



*Copyright © 2025 Flagon & Trencher.*

*Provided for research purposes.*

*All rights reserved.*

*Proper citation for this document  
is as follows:*

*Flagon & Trencher: Taverner and Innkeeper  
Biographies (2025), at  
[www.FlagonAndTrencher.org](http://www.FlagonAndTrencher.org), all rights reserved.*

JOHN GRAVE(S) 1658 - 1726  
Tavern Keeper, Guilford, Conn., 1717 - 1726?

John Grave was born in Guilford, Conn., 27 February 1658/9; died there 1 December 1726. He married 6 or 12 January 1684/5 Elizabeth Foote, daughter of Lt. Robert and Sarah (Potter) Foote of Branford, Conn., born 8 March 1664 in that part of New Haven which in 1670 became Wallingford. She died 1 $\frac{1}{4}$  May 1730.

John was made a freeman of Guilford 24 September [no year]. When he married Elizabeth Foote he installed his household goods in the house of his father, Deacon John Grave. Deacon John had built the house ten years before in Guilford (now Madison) which was called "the house at Tuxis Farms."

When John's father died in 1695, John fell heir to his father's leather-bound account book. The first date in the book was March 6, 1678/9. His father had used it for commercial accounts only, but John used it for other information as well. One of his entries reads, "I began to teach schools the 16 of December 1707". Then follows a list of his pupils, nine boys, including two of his sons. Another entry "An account of some books of divinities belonging to me John Graves, with some of their titles". Twenty-seven titles follow and the notation "sundry other small paper books".

The Court records of October 1707 show that The General Assembly of Connecticut confirmed John as Lieutenant of the first Company or train band in the town of Guilford. Some of John's entries in the account book are related to Queen Anne's Wars (1702-1713): "I went up to Hadly in the Queen's service on the 11th of August and taried there till the 27th in the yeare 1708, with my horse and all my accoutrements at my own finding". In 1713 is an entry that John paid Ebenezer Stone £1 7s for making a drum and "i had the care of beating the drum on Sabbath days the first day of July 1713."

In 1717, when he was 59 years old, well established in the community as a man of good moral character, Lt. John Graves was

elected by the town to take the office of Tavern Keeper at Guilford. Failure to take an office to which one was elected involved a fine. John and Elizabeth Graves had ten children, of whom four were probably still at home in 1717. His home was situated on a highway which was the direct route between New York and Boston, by way of Saybrook, Connecticut, and doubtless many travelers availed themselves of the accommodations there. The Tavern served local inhabitants as well. One of John's accounts shows his services to man and beast:

Mark Mallam Debt.

|  |   |   |   |    |
|--|---|---|---|----|
| To a pot of cider  | £ | 0 | 0 | 3  |
| To two quarts of oats  |   |   |   | 3  |
| To a dinner and a tankard of cider and<br>two quarts of oats | 0 | 1 |   | 5  |
| To a pot of phlip  |   |   |   | 8  |
| To victuals  |   |   | 1 | 3  |
| To two meals of victuals and a night's lodging               |   |   | 1 |    |
| To victuals for seamen                                       |   |   | 4 |    |
| To expenses for a Branford gentleman                         |   |   |   | 11 |
| To two pots of cider - one ordered sweetened                 |   |   |   | 7  |

John died 1 December 1726 and his will was admitted to probate 30 December 1726. After his death his son John continued to use the account book as long as he lived, and his son Capt. Elias after him. The last entry in the book: "Elias Graves died 31 May 1862 in the 71 year of his age."

REFERENCES

- John Card Graves. Graves Genealogy in America. ms. in Grovornor Library, Buffalo, N.Y.
- George Grave or Graves and his descendants in New England Historic Genealogical REGISTER, 1902, v. 56, pp. 260-264.
- Guilford, Conn. Town Records and records of Dr. Alvan Talcott by correspondence with Leon P. Beckwith, Town Clerk of Guilford.
- Steiner's History of Guilford, Conn. 1897. pp. 128, 159, 196, 292, 349, 420.