

# The LAST WORDS and DYING SPEECH

OF SAMUEL L. HADLOCK, who is this day to be executed at Pownalborough.

I SAMUEL HADLOCK, now in the forty fourth year of my age, was born in Cape Ann, in the county of Essex. My father died when I was about six years old. I was put to one Thomas Bryant, of Chebacco—lived with him about two years; and was very cruelly treated by him. My mother took me away from him, and bound me to one Deacon John Sawyer, in Cape Ann, who was a very kind and good master, and with whom I lived until I was fourteen years old. I then went home to my mother, and went out to labour until my twentieth year. Then my mother died; and I went and improved the farm my father left me by his last will. I remained in that situation about three years, and then married. I was very zealous in my pursuit after the world, and laboured exceedingly hard—bought several tracts of land, and got into a good way of living. God professed my undertakings, and my estate increased very fast.—About nine years ago I moved into Chebacco, and kept a tavern two years. Then a constable came from Cape Ann, with a writ for my poll and personal estate, which I refused to pay, having the same year payed a tax on my poll and personal estate in Chebacco. The said constable took a pair of oxen from me, and unjustly sold them at Vendue; which made me so uneasy that I was almost crazy, and determined to leave that part of the country. I advertised my lands for sale, and disposed of the greater part of them. Then took a small schooner, and put on board some stores, and as much of my household goods as I could carry—took my two sons and two daughters with me, and sailed along the Eastern Coast, until we arrived at Mount Desert; where I had never been before. I found a small harbour, lived on board my vessel, and worked on shore, until I built me a log house. In about three weeks I went back to Chebacco, and brought my wife, and the remainder of my goods; where I lived and laboured exceedingly hard, and was too much set upon getting the world, and too much neglected preparing for another. But I have this for my comfort, that I never knowingly cheated or defrauded any person; but always endeavoured punctually to fulfil my promises, and pay my just debts—although I was treated in a very different manner, and used ill by others.

On the unhappy twenty sixth day of October, 1789, I rose early in the morning, went out to work as usual for about two or three hours, and then went into the house. Being very thirsty I made some drink with water, rum and molasses, and drank once or twice. I felt dizzy in my head, and a good deal disordered in my mind—went out and travelled about my field for sometime; and going near to the house of John Manchester, his wife began to abuse me, and take in a very provoking manner. Her husband desired her to hold her tongue; but she kept on till she provoked with her, that I took hold of her, and pulled her backwards on the floor two or three times. Then James Richardson, son, jun. came in and desired her to be quiet, but she still abused me. I then flung on the floor, and laid never was a man so ill used—left the house, and went directly home. I carried but a short time, went again into my field, and from thence saw the unfortunate Eliab Littlefield Gott, and one Daniel Tarr, crossing the river in a canoe. I called to Gott, and he came to the shore. I took hold of him, asked him to go to Manchester's, and told him that James Richardson was there. He suddenly twitched from me and fell over the other side of the canoe, and was riding away. Gott then turned himself over, and I thought he was rising up. I struck him no more, but left his side, and did not see him again till the next day, when on his master's bed.—Richardson run towards his own house. I followed him, knocked at his door, went into his house, but could see nothing of him.—Mr. Stephen Sargent came to me and advised me to go home—said there were three or four of them, and that I had better not go in the road, for they might way lay and kill me. I took my accoutrements, went home by water's side, and went to bed. The next day I heard that Gott was not like to live; and went immediately to see him. Andrew Tarr, his son, and James Richardson were all there, and armed. They refused to let me come in, and threatened to kill me; but after some time I was admitted. Poor Gott lay on the bed, and appeared to be senseless. I desired Tarr to go for a Doctor, and told him that he should have any thing that my house afforded. I then went home, and about twenty four hours afterwards, five men came, took me, said Gott was dead, & carried me to Tarr's house, where Gott was; and then back to my own house. They stole my watch, used half a barrel of rum, killed one of my oxen and a fat hog—took from me my money, desk, notes of hand and all my papers.—After trying several days at my house, and hav-

ing plundered my substance to the value of about sixty pounds, they carried me to goal; where I was confined until brought before the Supreme Judicial Court. I had a fair and impartial trial by the Court and Jury; but God knows, and I know, that a great part of what the witnesses testified against me was false—by means whereof I must now lose my life. Yet, as a dying man, I heartily forgive them; and beg of a merciful God to give them true repentance for this and all their other iniquities.

After being convicted, and having received my sentence, I was remanded to goal, and put in irons. In about seven days after, I got off my irons; and having beforehand prepared myself, made a hole through the hearth and timber under it, which I kept covered in the day time. About midnight, on the 16th day of July, went through the hole I had made, crept along under the goal, dug under the fill unbeknown to any person, except my little Son (who was in the goal with me) and made my escape—travelled as privately as possible until I arrived at my own house—kept in my barn one night and the next day; in the evening took my boat, and in two days and nights got to Fallamquady. Then took passage to St. Andrews, and went by the name of Gilbert; where I tarried about a fortnight. Then went in the packet to St. John's, and travelled back in the country until I came to Grand Passage. Being sensible in my own mind that I never was in my heart guilty of the murder charged upon me, and God having delivered me from the goal, I still hoped that he would protect and preserve me; and the country being very poor, and I having to great a concern about my poor young children, I was determined to return home. I went on board a fishing schooner bound to Portsmouth; and was set on shore on Mount Desert, about three miles from my house. I got home in the night, and tarried there about one week—lodged sometimes in my barn, and sometimes in the woods; where I suffered much by hard rains and cold nights. At last I ventured to my house; and the said James Richardson came there and discovered me. I went away from my house about sunset, and was discovered by a girl in the woods. I then went on board of a small fishing schooner belonging to my son in law Manchester. He came on board that night and found me there. I went out a fishing with him about a week, and then a storm arose, which obliged us to make a harbour in Long Island; where I was taken by nineteen armed men, who robbed me of six dollars and an half in cash, one silk handkerchief, a pair of stockings, sundry fishing gears, and my gun and bayonet. I was then carried to Portland goal, where I was confined about a week. Then brought back to Pownalborough, where I have remained in irons until this day.

And now before I leave the world as a dying man, do solemnly declare in the presence of that God who is witness to all that I say, that the many scandalous reports which have lately been propagated and spread abroad in the world about me, that I had some years ago been guilty of murder, and many other atrocious crimes, are all false and without the least foundation of truth. I desire to bless God, who has given me so much of his rich loving grace and kept me from committing these, or any such like heinous crimes as I have been maliciously and falsely charged with. Although I acknowledge with grief that I have been too much taken up in a pursuit of getting the world; and thereby too negligent in the great concerns of my soul and a future state.

But as to the murder of the poor young man, which I have been charged with, and for which I must soon die, I solemnly declare before God and this audience, that I never had it in my heart to take away his life, or the life of any other person; except it was in defence of my own. And although the great and holy God, who cannot do otherwise than right, has so ordered things that I must be cut off from the land of the living, yet I can safely appeal to my mind, and my own conscience, that I never did wittingly and willingly, take away the life of that poor young man.

I do now solemnly caution and warn all persons to avoid quarrels and contentions with any one; especially with such as would irritate and raise your passions; whereby you may rush to do which may afterwards cause you bitter repentance. Shun up and avoid their company, or bare their flanders and reproaches with a christian temper, knowing that a just and righteous God will surely punish him that stretch up strife, & unjustly slandereth his neighbour.

And now I desire to forgive all those who have injured me, even to the taking away of my life. I desire to leave the world without having the least hatred or illwill in my heart towards any one of my fellow creatures. And I do solemnly warn all persons not to practice any sinful courses, nor prophane curses and swears, nor blaspheme the name of the great and holy God, which is too much the practice in their sinful and degenerate times. Remember that God will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain; but for all these things will bring them into judgement. Live peaceable and quiet lives, in all Godliness and honesty.

I now desire the humble and fervent prayer of all now present, while I am alive and a subject of payers, that he would of his infinite mercy pardon and forgive all my manifold sins, and graciously accept of my soul, through the merits of his dear son our blessed saviour and Redeemer, into whose hands I commit my departing soul.

SAMUEL L. HADLOCK.  
Attest, EZRA TAYLOR,  
Pownalborough, October 28, 1790.

*As recounted in a 1998 article in The History Journal of the MDI Historical Society, Samuel L. Hadlock of Manchester Point, Mount Desert, was tried and convicted for the 1790 murder of Eliab Littlefield Gott, age 22. In "Hadlock Executed This Day," authors Mary H. Jones, Alice MacDonald Long, and Ralph Hamilton Long, Jr. presented the extensive testimony of witnesses to the murder.*

*In bringing to the attention of the MDI Historical Society this broadside telling Hadlock's version of events, Raymond Strout and his sons Michael and Peter have helped to round out the story of this infamous event.*

*As is often the case, more information about an event provokes more questions. Was Gott's death an accident or cold-blooded murder? Did Hadlock's neighbors, who were the prime witnesses against him, use Gott's murder as a pretext to steal his property and generally abuse him? In the end, was justice done?*

## The LAST WORDS and DYING SPEECH

Of SAMUEL L. HADLOCK, who is this day  
to be executed at Pownalborough.

I SAMUEL HADLOCK, now in the forty fourth year of my age, was born in Cape Ann, in the county of Essex. My father died when I was about six years old. I was put to one Thomas Bryant, of Chebacco—lived with him about two years ; and was very cruelly treated by him. My mother took me away from him, and bound me to one Deacon John Sawyer, in Cape Ann, who was a very kind and good master, and with whom I lived until I was fourteen years old. I then went home to my mother, and went out to labour until my twentieth year. Then my mother died ; and I went and improved the farm my father left me by his last will. I remained in that situation about three years, and then married. I was very zealous in my pursuit after the world, and laboured exceedingly hard—bought several tracts of land, and got into a good way of living. God prospered my undertakings, and my estate encreased very fast.—About nine years ago I moved into Chebacco, and kept a tavern two years. Then a constable came from Cape Ann, with a tax for my poll and personal estate, which I refused to pay, having the same year payed a tax on my poll and personal estate in Chebacco. The said constable took a pair of oxen from me and unjustly sold them at Vendue ; which made so uneasy that I was almost crazy, and determined to leave that part of the country. I advertised my lands for sale, and disposed of the greater part of them. Then took a small schooner, and put on board some stores, and as much of my household goods as I could carry—took my two sons and two daughters with me, and sailed along the Eastern Coast, until we arrived at Mount Desert ; where I had never been before. I found a small harbour, lived on board my vessel, and worked on shore, until I built me a log house. In about three weeks I went back to Chebacco, and brought my wife, and the remainder of my goods ; where I lived and laboured exceeding hard, and was too much set upon getting the world, and too much neglected

preparing for another. But I have this for my comfort, that I never knowingly cheated or defrauded any person ; but always endeavoured punctually to fulfil my promises, and pay my just debts—although I was treated in a very different manner, and used ill by others.

On the unhappy twenty sixth day of October, 1789, I rose early in the morning, went out to work as usual for about two or three hours, and then went into the house. Being very thirsty I made some drink with water, rum and molasses, and drank once or twice. I felt dizzy in my head, and good deal disordered in my mind—went out and travelled about my field for sometime ; and going near to the house of John Manchester, his wife began to abuse me, and talked in a very provoking manner. Her husband desired her to hold her tongue ; but she kept on till [I was so] provoked with her, that I took hold of her, and pulled her down backwards on the floor two or three times. Then James Richardson, jun. came is and desired her to be quiet, but she still abused me. I then stamped on the floor, and said never was a man so ill used—left the house, and went directly home. I tarried but a short time, went again into my field, and from thence saw the unfortunate Eliab Littlefield Gott, and one Daniel Tarr, crossing the river in a canoe. I called to Gott, and he came to the shore. I took hold of him, asked him to go to Manchester's, and told him that James Richardson was there. He suddenly twitched from me and fell over the other side of the canoe into the water. He got up immediately, and went with me to Manchester's house. While I was standing on one side of the door, and Gott on the other, James Richardson came out of the house, seized me by the throat, shoved me against a fence, and kept smiting me in the face. Then Gott seized me by the hair and by the nose, while Richardson bent my neck over the fence, and almost strangled me. Manchester called on them for God's sake not to commit murder. Richardson then left off beating me, and they all went off. I was left very bloody, my face bruised, and my lips so broken that I could hardly speak. Putting my hand down to raise myself up, I found a stick that lay by the fence ; and seeing Gott run away, being in the heat of passion, I run after him. Just as I came up with him, he fell down, partly on his face. I then struck him on the under side of his thigh, and said to him get up and go along with me after that indian (meaning James Richardson) that is

running away. Gott then turned himself over, and I thought he was rising up. I struck him no more, but left him ; and did not see him again till the next day, when on his mother's bed.——Richardson run toward his own house. I followed him, knocked at his door, went into his house, but could see nothing of him.——Mr. Stephen Sargent came to me and advised me to go home—said there were three or four of them, and that I had better not go in the road, for they might way-lay and kill me. I took his advice, went home by the water's side, and went to bed. The next day I heard that Gott was not like to live ; and went immediately to see him. Andrew Tarr, his son, and James Richardson were all there, and armed. They refused to let me come in, and threatened to kill me ; but after some time I was admitted. Poor Gott lay on the bed, and appeared to be senseless. I desired Tarr to go for a Doctor ; and told him that he should have any thing that my house afforded. I then went home ; and about twenty four hours afterwards, five men came, took me, said Gott was dead, & carried me to Tarr's house, where Gott was ; and then back to my own house. They stole my watch, used half a barrel of rum, killed one of my oxen and a fat hog—took from me my money, desk, notes of hand and all my papers. After tarrying several days at my house, and having plundered my substance to the value of about sixty pounds, they carried me to goal ; where I was confined till brought before the Supreme Judicial Court. I had a fair and impartial trial by the Court and Jury ; but God knows, and I know, that a great part of what the witnesses testified against me was false—by means whereof I must now loose my life. Yet, as a dying man, I heartily forgive them ; and beg of a merciful God to give them true repentance for this and all their other iniquities.

After being convicted, and having received my sentence, I was remanded to goal [*sic*], and put in irons. In about seven days after, I got off my irons ; and having beforehand prepared myself, made a hole through the hearth and timber under it, which I kept covered in the day time. About midnight, on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of July, went through the hole I had made, crept along under the goal, dug under the sill unbeknown to any person, except my little Son (who was in the goal with me) and made my escape—traveled as privately as possible until I arrived [at my] own house—kept in my barn one night and the next

day ; [that?] evening took my boat, and in two days and nights got to Passamequady. Then took passage to St. Andrews, and went by the name of *Gilbert* ; where I tarried about a fortnight. Then went in the packet to St. John's, and travelled back in the country until I came to Grand Passage. Being sensible in my own mind that [I ] never was in my heart guilty of the murder charged upon me, and God having delivered me from the goal, I still hoped that he would protect and preserve me ; and the country being very poor, and I having so great a concern about my poor young children, I was determined to return home. I went on board a fishing schooner bound to Portsmouth ; and was set on shore on Mount Desert, about three miles from my house. I got home in the night, and tarried there about one week—lodged sometimes in my barn, and sometimes in the woods ; where I suffered much by hard rains and cold nights. At last I ventured to my house ; and the said James Richardson came there and discovered me. I went away from my house about sunset, and was discovered by a girl in the woods. I then went on board of a small fishing schooner belonging to my son in law Manchester. He came on board that night and found me there. I went out a fishing with him about a week, and then a storm arose, which obliged us to make a harbour in Long Island ; where I was taken by nineteen armed men, who robbed me of six dollars and an half in cash, one silk handkerchief, a pair of stockings, sundry fishing geers, and my gun and bayonet. I was then carried to Portland goal, where I was confined about a week. Then brought back to Pownalborough, where I have remained in irons until this fated hour.

And now before I leave the world, as [a dying] man, do solemnly declare in the presence of that God [before] whom I must soon appear, That the many scandalous reports which have lately been propagated and spread abroad in the world about me, *That I had some years ago been guilty of murder and many other atrocious crimes*, are all false and without the least foundation of truth. I desire to bless God, who has given me so much of his restraining grace and kept me from committing those, or any such like heinous crimes as I have been maliciously and falsely charged with. Although I acknowledge with grief that I have been too much taken up in a persuit of getting the world ; and thereby too negligent in the great concerns of my soul and a future state.

But as to the murder of the poor young man, which I have been charged with, and for which I must soon die, I solemnly declare before God and this audience, that I never had it in my heart to take away his life, or the life of any other person ; except it was in defence of my own. And although the great and holy God, who cannot do otherwise than right, has so ordered things that I must be cut off from the land of the living, yet I can safely appeal to him, and my own conscience, that I never did wittingly and willingly, take away the life of that poor young man.

I do now solemnly caution and warn all persons to avoid quarrels and contentions with any one ; especially with such as would irritate and raise your passions ; whereby you may rashly do that which may afterwards cause you bitter repentance. Shun and avoid their company, or bare their slanders and reproaches with a christian temper, knowing that a just and righteous God will surely punish him that stireth up strife, & unjustly slandereth his neighbour.

And now I desire to forgive all those who have injured me, even to the taking away of my life. I desire to leave the world without having the least hatred or illwill in my heart towards any one of my fellow creatures. And I do solemnly warn all persons not to practice any sinful courses, nor prophanely curse and swear, nor blaspheme the name of the great and holy God, which is too much the practice in these sinful and degenerate times. Remember that God will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain ; but for all these things will bring them into judgement. Live peaceable and quiet lives, in all Godliness and honesty.

I now desire the humble and fervant prayer of all now present, while I am alive and a subject of payer [*sic*], that he would of his infinite mercy pardon and forgive all my manifold sins, and graciously accept of my soul, through the merits of his dear son our blessed Saviour and Redeemer, into whose hands I commit my departing soul.

**SAMUEL L. HADLOCK.**

**Attest. EZRA TAYLOR**

**Pownalborough, October 28, 1790**