

# Tony Katavich meets Mary Mihaljevich

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Tony +  
Mary  
Kotavich  
m. 1950.  
Karfaia

73  
years  
named

Tony  
died  
Sept.  
2023

b. 1930

d. 2023

m. 1950

b. 1931

Tony Katarovich meets Mary Mihaljevich

Tony first set eyes on Mary at a dalmatian picnic held on Ninety Mile Beach.

Sometime later the Waiharara district held a fundraising venture. In those early days it was advertised as a "Basket Social", profits from a social were in aid of the Districts Hall.

The ladies attending the event would put together a basket containing enough food for a small group. Men would check out the many baskets on hand and then would bid and buy the basket of their choice. The auctioneer at the event was Mr. Mile Srhoy, who later years was our Mangamui County Council Chairman for untold years.

Tony took special notice of the baskets and noticed that young Mary had also brought <sup>along</sup> hers to join many others available.

Tony took notice of many details of the appearance of Mary's Basket and decided he would bid only on it.

The auction under way, and finally Tony had his chance to bid on the one of his choice.

Tony was not going to be outbid, there was no stopping until the auctioneer stopped and called out this basket goes to Tony Katarovich.

★ His was the highest price paid at the auction, but as Tony now looks back, but as a result you share the basket with the sponsor - our Mary. Much talk and smiles during the meal. Tony and Mary were soon engaged and then on 18<sup>th</sup> September 1950 Tony and Mary Married.

The rest is history.



Following marriage Tony and Mary went sharemilking at Rangiahua, a son Ivan was born at Kawakawa Hospital in 1951.

1952 ~~the~~ the couple came back north and purchased a farm at Waiharara, all in scrub and gumholes everywhere. It had no house so the couple bought Dr. Montague's house in Mangonui for removal and shifted it onto their farm. (price for removal from its site at Mangonui, transported to Waiharara and setting up at new site on farm - £160 Pounds, any further work on house to be charged out at 8/- shillings per hour) (Builder Dave Taylor)

In 1953 their second son Peter was born. In 1965 a new house was built on the farm and some four years later Tony and Mary decided to sell up and moved to Kaitia for work.

Tony found work at the N.A.F./Allied Farmers in Kaitia<sup>and</sup> remained with them for 18 years, then spent a further 5 years working for "Corpes" at their depot in Bank Street, before retiring.

Mary worked at the Arcade Pharmacy for 19 years and then a further 9 years at Shackleton's Pharmacy, before retiring at 70 years of age. In 1984 Tony and Mary built their final residence in Kaitia, at 3 Okahu Road. (across the road from the Kaitia Hospital.)

Vegans - 2 years.

## Tony Kataovich - Parents story.

Father Mijo Kataovich 1889-1976, arrived in New Zealand in 1908, (He was born at Orah near Vrgorac in Dalmatia).

Following arrival here he spent many years on the northern gumfields working at several fields. In 1925, Mijo exchanged letters and photos with a young lady back in Dalmatia.

Anka Marevic born 1899 agreed to come to New Zealand and arrived here in 1926. The following year 1927 they were married at St. Patricks Cathedral in Auckland. They then came north and settled at Waiharara, where Mijo had purchased a farm.

They had two sons - Jack born 1928 and Tony born 1930.

## Mary Kataovich / Mihaljevich Parents Story.

Father Peter Mihaljevich 1908-1976, was born in Ignane, a village on the Dalmatian Coast.

Peter arrived in New Zealand onboard the SS. Moeraki on the 25<sup>th</sup> August 1925. Following arrival, set off up north and settled in at Lake Ohia. Peter became a gumdigger, he also had short stints at work at working at Kaitiaki, Waipapakauri and Auckland.

But on each occasion he returned back to Lake Ohia. Indeed that was where Peter married a local young lady named Barbara Pribicevich in 1930. The reception was held at the Lake Ohia Hall. They went on to have four children George b. 1930, Mary b. 1931, Violet b. 1933 and Walter b. 1934. The eldest two George and Mary attended the local Werowero Native

School for a year or two. In 1937 the family moved further north to Sweetwater where Peter continued with gumdigging. The children now attended the Awanui School. In 1943 Peter, Barbara and family took on a share-milking contract at Awanui, landowner was George Fleming Publican at the township (1944-1958) → contd.



When Mary married in 1950, soon after the rest of the family decided to give up farming and they all moved to Auckland.

## Mary Grandfathers Story. June George Pribicevich Lake Ohia.

Born 1876 in the small coastal village, Zaostrog Dalmatia. In 1899 June married Tomica Banovic, also born Zaostrog. A son Ivan John was born the same year. Three years later 1902 June decided to leave his village, and make a start to a new life for his family, so it was New Zealand he chose.

Late 1902 he was a passenger on the ill fated Steamship "Elingamite". The ship was on a regular run from Sydney to Auckland, with 58 crew and 139 passengers aboard. Of those passengers, 10 were Dalmatians. On Saturday afternoon on the 8th November 1902, the ship entered a haze which drastically reduced visibility - 9.00 am Sunday morning the haze thickened, closing visibility to just two ship lengths. Creeping through the fog, they were on a course for disaster. It was not discovered until years later that the Three Kings Islands were wrongly charted. The bow struck rocks off the West Island at 10.40 am, Captain Atwood was left with no option but to give the order to abandon ship and it sunk in 20 minutes.

June was one of 111 passengers who survived. At an enquiry that followed the tragedy, June was the spokesman on behalf of the Dalmatians. A total of 45 lives were lost from drowning or exposure; 28 passengers and 17 crew members..

Following his arrival in New Zealand June (here known as George) began work as a gundigger. In 1908 George's wife Tomica and son John arrived here. George bought a farm at the top end of Peterau Rd Lake Ohia. He built his family a small home and then set about developing the steep scrubland property. The couple had three more children born here plus

1. John, who married twice - Mihaljevich then Blackmore.
2. Katie b. 1908 later married Ivan Grubisa
3. Barbara b. 1910 married Peter ~~Mih~~ Mihaljevich
4. George Junior b. 1912, died a young man in 1932.