

[Eric Weber](#)

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November 6: The birth date of Josiah Dwight (1747-1796), one of the earliest and most influential leaders of Williamsburg and its church. After moving here from Hatfield about 1770, he built the large house still standing at 7 Old Goshen Road, on the corner of Village Hill Road. He kept a tavern there, and the first meeting of the District of Williamsburg after its separation from Hatfield in 1771 was held there. That made it very convenient for the thirsty voters to adjourn to the taproom immediately afterward, a tradition that was continued (at his tavern and others) even after the meetings began to be held in a new schoolhouse nearby.

Josiah was a wealthy man for his time, owning over 300 acres of land in Williamsburg that he'd inherited from his father Seth Dwight of Hatfield, and operating a sawmill on the West Branch below his farm. Lydia Pomeroy Graves (1773-1866), whose idea for manufacturing cloth-covered wooden buttons made her son-in-law Samuel Williston fabulously rich, recalled of Josiah and his wife Tabatha Dwight when she herself was 89 years old, "[Josiah] was large and fine-looking and very dignified in his personal appearance. He was always sure to be found on the right side of every good cause in the town. [Tabatha] was also fine-looking, energetic, enterprising and desirous of making property. She managed her household affairs with much skill and was respected for her talents and character."

Josiah's will was made in 1796 and proved in Springfield court that Fall. In it he provided for his widow and left land to his sons Josiah Jr., Dorus, and Daniel, and cash legacies to his two living daughters. Curiously, he left \$1.50 and nothing else to his eldest son Seth. His estate was valued at \$5200.