

## Building Index

1	Loggers Landing/Chevron	31	American Legion, Post 132
2	Hal's Drive-In	32	Back to Basics Sewing & Quilting
3A	Concrete High School, Middle School, and District Office	33	Verizon phone system building
3B	Concrete Elementary School	34	Cascade Styling
4A	East Valley Medical Center	35A	Police Department
4B	East Valley Pharmacy	35B	Volunteer Fire Department
5	Country Corral	36	Concrete Town Maintenance bldg.
6	CCD (Catholic Community) Center	37	Medic-3 Ambulance
7	St. Catherine's Catholic Church	38	Old Concrete School buildings (privately owned)
8	Community Bible Church	39	Historic Texaco service building
9	Mt. Baker Presbyterian Church	40	Mt. Baker Hotel (apartments)
10	Post Office	41	Hair's Hangout Restaurant
11	Town Hall, Concrete Town Library	42	(private apartment)
12	Skagit River Railway	43	Rhythm & Blues New & Used
13	(privately owned garages)	44A	Versatile Dreams
14	Concrete Towing	44B	Concrete Liquor Store
15	Parts Plus Auto Parts	45	The Store (gift shop)
16	Assembly of God Church	46	Ross building
17	East County Resource Center and Upper Skagit Library/Computer Ctr.	47	Payne building
18	Concrete Senior Center and Site of Concrete Saturday Market	48	Fish Taxi facility and PSE Outdoor displays/ picnic area
19	Concrete Dental	49	Puget Sound Energy Visitor Center and office
20	State Bank of Concrete	50	Historic Washington Cement Office
21	Historic Argerin building	51	Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church
22	Cascade Supply Hardware	52	Eagles Nest Motel and Gift Shop
23	Historic "The Model" building	53	Eagles Nest RV Park, Laundromat
24	Hub Tavern	54	(former site of Valley Ready-Mix)
25	Historic Concrete Theater building	55	Concrete Auto Parts (NAPA)
26	Baker River Trading Post	56A	Lotsa Mamas Restaurant
27	Eagles Aerie #1444	56B	Concrete Auto Licensing
28	Red Cedars Inn	56C	Concrete Chamber of Commerce
29	Concrete Food Bank	57	Concrete Heritage Museum
30	Boonies Espresso & Antiques		

### How Concrete Got Its Name

The first record of prospectors coming to the Baker River area, looking for gold, was in 1858. In the 1870's homesteaders began staking claims. Richard Challenger, whose name remains on Challenger Road, settled on the west bank of the Baker, and called the area "Minnehaha". Prospector Amasa ("Peg-Leg") Everett had a homestead on the east bank of the Baker River. He was the first to discover the local deposits of limestone and clay that later became the basis of the cement industry. In 1890, the west bank community of "Baker" was platted by Magnus Miller, and the first post office set up there. By 1905, the Washington Portland Cement Company was in operation on the east bank of the Baker, and the community that sprang up around it was called "Cement City". A competing plant, the Superior Portland Cement Company, was built in west Baker, and operating by 1908. In 1909, after much discussion, it was decided to merge Cement City and Baker—and the name they settled on was "Concrete".

### Concrete's Main Street Buildings

By 1921, most of the original wooden buildings which housed early businesses along Main Street had been destroyed by two large fires. Since concrete was in ample supply, a Town ordinance stated that subsequent commercial buildings would be made from this non-flammable material. Most of the current Main Street buildings date from the 1920's, and are constructed from poured concrete. After World War II, concrete block became the preferred building material; examples are the American Legion and Cascade Supply buildings.

## Concrete's Historic Sites

**Henry Thompson Bridge** – Built in 1916–1918, with concrete donated by the two cement plants, named in honor of a local pioneer and county commissioner. At that time it was the longest single-span cement bridge in the world. It is on the National Historic Register, and was renovated in 2003-2004.

**Lower Baker River Dam** – Completed in 1925 by Stone and Webster Company, raised to 293 feet in 1927, this was the tallest hydroelectric dam in the world at the time.

**Washington Portland Cement Plant and Office** – The first of Concrete's cement plants, located on the east bank of the Baker River, and erected in 1905, when the area was still called "Cement City". Dry concrete was made by mixing limestone and clay, cooking the mixture in large rotary kilns, and grinding the resulting "clinker" into a fine powder. The silos were used to store and age the powder before it was shipped out on railroad cars.

**Silo Park (Originally the Superior Portland Cement Plant and Office)** – Concrete's second cement plant started operating in 1908, and eventually outbid the Washington plant to become the dominant industry in town. Known for having the largest cement kilns on the west coast, the Lone Star plant was finally shut down in 1968 because of increasingly stringent air quality restrictions. The land was given to the Town of Concrete for a park in the 1990's; remaining structures include the silos, Lone Star office, safety statue, power plant, and the privately owned "Clinker Club" (north, across Main Street).

**Old Concrete Schools** – Built in 1910, the Concrete "District School" housed grades one through eight. A large addition expanded it in 1938. The High School was built in 1923, saving students from having to continue their education in Sedro-Woolley. The wooden gymnasium was started by a large bequest from a local mill worker; this building was one of the sets for the 1992 movie "This Boy's Life". All the structures are now privately owned. The playground park has been a baseball field from 1910 to the present, and with a large local population of young single men employed in logging, mill and cement work, Concrete's "Nighthawks" Town Team became a top team in the county's early ball leagues.

## Historic Buildings in Town

**Police and Fire Department** – Built in 1926, at that time it included the City Hall, Fire Department and a two-cell jail. Superior Portland Cement donated all the cement. The mural was painted by local artist Don Smith in 2001.

**Mount Baker Hotel** – Built in 1924 to house workers building the Lower Baker Dam.

**Hair's Hangout** – Built in 1906, this was the last remaining wooden structure after fires destroyed most of Main Street buildings prior to 1921. Formerly the Log Cabin Tavern until 1990, then expanded and remodeled to become the Baker Street Grill until 2001.

**Concrete Liquor Store** – Built in 1918 as a Model T Ford repair facility, the Concrete Herald newspaper relocated into this building, with Charles Dwelley as editor. The Concrete Herald was printed here until the 1990's, when it closed.

**State Bank of Concrete** – Opened in 1909, it was reorganized as a State Bank in 1919, with local stockholders including officers of the Superior Portland Cement Company.

**Argerin Building** – In 1929, this concrete building replaced a 1907 wood structure known as the "Whitney Hotel" that was famous for the best run high-stakes poker games in the county. The Concrete Department Store was located here from 1936 until 2003.

**Hub Tavern** – Includes an old saloon backbar which was brought to Concrete in 1912, and was originally installed in another building, the Olympia Bar.

**The Model** – one of the first concrete buildings built after the 1921 fire, when new town regulations required fireproof construction, it was intended as "a model" for new buildings.

**Concrete Theater** – opened in 1923, with a large stage, orchestra pit, and balcony seating (which "cost extra"). Owner C.D. Stickley promoted both Hollywood films and local talent shows. The building is listed on the Washington State Historic Register.

**Assembly of God Church** – est 1910, originally Odd Fellows Lodge, then became the Rebekah Hall. Main floor was rented out to various merchants over the years.

**Mt Baker Presbyterian Church** – built in 1908, by Rev. L. C. Michaels.

**Concrete Town Hall and Library** – built in 1908, this building was originally located on Main Street across from the Bank, and grade school classes were taught in it until 1910. (School prior to that time had been held in a log cabin).

**St Catherine's Catholic Church** – built in 1912, overlooking the Superior Cement Plant.

**Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church** – originally built as a hospital in 1909. In 1929 the local doctor remodeled it to resemble a Colonial mansion. In 1953 the Lutheran Church purchased the property and added a sanctuary and classrooms.

Historic information from "So the Called The Town Concrete", by Charles Dwelley, 1<sup>st</sup> printing 1980, reprinted © 2004 by Concrete Heritage Museum.

(information for left side of map)

Albert's Red Apple Grocery  
APP Cardlock Fuel  
North Cascades Inn  
(restaurant, lounge, motel)  
Concrete Self-Storage  
Valleys West Realty

GRASSMERE VILLAGE shops:

Annie's Pizza  
Foothills Bookkeeping  
Whispering Willows Salon  
Cascade Country Realty  
Tammy's Computers  
Perk's Espresso/Deli/Ice Cream

(information for front cover)

Area information by:

Concrete Chamber of Commerce  
P O Box 743, 7460 S. Dillard  
Concrete, Washington 98237  
360-853-7042 (revised 2004)

Historic information by:

Concrete Heritage Museum Assoc.  
P O Box 571, 7380 Thompson Ave.  
Concrete, WA 98237  
Message phone: 360-853-7009

GUIDED TOURS OF HISTORIC CONCRETE

On the open-air SOCKEYE EXPRESS – Saturdays, Mid-May through Labor Day  
Call 360-853-7009 (weekdays) to schedule group tours.