

# Hearts Of Edenton

Love and Marriage in Historic Edenton

Oh, Penelopes!

We know this one is long but we promise that it's worth it-here's a hint: there's an ELOPEMENT!

This is a tale of two Penelopes-well, technically six Penelopes, but it's mainly about two.

The first is young Penelope Galland (or Golland), who lost her father in 1704. Her mother, also named Penelope, just re-married, and mother and daughter Penelope have moved to a new home. It's a beautiful house near the banks of the Chowan River, with easy access to the Albemarle Sound. Nearby will someday be a successful fishery, and the house is just a short boat ride away from little "Ye Towne" growing next to Queen Anne's Creek. It's important that the house is close to "Ye Towne", for the main occupant has lots of business to attend to in the planned city. Lots of, say, administrative business, that also takes him to Bath Towne on occasion. He does, after all, have to sit in meetings, make decisions, write correspondence, and deal with pirates...wait, what?

The house of course is Eden House—home of Governor Charles Eden, Penelope's new step-father. Yes, one of the Penelopes is Governor Eden's daughter (well, step-daughter), who, according to legend, would someday marry the notorious pirate, Blackbeard! Alas, that tale is only fiction, but trust us when we say that Penelope Galland's real story is far more exciting!

In a time of low life expectancy and few legal rights for women, one of the few ways for a woman to amass wealth and power was through inheritance and/or marriage. And Penelope Galland, whether intentionally or not, would use both of these institutions to become one of the wealthiest and most powerful women in North Carolina's history.

Sometime between 1714-1722, Penelope marries Colonel William Maule, who, among other positions, was serving as Surveyor General for the colony—a prestigious post that likely was further improved in status by his marriage into the Governor's family,

We do not know for sure if the marriage happened before or after Penelope's mother's passing in 1716, but at some point a rift forms between Governor Eden and the Maules. Apparently William Maule fails to pay the proper fees for the Surveyor General's position to the Governor at some point, and historians cite this as the reason why Governor Eden fails to include the Maules in his will. Instead, the majority of his estate is later claimed by the Secretary of the Colony and Eden's personal friend, John Lovick, and Lovick even receives Eden House itself.

When William Maule passes away in 1726, he bequeaths Mount Galland (now Mount Gould) and Scotts Hall plantations in modern-day Bertie County to Penelope, and leaves an even more vast swath of land to their only surviving child—a daughter, also named, you guessed it, Penelope. Young Penelope Maule eventually marries Dr. William Cathcart in 1742, but unfortunately passes away soon afterwards.

Interestingly enough, one of Dr. Cathcart's daughters by his second marriage would later marry a certain Samuel Johnston, but that's another story!

Penelope Galland is now a widow, and could likely live on the profits from her plantations and the labor of the enslaved persons in her "possession", but she re-marries, and to someone we already know—John Lovick. Oh yes, the man who received Eden House instead of her becomes her husband, and, when he passes away in 1733, he leaves the vast majority of his estate to her. Penelope Galland Maule Lovick now owns her home from her youth.

Did you know that from the medieval period through the late nineteenth century, a series of laws called "coverture laws" considered a married woman's legal rights to be "covered" by those of her husband? That meant that, among other concerns, a married woman did not have control of her own inherited property except in extenuating circumstances.

Thus one might assume that Penelope would be worried about potentially losing Eden House again through another marriage...

And Penelope marries George Phenny in 1734. The former governor of the Bahama Islands, he had moved to North Carolina to take the position of Surveyor General of Customs for the Southern District of America. Unfortunately, he also passes away within just a few years of their marriage, perishing in 1737, just a few months after the death of their infant son. He too leaves practically everything to Penelope.

Penelope Galland Maule Lovick Phenny has climbed the ladder from step-daughter of a controversial political figure to a woman of particular prestige. By virtue of her status as a single woman of profound wealth she likely possessed more freedom than the vast majority of her female contemporaries could ever imagine.

She probably could have chosen any eligible bachelor in the colonies, but she chooses another governor-Governor Gabriel Johnston.

Johnston? Haven't we heard that name before? Yes indeed-Gabriel Johnston is the uncle of Samuel, Isabella, and Hannah Johnston of Hayes!

After their wedding sometime between 1738-1740, Penelope installs her new husband at Eden House. Soon after, she gives birth to yet another Penelope! Yet soon after securing her legacy, this profoundly successful woman, who probably could have held her own in a certain "game of thrones", passes away in 1741, survived at that point by both daughters Penelope.

We already heard about how Penelope Maule Cathcart would pass away shortly after her mother, but what happens to our second main Penelope, Penelope Johnston?

Will she continue in her mother's footsteps to climb the ladder of wealth and power, or will she forge her own path?

Although Governor Gabriel Johnston is a complicated man, his daughter appears to be the proverbial "apple of his eye". Penelope is raised in accordance with her elite status, but when her father passes away in 1752, she is suddenly orphaned. Instead of moving in with her Johnston relatives then residing in Onslow County, she enters the household of Governor Dinwiddie in Williamsburg, Virginia! There she enters into the high society of the Virginian elite, and is on track to make an excellent marital match, such as in the tradition of her mother. But as much as she is a Galland, she is also a Johnston, and we already know how love holds sway in the Johnston family!

In 1758, Penelope ELOPES with the dashing John Dawson!



His father was the second president of the College of William and Mary and young Dawson certainly has “good connections”, but Penelope is far wealthier. While news of the elopement causes quite the scandal in North Carolina, the Dawsons move back to Eden House and live happily there for twelve years. Penelope gives birth to four children, three of which survive their infancy, and one, of course, is named Penelope! Sadly, Penelope loses her beloved husband in 1770, but unlike her mother, she never re-marries.

Penelope Johnston Dawson still maintains her social life, however, and frequently visits her Johnston cousins when they take up residence at Hayes. This of course brings her into the circle of yet another Penelope-Penelope Barker! Y'all knew we had to include her somehow! Penelope Barker's own rise to wealth and power is also another story, but she and Penelope Dawson have something else in common.

In October 1774, both women sign a document showing their support for the Provincial Deputies' decision to boycott British goods. Oh yes, in the proud tradition of epic Penelopes, Penelope Dawson becomes a signer of the Edenton Tea Party Resolves! She then lives out her days in her beloved Eden House, which then becomes the home of yet another generation of Penelopes.