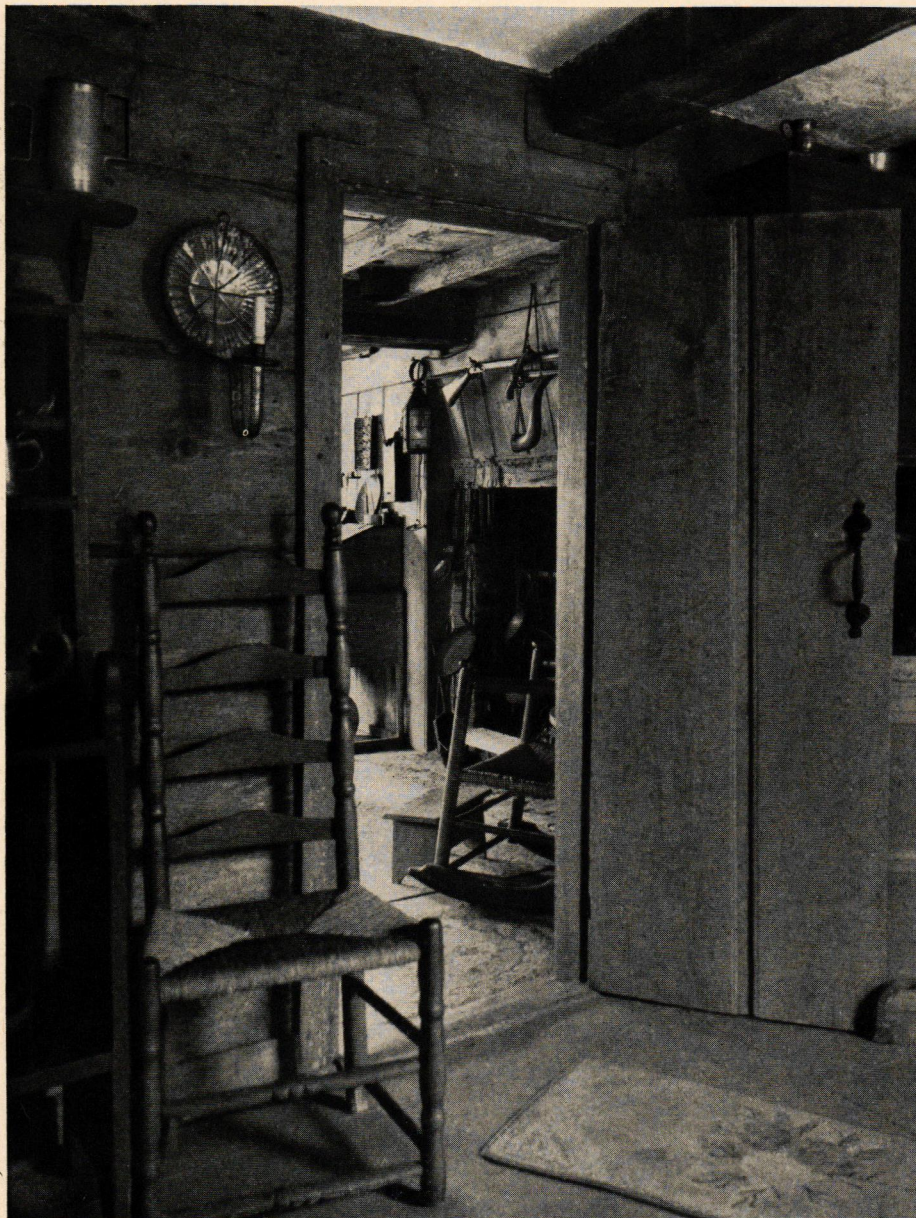


# THE MONOGRAPH SERIES

## Records of Early American Architecture

RUSSELL F. WHITEHEAD, A. I. A., *Editor*  
FRANK CHOUTEAU BROWN, A. I. A., *Associate Editor*

*Volume XXV · Number 1*



LOOKING FROM LEANTO INTO LIVING ROOM  
THE HASKELL DWELLING

[ 1 ]

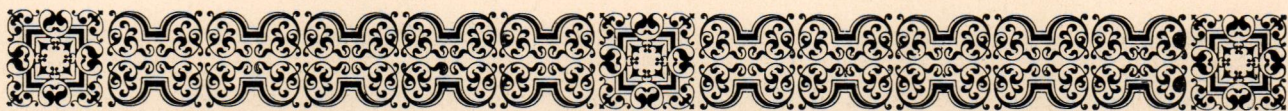




FIREPLACE DETAIL—FIRST FLOOR LIVING ROOM  
THE WILLIAM HASKELL DWELLING, WEST GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

{ 2 }





# *The* INTERIOR DETAILS *and* FURNISHINGS *of* THE WILLIAM HASKELL DWELLING

Built before 1650 at West Gloucester, Massachusetts

Photographs by Arthur C. Haskell

**S**OMETHING has already been told in these "Monographs" (Volume XVIII, No. 3, and XXIII, No. 2) of the early history of the Cape Ann settlements, although not in detail. It remains a varied and confusing record. However, after three years, the first settlement of 1623 was given up. This was the Dorchester Company, whose members returned to England, except the few who followed Roger Conant to Naumkeag, and became the "Old Planters" of Salem history. Besides the temporary fish drying stages set up by the men from Plymouth, in 1624, and the brief stop of the "Talbot," en route to Salem in June of 1630, there is also the legend that the region harbored for a while the gay Thomas Morton, after his expulsion from Merrymount, near Quincy, by the more sober-minded Pilgrims.

At least two other attempts at settlement were made, in 1633, by a group under Rev. John Robinson, of Plymouth; and another "Fishing Colony," authorized in 1639, to one "Maurice Thomson, merchant." Neither succeeded; but it would appear that the region was gradually becoming populated because, in 1641, the General Court appointed a committee to "view and settle bounds" of Ipswich, Cape Ann and Jeffries Creek (later to become Manchester). This was done in February of the following year, 1642, only the year before William Haskell removed from Beverly to "Planter's Neck."

It was in 1637 that there came to the new world from Bristol, England, three brothers, all of whom at first established themselves within the area of the old Salem colony. The eldest, Roger, born in 1613, remained in Salem until his death in 1667. The second brother, William, who was born in 1617 and died in 1693; shortly after his arrival in Beverly removed to Cape Ann. The third and youngest, Mark, born in 1620, settled and lived in Beverly, which was then a part of Salem.

William Haskell removed from Beverly to "Gloster," in 1643, when he was about 26 years old, and was married to Mary, daughter of Walter Tybbots of that colony, on November 16 of that same year. In 1645 his name is mentioned as owner of property on "Planter's Neck," a promontory lying between Lobster Cove and the ocean, on the northerly side of Cape Ann, in "Agassquam," now known as Annisquam. There he resided until either 1652, or shortly thereafter (some family histories say 1656). At any rate, on August 4, 1652, there is a record of the transfer of about ten acres, with a house and barn, from Richard Window, to Deacon William Haskell, on the west side of Walker's Creek, and the Annisquam River, in what is now known as West Gloucester.

Sometime during this early period, there appeared on the passenger list of a small vessel sailing to this colony, one Richard Window, who was there described as a "joyner." He located upon the West, or mainland, side of the Annisquam River, which even then nearly separated the Cape from the mainland. This appears to have been the same property that was later transferred, with house and barns, to Deacon Haskell in 1652. Exactly when Window built his house has not been determined, although two dates mentioned are 1645 and 1648. Even if Deacon Haskell built a new house after acquiring this property in 1652, its antiquity remains sufficiently established, and as much might still be said, if it was even built for the occupancy of his eldest son, William, after his marriage in 1667! Based upon any one of these dates, the preservation of this essential fabric, in so comparatively unchanged an estate, over all the years between, is one of those happy miracles that have occurred in only a few of our early New England structures.

The only argument against the house having been built at the earliest dates given—1645 or 1648—is that its structure proves that it was all constructed at one time, and a "two room" two-story house, in that remote location, at so early a date, seems rather pre-



tentious, when comparing it with the small "one room" Riggs cottage, across the River, for instance, which was built within a few years of 1658, one of the several hewn log houses on the Cape (and undoubtedly built *without* benefit of instructions from the Delaware Swedes!). Yet Richard Window, as the "joiner" for the Colony, might well have chosen to express his skill in his own dwelling, even at so early a date and in the comparative isolation of its site.

The original structure—still easily to be distinguished from the two principal additions that now adjoin its outer walls—had the usual early plan, of two rooms upon each floor, each side of a large central chimney, with the staircase to the upper story built against the chimney front. The house faces south, and is but thirty-six feet front by eighteen feet deep. Each story is about 7' 5" high, from the floor to the under side of the single thickness of boarding forming the floor above. The later plaster ceilings fortunately preserved the old vermilion color that had been used at some earlier time to pick out the slightly-moulded lower edge of the beams over the larger room a treatment that has been repeated up and down the chamfered edges of the heavy oak corner posts in this same room.

In summer time, despite its location near a main highway, the house is so protected by the trees along the brook, that it is approached in apparent isolation over a narrow dirt roadway that at first discloses only its old front, unaltered since the old casement sash were exchanged for double-hung windows early in the Eighteenth Century, and the roof and outer wall faces, which have required occasional renewal from time to time.

The present entrance door is a replacement. Within its simple framework, with old boards and still older bosses, the door itself, hung on old wrought iron angled strap hinges, and graced with a wooden bolt upon its inner face, is one of the several successful additions made by the present owners, Mr. A. H. Atkins, a well known sculptor, and his wife. Shortly after acquiring the house, Mr. Atkins was so fortunate as to find an old box containing enough old handmade

iron bosses (which had apparently never been used) to complete the illusion of authentic antiquity for this entrance that the house deserves.

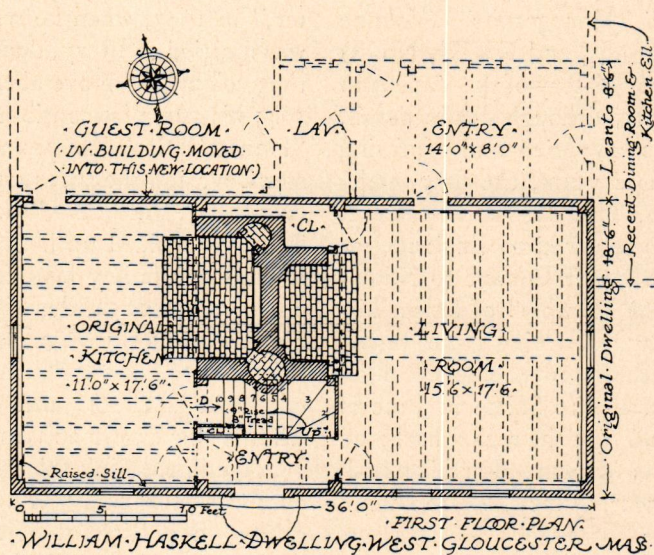
To avoid making any changes in the old structure, Mr. Atkins moved up against the back of the dwelling, upon one end, an old shed upon the estate, and made its interior over into a bedroom, building a new chimney at its northern end, in which he copied one of the old fireplaces from the front house. There was also a simple shed-like structure extending eastward from the rear portion of that end of the dwelling, containing a minute kitchen that, with the entry in the leanto, provided a small dining space and lavatory off the Guest room. Within the last few years (indeed,

since the major number of these pictures were taken) this end has been replaced with a somewhat larger wing containing a Dining room, as well as a Kitchen, and, in the second story, another bedroom and a couple of small baths to serve that room, as well as the old East Bedroom, from which it is unobtrusively entered, from an old closet space between. By these means, the owners secured for themselves all needed modern conveniences, and

a larger capacity for the dwelling, without in any way injuring its exterior appearance, or disturbing the restful interior character of its older nucleus.

Entering, as most people do, through the door opening from the old stable yard into the leanto along the back of the dwelling, the early note is struck immediately by the few simple early chairs and table set along this miniature gallery, and the fine collection of pewter shown upon the open shelves of the small cupboard against the rear wall of the old house. This entry is plastered after the old fashion, exposing the hand-worked wooden principal timbers in the ceiling and at the corners of the space enclosed.

From this room you step down—over the old raised sill of the original house—into the larger, or Living, room of the dwelling; although it contains the smaller fireplace, as the other first story room, to the west, was the old Kitchen or Hall, with its wider, deeper and higher fireplace, containing an inner corner baking oven and warming niche. But the East Room is







FRONT ELEVATION FROM THE SOUTH EAST

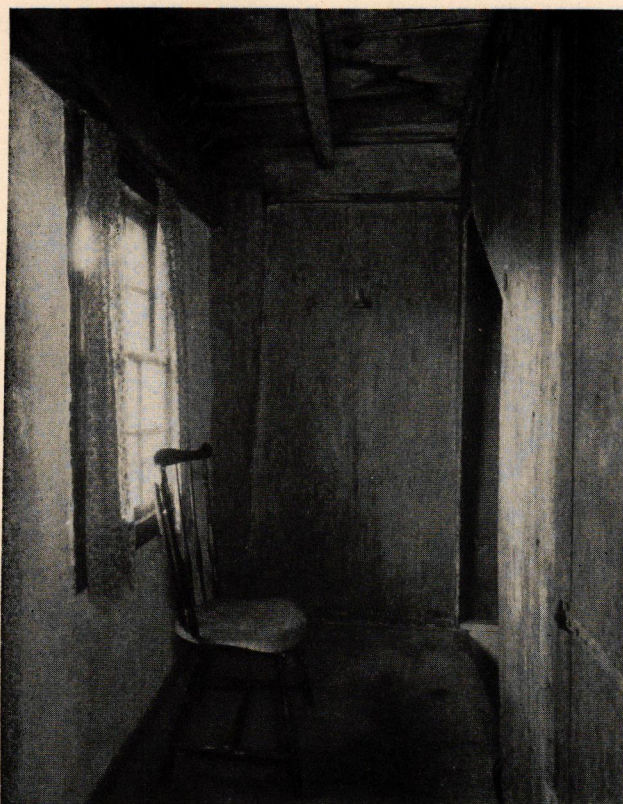


REAR ELEVATION FROM NORTH EAST

THE WILLIAM HASKELL DWELLING, WEST GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

[[5]]





SECOND STORY PASSAGE LOOKING TOWARD  
SPINNING ROOM

a very little more pretentious—if indeed, the word can be used at all in reference to so simple an entity as this Haskell dwelling—with its delicately edge-moulded hewn oak beams, the shaped and chamfered cornerposts, and the simple toothed moulding over the fire opening, and below the inclined feather-edged panelled boarding that extends from the old fire-lintel to the chimney girt above.

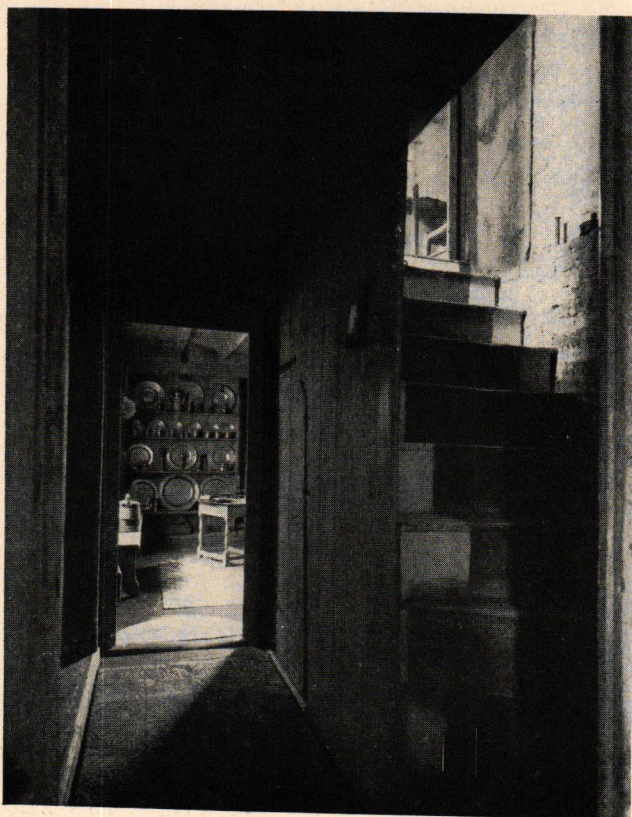
In the front Entry, more spacious than usual for so small a plan, the plainest possible flight of steep stairs rises back of the single thickness of feather-edged boarding, exposed on both faces. Between this and the uncovered brick face of the chimney, the flight rises from winders at the start, to a narrow space before the door of the West chamber, probably the Spinning Room, just wide enough to allow a person to turn and pass across to the large East chamber, at the other end of the main house.

As in most early structures, the building was probably left entirely unfinished inside its framed and boarded walls. The simple boarding separating the front stairs from the entry, and finishing the fireplace room-ends, was then entirely consistent with the exterior walls. In other examples of this period, the outer wall boarding sometimes extended continuously

for two stories, from sill to plate, relieved only by shallow "shadow moulding" along the exposed inner edges. The difficulties of obtaining plaster from old Indian shell heaps caused chimneys and fireplaces to be laid in puddled clay, as was here done, and the few finer natural lime deposits—when found—were reserved for lime washes or plaster wall bases. It was rarely wasted on room ceilings.

This completes the original dwelling, but still gives no suggestion of the beautiful and completely appropriate outfitting that the old place has so sympathetically received from its present owners. For that suggestion one must turn to the accompanying pictures, in which have been recorded a small portion of the many compositions that exist to delight the eye, in whatever direction one turns, anywhere within the structure. For not only are its occupants appreciative of the dwelling, but they are also appreciative—and have been acquisitive, as well!—of all the early types of furnishings for which it supplies such unique and appropriate backgrounds.

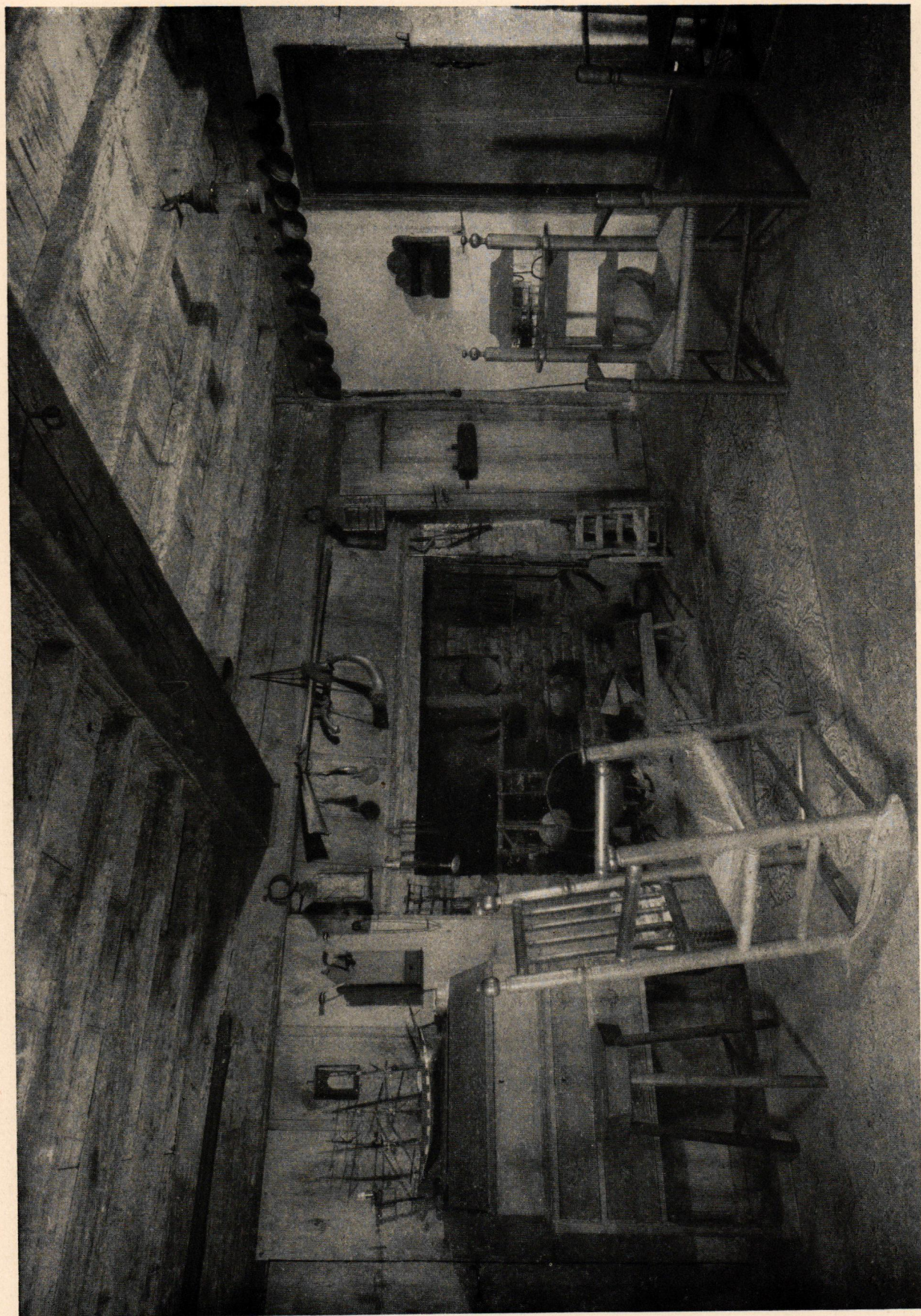
In one room after the other, one finds old house-keeping equipment of the period—and of the several generations of the old family that followed (for four generations, at least, the "eldest son of the eldest son" was a William Haskell). The rooms are crowded



ENTRY—FIRST FLOOR—LOOKING INTO OLD KITCHEN

[[6]]





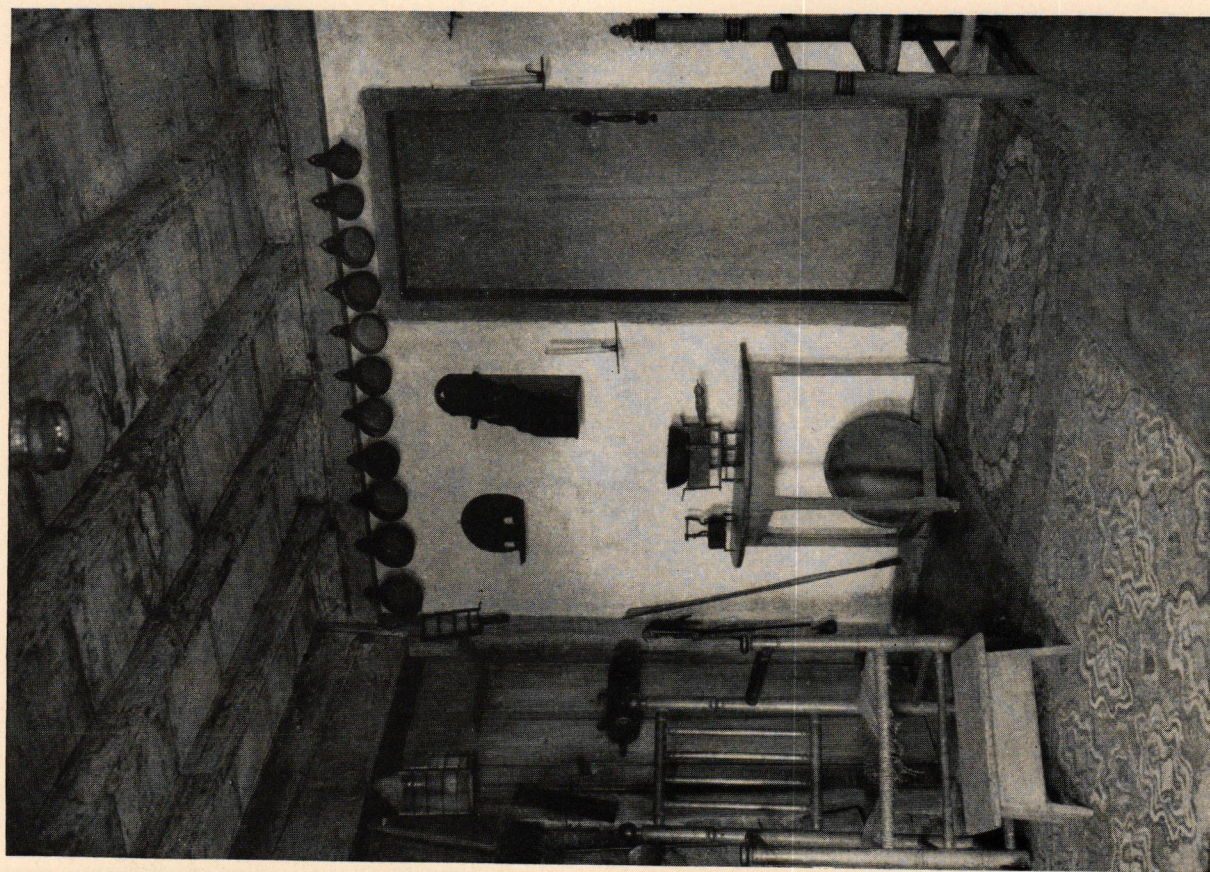
LIVING ROOM LOOKING NORTH WEST—THE HASKELL DWELLING, WEST GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

[[7]]



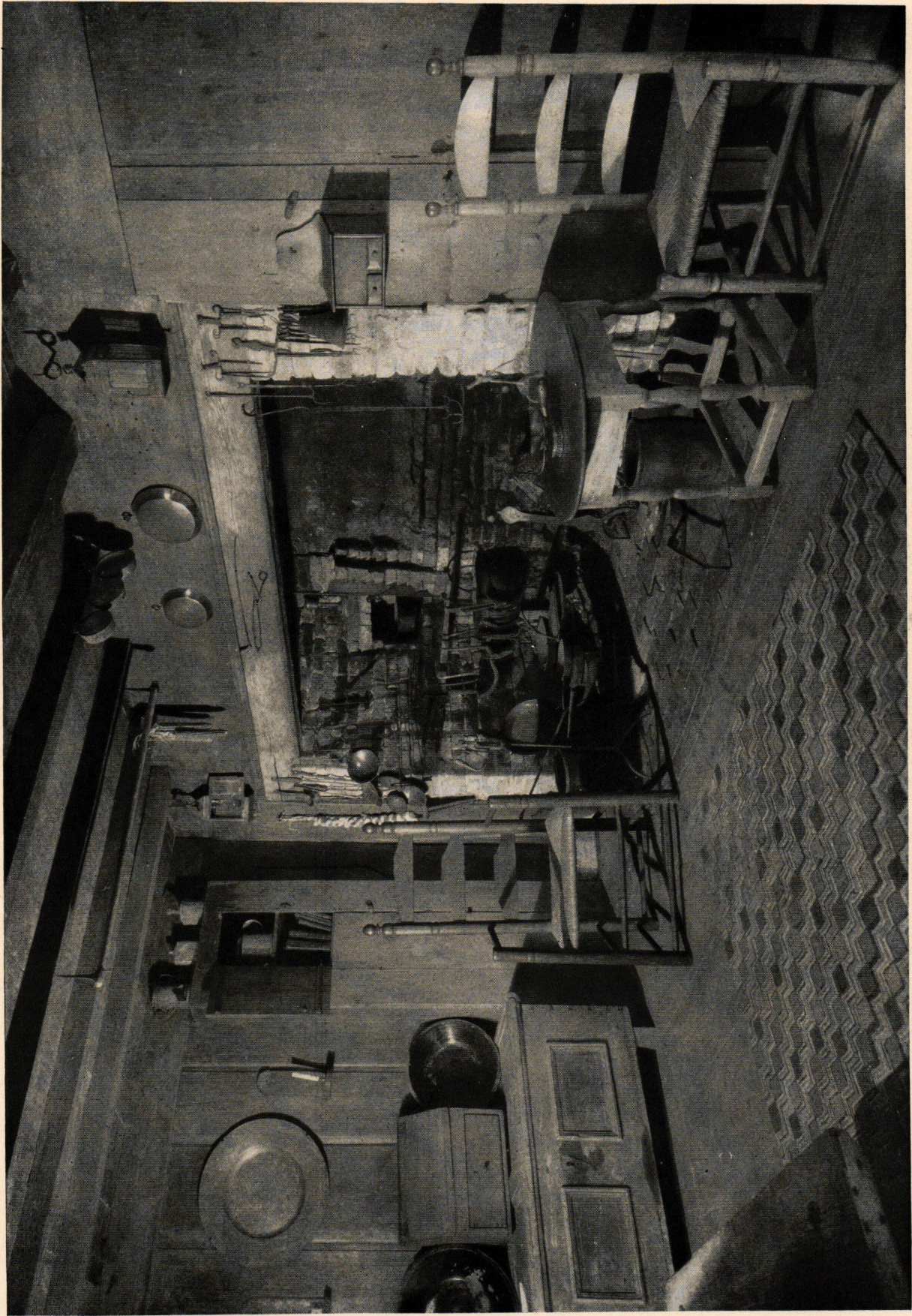


LIVING ROOM LOOKING TOWARD FRONT ENTRANCE



LIVING ROOM SHOWING DOOR TO REAR LEANTO  
THE WILLIAM HASKELL DWELLING, WEST GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS





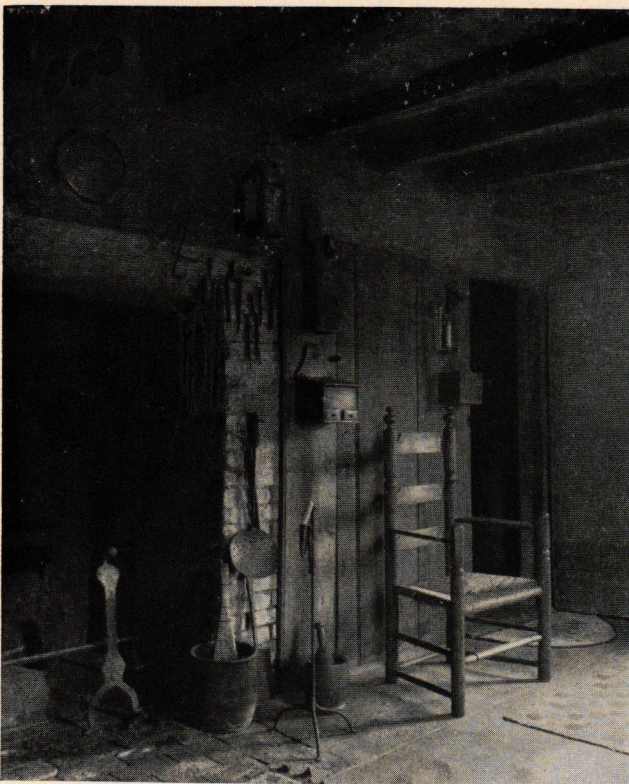
OLD KITCHEN LOOKING NORTH EAST—HASKELL DWELLING, WEST GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

[9]





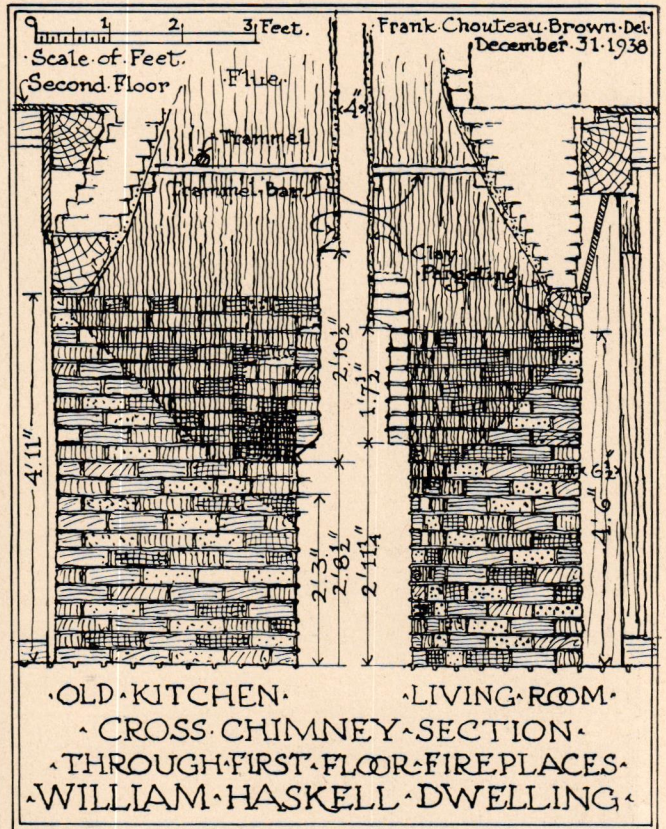
OLD KITCHEN—WALL OPPOSITE FIREPLACE



OLD KITCHEN—SHOWING DOOR TO FRONT ENTRY  
THE WILLIAM HASKELL DWELLING  
WEST GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

with early impedimenta; old iron and wooden fittings, cranes, trammels and trammel hooks; iron trivets, skillets, pots, kettles, candlesticks, and dogs; foot stools, shovels, tongs, and coal pinchers; wooden trenchers, pewter porringers, plates and bowls. Early glazed slip-ware, or pewter and wooden mixing bowls, are near at hand, with early oak, hickory and maple or pine chairs; tables, benches and stools set handily beside the fireplace or across the room. Even wall rack pipe holders, pine knife boxes, etc., are there.

The pieces of early glass are less conspicuous, but

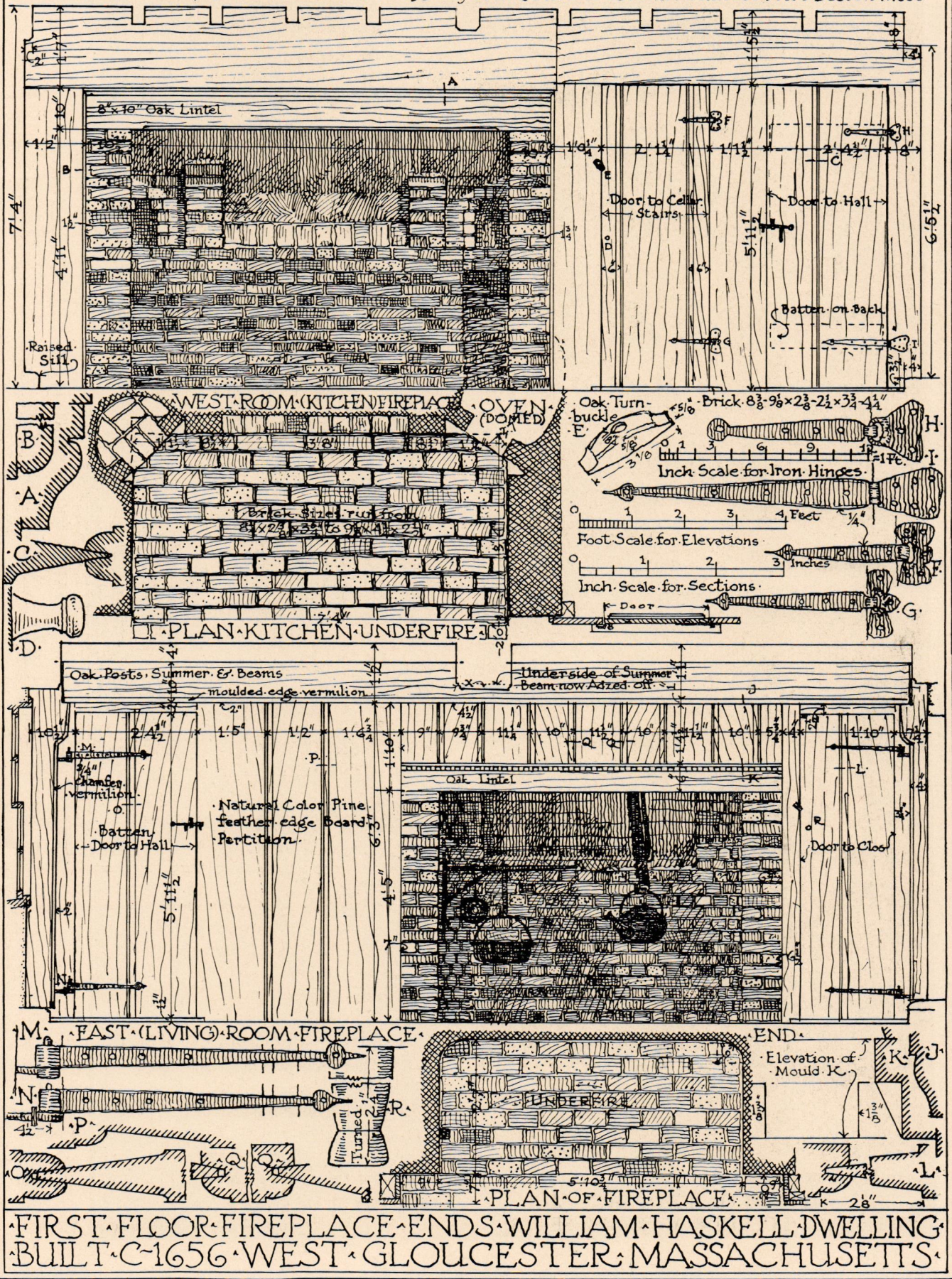


they, too, are grouped thereabouts, as needed, along with appropriate textiles, simple hooked rugs, slight small print sash curtains, and woven bedcovers. Even the Guest Chamber in the attached shed-ell, is fitted as finely and beautifully as the more authentic rooms. In fact, the whole structure and its contents, as it stands, composes as complete and perfect a "museum" of early *Americana* as now remains in New England representative of its date and time. In proof thereof we tender for the reader's delectation some few of the many glimpses of these interiors and their furnishings, such as the painstaking craft and skill of a descendant of the younger brother of the first William Haskell now makes possible!

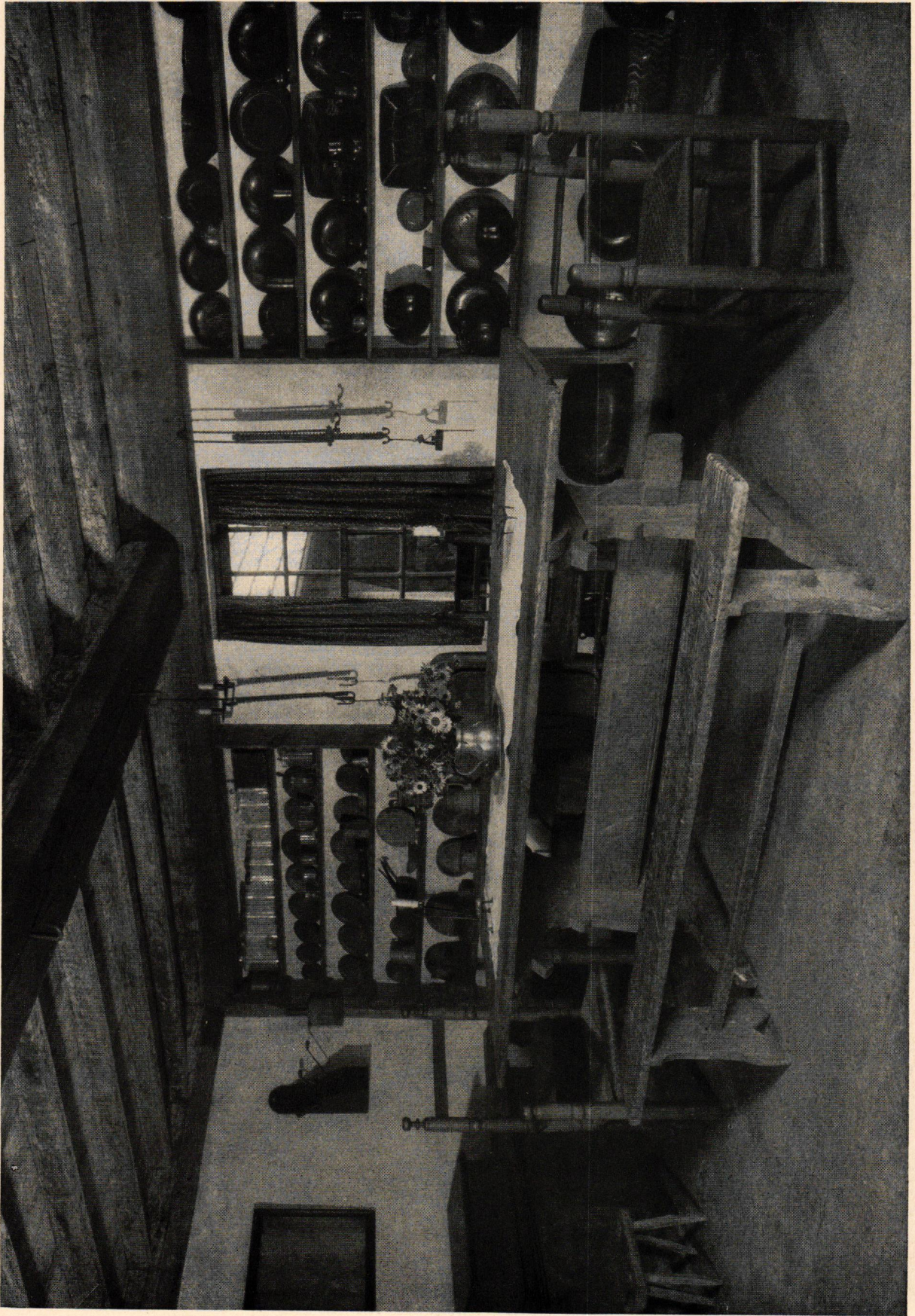
FRANK CHOUTEAU BROWN, A.I.A.



Measured December 17 & Drawn December 18 1938 by Frank Chouteau Brown Architect A.I.A. Boston Mass



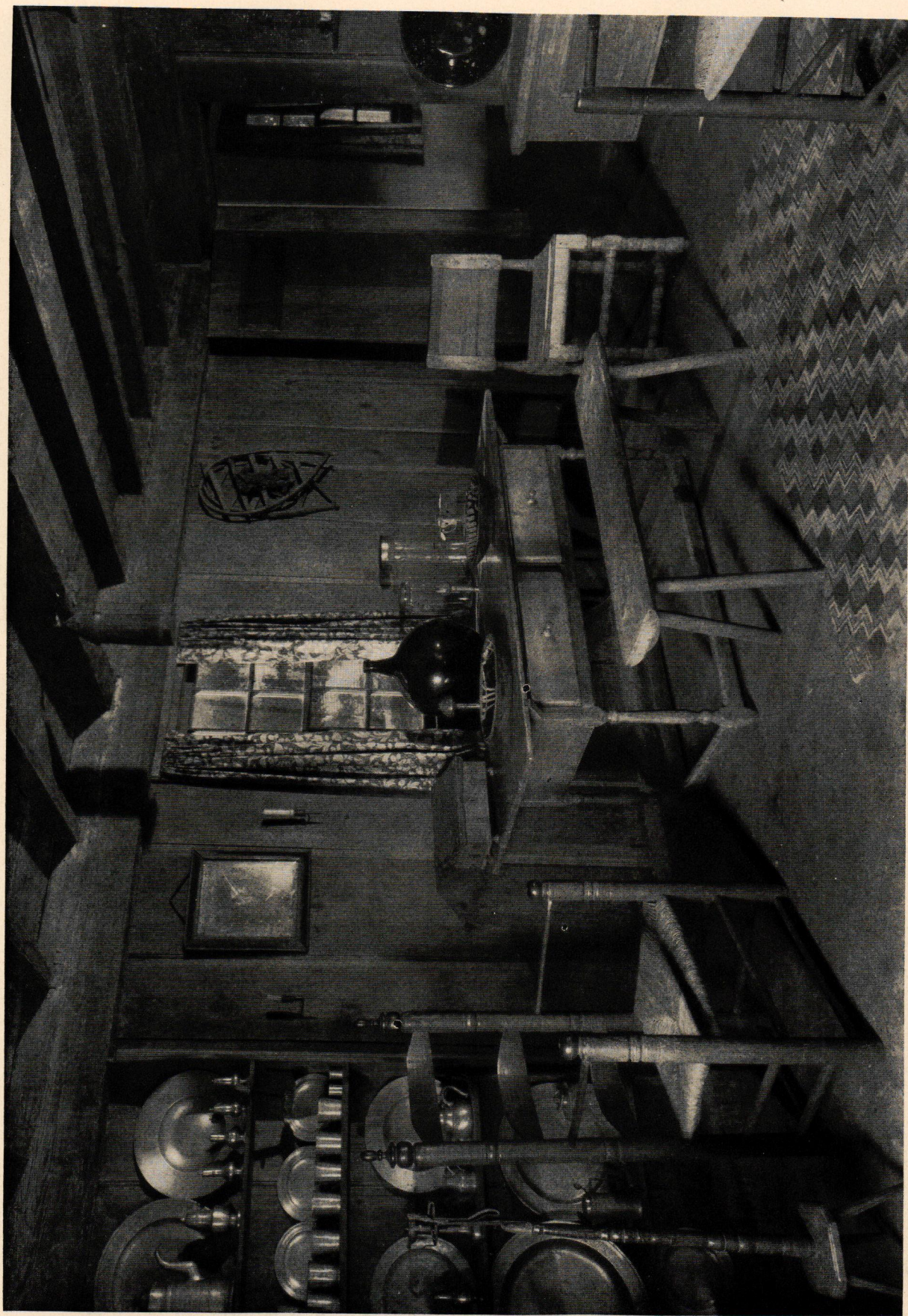




LIVING ROOM—GENERAL VIEW LOOKING TOWARD NORTH EAST—HASKELL DWELLING,  
WEST GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

[ 12 ]

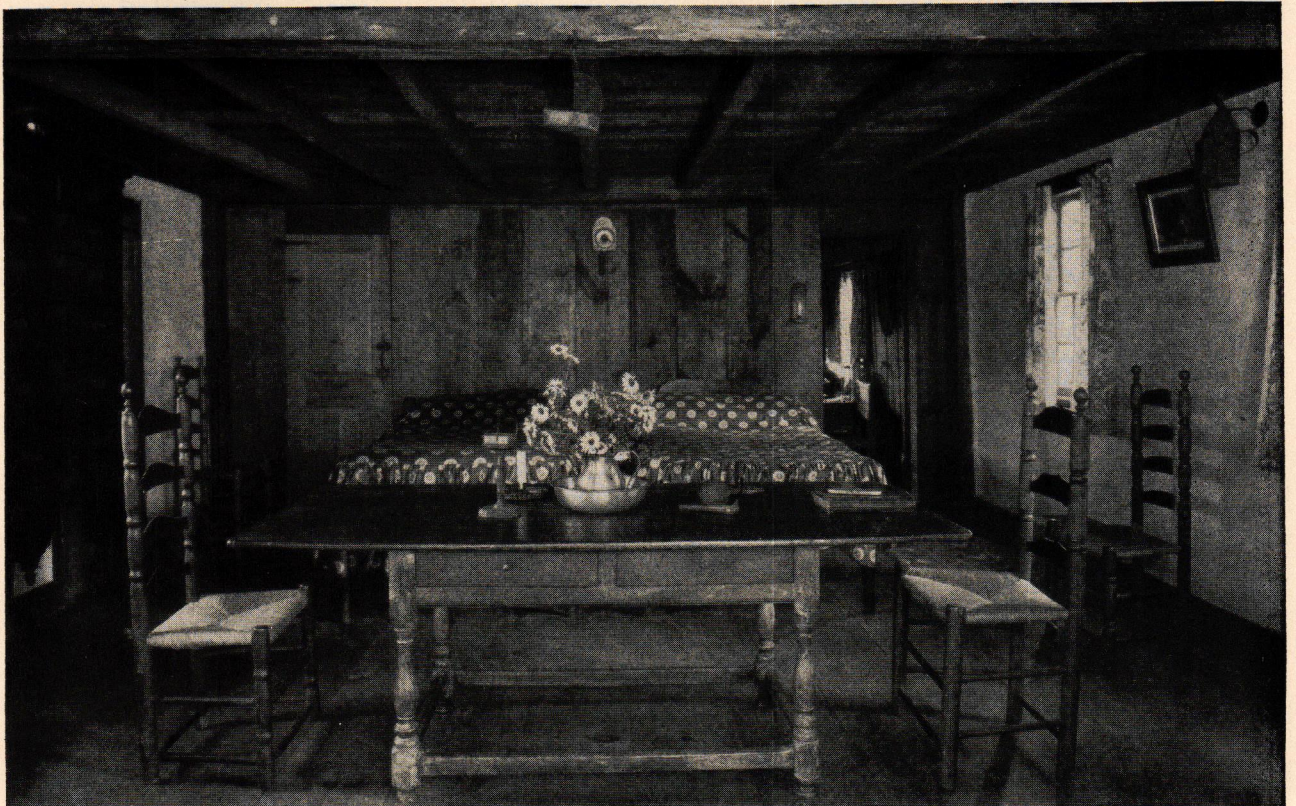




OLD KITCHEN—SHOWING DOOR TO GUEST ROOM ELL—HASKELL DWELLING, WEST GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

[[13]]





GUEST ROOM—SOUTH END WITH DOOR TO OLD KITCHEN



LEANTO GALLERY LOOKING TOWARD EAST END  
THE WILLIAM HASKELL DWELLING, WEST GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

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BED ROOM OVER OLD KITCHEN—LOOKING NORTH WEST



BED ROOM OVER LIVING ROOM—LOOKING NORTH WEST  
THE WILLIAM HASKELL DWELLING, WEST GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

[15]





SPINNING ROOM CHAMBER—SOUTH WEST CORNER  
THE WILLIAM HASKELL DWELLING, WEST GLOUCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS

[16]