



# PENELOPE MARTIN'S

## SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

FROM THE BOOK, *CUMBERLAND MAINE IN FOUR CENTURIES....*

In 1788, William Martin, a London businessman, who had come to America with his family, purchased the Jeremiah Powell estate at Broad Cove and moved his family to this town. Here, in the Powell mansion William Martin and his daughter Penelope Martin (who was educated in England,) with the assistance of her two sisters, Eliza and Catherine, in 1790 established a private school for girls. It is remarkable as being one of the first institutions in this part of the country to undertake the higher education of women. It was a boarding school in which were taught the branches now included in our high school course as well as those accomplishments then deemed necessary in a girls' school. It became prosperous and well known throughout the state, attracting pupils from a distance because of its reputation for imparting a thorough education. The Misses' Martin School was conducted in North Yarmouth till the family removed to Portland in 1804 and there the school was continued, being one of the first in New England to bring to it the cultivated Christian elegance of the old world."

*The door of the original Powell homestead can be viewed at the Cumberland Historical Society Building. The door was rescued by Ted and Marion Chandler, residents on Middle Road. She was a Cumberland native and historian, and their home was the Martin's ancestral home. From their home, they could see the Powell/Martin house. For history's sake, they rescued the door before the homestead was demolished, and put it on permanent loan to the CHS. Their son, John, saw no need for it to be on loan, and gave it as a donation to CHS a couple of years ago.*

Below is a photo of the Powell/Martin house on what is now Powell Road between Route One and Route 88. It was, at the time this photo was taken, unoccupied. This is from the postcard collection of Cumberland Historical Society. It is a



real photo postcard taken from the crest of Spear's Hill on Route #88, near the junction of Tuttle Road looking toward Yarmouth.

The photo was taken in the 1920's with the Interurban trolley stop at the left and the Powell/Martin house in the middle right beside the telephone



## *From...Old Times in North Yarmouth, Maine,* page 1044...

*You can read more information about Penelope Martin by reading the April 2017 Newsletter on the Society's web page listed under Community Activities on the town's website...*  
[www.cumberlandmaine.com](http://www.cumberlandmaine.com)

“William Martin’s funeral took place June 18, 1814. He came from England in 1783 and settled in North Yarmouth in trade. He was naturalized in 1787, and in 1790 was a candidate for Congress in opposition to George Thacher and others. He moved to Portland in 1804. His daughters had an accomplished education, particularly Penelope who remained in England till 1790 to complete hers, and who for many years kept a high school for young ladies, both here and at North Yarmouth, which attracted many from abroad, and where a thorough education was imparted. Two of the children were living in 1849, at an advanced age. Samuel died in 1848, Eliza some years ago, and William Feb. 14, 1849 aged 86. The mother, a superior woman, died in 1828, aged 90.”

They are buried in Evergreen Cemetery, Portland.