

The confession, last words, and dying speech of John Stewart, a native of Ireland. Taken from himself, at his own particular request ... [Signed] John Stewart. Boston jail, April 6, 1797.

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Thomas

Michelle

Boston Jail

The Confession, last Words, and Dying Speech of *JOHN STEWART*, A Native of Ireland.

Taken from himself, at his own particular Request.

I WAS born in Ireland, and came of good reputable Parents, who did their best Endeavour to bring me up in the fear and nurture of the Lord ; but I was prone to Wickedness from my Youth, and began a wicked Line of Life about the Age of Fifteen, by defrauding my Parents of Part of their Property when they entrusted me with it to sell at the Markets or Fare, and divided it with my wicked Companions.—The next Step I took to support my extravagant Expenses, was taking the Key from my Brother's Pocket, and went to a Table-Drawer and stole his Money at different Times, and Money from his Pockets if he left any when he left off his Clothes to go to Bed; and spent it at Cock-fighting and Horse-racing.

My Brother has often advised me to refrain from my wicked Companions, and that when I should arrive to the Age of Twenty-one Years, that I should receive my Share of my Father's Property; but he finding me so wild and stubborn, that I would not hearken to his Advice, he advised me to go to America, and provided a Passage for me in the Ship Wilmington, Captain James Jefferson, bound for Philadelphia. On our Arrival I was landed at Wilmington; from thence I went to Philadelphia, where I stay'd a considerable Time, living on the Money I brought with me, and without doing any Work. When my Money begun to run short, I went Pedlaring about ten miles from Lancaster, in Chester County; from there I took a notion that I would return back to my native Country, with the same Ship and Captain that I came over with; for reason that I had spent all my Money, and my Brother had contracted with the Captain that if I thought fit to return, to bring me back, and he would pay all my Expenses; but meeting with one Joseph Richardson, within twenty miles of Philadelphia on my way back, I agreed with him to Work at cutting Wood, for the space of one Month, which I thought would never be up, by the Blisters on my Hands; but I stay'd in the Neighbourhood almost two Years: and for Quarrelling I was taken up by two Warrants in one Day. I was forgiven for one offence—the other I paid a considerable Sum of Money for,—which was for beating a Man in his own House, and his Wife held the Candle for me while I beat him: He being a Countryman of mine, I left him with

two severe black Eyes, which his Wife told him that if he would not leave off beating her, she would employ me to beat him, which I did accordingly, to her satisfaction.

By the Neighbours upbraiding me with my Conduct, I quitted the Place and went to Philadelphia, where I fell in with a Mr. Reynolds, who employed me to work in a Brick Yard, where I work'd faithfully for the whole Summer, but he cheated me out of my Wages.

The Sickness being in Philadelphia, I went in the Stage to New York; on my arrival there, I met with a young Man who took me to a House of Boarding, where there were bad Women. I wrought at labouring Work about the Town, which work could not support me.—One Evening this young Man took me out and told me that I could get more Money in a Night by Thieving, than I could by Work, to which I agreed: On that Night I went into a Shop and stole about the worth of two Dollars, which so frightened me that I left the Place and proceeded towards Boston. When I arrived in Boston the first Person that employed me was Mr. Call, a Carpenter, to pile Boards, &c. for the Space of two or three Weeks, of whom I received my Pay honorably, and good Usage.—From there he got me to Work at Mr. Callender's Store, near the Market, which was very dirty work, but I received extra Wages accordingly.

From that, bad Company, and excess of Liquor, brought me to Thieving, and got myself in Boston Jail—as there was no Proof against me, I got clear, although I was guilty of the Theft.

Afterwards being in company with John Roach, I was taken up with him for Theft value about one Dollar, and being carried before Justice Greenleaf, although innocent of the Theft, yet behaving before him in a most scandalous Manner, such as Swearing and Blaspheming, &c. I was sent to Jail and there confined for a long Time without the help of Friends to pay my Fine.—But at length I got my Liberty.

The last of my Crimes, and for which I am now going to suffer an ignominious Death, was—the breaking (with two others) into the House of Capt. Enoch Rust, in the Night of the 8th of March last, with intent of Stealing therefrom, and had prepared a number articles to bring off with me, but getting warm with the Liquor I found in the House, I daringly went to the Chamber of the younger Capt. Rust, and demanded his Money, and threatening his Life in case of Refusal; but he sprang from his Bed, and, being overpowered by his strength, Courage and Valor, I was secured and committed to Jail.

My Trial came on the 14th March and I was brought in Guilty. The next Day I was ordered into Court and received Sentence of Death.

By the appointment of the Executive of this Commonwealth, I am THIS DAY to be launched into Eternity!—and O LORD, have Mercy on my contrite Spirit.

My unhappy Fate I hope will be a Warning to all young Men to abstain from excess of Liquor, bad Company, and lewd Women,—which have brought me to this untimely End, at the Age of between Nineteen and Twenty Years.

I was educated and brought up in the Presbyterian Religion, by my Parents, who were very Religious. —All I have now to do is, praying most fervently to GOD to have Mercy upon my poor Soul, and take it to himself, to whom I commit it, and hope all good Christians will assist me with their Prayers.

I have to return my sincere Thanks to the several reverend Gentlemen of the Clergy, who have visited and assisted me with their Prayers, from which I have received great Consolation and Hope. And to Mr. Hartshorn and Family, who have tried much to comfort me in my unhappy Situation, and used me like a Friend, not like a Stranger.

JOHN STEWART.

Boston Jail, April 6, 1797.