



General Stores Building

Ohura Rd, Whangamomona

1901

Use:	Former shop, currently no use	Historic Value:	3 out of 5
Materials:	Rusticated weatherboard facade	Architectural Value:	2 out of 4
NZHPT Registered:	Historic Place Category II	Technical Value:	- out of 2
Legal Description:	Lot 1 DP 2714 Lot 1 DP2787 Lots 1&2 DP3890 & Secs 9&10 Pt sec11 Whangamomona Tnsp	Symbolic Value:	- out of 3



Rarity Value:	- out of 2
Townscape Value:	1 out of 2
Group Value:	1 out of 2
Overall Heritage Value:	7 out of 20

The General Stores Building, or McCluggage's Store as it was known as, was built by Mr. A.W. Hodder, under the instruction of the McCluggage brothers in 1901. It was said to be the largest store in the district : employing 23 staff at its maximum, and was the major agent for both buying and selling produce.



*Staff at McCluggage's Store.
Taken about 1910.*

McCluggage's Store was the focal point and rendezvous of the district, which can be accredited to the fact that the post office was also part of the store. Mail was brought on a pack horse by Mr. Roon and arrived in the evening, with many men having to walk miles there and back through the bush to receive the long-awaited parcels.

Due to difficult winter roads, it was not uncommon for 200 tons of flour to be ordered from New Plymouth at the end of summer.

After the McCluggage brothers, Court and Cottier ran it, and then Charlie McGuinn managed the store for the period between the two World Wars. On the counter he kept small barrels containing dried prunes, apples, apricots and suchlike. Customers would get into a habit of helping themselves to these – just popping their hands in to grab a few treats. Charlie solved this problem by setting a lot of mousetraps into the barrels (one has to wonder how he managed to get these goods out for the paying customers!).

The store managed to survive through the great flood of April 1924, which closed the railway for five months and closed off access to the settlers on the upper Waitara River and down the Whangamomona Valley. This resulted in many residents leaving the area.



McCluggage's Store in its prime

The Whangamomona fire on the 2nd of December 1943 also brought a decrease in business; with the fire destroying the bake house, drapery, butchery and billiard room. The school roll also decreased, going from 83 in 1914, to 26 in 1944.

The decline in the township could not be reversed. Consequently, due to lack of profit, the manager of the store (Mr. McElwain) closed it in 1967, with the building remaining closed until the present day.

Bibliography

Whangamomona 75th Jubilee

History of Whangamomona County (1940)

Church, Ian; *The Stratford Inheritance*, The Heritage Press (1990) p48

Photos courtesy of Judith Batt, *Whangamomona Electronic Album: Version 1, March 2003*