

Douglas Hall and Rolls of Honour



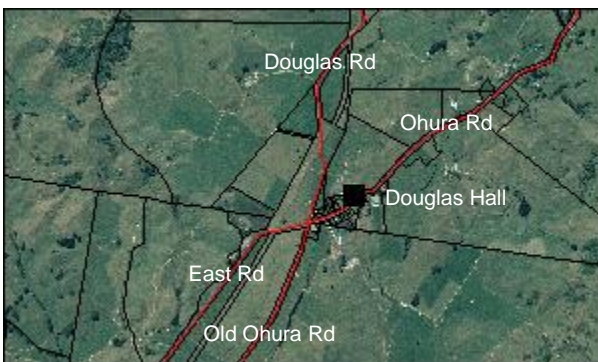
# Douglas Hall

1677 Ohura Rd

1905

<b>Use:</b>	Hall
<b>Materials:</b>	Timber
<b>NZHPT Registered:</b>	Not registered
<b>Legal Description:</b>	-

<b>Historic Value:</b>	4 out of 5
<b>Architectural Value:</b>	1 out of 4
<b>Technical Value:</b>	- out of 2
<b>Symbolic Value:</b>	2 out of 3
<b>Rarity Value:</b>	- out of 2
<b>Townscape Value:</b>	1 out of 2
<b>Group Value:</b>	- out of 2
<b>Overall Heritage Value:</b>	8 out of 20



In 1905, the Douglas Hall was built – in the same year that the railway reached the rural town. It was first used from 1906 to 1912 as the Douglas school, as the school buildings had not yet been built, and there was a pressing need for one in the community.

The presence of the Hall proved to be so successful that it was enlarged after World War I. The Hall was further extended and modernised in 1954, when a supper-room, men's and ladies cloak rooms, a septic tank, a connection to the water supply owned by Mr. A. Walter, and a new stage replacing the drop-down stage were added. This was financed by a subscriptions list of £815, and an overdraft of £750. In 1980, the Hall was again renovated, with \$5000 worth of work being carried out, partly financed by the proceeds gained from farming a flock of 20 ewes on leased County land on the Douglas Saddle. This enterprise greatly lessened the financial difficulties faced by the Hall Committee (which was formed in 1938). The renovations included reclading the wall facing the tennis court, replacing all the windows, relining the interior of the Hall, and enlarging and modifying the front porch. It was at this time that the voluntary workers embedded a 'mystery' time capsule in the west wall.

The Douglas Hall was also modified substantially in the form of equipment over the years. In 1927, the electric light replaced the old kerosene lamps. In 1954, a Kent oil-burning heater was installed in the corner of the main Hall; but this was removed in 1980 when it was declared a fire hazard. The roof was repaired in 1961, and the Federated Farmers and Wdff donated an Expellair Ventilator and heaters for the supper-room. New portable chairs and tables were purchased for the Hall in 1968, replacing the old trestles and forms.

Even after Douglas school was built, the Hall was used on occasion as a temporary school building. This happened in 1953, while the school was being moved; and again in 1968 while the school buildings were being painted.

The Rolls of Honour, which hang inside the main room of the Douglas Hall, were unveiled in 1946, and they serve as a commemoration of the men from Douglas District who fought from both of the World Wars.

The Hall was seen as the social centre of the district with various events being held there. It has been used for numerous dance evenings – in the winter months of the 1920s these were held at least fortnightly, with the Hall being decorated with streamers, ferns, flowers and suchlike. Annual balls were also held during this time, with the waltz and square dance being the most popular. During the 1930s, events such as Maori concert parties, hypnotists, and plays were held in the Hall, and by the 70's barn dances (organized by the school) were very common. The 1950's saw the Hall in its prime – being booked regularly for indoor bowls, badminton, movie screenings, the Lodge and RSA, euchre evenings and Wdff.

Even today, the Hall plays an important part in the community of Douglas. It is used regularly by the tennis club in summer, and by the school for various activities.

## **Bibliography**

*Douglas School 75<sup>th</sup> Jubilee 1906-1981*, p 51  
*Douglas: A Taranaki Rural Community*