

Before the Plywood

Fidalgo Lumber and Box Co. (12)

The mill began c. 1890 as the Kyle Sawmill. According to Tommy Thompson, it was incorporated as Fidalgo Mill Company in 1890 in order to provide lumber for the Thompson-Houston Electric Company who was then building the Fidalgo City and Anacortes Electric Railroad. (See Thompson's manuscript on FC-A Railroad, May 1990.) With the failure of the railroad, the mill ceased business and, in 1892, it was resurrected as a cooperative shingle mill, which operated in fits and starts throughout the latter 1890s.



Aerial view of Fidalgo Lumber and Box on W Avenue between 34th and 35th.

The mill was leased by a variety of operators until c. 1896, when it passed into the hands of R.P. Thomas, who continued to operate it as a shingle mill. (See 4-9-1903 ANACORTES AMERICAN article, "Fidalgo Mill.")

In 1901, Thomas changed the shingle business to a lumber mill and called it Fidalgo Mill Company. 1902 SEBRING'S SKAGIT COUNTY ILLUSTRATED reported that the mill had an annual capacity of 12,000,000 board feet and cut 50,000 feet per day.



In addition, the mill operated a box factory that turned out 3000 boxes per day and employed 50 men steady wages of \$2.25 per day. The mill "supplied not only the cases for the local fish men but also large quantities are shipped to California for the use of fruit packers there." The 5-4-1904 ANACORTES AMERICAN reported, "Sewer pipe to be made by Fidalgo Milling Company: will be made of fir and last 20 years under heavy pressure." As stated on 4-1-1909, the Fidalgo Mill Company would erect a new burner 24' in diameter, 96' high. "Will be tallest steel burner in NW, 20' higher than biggest smokestack now standing."

By 1911 the mill appeared to be idle; only its store was still operating at 35th and V Avenue. (See WF 0135) The report on 7-25-1912 was, "Morrison Brothers buys Fidalgo Lumber Mill for \$20,000 and will employ 160 men." Thereafter the mill was known as Fidalgo Lumber and Box. On 3-25-1915 it was stated, "Fidalgo Lumber and Box, 75 man payroll."

The paper reported on 5-22-1930 that fire had destroyed "three storage sheds and 5 million BF of lumber at Fidalgo Lumber and Box Co. at a loss of \$150,000." It appears another fire totally destroyed the mill in about 1935.

In 1937 Anacortes Veneer was built on the site. (See WF 0468 for history of Anacortes Veneer.)

Before the Plywood Mill (34th – 37th Streets, V-W Avenues area)

A Summary

- c. 1891-c. 1897 Anacortes Cooperative Mill (shingles)
- c. 1897 – 1901 R.P. Thomas Mill Co. (shingles and lumber)
- 1901-1906 Fidalgo Mill Co. (lumber, box shooks, wood water pipe) (R.P. Thomas was owner)
- c. 1906 – c. 1930 Fidalgo Lumber and Box Co. (lumber, box shooks)