

## **What My Ancestors Did in the American Revolution**

*I actually have no idea, and here is why.*

*(Please don't treat your descendants this way.)*

Seven generations back, Hugh Ghormley emigrated to the British colony called Pennsylvania from Scotland. The year was 1750.

A likely rumor, which I learned from a Forest Service Ranger, was that three brothers from Scotland all applied for emigration at the same time. I know this sounds like a joke.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it took months to receive approved paperwork, and when it came back all three had different spellings of their last names.

### **What's in a name?**

The Ranger's name tag read "Gormally." He told me the other two spellings among the three siblings were "Gormley" and "Ghormley." It had taken so long to get the permits to leave the country, they simply took the names assigned and hopped on the boat.

The original, correct spelling, if there ever had been consensus in that day, has been lost to history. Me, I'm sticking with Ghormley.

What old Hugh did for a living is likewise a mystery. Three generations later, my great-great-grandfather William was a farmer. There weren't many choices, of course: Farmer, merchant, mechanic, doctor, preacher. With a few variations, I think that's pretty much the list.

### **A revolution in the front yard**

Back in the 1700s, along came Hugh's kids. After his arrival on these shores, Hugh had twin sons who turned 18 in 1776.

They lived in Philadelphia, PA.

At the time of the Constitutional Convention. During a shooting war.

When the entire world order was being reshaped.

Two healthy young Ghormleys did... what, exactly?

No one knows, because no one said. There is no record that we have ever found with the slightest hint of what they or their family experienced. In fact, there are no records of any kind beyond marriages, births and deaths. Over the decades, sometimes locations were noted, but only in official records, such as on a marriage license.

Because I share the DNA, I have my suspicions. They probably left Pennsylvania and went west to avoid the conflict. A generation later, the family name appears in Ohio. It was a popular destination for a growing agrarian population.

There is no dishonor in such a move. But we do not know.

### **Share your story with those who follow**

My point is this: DO NOT subject your following generations to the same ignorance about your own life. They need to hear from you, even years after you leave this earth behind. Your story handed down will shape their lives.

Your story need not be eloquent or dramatic, but it needs to be YOU.

There are ways to do this. The methods are not difficult, but they are dreadfully easy to put off.

“Legacy Through Storytelling” is one of the highlights of *Your Best Retirement*. Identify the experiences of your life that

make you a person worth remembering, and then tell the stories.

The cool thing is, once you are done with this exercise, you are not done. The mosaic that is your life continues to grow and change. As you grow, so does your legacy.

Put it into words, so that others can recall your life and times.

Even if you were merely an Ohio farmer seeking shelter from the storm.