

# FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY

## Kinnear Mfg. Co.

### Milestones

#### Products

Rolling steel doors, fire doors, commercial operators, counter shutters, grilles, wood and steel sectional doors.

#### Facilities

Around 1977, Kinnear had factories in Columbus, Ohio, San Francisco, Calif., Centralia, Wash., Toronto, Ontario, Hollister, Calif. (later moved to Jackson, Miss.), and Portland, Ore. Besides its 130 dealers, Kinnear owned branch offices in 14 principal U.S. cities for sales and installation.

#### Comment

“A Kinnear door was the best product you could find. The product was good for 30-50 years. Maybe it was too good.”

– Bill Laufersweiler

#### Sources

Louis Hildreth Sanford, former Kinnear stockholder, employee, and grandson of Louis Hildreth.

D. Thomas Voris, former controller (1971-1979) and president of Kinnear (1987-1990).

William J. Laufersweiler, Kinnear VP of national accounts (1934-1982).

Glenn Pearson, assistant branch manager (1975-1990).

**1895** The company is founded in Columbus, Ohio, by W.R. Kinnear, the first to produce the “interlocking slat rolling steel door.” Complete records of every door are kept in fireproof vaults.

**1906** Kinnear fire doors are credited with saving several buildings in the San Francisco earthquake and fire.

**1919** The Kinnear company is purchased by Edwards Mfg. Co. of Cincinnati. E.W. Edwards’ nephew, Louis R. Hildreth, moves to Columbus to become Kinnear’s president and general manager.

**1931** The firm introduces the Kinnear Rol-Top, their first sectional door, made of 12-inch wood sections.

**1932** Kinnear runs the first ad for a sectional overhead door in House Beautiful magazine.

**1940** In the 1940s and 50s, Kinnear holds a 30-40 percent market share of the rolling door business.

**1947** Louis Hildreth acquires controlling interest in Edwards Mfg. Co. and in Kinnear, its primary business.

**1963** Louis Hildreth’s son, Gordon Hildreth, becomes Kinnear president upon the death of Louis Hildreth. The company has about 500 employees and three unions.

**1963** Kinnear of Canada is established with the purchase of a rolling door factory in the Toronto area.

**1966** Kinnear purchases a wood mill in Centralia, Wash.

**1972** The Harsco Corporation (previously known as Harrisburg Steel Corp. of Harrisburg, Pa.) acquires Kinnear, which then becomes a division of Harsco.

**1987** D. Thomas Voris is hired as president of the Kinnear division.

**1990** Wayne-Dalton acquires the Kinnear division of Harsco Corporation and Kinnear Canada and becomes “the largest manufacturer of overhead doors.” Kinnear has about 350 employees. The Columbus plant is closed and operations are moved to Dalton, Ohio.



The first Kinnear Rol-Top, as seen in the 1934 Sweets catalog.



Louis R. Hildreth, president and general manager of Kinnear from 1919-1963. Photo: ca. 1935.



The Kinnear logo, ca. 1977.



The Kinnear Sweets catalog, 1934.



A Kinnear operator from 1930.