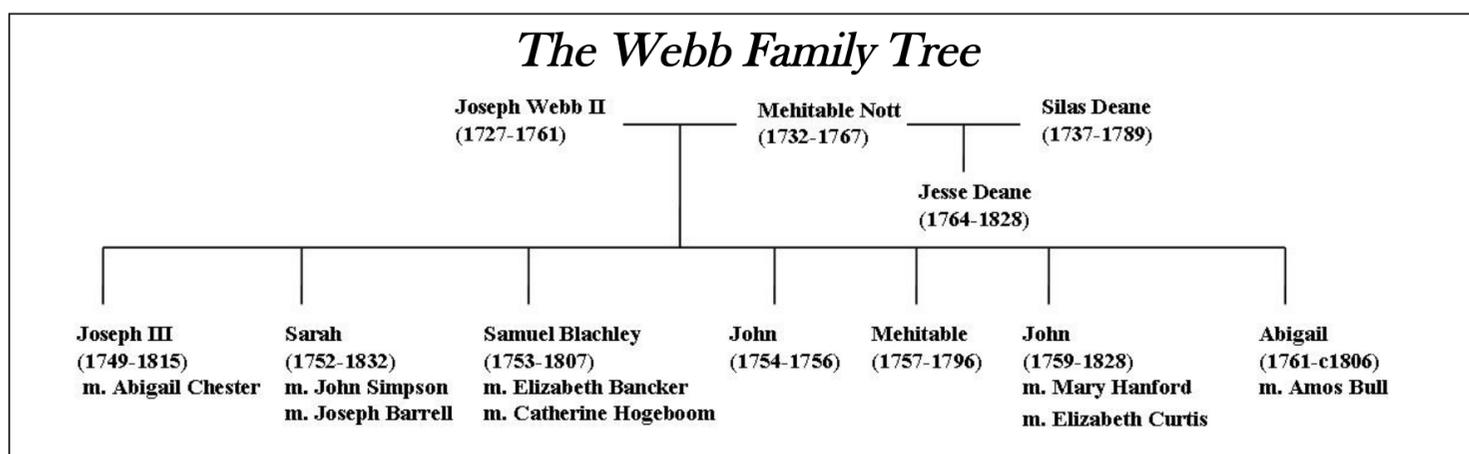


THE WEBB FAMILY

Joseph Webb II (1727-1761) was a prominent merchant and ship owner. He married **Mehitable Nott** (1732-1767), the daughter of a sea captain, in 1749. Three years later, in 1752, Joseph II contracted with Judah Wright of Farmington to frame an impressive, three-and-a-half story Georgian residence on Main Street in Wethersfield. He chose a gambrel roof for his house, which signaled both his wealth and his familiarity with the latest trends in architecture. The large attic space could also be used to store his merchandise. **Joseph II** and **Mehitable** had six children who survived to adulthood: Joseph III, Sarah, Samuel Blachley, Mehitable, John, and Abigail. The most famous was **Samuel Blachley Webb** (1753-1807), who served as an aide to Generals Putnam and Washington. Joseph II, of whom there is no known portrait, died on April 5, 1761 at the age of 34. His widow married **Silas Deane** in 1763 and they had one child, Jesse Deane (1764-1828). Mehitable died at age thirty-five in 1767.



Mehitable Nott Webb with her son Jesse Deane, c. 1766. Collection of the Kent-Delord House Museum.



Portraits of Joseph Webb III and his wife Abigail Chester Webb. Joseph's likeness is a pastel by artist John Singleton Copley, c.1774. Abigail's portrait is an oil on canvas by an unknown artist c.1800. Collection of the Kent-Delord House Museum, Plattsburgh, NY.

Joseph III (1749-1815) inherited the house after his father's death. He married **Abigail Chester** (1754-1827) and they brought ten children up in the house. Joseph III and Abigail entertained frequently and their residence became known as "Hospitality Hall." In May 1781, they hosted George Washington when he met with the Comte de Rochambeau to plan the Yorktown campaign. Like many other merchants of the period, Joseph III had financial trouble after the War. He was sent to debtor's prison in Hartford twice. In 1790, to avoid foreclosure by his creditors, he sold the house to his wife's family, the Chesters, and moved his family in with them. In 1802, the Webb family finally had to sell the house. After a series of owners, the property was purchased by **Judge Martin Welles** around 1820. He made a number of changes, including building a new chimney and changing the size of the rooms on the south side. To his credit, Welles decided to preserve the northeast bed chamber associated with Washington's visit and saved its original wall paper. The property remained in the Welles family until 1913.

