

## Gore School

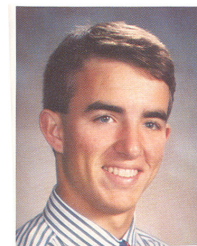
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***Gore School 1890-1951*** Note the prominent bell tower. (Photo Courtesy Georgia Morgan, as printed in the *Lebanon Express*, date unknown.)

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### *The Founding of Gore School* *From A Piece of the Past* *by Zach Kinzer*



Lebanon was not much of a developed town when pioneer William B. Gore settled on his 640 acre Donation Land Claim in 1846. The land which he contributed to became the center of the Gore Community that is present today. The site is about one mile north of Lebanon today. The original site of land extended one mile east and west from the road we now know as Highway 20, and south to include the IOOF Cemetery. The cemetery is where he was laid to rest. William B. Gore was born January 6, 1811, in Jefferson County, Indiana. In 1836, before William had settled down and started a family, at the age of 25, his curiosity to move on got stronger, so he went to the prairie state of Illinois. There he met what he thought was the most beautiful thing on earth, Miss Margaret Morgan, and they were happily married. The following year was contributed by his still strong felt desire to travel west. So, together with his wife, they traveled by wagon pulled by an ox team farther west, this time going as far as Des Moines County, Iowa. But that wasn't the end of his road. Gore's inner drive to reach the west kept him going, so much that by April 1845 he decided that, "the setting sun alone would be his stopping place." So he packed the few belongings he owned and

repaired his wagon to begin the long and dangerous journey. They started out over an almost never traveled plain, across which at that early date, only few persons had dared to venture. He arrived at The Dalles, Oregon, situated at the east end of the Columbia River Gorge. It cuts the Cascade Mountains, through which the large bodied Columbia River makes its way to the sea. From this point it was almost impossible to reach the Willamette Valley by wagon road, because this type of travel was not for everyone and there weren't enough travelers to have a need for a path. The only alternative left was to go through the mountains by water. They joined other pioneers traveling further west. "Necessity, which is the cause of invention, came to their relief. With hands made worn by use, they cut down just enough trees with their axes to build themselves a raft from the pine forest." With their wagons filled with cargo, women, and children, with a few men to manage it, they began on the un-ried and dangerous waters of the Columbia, until they reached Portland. In the spring, William and Margaret Gore, along with others of the company came to the Linn County. Here William Gore settled on his 640 (acre) Donation Land Claim. He first built his farm, but as Lebanon grew he decided to move to town and leave the farm. Once he had arrived to the end of his travels, William Gore contributed to the school which was named after him. "Gore School was built on half an acre of land donated by William Gore. The land had been covered with evergreens and a small bunch of oak trees. The oak trees were left and they cut down enough trees to build the school and no more. The first class at Gore School was held in 1880 and was taught by Miss Libby Amber. The nearby canal which was shoveled out by Chinese slaves, took the place of a well and the children drank from a dipper in a water pail. Back then they had no worries of contaminated water. The desks and benches were hand made by the local parents and there was a barrel-shaped stove in the center of the room, which served not only for heat, but to dry clothing and shoes." As Lebanon grew larger, more people moved into the area and the school building became over-crowded. In 1890, the new building with its bell tower was completed, but there weren't sufficient funds to buy a bell. So James Settle, a school board clerk at Gore for close to twenty years, one day found a cow that had strayed onto his land and sold it. He gave the money to the school to buy the bell.

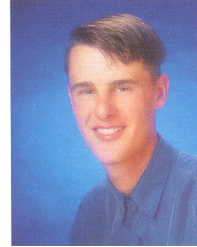
As the years went on into the early 1950's, it became necessary to start planning for a new two-room school. It was re-opened in 1951, close to the same original site. The bell which had rung so faithfully for half a century is now mounted in front to (sic) the school with a plaque in memory of its provider. Within 10 years, many additions were made to complete the building as it stands today. The original two-room school is now the 3rd-4th and 5th-6th grade rooms. Today, Gore Elementary School District No. 81 has, on the average, 85 students enrolled in grades K-8th. Close to six square miles are covered within the districts boundaries. The district is within the Lebanon Union High School District. By 1995 this is scheduled to change with consolidation. Thanks to the curiosity of William Gore to travel as far as possible to the little town of Lebanon, Oregon, we have Gore School. Without his contribution of a land donation toward the building of the school and his being well-loved by all, the community may not have become what it is today.

"Gore School History.- Lebanon Express 26 Feb. 1959. McFarland, D. C. -In Memoriam of William B. Gore." Lebanon Express 16 Mar. 1894. Mitchell, Dee. Telephone Interview. 8 Apr. 1994. Sweet, Barbara, Secretary of Gore School Elementary, Lebanon, Or. Personal Interview. 9 Apr. 1994. Woods, Betty. Telephone Interview. 11 Apr. 1994.

*As a student of the class of "95" at Lebanon Union High School Zach Kinzer has many interests. These include: football, and many various other sports, the outdoors, and hanging out with his friends. He was born in Lebanon and has lived here his whole life. He plans to attend a four year college and lead a successful life with a wife and kids.*

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**From *A Piece of the Past*  
by Damien Schmidt**

**Gore School is rich in memories and history. Most residents of Lebanon don't know a lot about rural Lebanon schools, but Gore School is one of many great schools in the area.**

**The first year of operation for this small rural school was in 1880. The classroom was a mere 50' by 60' room, which is very small by today's standards. During the damp, Oregon winter months a barrel stove was placed in the middle of the classroom. The stove was used for warmth and also for drying clothes. All grades of students, which includes kindergarten through eighth grade were in the same classroom. Since all of the students were in the same classroom, the situation could have gotten out of control, but it rarely did. Imagine having a first grader sitting along side a eighth grader, that could have caused a lot of problems, but it didn't. The only reason the class stayed in order was because of the patience of the teacher, and she could make class interesting for all ages. The name of Gore School's first teacher was Miss Libby Amber.**

**William B. Gore was one of the founding fathers of Gore school. He was born in Jefferson County, Indiana, on January 6,1811. After living there for 25 years, he got the " Western Fever" in 1836. Later, in the state of Illinois he met Miss Margaret Morgan, and they were married on June 29,1837. The newlyweds continued their westward journey to Iowa, and then toward Oregon. The trip to The Dalles would be long and dangerous because there was Indians, sudden winter storms, and, of course, the fear of the unknown. Can you imagine leaving almost everything you own and going thousands of miles into the nearly uncharted wilderness, with only a wagon full of belongings? This is exactly what the Gores were trying to do. Once the Gores reached The Dalles, their journey was almost complete, except for the last leg to the Willamette Valley. The only route that was known at that time was to float down the Columbia River to around Portland and then get out of their rafts and ride by wagon to the Willamette Valley. The Columbia River was much more dangerous than today because of the large rapids, high winds, and large rocks that could sink the small raft. Mr. Gore and his wife really wanted to have their home in the Willamette Valley, so they made the raft and set sail. The Gore's small raft was soon caught in a large windstorm and was nearly capsized by the large waves. Fortunately, they were able to get the raft to shore and ride out the storm on land.**

**In 1842 the Gore family settled on a 640 (acre) Donation Land Claim. The site is approximately one mile north of present day Lebanon. His property extended one mile east and west of Highway 20, and southward to the Masonic-IOOF Cemetery. Mr. Gore and his wife picked this area because of the good fertile soil for their crops and**

the available (?). Mr. Gore is a major part of Gore School's history because he donated the land that the school was built on. He was also heavily involved in the school as a member of the school board. Mr. Gore's land, along with John Settle's leadership, has made Gore what it is today.

John Settle was a great member in the community who gave time and money to the school. John was a member of the school board for many years and was a leader in the early years. A(n) example was when he sold a cow that had wandered onto his land and gave the money to the school. The school took the money and bought a bell, which is on display in front of the school. The bell rings on occasion when Gore wins in after-school sports.

Gore School, itself, is full of memories. Dee Mitchell went to school at Gore when he was only 5 years old in 1923. Dee couldn't recall a lot of memories because it was a long time ago. The kids then only took the basic classes like arithmetic, history, spelling, and science. Dee also recalled not having a lot of homework and only one teacher for all students. There were no organized sports, but Dee enjoyed recess because they played marbles and baseball. The reasons that there were no sports was simple: all the children's parents were farmers and the kids had to do a lot of chores at home. My grandfather went to Gore School around the time when Dee did and he always complained that the school gave me too many days off. When he went to school they didn't have a lot of days off because they needed the time in the spring for planting and getting the fields ready. The families also needed the time in the fall for harvesting their crops. Thus the school year was shorter, and the classes were more intense.

Today Gore is a thriving school. The average attendance is 85 students, and there are around 12 current employees working there. I was privileged to attend the school my seventh and eighth grade years and found it to have many good qualities. The school has many dedicated teachers and a great principal. All of the faculty work hard on and off the job to make Gore a great school. Gore School is truly a school that is full of history and memories.

#### WORKS CITED

Gore School History. Lebanon Express 26 Feb.1959 pg.2  
McFarland, D.C "In memoriam of William B.Gore" Lebanon Express 16 March 1984  
Mitchel, Dee Telephone Interview. 8 April 1994  
Woods, Betty Telephone Interview 8 April 1994

*Damien Schmidt, class of '95, enjoyed many things in life. He enjoyed sports of all kinds and was involved in basketball all four years at Lebanon High School. Damien was born in Lebanon and moved from Sweet Home to Albany then back to Lebanon. He attending Gore School for two years and enjoyed it a lot.*

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***Gore School***, as it appeared during the 1962-63 school year. The school was closed at the end of the 2001-2002 school year, and sold. Students from Gore School now attend Pioneer School, which is newly constructed and opened at the beginning of the 2002-03 school year.