

La Conner Quick Facts

- › In 1869 John S. Conner purchased the trading post (now occupied by the totem pole plaza west of Maple Hall) on the Swinomish Channel & named the area in honor of his wife, Louisa Ann Conner.
- › The first White settlers here were probably midwesterner Alex R. Underwood, Michael Sullivan of Nova Scotia and Sam Calhoun of New Brunswick who all arrived in the mid-1860s.
- › Sullivan and Calhoun were the first to start building dikes to reclaim the surrounding flats from high tides and annual flooding.
- › In 1873 two brothers, James and George Gaches, purchased Conner's store and later, along with Conner and others, later became "agri-brokers" for the produce growing on the flats.
- › George Gaches built Gaches Mansion in 1891; since then it has been used as a hospital, an apartment building, and an art museum. It is currently home of the La Conner Quilt Museum.
- › The acres of fertile farmland around La Conner were first planted mostly with oats – grown primarily for the horses of Seattle and California.
- › The LaConner Civic Garden Club building was constructed c.1875 as a community building and has been used as a grange hall, federal & district court, county seat, schoolhouse, and church.
- › The Tillinghast Seed Company opened at the entrance to town in 1890 and has operated from there ever since.
- › In 1900 the population of La Conner was nearly 600 and had reached the natural limits of its growth; today the town serves as home to approximately 800.
- › The town became an artists' colony after Morris Graves arrived in 1937. Followed by Guy Anderson, Clayton James and others, they became leaders of The Northwest School of art.
- › The Rainbow Bridge was built in 1957. It was painted with the orange rust coating, but residents liked the color so much it was never given the normal final gray coat.
- › In 1968 the Skagit County Historical Museum was built at the very top of the hill, at 501 So. 4th St. This site with its spectacular view was formerly "Autoview Hill," a major tourist site for 50 years.
- › The major industries in La Conner today are agriculture, tourism and fishing.

-- Adapted from Chamber of Commerce information, revised by Tom Robinson, Skagit County Historical Museum