

Pope & Talbot records

Inventory

Accession No: 1068-001

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This document forms part of the Guide to the Pope & Talbot Records. To find out more about the history, context, arrangement, availability and restrictions on this collection, click on the following link:

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POPE & TALBOT
Accession Nos. 1068, 1130

GUIDE

HISTORY

Andrew Jackson Pope and Captain William Talbot, both from families who owned sawmills in Maine, founded the Pope & Talbot Company shortly after they arrived in San Francisco in 1849. The pair had come to gold rush San Francisco to sell lumber that had been cut on the East Coast and shipped around Cape Horn. It soon became evident, however, that transportation costs severely cut into the profits of this venture. They thus decided to build a sawmill at Port Gamble. When the mill opened in 1853, it was only the fourth mill on Puget Sound. Pope & Talbot created a subsidiary, the Puget Mill Company, to run the mill.

Although its mill was not as large as Captain William Renton's Port Blakely mill, the Puget Mill Company still grew to be the most profitable lumber firm on the Sound. The company built another mill at Port Gamble in 1856, bought additional mills at Utsalady in 1877 and at Port Ludlow in 1878, and acquired several sailing ships throughout the nineteenth century. The Pope & Talbot companies owed a great deal of their prosperity to their expert administration. William Talbot had wisely picked the talented Cyrus Walker and Edwin Ames to manage operations on Puget Sound (see the guide to the Edwin G. Ames papers for more detail). Talbot also adopted a modern organizational structure with many specialized subsidiaries and instituted modern accounting procedures well before any other firm in the industry.

Pope & Talbot was able to weather depressions because of its owners' policy of borrowing money only from family members and because of the company's diverse market base. Pope & Talbot was more adventurous and more successful than other companies trying to enter foreign markets. For many years the company had a virtual monopoly on the lumber trade with Hawaii. In addition, Talbot and Pope built good relations with lumber yards throughout California. When competition in California became too fierce, Pope & Talbot took the leading role in organizing the Pacific Pine Lumber Company, a cooperative effort to fix prices, set production quotas, and divide up the lucrative California market. Pacific Pine lasted only from 1886 to 1897 and never functioned particularly well as a cartel, but it still postponed the time when Pope & Talbot lost its strong position in the California market.

The completion of the Northern Pacific line to Tacoma in 1887 did not immediately impact Pope & Talbot. In the 1890s, however, when railroad rates fell and when lumbermen from the Great Lakes states moved into the Northwest, Pope & Talbot saw its profits shrink. Talbot had selected the company's mill sites because of their excellent harbors. Unfortunately, this left the Pope & Talbot mills, all located on the west side of

Puget Sound, miles from a major rail line and thus unable to compete in the vast markets east of the Cascades. The company also faced increasing competition in its overseas markets.

Pope & Talbot began hiring its own logging crews and cutting its own land to avoid buying high-priced logs from independent companies in the early twentieth century. This policy, coupled with sales of logged-off lands between Seattle and Everett, kept the company afloat but never really overcame the advantages held by the newer, rail-oriented mills. The Talbot and Pope families sold their companies to the Charles McCormick Lumber Company in 1925. McCormick quickly ran into financial trouble, causing the Talbot and Pope families to resume management in 1929. When McCormick failed to meet his payments, Pope & Talbot re-acquired its former holdings in 1938.

The rebirth of the Pope & Talbot companies came at an auspicious time. The Second World War massively stimulated the lumber market and also allowed Pope & Talbot, with its fleet of cargo ships, to make a fortune shipping war material to Europe. In the 1940s Pope & Talbot used these profits to construct a huge new mill in Oakridge, Oregon; to buy additional timberlands on the western shore of Puget Sound and in the Oregon Cascades; and to rebuild the Port Gamble mill. This made Port Gamble the home of the longest continuously operating sawmill in North America. Pope & Talbot and its subsidiaries are still major lumber producers and are currently the third largest private timber owners in the Northwest.

SCOPE AND CONTENTS

Pope & Talbot donated 45 cubic feet of records from its Seattle office in 1968. This became accession 1068. The following year, the company turned over 9 cubic feet of material from its Port Gamble office. These records are accession 1130.

The main body of accession 1068 is correspondence from 1905 to 1934. The letters are divided into seven groups by author and are filed chronologically within the groups. Most communication was between the company's San Francisco headquarters and its offices on Puget Sound. The records of Pope & Talbot's subsidiaries--including the Puget Mill, Admiralty Logging, and Puget Sound Tugboat companies--are kept in separate subgroups. None of the subgroups include any correspondence except the McCormick Company subgroup, which contains letters regarding Pope & Talbot's sale and subsequent re-acquisition of their companies. The subgroups primarily contain financial records, shipping records, reports, deeds, and legal papers.

Accession 1130 is largely composed of financial records from the Puget Mill Company between 1888 and 1935 and of general correspondence from the Seattle and Port Gamble offices during the 1940s.

RELATED MATERIALS

Many additional records of the Pope & Talbot companies can be found in the papers of Edwin G. Ames (accession 3820), a manager of the Puget Mill Company from 1881 to 1925. Consult the guide and inventory to this collection for more details.

The best history of the Pope & Talbot companies is Edwin Coman and Helen Gibbs, *Time, Tide, and Timber: A Century of Pope & Talbot* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1949). In addition, Thomas Cox, *Mills and Markets: A History of the Pacific Coast Lumber Industry to 1900* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974) and Robert Ficken, *The Forested Land: A History of Lumbering in Western Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987) both discuss Pope & Talbot in their histories of the lumber industry.

POPE AND TALBOT *Lumber Company*
 Acc. No. 1068-001
 Preliminary Inventory

<u>Box Number</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Dates</u>
	<u>General Correspondence</u> (arranged by correspondent)	
1-4	W. H. Talbot	1917-1924
4-7	T. C. Walker	1926-1932
8-13	Cyrus Walker	1908-1921
13-17	G. W. Johnson	1927-1933
18-19	Johnson and Ames (Broadmoor)	1925-1929
19-23	E. G. Ames	1905-1932
24-73	<u>General Correspondence</u> (chronological arrangement which includes interoffice) 1909-1934	
73	<u>Shafer Brothers Logging Company</u>	1940-1942
	<u>Land Reports</u> to Washington Forest Fire Assn	1936-1939
	<u>Lands of Puget Mill</u> in Clallam County	
74	<u>Cowlitz County Abstracts</u> (Documents 92-109)	
75	<u>Internal Revenue Questionnaire</u> for Years Prior to 1919	
	<u>Forest Industries Schedules</u>	1919-1928
76	<u>Puget Mill Lands</u>	1919
	<u>Old Stock Certificates</u>	
	<u>History of Cyrus Walker</u>	
	<u>Puget Mill Land</u>	1923?
77	<u>Miscellaneous Business Deals</u>	1923-1926
116	<u>News Clippings</u>	
	<u>Auto Licenses</u>	
	<u>Miscellany</u>	

POPE AND TALBOT

SUBGROUPS

Note: Subgroups consist of material other than correspondence such as business records, ledgers, journals, tax records, timber cruises, etc.

<u>Box Number</u>	<u>Name of Subgroup</u>
78-80	Admiralty Logging Company
80	Puget Sound Tugboat Company sa: Boxes 111-113
81	Admiralty Tug Boat Company
82	Broadmoor Maintenance Commission
83	Brown's Bay Logging Company
84	Hall Brothers Marine Railroad and Shipping Company
85	Hayden Company
86-87	Industrial Company
88-94	McCormick Lumber Company (includes correspondence to and from Pope and Talbot (1926-1933) re transfer)
95-102	Puget Mill Company
103-105	Puget Sound Lumber Company
106-107	Puget Sound Commercial Company
108	Puget Sound Mercantile Company
109-110	Puget Sound Towage Company
111-113	Puget Sound Tugboat Company sa: Box 80
114	Union River Logging Railroad Company (ca. 1883-1926)
115	Walker Estate Company

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*News clippings
auto licenses*

/ = shelved at Remote Storage

POPE AND TALBOT

Oversize on ~~North Wall~~Admiralty Logging Company
sa: Puget Mill Company

Ledger "A"	Jly 1916 - Dec 1918 ✓	1 vol
"B"	Jan 1919 - 1921 ✓	1 vol
Journal "A"	Jly 1916 - Jun 1919 ✓	1 vol
"B"	Jly 1919 - Dec 1922 ✓	1 vol
	Jan 1923 - Dec 1933 ✓	1 vol
Cash Book "A"	Jly 1916 - Feb 1920 ✓	1 vol
"B"	Mar 1920 - May 1931 ✓	1 vol
Payroll Ledger	Aug 1916 - Dec 1917	1 vol
	Jan 1918 - Dec 1919	1 vol
	Jan 1918 - Jun 1920	1 vol
	May 1918 - Jly 1921	1 vol
	Aug 1921 - Apr 1923	1 vol
	Oct 1919 - May 1922	1 vol

Admiralty Tugboat Company

Minute Book, 1902-1926	1 vol
✓ Cash Book, 1902-1910	1 vol
✓ Ledger, 1902-1926	1 vol
✓ Journal, 1902-1926	1 vol

Brown's Bay Logging Company

Daily Report, 1906-1908	1 vol
✓ Cash Book, July 1910-Dec 1916	1 vol
✓ Ledger "A" 1910-1913	1 vol
"B" 1914-1916	1 vol
Payroll Ledger, Mar 1909 - Jan 1913	1 vol
	Feb 1913 - Oct 1915
	Nov 1915 - Jun 1916
	Mar 1912 - Jun 1914
	Jly 1914 - Apr 1918
✓ Journal, Jly 1910 - Oct 1915	1 vol
✓ Nov 1915 - Jan 1917	1 vol

Hall Brothers

Ledger, 1916-1922 ✓ 1 vol.

Puget Mill Company
sa: Admiralty Logging Company

Index, 1919, 1921, n.d. 4 vols
 General Index - concerns log shipments, incl. drawings of ships, correspondence, et
 Journal, 1877-1927 ✓ 1 vol 1 vol
 1906-1910 ✓ 1 vol
 1908-1911 ✓ 1 vol
 1909-1911 ✓ 1 vol
 1915-1922 ✓ 1 vol
 General ledger, 1910-1920 ✓ 5 vols
 1915-1916 ✓ 1 vol
 Payroll ledger, Jan 1922 - Apr 1925 1 vol
 1922 1 vol
 Detail operating costs ledger, 1920-1925 ✓ 2 vols
 Operating Ledger, 1921-1925 ✓ 1 vol
 Annual report of installment sales ledger, 1922-1927 ✓ 1 vol
 1925-1926 ✓ 1 vol
 Subdivision sales register, 1921-1933 1 vol
 Real estate accounts, 1921-1927 ✓ 1 vol
 Contract and Tax record, 1916-1924 1 vol

Puget Sound Commercial Company

Minute Book, 1877-1916 1 vol
 Assets and Reports, 1877-1889 1 vol
 Capital Stock, 1877-1923 ✓ 1 vol
Domestic Order Book, n.d. 1 vol.

Puget Sound Towage Company

Ledger, 1891-1904 ✓ 1 vol
 Journal, 1898-1927 ✓ 1 vol
 Cash Book, 1899-1911 ✓ 1 vol

Pugget Sound Tugboat Company

Minute Book, 1891-1901	1 vol
1901-1931	1 vol
Journal, 1891-1914 ✓	1 vol
1922-1926 ✓	1 vol
Ledger, 1891-1913 ✓	1 vol
1913-1931 ✓	1 vol
Cash Book, 1892-1911 ✓	1 vol
Voucher Register, 1908-1911 ✓	1 vol
Receipt Book, 1895-1910 (Payroll)	1 vol
Proportion Statements, 1891-1910 ✓	1 vol
Stock Certificate Books ✓	2 vols

Walker Estate Company

Rent Book, 1919-1921	1 vol
Ledger, 1930-1940	1 vol
Expense and Income Ledger, 1930-1941	1 vol
Check Register, 1930-1950	1 vol
Voucher Distribution, 1930-1948	1 vol
Minute Book, 1930-1939	1 vol
Financial Statements, 1930-1932	1 vol
1943-1946	1 vol
1946-1949	1 vol
1949-1951	1 vol