



JOHN DOUGALL was born in 1826 in Edinburgh. In 1858 he married Elizabeth Lawrence in Melbourne. Not known when/why either of them came to Australia. In 1858 their first daughter, Elizabeth Dougall, was born in Hobart. In 1860 Margaret Dougall was born in Port Albert, Victoria. In 1861 the family came to NZ on the *Free Trader*, but it is not known why they decided to come. In 1860 the first ship had been quarantined in Otago Harbour and the authorities were then forced to look around for a suitable place for a quarantine station and chose the larger island in the Otago Harbour, Halfway Island and two buildings were erected 1861. In 1863 these buildings were used for first time, but proved to be quite inadequate.

Also 1863 John Dougall was appointed as Keeper of Quarantine. He was a master mariner, who had been in the Pilot Service but it is not known where or when. His duties were not set down officially, but he was obviously in charge of the buildings, chattels, water supply, jetty, paths, organisation of passengers, etc, and worked in with the ship's doctor and steerage cooks. (First class passengers didn't get sick, and stayed on board.)

New buildings were erected in 1872 and the Married Quarters still stands. A Keeper's Cottage had been built probably just before 1872. Prior to this the Dougalls had lived in one end of one of the two original buildings, which was very cramped.

The main part, four rooms, of that cottage is now the hub of the present Lodge, which was built around it in the 1920s.

In between ships, and in the 1880s, John Dougall supplemented his income from farming and salary with shipping and piloting work at times, but he always had to be ready for a ship to be quarantined at short notice.

The 1870s were the years of the greatest number of people being quarantined, as these were the years of large numbers of assisted immigrants.

Elizabeth Dougall died in 1865, cause not known, and it was too early for the first extant Port Chalmers Burials Register.

William Dougall died in 1866 of scarlet fever, almost certainly caught from quarantined passengers on the island.

These Dougall children are buried in the cemetery on the south side of the island.

Later, in 1884, their sister Margaret died, aged 24, of nephritis, and then John Dougall, aged 63, died on 7 January 1890 of a stroke.

Only the three youngest of the family were left.

So John's widow Elizabeth became caretaker with 15 year-old son Will to help.

Will married Hester Allan of Broad Bay in 1898, and Elizabeth lived on at the island with them for a few years and then lived with daughter Nellie at Akaroa, until she died in 1922.

Will and Hester Dougall had daughters Bell and Madge, then later Gwenyth.

The Quarantine Station closed in 1924 and the parents and Gwenyth went to Motuihe the island quarantine station for Auckland. However it closed about 1929 and the Dougalls returned to live in Dunedin. Both later lived with daughter Bell Love in Southbridge.

Hester died in 1956, and Will in 1959.

In all, 43 ships were quarantined. First was in 1860, and the last in 1916.

Quarantine Island is 34 acres/15 ha. The word quarantine comes from the Italian 'quarantina' meaning a period of 40 days, the time set by ports around the Adriatic Sea, around the 15th century, which were the first to work out a system of keeping ships out of their ports when there were diseases.

Information and photograph supplied by Lyndall Hancock.