



Andrew Jackson Pope

1820-1878

Andrew Jackson Pope was a “State of Mainer”– born in East Machias in 1820 – one of seven sons of Colonel William Pope, a colonel in the Maine militia who served in the War of 1812, was captured by the British, and held a prisoner for some time in Canada. Colonel Pope by 1840 had his own sawmill, timberlands, and a shipyard at East Machias. In 1841, he moved to Boston, accompanied by three of his sons, including Andrew. His four older sons remained at East Machias, producing lumber to be sold by the Boston Popes.

In 1849, Colonel Pope sent Andrew to San Francisco to represent the Pope interests. Before leaving Boston he met a boyhood friend, Frederic Talbot, and another East Machias resident – Captain J. P. Keller. They decided to go to San Francisco together on the steamship “Ohio,” arriving at the Golden Gate on December 1, 1849. With an earlier arrival from East Machias – Lucius Sanborn – they formed a company on December 3, 1849, to go into the ship lighterage business. At the end of January, 1850, they bought out Sanborn’s interest.

Meanwhile, Andrew Pope and Frederic Talbot went into the lumber business, renting a beach lot in what is now the heart of San Francisco’s business and financial district. They decided to seek their fortune through building, rather than through gold mining. California gold lured thousands of men to the West, and they knew that lumber would be needed for the growth of the country.

On March 3, 1850, Captain William Chaloner Talbot, brother of Frederic Talbot, arrived in San Francisco Harbor from East Machias in command of his brig “Oriental” with a cargo of lumber and with passengers headed for the gold fields. Frederic Talbot sold the lumber cargo in Sacramento and William Talbot joined forces with the other three partners, putting in his vessel as his share.

By mid-December, 1850, Frederic Talbot decided to return to East Machias, leaving the other three to carry on the business. By 1851, lumber shipped from the Eastern United States could not be profitably sold in California, so Pope and Talbot decided to seek out a cheaper source of lumber supply.

Hearing of the vast timber resources of the Puget Sound region, they decided to make San Francisco their home and to found a mill on Puget Sound. So – on November 29, 1851 – they, together with Captain Keller, signed an agreement to build and operate a “steam saw mill for manufacturing lumber in Oregon in the vicinity of Puget Sound.” To prepare for their new undertaking, they dispensed of their ligherage interests and sold the “Oriental.” Before proceeding further, the three partners returned to East Machias, where they acquired a fourth partner – Charles Foster, who had previously been associated with Keller in the shipbuilding business. The four men were all connected by matrimony. Talbot’s sister was Pope’s new wife, his wife was Foster’s cousin, and Mrs. Keller was his cousin.

On December 20, 1852, the four men formed the Puget Mill Company for the “purpose of manufacturing lumber in the Territory of Oregon at Puget Sound,” and Messrs. Pope and Talbot returned to California with their families. Talbot took another shipload of lumber and gewgaws for trading with the Indians. He sailed to Puget Sound to seek out a site for a sawmill – the machinery for which was to be brought in another vessel by Keller.

Andrew Pope returned to San Francisco to prepare for handling the sales of the new Puget Sound mill. By January, 1854, the new Puget Mill Company sawmill at Port Gamble was ready to ship – and Pope was ready to sell. The year 1854 was a good one and he had no difficulty in selling in California all the lumber the mill could produce. But 1855 was a different matter, and so Pope had to seek out new markets throughout the world. From then on Pope & Talbot lumber became known wherever lumber is used. Because of expanded sales, it was decided to form a new sales organization in San Francisco, to be

known as W.C. Talbot & Company, owned by Messrs. Pope, Talbot, Keller and Foster.

In order to have enough vessels to deliver a sizable part of their cargos, the partners began to buy more ships. By 1862, the Puget Mill Company had developed a trade larger than that of any other Puget Sound mill. With the arrival of the Civil War, A.J. Pope and W.C. Talbot threw themselves into the activities of a group of Northern sympathizers.

On February 1, 1862, Pope’s brother, Samuel, died at East Machias. On June 11, 1862, Captain Keller, who had been managing the Port Gamble Mill, died at Victoria, B.C. These two deaths resulted in difficulties for Andrew Pope, requiring him to return to the East on July 24, 1862. While he was gone, Talbot abolished W.C. Talbot & Company and formed the firm Pope & Talbot, in which he and Pope were to be equal partners. In 1863, Pope & Talbot concluded an agreement with Keller’s heirs and with Charles Foster that gave them sole control. They then sold a 1/10 interest in the Puget Mill Company to Cyrus Walker, who had been superintendent of the Port Gamble mill under Captain Keller.

During the ensuing years, Andrew Pope and W.C. Talbot acquired other properties in the West, chiefly in California. By 1874, they owned a real estate empire, including almost 80,000 acres of ranch lands. And, in 1874, they decided to incorporate. On October 20, 1874, they formed a California corporation – the Puget Mill Company. In March, 1875, they were named by the San Francisco Journal of Commerce as the “the lumber kings of the Pacific Coast.” In March, 1877, the Puget Mill Company bought an existing sawmill at Utsalady, on Camano Island in Puget Sound. After this purchase, Andrew Pope apparently thought they had sufficient property, because he wrote his brother-in-law, William C. Talbot, on September 30, 1878: “Ludlow mill to be sold November 7. If you

wish to buy, say so. I think we have mills enough. Captain Talbot wanted to buy, and the Port Ludlow Mill Company at Port Ludlow on Hood Canal, near Port Gamble, was purchased by the Puget Mill Company. But Andrew Pope was in poor health, and did not live to see the development at Port Ludlow. He passed away in San Francisco on December 18, 1878, at the age of 58.

Thus, at a relatively youthful age, Andrew Jackson Pope departed this earth, leaving behind him a tradition of building his country and his firm to be carried on by his son, his grandson, and his great-grandsons who today

are active participants in the management of the oldest lumber manufacturing firm west of the Mississippi River. The tradition of growth has seen this firm grow from its tiny beginnings to large wood products manufacturing plants, not only in what is now Washington State, but also in the State of Oregon and across the Canadian border in the Province of British Columbia, with more than 1200 employees. In addition, the firm is also engaged in recreational housing and community development on some of the very lands that originally were the source of its forests.