CEMENT
By John R. Hill

What is cement?
Cement is a powdered product used to bind aggregate together. It is produced by heating a mixture of ground limestone, shale, and silica sand to about 1,480 degrees Centigrade. The resulting solid is ground and mixed with gypsum. When water is added to the mixture and combines with silicates that were formed during the heating process, it makes a very strong binding agent. Builders in the Roman Empire used cement, but their knowledge was lost until cement was rediscovered in 1824 by English stonemason Joseph Aspdin. Aspdin called it “Portland cement” because it looked like a building stone used on the Isle of Portland.

Is cement the same as concrete?
No. Concrete is a mixture of cement, gravel, and sand. Cement and concrete are both extremely useful materials for building houses, roads, bridges, and other structures. Cement manufacturing is an important component of Indiana’s economy.

A cement plant in Indiana.

Many modern buildings are constructed with poured concrete walls, such as this museum.

Builders in the Roman Empire used cement, but unfortunately the knowledge was lost until the early 1800s.