## [Confession From The Gallows by Samuel Peter Rock](http://www.shawano.ca/?page_id=218" \o "Permanent Link: Confession From The Gallows by Samuel Peter Rock)

(From the Archives of Ontario, Reference: The Kingston Chronicle, June 19, 1859)

“My dear friends, I appear before you for the last time I shall ever behold the human family on this earth.

It seems hard, I assure you, to part this world of sin and misery; but who would not give up this wicked world, and the vanities for the glory and joys of the Kingdom of Heaven, to see, love and enjoy God for ever and ever.

To me this has been a life of deep trouble and sorrow, caused by not attending to the duties I owed God, for his spiritual and temporal kindness, in bearing with my wickedness so long as he did.

But I have reason to be thankful, that God gave me strength to see the dangers that I stood in, and pointed out to me the way of obtaining pardon for my sins, by believing and relying on the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for mankind. I can assure you that through my penance and supplication to the throne of Heaven I entertain the hope that God will have mercy on me, the greatest blessing that the sinner can gain through atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The death that I am about to suffer for the poor Dickie, is just and righteous, and I can assure you that I did it all alone myself, and that Barbeau had no hand or part in it, nor had any in the burning of Dickie’s home, on the 10th of January, nor in the opening of his chest.

He is as innocent of it as the child unborn; I would have said so in my confession, but I thought by making it appear that Barbeau assisted me, and that I was not the only guilty one, the Government might commute my sentence, for imprisonment in the Provincial Penitentiary for life, but I failed in this, and other plans so, as I am here to die, I give my life freely for the one I have taken.

I do not know how the shanty got on fire, it must have been an accident. I did all I could to save his things. I worked as hard as any man could, and so did Barbeau. It might have caught from the fire which was kept up during the night as it was very cold.

I never had any intention of robbing him in my life, until Allan Maitland and I thought  to get into where the whiskey was kept, but we could not get in there without leaving marks on the floor boards. I got some whiskey I had in the cellar, when Maitland went away and commenced drinking it until I got high over it. Then I robbed him of twenty five dollars and eighty cents. When Barbeau and Dickie came I did not want to kill either of them or I would have shot Barbeau when he came in, but why did Dickie rush into the room where I was, where there were three double barreled guns and all I had to do, was to seize one and shoot him but he did rush in, and I took up the first one that I could get, and shot him.

I did not hunt for any more money after he was shot. I tried to shoot myself. I did not try to shoot Barbeau, but went away to Jelly’s Tavern, where I was taken.

I wish to return my thanks for Mr. Corrigan, Coroner of Madoc; he is a kind man, and saved me from being hung when taken, before I had time to repent for my sins, for if he had not, the people of my own county and the Scotsmen on the road, would hung me on the spot, and I should have been cut off in my sins without time to repent, which I have now done, and am as pure as any of you now before me, and perhaps purer than many. I hope he may live long and may God Almighty have mercy on his soul.

To the people of this Town, I am an entire stranger, but I feel thankful for the kindness to me, particularly lawyer Sisson, who did all for me he could. I wish Mr. Bell to accept my sincere thanks also, for the eloquent speech he made on my behalf at my trial. I forgive all men, hoping that God in his mercy will forgive me.

I ask you all to be aware of giving away to your evil passions; take the example of me today, and what was witnessed in Cobourg a few days ago, and do not be overcome by temptations of the evil one, for it is written in God’s book, the Bible, that the evil tempted our Lord Jesus Christ on the top of a high pinnacle, saying” cast thyself down, for it is written, that the angels will bear thee up, least thou dash thy foot against a stone”. We all know as well as I do, that you have an immoral soul, but it is not your own, it is only given into your keeping a little while, when it will be lamented from you again and then what happiness of you have kept your stewardship aright.  Yes, take the example placed before you today, and renounce the devil and all his works and pomps, for had I attended to the teachings I received when a child, I could not have brought this disgrace on my friends, or myself to a disgraceful death.

There is another thing which I wish to mention. Rumors have been circulating in town, in reference to a man named Gibson, who was my fellow prisoner, to the effect that we had been fighting, and to the extent that knives were used between us. Now in justice to the living, I must say, that nothing of the kind ever occurred. I have never received anything but kindness from him; he always used me well, and when he received anything that could in any way contribute to my comfort in my lonely cell, he freely gave it to me.  His kindness was displayed in every action, and though he had the misfortune to be arrested, he is a credit to his father and mother who bore him. While others were calling me a cold-blooded murder, and I acknowledge I am one, he always took my part; when others wished to have me put in irons, his was the first voice to speak on my behalf.

I feel it is my duty at this solemn moment, on account of some statements made against the character of my wife, to vindicate her in the eyes of the world. She has been called a harlot. She is a virtuous and pure woman, is now, and always was. The only stain on her character, is the misfortune of being linked to me in this unhappy life”. (He was then interrupted by the Rev. Mr. Brennan who requested him not to let anything earthly excite him at this moment)