

Ghere

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ness – the “Lost Generation” of WWI, the rural farm families shaped by a still largely agrarian society, and the growing labor forces and blue-collar classes created by the Industrial Revolution and railroads. But most of all, it was the influence of tight-knit, hardscrabble early 20th century American families whose tenacity and endurance forged that greatest generation into a generation that epitomized hard work, responsibility, and humility.

The Ghere family of Arcola was one such family. Hiram Ghere, born in Pennsylvania in 1830, moved west before the age of 20 and lived with his brother David in Frankfort, Ind. In 1856, Hiram, a farmer, married Elizabeth Hicks, who was born in Pennsylvania in 1838 and moved to Indiana with her family at the age of 6-years. Hiram and Elizabeth lived in Jackson, Ind. before moving to a farm just south of Arcola in 1873. The marriage produced nine children. Hiram and Elizabeth lived on the farm until Hiram’s advancing age forced them to move into town. Hiram passed away in 1913 and Elizabeth in 1933. They were buried in the Arcola Township Cemetery.

John Andrew “Andy” Ghere, born in 1861, was the third child of Hiram and Elizabeth Ghere. Andy married a 20-year-old Douglas County woman, Alice Lathrop, in 1881. They had 10 children. Andy worked as a drayman, transporting a variety of goods. A well-known local businessman, he was stricken unexpectedly by a heart attack and died at the age of 55 while unloading sacks of feed at Ernst elevator in Arcola on the morning of May 8, 1916. Alice also died unexpectedly at the age of 58, on June 9, 1919, after what was thought to be a routine surgery. Andy and Alice are both buried in the Arcola Cemetery.

Roy Andrew Ghere, the third child of Andy and Alice, was born on August 19, 1885. Roy married Lillie Smith. Lillie was born in Arcola in 1886 to George Wilson Smith and his wife.

George Smith’s father, Edmund Smith, a farmer born in Massachusetts in 1816, moved his family to Arcola in the early 1870s. After moving to Arcola, George, who was born in Ohio in 1855, worked as a farmer, a drayman, and then as a marshal for the city of Arcola. He married Mary Frances “Fanny” Leckner in Douglas County on Christmas Day 1879.

Roy and Lillie Ghere were married in February 1906 and would become well-known in the area for their large family. In December 1928, the Roy Ghere family and the Harve Pullen and Bert Gordon families were the subject of an article in the Mattoon Journal Gazette entitled, “Forty-One Children In Three Arcola Families.” The article noted that Mr. and Mrs. Roy Ghere had not long ago celebrated the birth of their 15th child (daughter Lillie Elizabeth “Patty” Ghere).

That same month the Sterling Standard headlined an article, “Santa Must Make Extra Trip to Arcola,” citing five Ar-



One of two Purple Hearts earned by Bobby Ghere.

cola families with a collective total of 59 children (Ghere 15, Bert Gordon 14, Harve Pullen 12, Frank Davis 9, Sam Gray 9).

In June 1930, the Decatur Herald carried a story heralding the birth of the Ghere’s 16th child (their daughter Maxine), and the Mattoon Journal-Gazette announced that according to the Arcola city clerk the Ghere family had set a new city record for largest family with their 16th child, a title that until recently had been jointly held by the Ghere family and the Bert Gordon family (who had added another child to their brood) when both families boasted 15 children.

But The Times out of Streator said it best on June 21, 1930, with a headline about Roy Ghere that simply said, “He’s Champion Daddy.”

The Gheres had 17 children. Their oldest children, twins named Albert and Alberta, were born in 1906. Albert only survived one day. Their youngest child, Jo Ellen, was born in 1931. Their daughter Patty died on June 11, 1941, at the age of 13 after suffering a heart attack brought on by rheumatic fever.

Roy was a self-employed drayman like his father. After suffering some ill-health, he died of pneumonia on June 15, 1934, at the age of 48. His sons carried on the business until 1943.

Bobby Gene Ghere was born in Arcola on May 4, 1923. He was the twelfth child of Roy and Lillie Smith Ghere. Bobby excelled at sports and was a standout four-year football, basketball and track athlete at Arcola High School. He was co-captain of the AHS football team his senior year, he was leading scorer on the basketball team that same year, and in May 1942 his hometown paper noted his “outstanding performance” in the 220-yard low hurdles in the state track meet. Due to childhood illnesses that disrupted his schooling, Bobby graduated high school at the age of 20 in the spring of 1943.

With WWII raging, Bobby was called into military service. He married his high

supply to replenish their ammunition. When no one volunteered, and despite his authority to order someone else to go, Ghere went himself. On the trip back from battalion supply, they were ambushed. The driver was able to escape but Bobby Ghere was wounded and died March 3.

Imogene Bright Ghere received a telegram from the War Department on March 20, 1945, with the news her husband had been killed “somewhere in Germany.” Along with his wife and his loving family, Bobby left behind an 11-month old son named Danny he never had the chance to meet. Bobby was buried in the Netherlands American Cemetery and Memorial near the village of Margraten. Etched on the back of Roy and Lillie Ghere’s headstone in the Arcola Cemetery is a memorial to their son.

In 2003, after years of searching, Bobby’s son and widow were contacted by David Wheeler who served with Bobby during the war. Wheeler described Bobby Ghere as the “ultimate leader, the source of power, dignity and humanity in the face of war that the city boys in the squad didn’t have.” He added, “Sgt. Ghere was the complete companion, always calm, fearless, indefatigable. Any of us would have followed him into Hell.” Bobby Ghere was just 21-years old.

All seven of Roy and Lillie Ghere’s sons joined the U.S. military and served during WWII. All but Bobby survived. In November 2015, a section of Route 133 was renamed “Ghere Brothers Memorial Highway” to honor these extraordinary brothers, who were part of an extraordinary family.

On March 29, 1944, Lillie Ghere suffered a heart attack and died. With six of her sons in service, and the seventh soon to follow, the older Ghere daughters took over care of their younger siblings.

The Ghere family is one of the many incredible families that shaped Arcola history and American history, and one of so many families that made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. The Ghere family story tells the story of America and the character, grit, and determination that formed our nation and our Greatest Generation.

PUBLIC NOTICE • PUBLIC NOTICE

The Arcola School District is seeking bids for a Multi-Function School Activity Bus. To receive detailed specifications, prospective bidders should contact the district superintendent; Tom Mulligan at (217) 268-4963 or at tmulligan@arcolaschools.com; during the period of September 18 through October 4, 2023. Bids are due to Tom Mulligan, Superintendent at 351 W. Washington, Arcola, IL 61910 by 10:00 am on October 4, 2023. Bids can be sent electronically, mailed or hand delivered.

PUBLIC NOTICE • PUBLIC NOTICE

STATE OF ILLINOIS)
) SS.
COUNTY OF DOUGLAS)

CERTIFICATE

I, Mark Eadie, do hereby certify that I am the duly appointed, qualified and now acting Secretary of the Arcola Public Library District in the Counties of Coles and Douglas and State of Illinois; that attached hereto is a true and correct copy of the Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance No. 23-02 for the fiscal year July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024.

I further certify that the Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance was duly passed by the Board of Trustees of said Library District at a meeting thereof held on the 11th day of September, 2023; that said Ordinance was duly passed by yea and nay vote thereon with at least a majority of all the Board of Trustees having voted yea on the adoption and passage thereof and approved in accordance with the laws of the State of Illinois pursuant to the notice and publication thereof as required by law.

I further certify that said Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance contains an estimate of revenues, by sources, anticipated to be received by the Arcola Public Library District in the fiscal year.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have signed my name in my official capacity as the Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Arcola Public Library District, at Arcola, Illinois, this 11th day of September, 2023.

Mark Eadie, Secretary (sig)
Arcola Public Library District

Yea 6
Nay 0
Abstain 0

PUBLIC NOTICE • PUBLIC NOTICE

ARCOLA PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT
Ordinance No. 2023-02

ANNUAL BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING THE 1ST DAY OF JULY, 2023 AND ENDING THE 30TH DAY OF JUNE 2024

WHEREAS, The Board of Trustees of the Arcola Public Library District, of the Counties of Coles and Douglas, State of Illinois, has prepared or caused to be prepared a tentative form of the Annual Budget and Appropriation for said Public Library District for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024 and the same has been conveniently available for public inspection for at least thirty (30) days prior to final action thereon; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing was held as to such Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance on September 11, 2023 notice of which was given at least thirty (30) days prior thereto by publishing notice thereof in a newspaper of general circulation in the Arcola Public Library District; and

WHEREAS, all other legal requirements have been duly complied with by the Board of Trustees of the Arcola Public Library District;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE ARCOLA PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT, IN THE COUNTIES OF COLES AND DOUGLAS, STATE OF ILLINOIS, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1: That the following sums, or so much thereof as by law may be authorized, be and the same are hereby budgeted, set aside and appropriated for the specified Library Purposes for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024; and the objects and purposes for which said appropriations are made, and the amounts thereby appropriated are as follows; to-wit:

| FOR CORPORATE PURPOSES [75 ILCS 16/35-5]: | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. For Salaries | \$ 136,200.00 |
| 2. For automation | \$ 6,500.00 |
| 3. For books and materials | \$ 14,600.00 |
| 4. For periodicals | \$ 4,000.00 |
| 5. For audio books and DVDs | \$ 3,500.00 |
| 6. For microfilm and digital material | \$ 1,500.00 |
| 7. For operating supplies & postage | \$ 13,000.00 |
| 8. For professional development | \$ 1,700.00 |
| 9. For public relations | \$ 2,500.00 |
| 10. For utilities and maintenance | \$ 37,760.00 |
| 11. For technology and software | \$ 3,000.00 |
| 12. For miscellaneous expenses | \$ 2,000.00 |
| 13. For professional fees | \$ 6,400.00 |
| 14. For programming and supplies | \$ 1,000.00 |
| 15. For contingencies | \$ 4,000.00 |
| TOTAL | \$237,660.00 |

| FOR SOCIAL SECURITY FUND PURPOSES [40 ILCS 5/21-110; 21-110.1]: | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. Social Security & Medicare | \$ 8,000.00 |
| TOTAL | \$ 8,000.00 |

| FOR ILL. MUNICIPAL RETIREMENT PURPOSES [40 ILCS 5/7-105; 7-171]: | |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. Municipal retirement fund | \$ 7,000.00 |
| TOTAL | \$ 7,000.00 |

| FOR LIABILITY, WORKERS' COMPENSATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE, [745 ILCS 10/9-107]: | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Insurance (including public liability; property damage (fire); workers' compensation; unemployment compensation; & treasurer's bond) | \$ 12,940.00 |
| 2. Risk Management/Loss Control program | \$ 500.00 |
| 3. Contingency | \$ 500.00 |
| TOTAL | \$ 13,940.00 |

| FOR BUILDING MAINTENANCE FUND: [75 ILCS 16/35-5]: | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Building repairs | \$ 15,660.00 |
| 2. Equipment & Furniture | \$ 5,500.00 |
| 3. Tech Equipment | \$ 1,900.00 |
| 4. Tech Repairs & Maintenance | \$ 1,000.00 |
| 5. Copier lease | \$ 3,000.00 |
| 6. Contingency | \$ 1,500.00 |
| TOTAL | \$ 28,560.00 |

| FOR SPECIAL RESERVE FUND [75 ILCS 16/40-50]: | |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. Building Fund | \$ 5,000.00 |
| 2. Contingency | \$ 500.00 |
| TOTAL | \$ 5,500.00 |

Section 2: Appropriated for the foregoing expenses from the following estimate of revenues, by source, anticipated to be received by the Library District in the fiscal year:

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Projected cash on hand July 1, 2023 | \$ 4,410.00 |
| Special Reserve Fund | \$ 5,500.00 |
| Self Insurance Reserve Fund | \$ 1,000.00 |
| Miscellaneous gifts and donations | \$ 1,500.00 |
| Income of interest | \$ 750.00 |
| Special purpose grants | \$ 6,500.00 |
| Photocopy, cards, fax, and fines | \$ 1,500.00 |
| Tax for General Corporate Library purposes | \$ 223,000.00 |
| Tax for Social Security purposes | \$ 8,000.00 |
| Tax for Ill. Municipal Retirement purposes | \$ 7,000.00 |
| Tax for Liability and insurance | \$ 12,940.00 |
| Tax for Maintenance proposes | \$ 28,560.00 |
| Expected cash on hand June 30, 2024 | \$ 0 |

Section 3: Any unexpended balances in the General Library Fund, and Maintenance Fund appropriations will be deposited into the Special Reserve Fund pursuant to a plan in accordance with Article 40 of Chapter 75, Illinois Compiled Statutes.

Section 4: The Secretary of the Arcola Public Library District is hereby authorized and directed to have this Ordinance published at least once in a newspaper of general circulation within this library district.

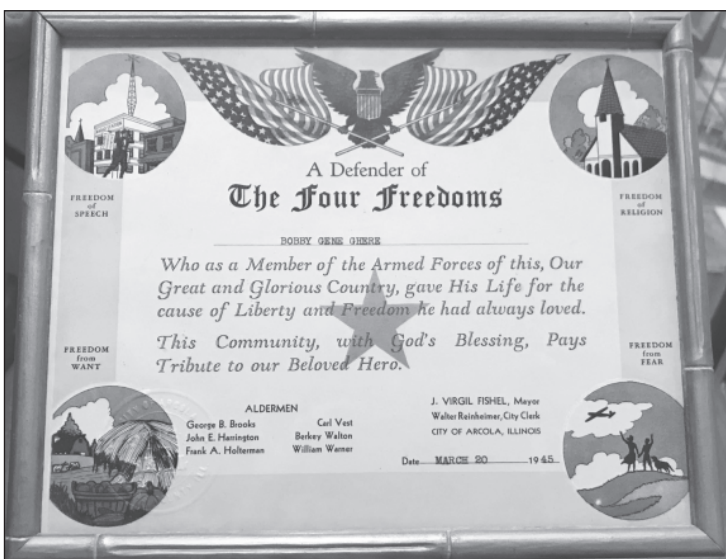
Section 5: This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage, approval and publication as provided by law.

Passed by the Board of Trustees of the Arcola Public Library District and approved by the President thereof this 11th day of September, 2023.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE ARCOLA PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT

By: Thomas J. Saunders, President (sig.)

Attest: Mark Eadie, Secretary (sig.)



The “Defender of the Four Freedoms” certificate from the City of Arcola proclaiming its appreciation to Bobby Gene Ghere who lost his life in service to his country, March 20, 1945.