates from 1808; and is an excellent and representative example of that period, as it took shape in the neighborhood and within the area of that rugged and picturesque island that is known as "Cape Ann"!





*Hall and Stairway*

THE SARGENT-MURRAY-GILMAN-HOUGH HOUSE—1768—GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

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FIRST FLOOR PARLOR—THE SARGENT-MURRAY-GILMAN-HOUGH HOUSE—1768—GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS



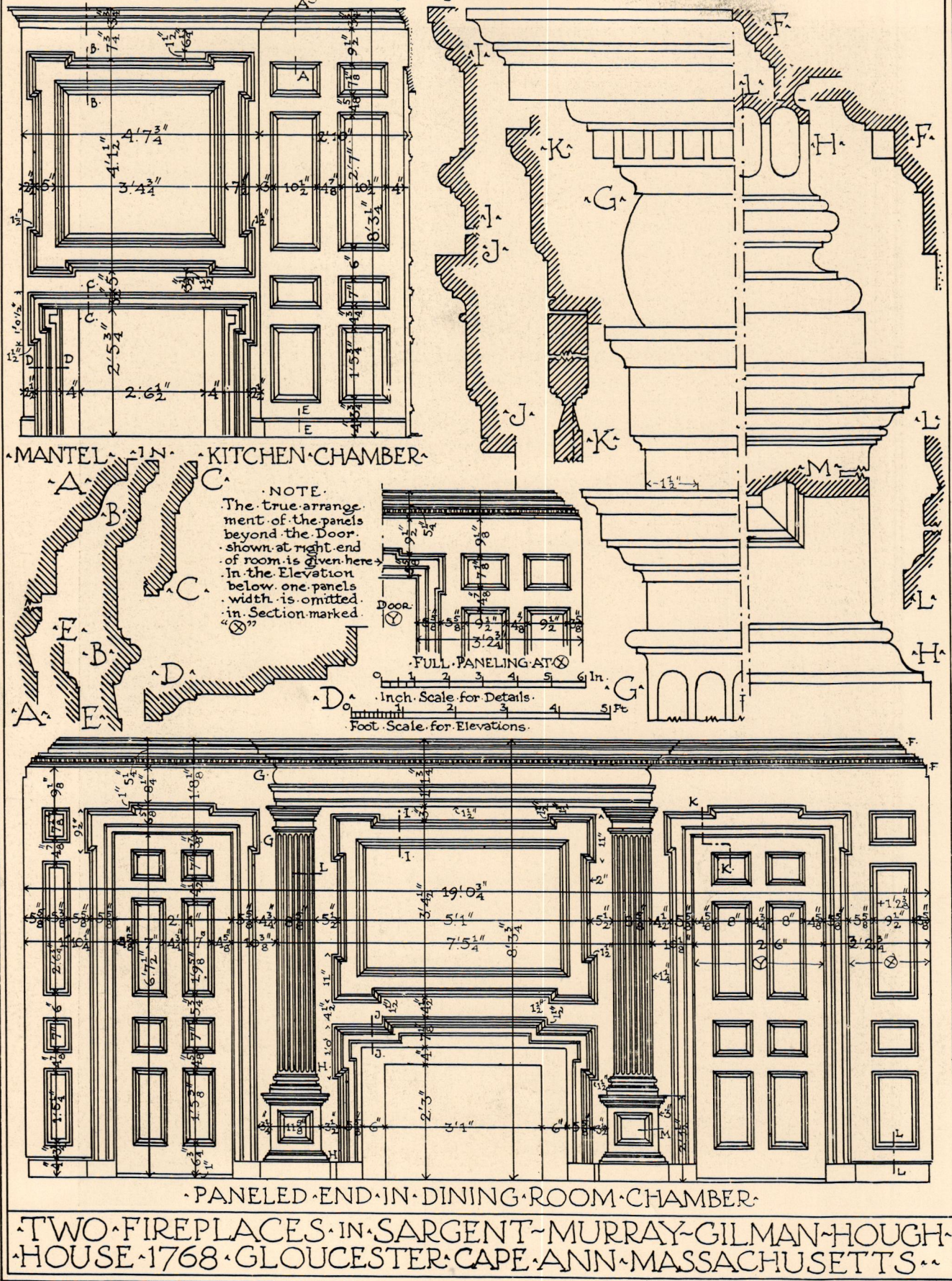


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*Paneled End in Dining Room Chamber—Second Floor—(Measured Drawings on Page 166)*  
THE SARGENT-MURRAY-GILMAN-HOUGH HOUSE—1768—GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS



Measured June 24 & Drawn August 20 1934 by Frank Chouteau Brown Architect A.I.A. Boston Mass.







*Mantel in Kitchen Chamber*

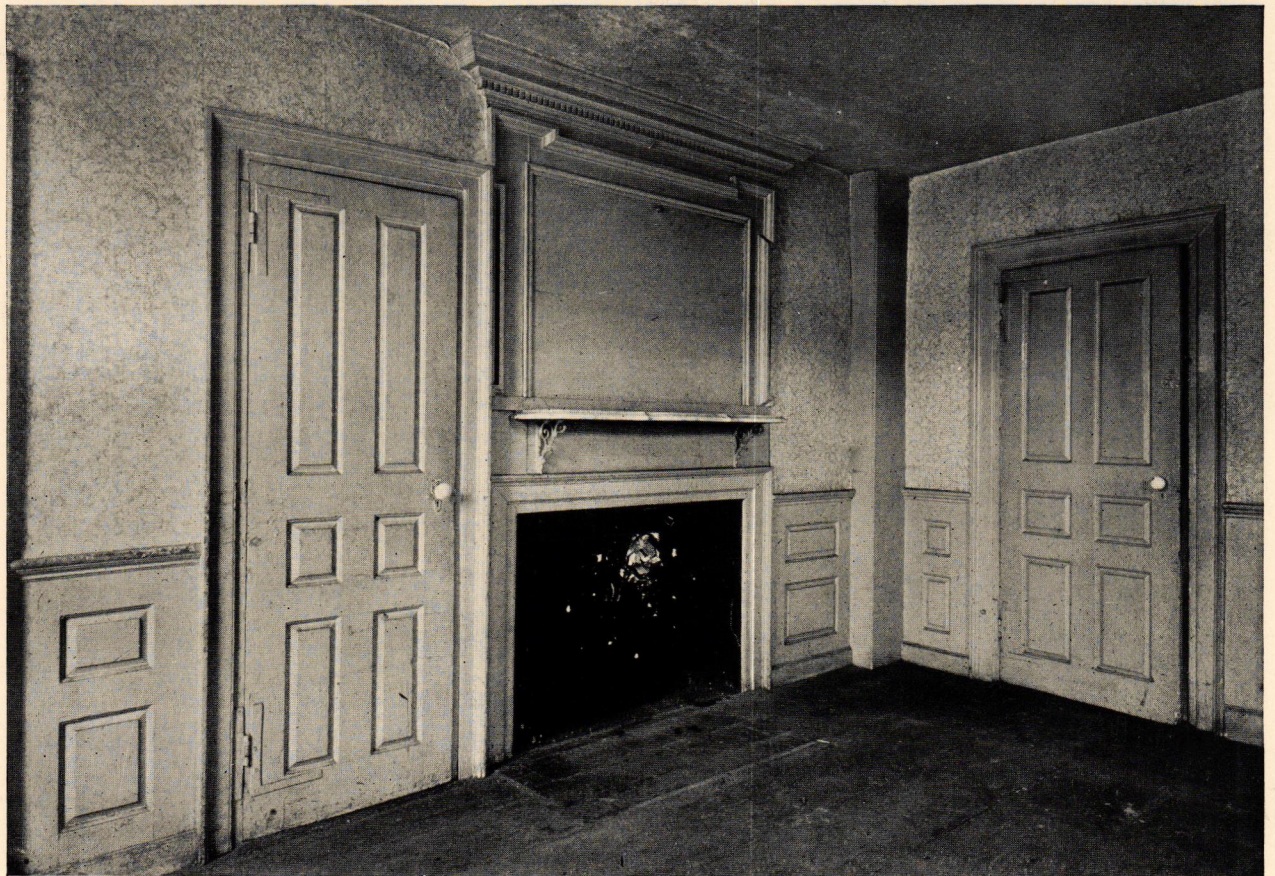
THE SARGENT-MURRAY-GILMAN-HOUGH HOUSE—1768—GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

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THE MACKENZIE HOUSE—1760—90 MIDDLE STREET, GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

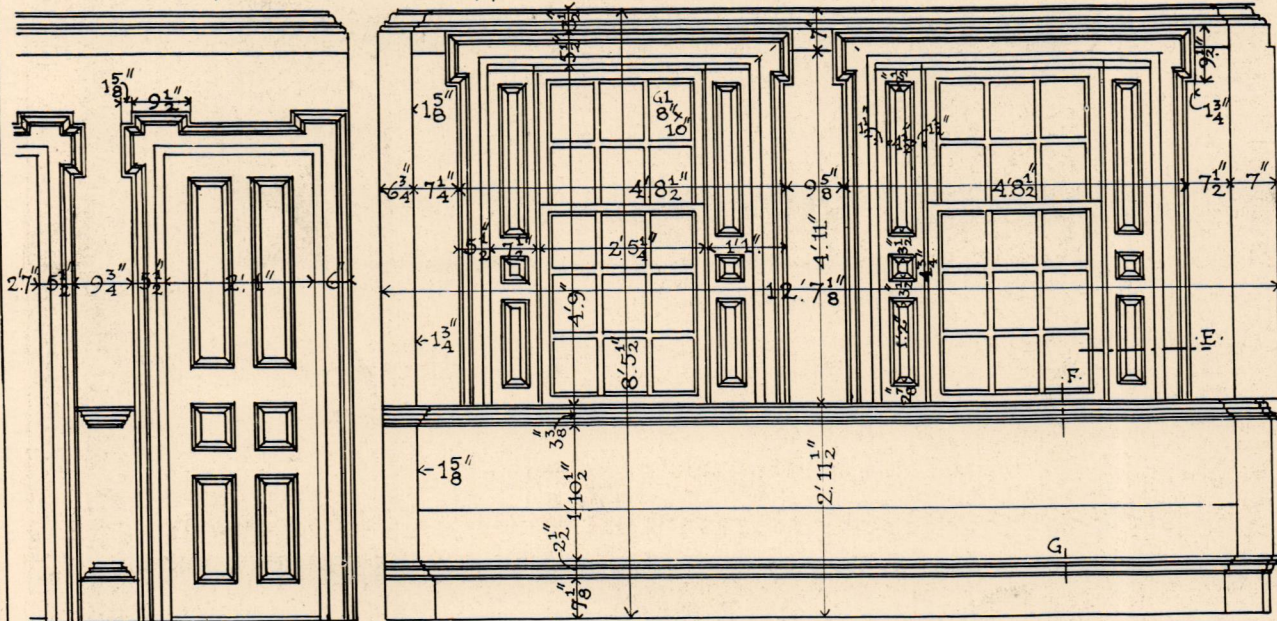
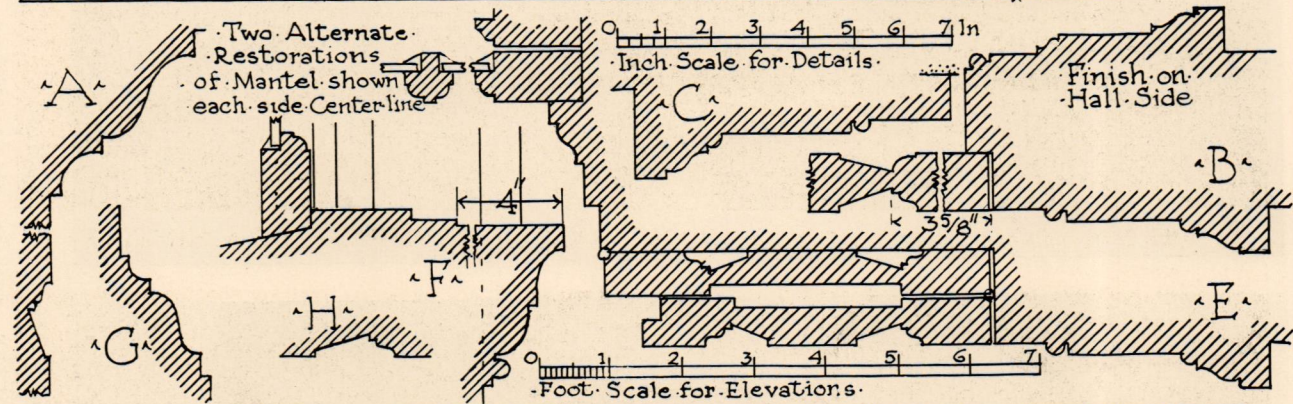
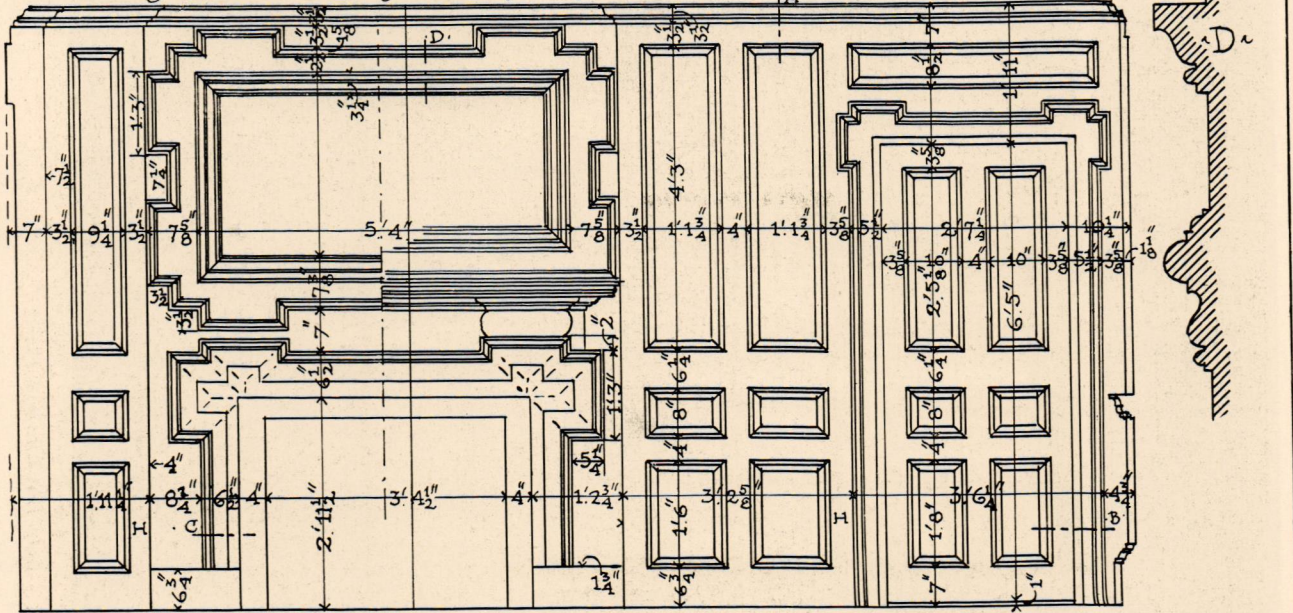


"OLD COLLINS HOUSE"—1760-70—254 MAIN STREET, GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

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Measured May 6. & Drawn July 15 & 17, 1934. by Frank Chouteau Brown. Architect. Boston. A. I. A.

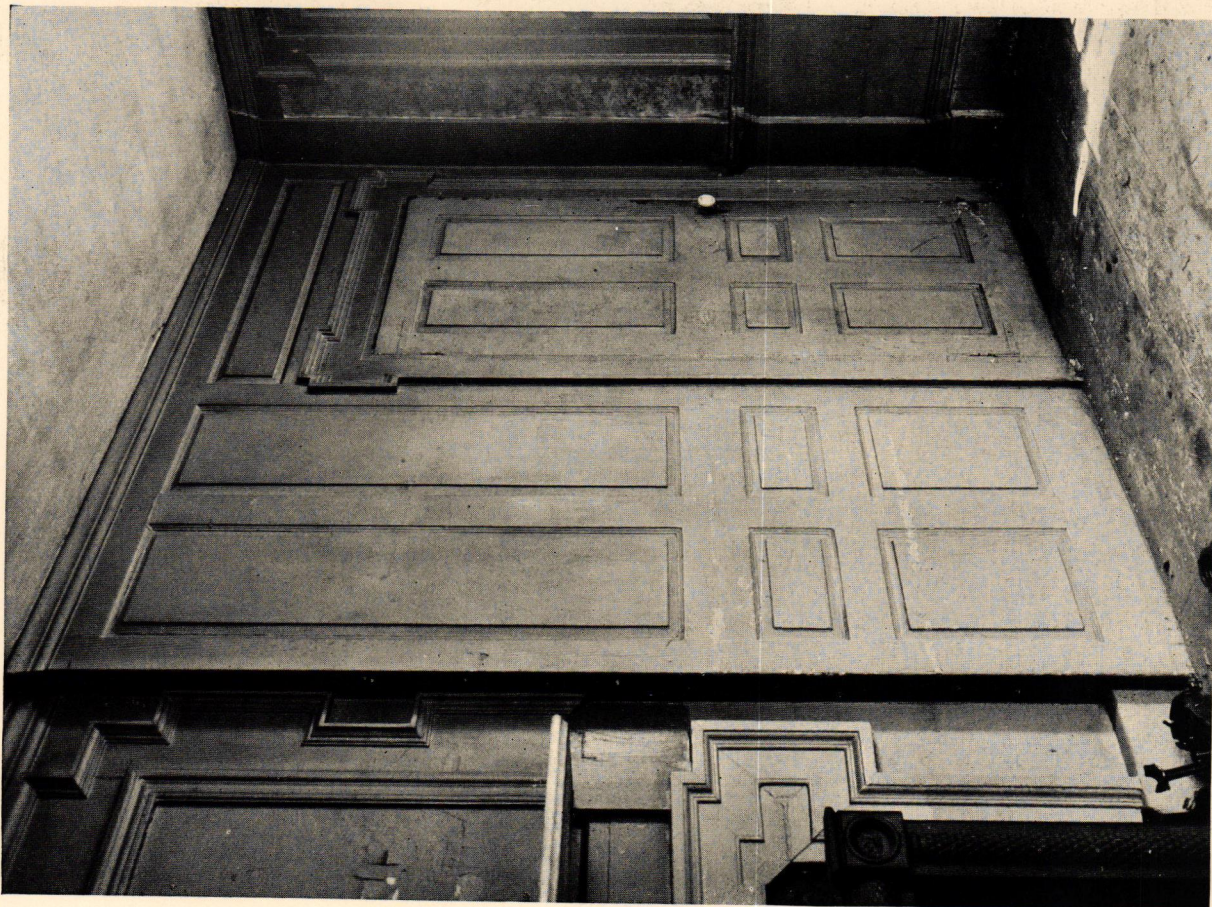


·END·DOOR·&·FINISH·

· FRONT · WINDOWS · & · FINISH ·

^PANELED ROOM IN "OLD COLLINS HOUSE" 1760-1770  
^GLOUCESTER CAPE ANN ^ MASSACHUSETTS ^





*Mantel, Panel and Door*

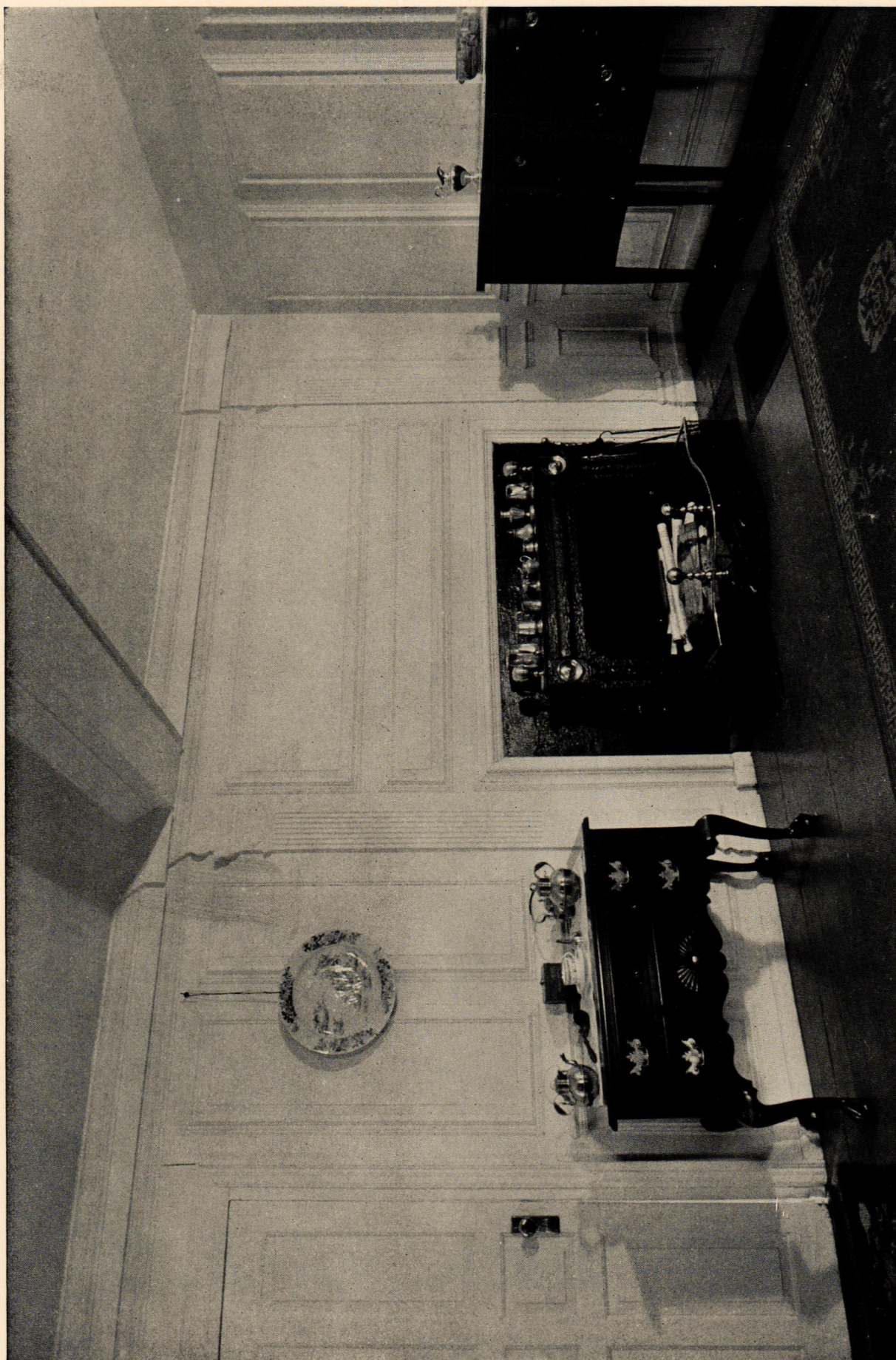
*(Measured Drawings on Page 169)*

PANELED ROOM IN "OLD COLLINS HOUSE"—1760-70—GLOUCESTER, CAPE ANN, MASSACHUSETTS



*Side Window and Finish*

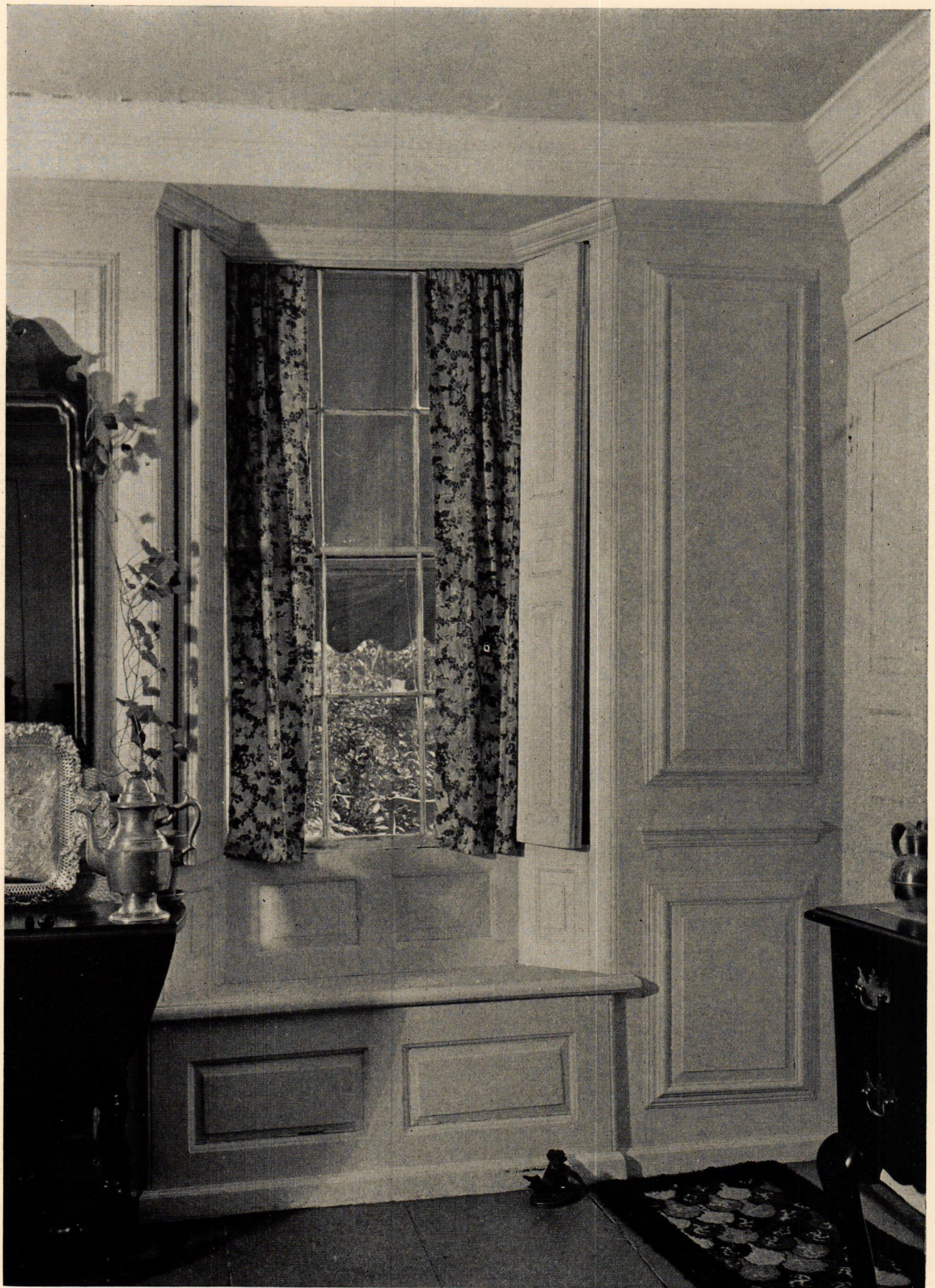




*The Dining Room*  
THE BABSON HOUSE—1740—GLOUCESTER, CAPE ANN, MASSACHUSETTS

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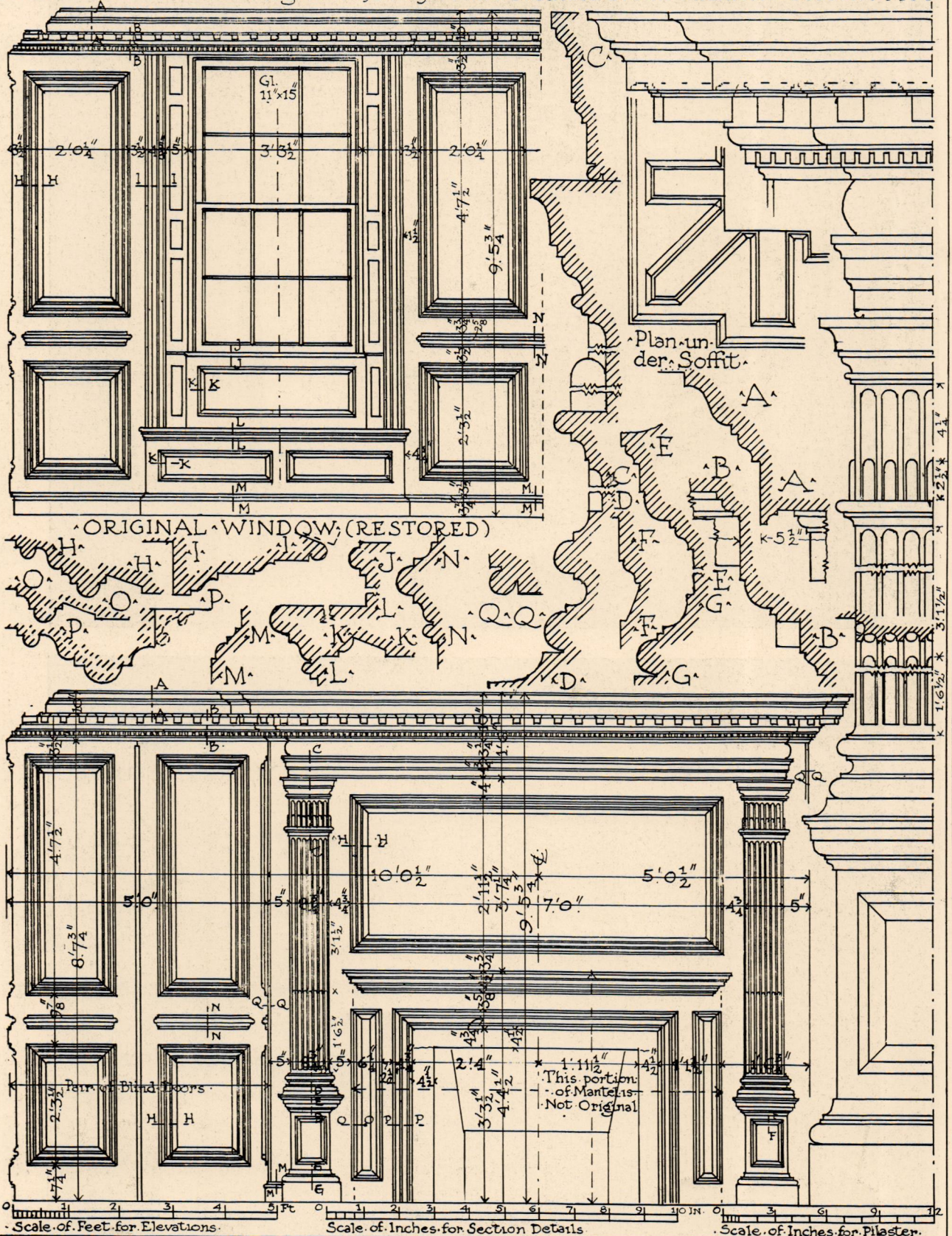
*Window and Panel Details*

THE BABSON HOUSE—1740—GLOUCESTER, CAPE ANN, MASSACHUSETTS

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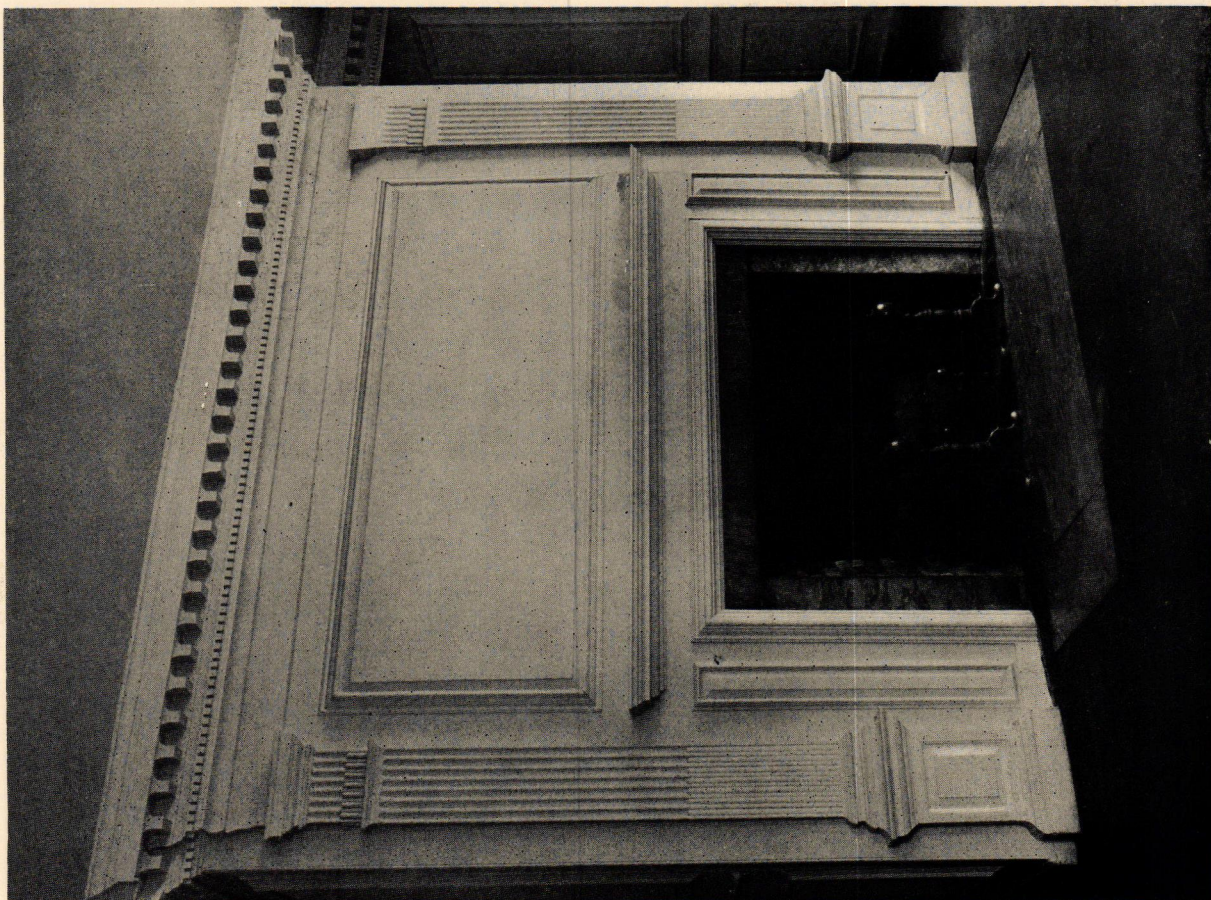


Measured June 24 & Drawn August 11 1934 by Frank Chouteau Brown Architect Boston A.I.A.



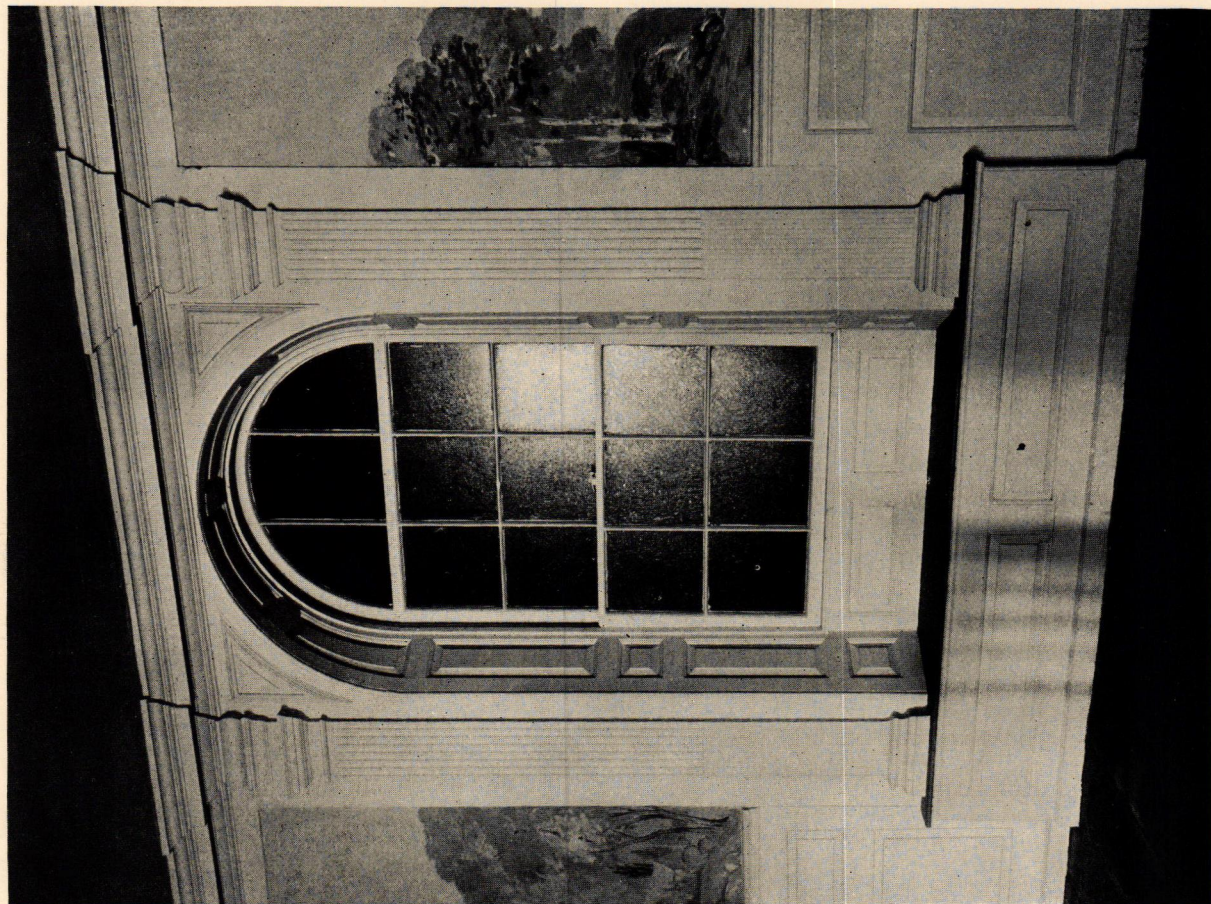
PANELED ROOM THOMAS SAUNDERS HOUSE "1764"  
(NOW THE SAWYER FREE LIBRARY) GLOUCESTER MASS





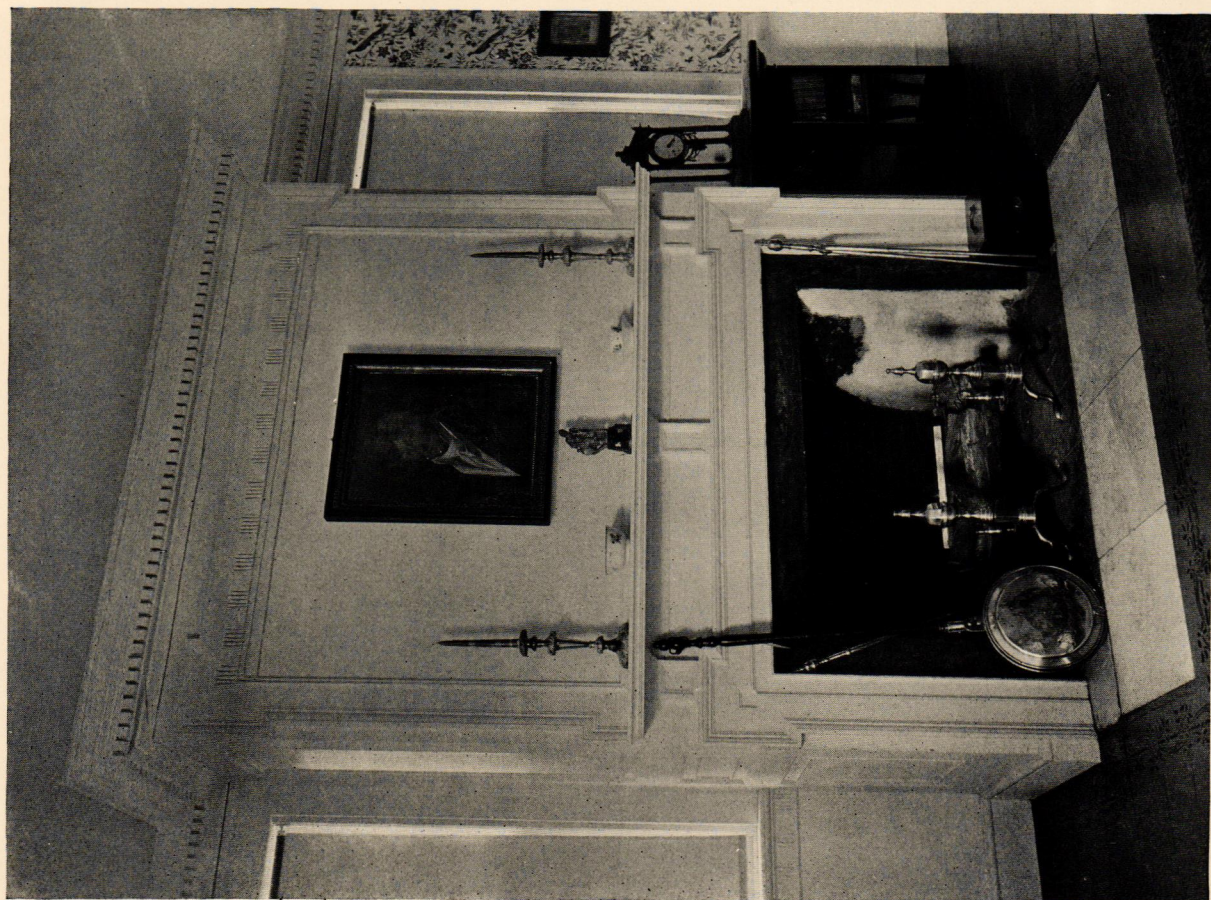
*Mantel Detail (Measured Drawing on Page 173)*

THE SAUNDERS HOUSE—1764—(NOW THE SAWYER FREE LIBRARY), GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS



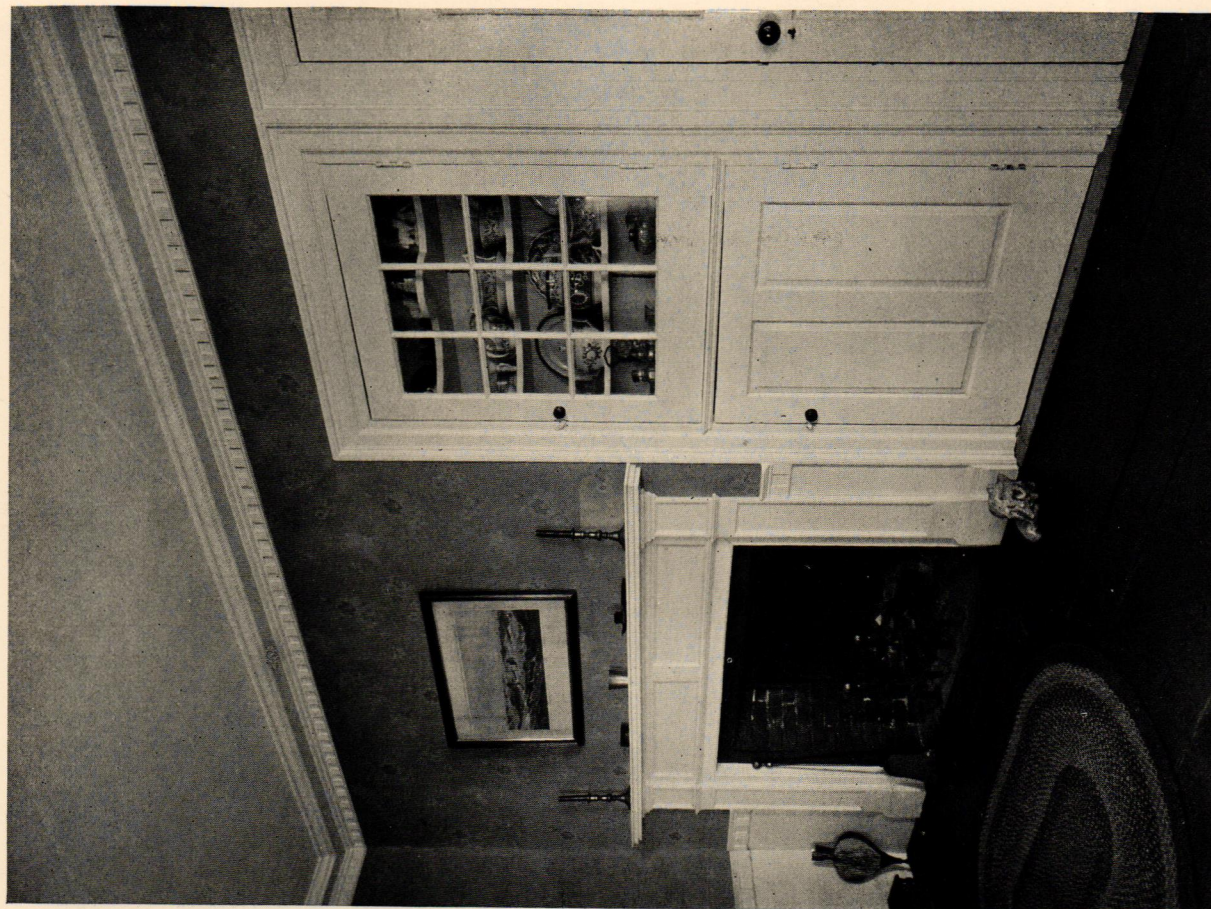
*Window Detail—Window on the Staircase Landing*





*Mantel Detail*

THE CAPE ANN SCIENTIFIC, LITERARY, AND HISTORICAL  
ASSOCIATION BUILDING—1808—GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS



*Mantel and Closet Detail*

THE GEORGE GOTT HOUSE, 7 GOTT STREET—1805—ROCKPORT,  
CAPE ANN, MASSACHUSETTS





PEARSON HALL—1817—PHILLIPS ANDOVER ACADEMY, ANDOVER, MASSACHUSETTS  
*Charles Bulfinch, Architect*

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