

# The History of the City of Kingsford



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**Edward G. Kingsford**

Kingsford's early history was a quiet one. In 1920, the population was a mere 40 residents, as there were no settled communities, no stores or businesses

Then came a man named Ford.

Henry Ford had been eyeing the reserves of iron and timber in the Upper Peninsula since 1912. He contacted Edward G. Kingsford to express interest in acquiring raw materials for his factories. Kingsford, the husband of Ford's cousin, Minnie Flaherty, was a real estate agent and owned a Ford dealership in the area.

The Ford Motor Company had plans to locate a sawmill and parts plant in the Upper Peninsula to manufacture the wooden components for Ford automobiles. E. G. Kingsford facilitated the purchase of 313,447 acres of

land for Ford and in 1920 construction began, employing more than 3,000 in the first year. On December 29, 1923, the charter for the newly formed Village of Kingsford was approved. By 1925, employment supporting the Ford Motor Company expansion to Dickinson County peaked at 7,500 workers.

Henry Ford's influence in Kingsford was vast and enduring. Ford sought affordable, modern housing for his employees and constructed over 100 homes in what is now known as the Ford Addition. Many other landmarks bear his name such as the Ford Airport, Ford Dam, Ford Clubhouse, Ford Hospital, Ford Park and Ford Commissary.



Henry Ford's world-class facility in Kingsford was the jewel of his empire during that era. The production of the "Woody" station wagon bodies and the conversion to glider production during World War II highlighted Ford's accomplishments in Kingsford. To make use of the waste wood generated by the sawmill, a chemical plant was constructed and in operation by 1924. The chemical plant reclaimed, from every ton of scrap wood, a variety of saleable byproducts. The 610 pounds of charcoal reclaimed per ton was manufactured into briquettes and sold, known as Ford Charcoal Briquettes.



The village flourished through the war years and on August 7, 1947, a city charter was approved. Henry Ford II eventually closed the sawmill and parts plant in 1951 and sold the chemical operation to a group of local business interests that formed an enterprise known as the Kingsford Chemical Company. The charcoal briquette plant continued and renamed their product Kingsford Charcoal Briquettes, which has become a household name. The plant continued operation in Kingsford until 1961, and is now a division of Clorox Company in Oakland, CA..



The city of Kingsford is now home to a number of diverse industries and small businesses with a progressive climate for expansion and growth. Our residents enjoy quality public safety and public works departments

and a school district built on community pride and cooperation. The Kingsford High School logo has also embraced the Ford influence. Our team name is the "Flivvers" which is a nickname for the Model "T" Ford from the early 1900s.

The City of Kingsford - Dickinson County's business and family friendly community.

Author: Roger Scott