

# My Baba's and Dida's Journey; Dalmatia to New Zealand.

by Marko Garlick







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## Dedication

I dedicate this book to my Dida – Ante Anich. A larger than life man with many stories, who I wish I could've met in person.



**Ante Anich and his wife, Darinka Anich.**

Chapter One

# Introduction

This book is not only informative about the journey of Dalmatians to New Zealand, but also a showcase of my own cultural journey through writing this book. I wrote this book for a Personal Project, as part of the MYP (Middle Years Program) curriculum in Kristin School. I have written this at the age of 14 (year 10). This has given me the opportunity and the motivation to write something about things that have been in the back of my mind for many years. Ever since I was young, all credit to my mother; I have been immersed in the Dalmatian culture. My Baba would tell me stories of herself back in Croatia and I went to the Dalmatian Cultural Club, where I met other Dalmatians and learnt more about the culture and language. I speak basic Croatian at home but am not fluent although I have recently taken up language lessons to become better. My family and I have always been discovering little parts about our heritage and this is a collation of them. This project has also coincided with my first trip to Croatia. I was there for 2 and a half weeks and interviewed many cousins and learnt a lot about myself and my ancestors. This book has allowed me to not just discover the history of Dalmatians to New Zealand but to discover myself.

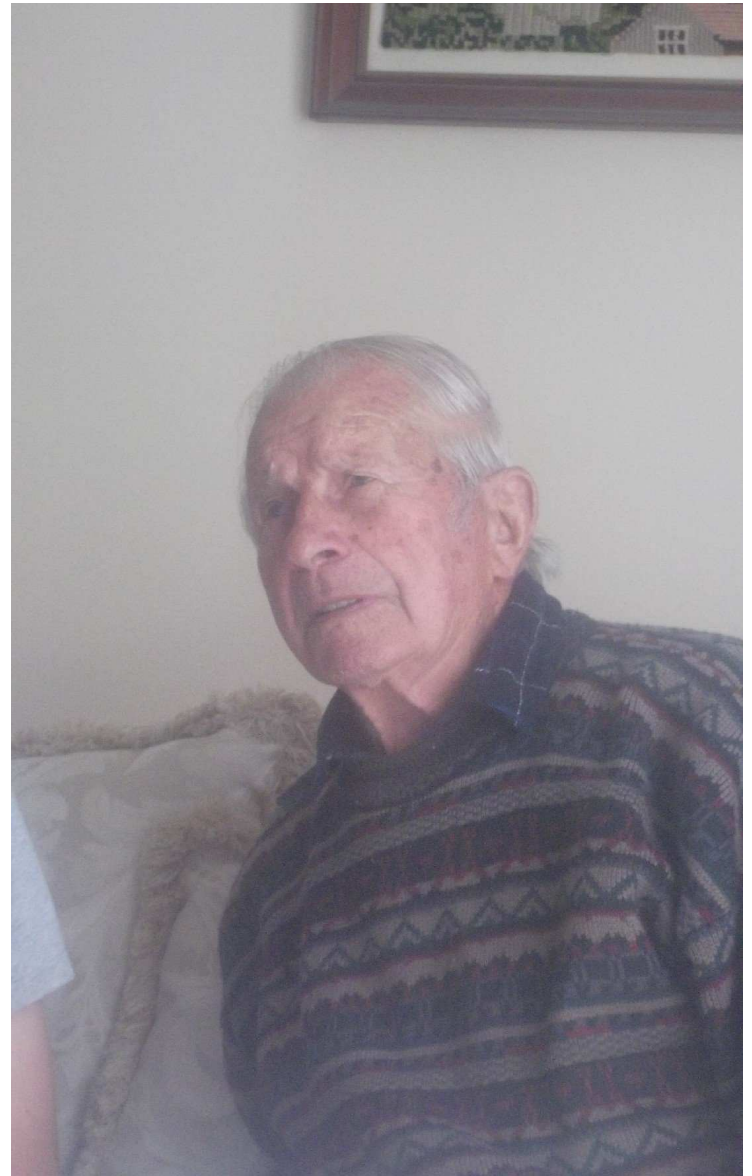
### **Making a Few Things Clear**

*In this book I will take for granted that the reader knows a few things. So, as to avoid confusion, I will outline them below.*

- Dalmatia is the coastal region of what is now Croatia. But in a lot of my writing I will talk about Yugoslavia as I cover Croatia (Dalmatia) when it was part of Yugoslavia before the homeland war of the early 1990's and the breakup of Yugoslavia.
- Croats is the plural for the people who live there. This also applies to Yugoslavs.
  - In Croatian, Baba is Grandmother and Dida is Grandfather.

- I included Nikica Urlić as one of the people I interviewed as my Baba (Darinka Anich) unfortunately now has dementia and cannot remember things as well as she could previously. Nikica is a family friend from Drašnice. Also, I included Paul Jeličić as an replacement for my Dida (Ante Anich) as my Dida passed away even before I was born. Paul is the oldest living Anić.
- And some simple pronunciation. In Croatian the letter "j" is pronounced the same as the letter "y" in English. Also "ć" is the same sound as "ch" in English. You will notice that some last names end with "ć" while others with "ch". This is because when Dalmatians came to New Zealand, they changed their last names to "ch" so English speaking people could pronounce their names correctly.

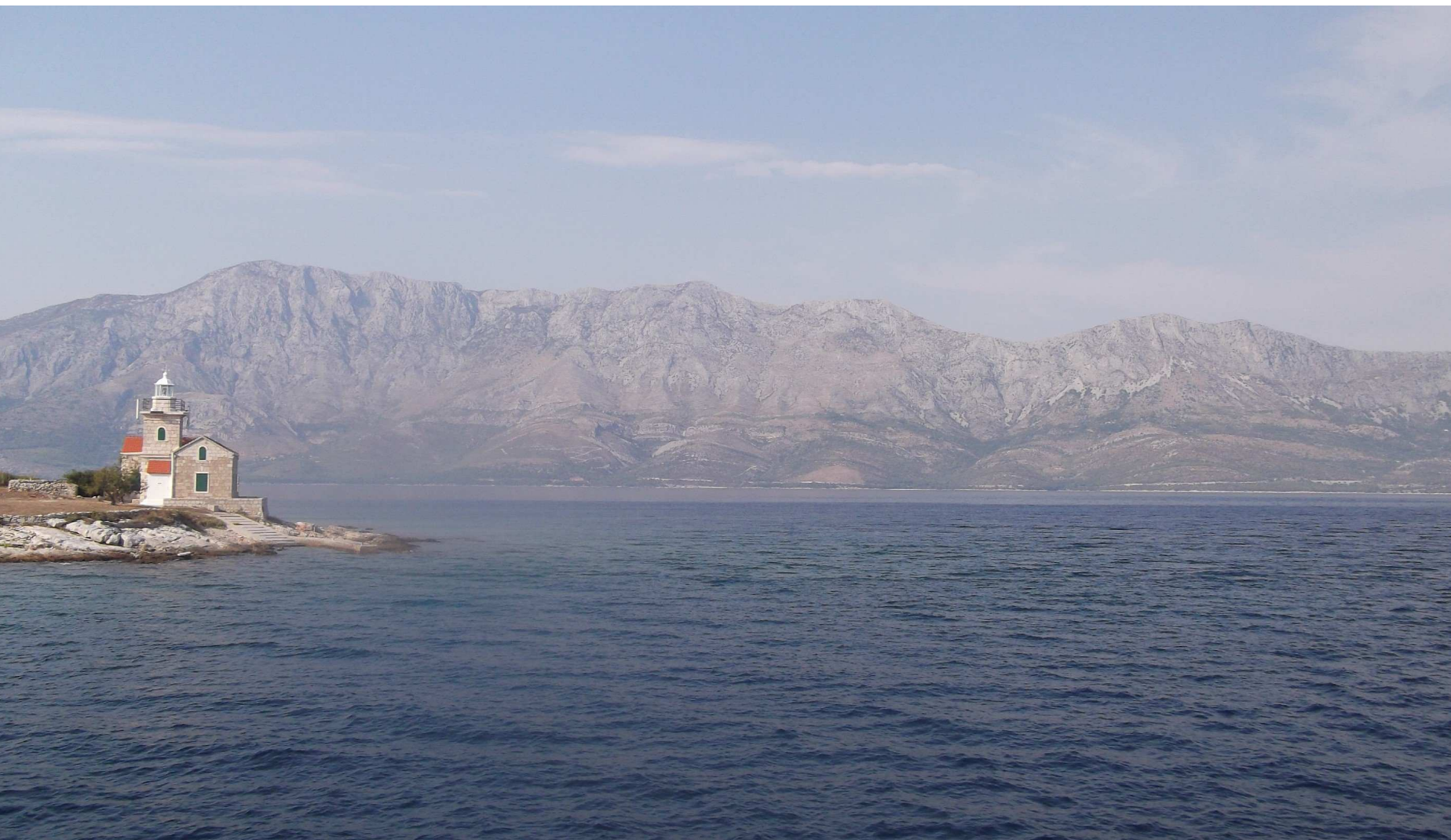
## Interview Photos





Chapter Two

# The Villages



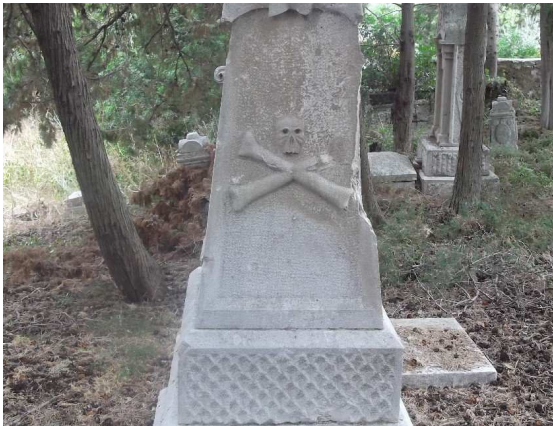
**Sućuraj**  
*Birthplace of My Dida*

# Timeline of Significant Events in Sućuraj

| Year (approx.) | Event of Importance                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 231 BC         | Queen of the Dalmatian Islands: Teuta. She was Illyrain and ruled until 219 BC. There are tombstones still on the island (velika gomila). These were just heaps of stones over bodies, unlike roman graves which were singular and above ground. Hvar used to be called "Pharaos" (Greek name).                               |
| 219 BC         | Romans ruled and were dominant as they won all their battles.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 8th Century    | First Slavs to Sućuraj from Neretvania. It was tribal in those days.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Middle Ages    | Lots of people arrived from Neretvania. They were the pirates (Gospodarili) at that time. These pirates would attack the Venetians (Mlečane).                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 1389           | Turks defeated Catholic army.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 1463           | War between Turks and Venetians. (ie. Catholics vs Muslims)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 1499           | Turkish army came into coastal areas. People on Hvar were terrified.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 1420-1797      | Hvar under Venetian rule. There were no formal borders.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 1526           | Venetian army in Sućuraj. The Turks came and set fire to Sućuraj. Five times they burnt down the monastery.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 1535           | Turks came back and set the village on fire again.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 1526-1540      | The war with the Turks continued. The pirates were active against the Turks and the Dubrovnik Republic.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 1571           | The Turks attacked the islands of Korčula and Hvar with 80 ships. The continued attacks left the Sućuraj population to very little. It took a while for people to return. At 1573 there were only 100 people remaining and by 1605, there were only 80 people left. Only 5% of the population stayed when the Turks attacked. |
| 1613           | The Venetian fortress was built in Sućuraj. It was bombed by the Americans in 1944.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 1645-1699      | Venetian-Turkish war over Sućuraj lasted 24 years. It was known as the "Kandijskog Rata".                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 1672           | 230 families from the mainland came to the islands of Hvar, Brač and Korčula. They were Orthodox Christians and changed to Catholicism. This changed the language.                                                                                                                                                            |
| 1711           | There were 325 people in Sućuraj. There was a large death rate as 25% of children died before age 10.                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 1797-1805      | Hvar ruled by the Austrians.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 1805-1813      | The French came to Hvar. Also, there was a hygiene problem with all the deaths in Sućuraj so a new cemetery was located outside the village.                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 1806           | The French battled with the Russian fleet outside Hvar.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 1811           | There were 400 French soldiers in the Venetian fortress in Sućuraj.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 1815           | The French left Hvar, there was a congress in Vienna and it was decided to give Dalmatia to Austria.                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 1835           | 130 houses in Sućuraj. 70% worked the land 20% were fishermen, and 10% had office positions. There was also a village doctor.                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 1918-1921      | Sućuraj was occupied by Italians.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 1921           | The Kingdom of Yugoslavia was formed. This introduced 2 alphabets to Dalmatia - Latin and Cyrillic.<br>Music from Greater Croatia and Serbia was introduced to Dalmatia eg. The Tamburica Band (an Eastern European string band).<br>Emigration was to four countries (Australia, New Zealand, USA and Argentina).            |
| 1941-1945      | World War 2.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 1941           | Germans and Italians attacked the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The Italians bombed Mostar then Sućuraj. The Italian army came to Sućuraj and occupied the village. The Partisan war started in Dalmatia in the autumn of 1941.                                                                                                      |
| 1943           | There were 300 Italian soldiers in Sućuraj, known as Vojnika. It was difficult as the locals were forced to feed the Italians and the students at school were forced to learn Italian. My Dida's brother, Nikola Anić, was part of the Partisan leaders in Sućuraj and he was wounded during World War 2.                     |
| 1944           | 9th of January, Germany bombed Sućuraj day and night. It was the worst Sućuraj had ever seen. The women and children of Sućuraj were taken to a refugee camp in Egypt. Others went to Slavonia in Eastern Croatia.                                                                                                            |

Sućuraj is a small seaside village fraught with conflict since 2300 years ago when the Illyrians first inhabited it. Over the years many different people from throughout Europe have come through Sućuraj (see timeline) with Romans, Croats, Venetians, French, Austrians, and Italians occupying the village for their empire. Countries have destroyed Sućuraj many times to gain the invaluable water access that most of Europe is deprived of. The Turks burnt the monastery in Sućuraj down five times before they decided that the Venetians were too powerful for them and left.

Originally, Sućuraj was home to pirates. Before many trees were cut down for property, the east cape of the island was dense with trees, providing great cover for the pirates. When the merchant boats would venture around the cape in bad weather, they would move very slowly in the rough seas. The pirates would come out of hiding in the trees and use a small dingy to row out and rob the merchant boat. Sućuraj has still been affected by modern day conflict. The Axis powers, the Germans and Italians, bombed Sućuraj in WW2 for control of the Dalmatian coastline. Then the Americans bombed the village again when the Germans and Italians occupied the island. They especially targeted one of the oldest monuments in Sućuraj – A Venetian fort from 1613 where the Axis forces were using as shelter. Although suffering damage, it has been partially restored and preserved today.



Tombstone with a skull and crossbones in the old cemetery.



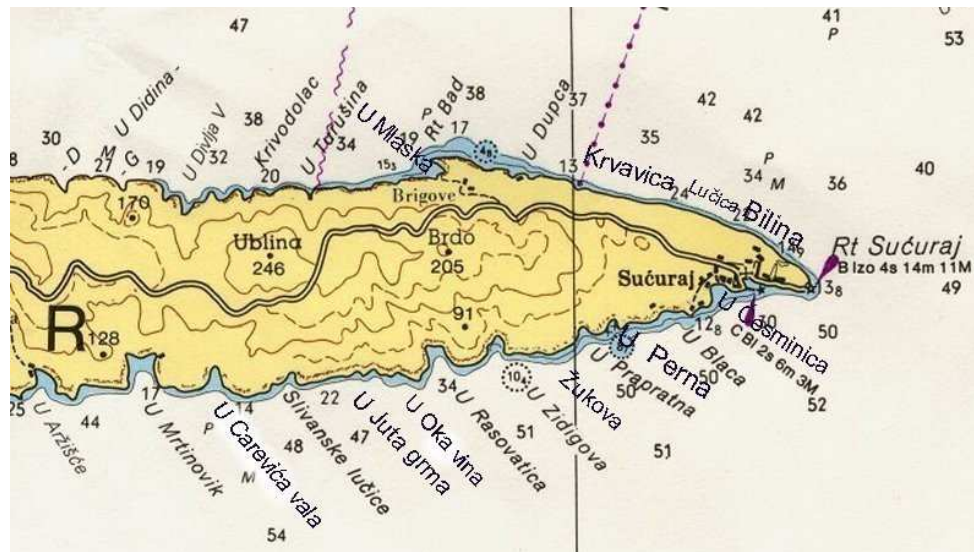
Bomb damage to house in Sućuraj.



The Fortica.



The town is situated on the island Hvar, 5km from the Dalmatian mainland and 77km from the town of Hvar, on the opposite end of the island.



The village itself is split into two sides, Gornja Banda and Donja Banda. This means upper and lower district. From interviewing Paul Jeličić I discovered that Sućuraj was mainly a subsistence village, relying on what they produced to survive. They produced grapes for wine and eating, olives and had donkeys and goats. They bought meat when they could but they mainly ate fish in the form of small snapper or sardines. The sardine trade grew so big that Sućuraj sold barrels of sardines preserved in salt to other countries around the Mediterranean. A sardine factory in Sućuraj was a large employer but was shut down after a while. A big export for Sućuraj, and for Dalmatia, has been wine. They have been producing it for centuries and it is some of the best in the world.

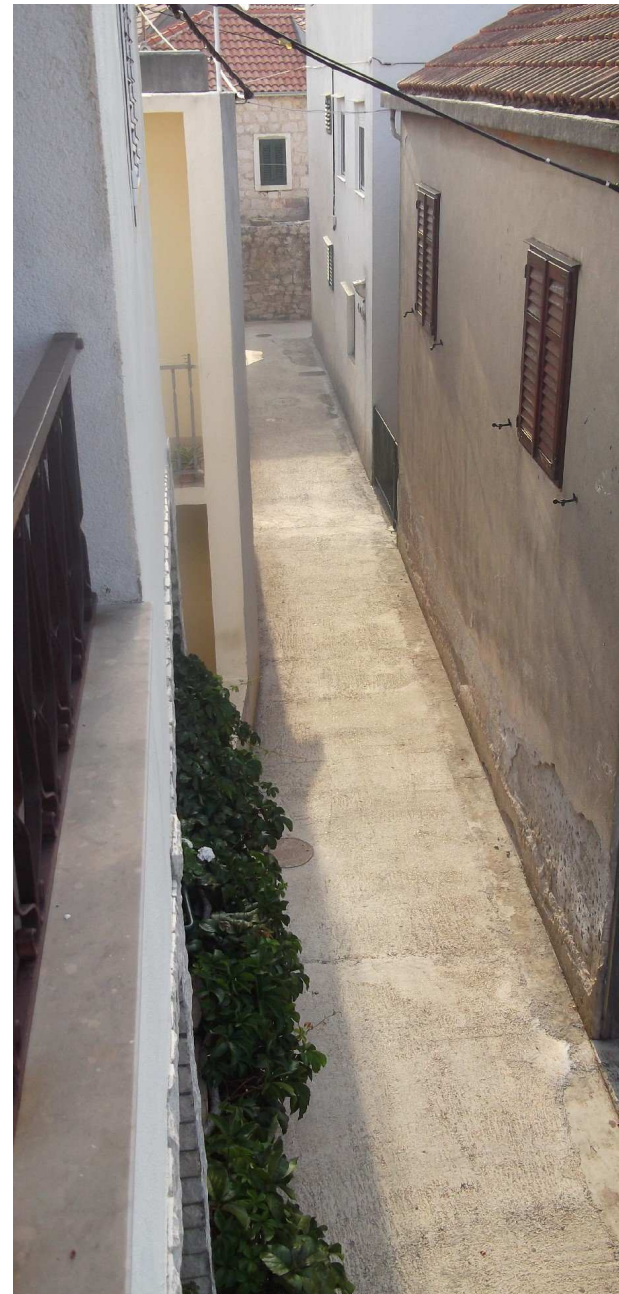
Sućuraj now, is based around tourism and fishing for sources of income with many restaurants and apartments around the village. It has around 400 permanent residents and this number swells greatly in the summer holiday season of July-August with the long sunny days, calm water in the two main beaches - Česminica and Bilina. Although German, Austrian, Polish and Czech tourists are in Sućuraj as they have always been, now Asian tourists are flooding in. Many busloads of South Koreans poured into small villages during my time there. This really gives the local economy an extra boost.

Tourism has only now picked back up to the rate that it was before the breakup of Yugoslavia in the violent "Homeland War" of the early 1990's. Locals told me they experienced a drought of tourism and found it hard to stay in business. But now a sense of security has returned to the region and tourists now feel safe in Dalmatian again. A new source of income is the massive amount of yachts which have become very popular lately in the calm, hot Adriatic Sea. Sućuraj, like many other ports along the coast, is geared up for yachts and the people on the boats usually eat and drink at the restaurants in the village, helping the locals. Even billionaires have caught on to this with a huge super yacht sailing past Sućuraj when I was there.





The village now has reticulated water, reliable electricity and even WIFI internet (all from cables and pipes going back to the mainland). From my experience there, the subsistence way of life has mostly gone with residents relying on money from outside Sućuraj to live. There were definitely no more donkeys or goats but I did see a few chicken coups near the outskirts of the village. But the village life vibe is still there. I was able to walk across the village in five minutes, and in my two weeks there people started to know and recognize me. Also the tight alley ways and the people yelling from house to house between them is something unique that bigger towns/cities don't have. Also, in modern times, because of Sućuraj's small population, children have to go to larger towns or cities on the mainland for education. There is a small primary school (Years 1 to 6) but for intermediate and older, kids have to go to schools elsewhere. On my visit there I didn't see any children above primary school age there except on the weekends. From people I talked to, high school students from islands mostly stayed in hostels or near the school. They would only visit their parents once a month.



View of tight alleyway in Sućuraj.



**Drašnice**  
*Birthplace of My Baba*



Drašnice is small village centred on fishing and tourism. The name comes from a thorny grass called "draca zestica", which has appeared in great quantities in the wider land area of Dalmatia. This village is very ancient, and like Sućuraj, the first known inhabitants were Illyrians with their hill forts and tumuli still preserved. But the peaceful Drašnice today has been influenced the most by the Romans. Life under Roman rule became less turbulent and Drašnice grew to become a bustling village.

The largest and most recent event to happen to Drašnice was the great 1962 earthquake. This damaged most of the village to the extent that people could no longer live in their homes. This event coincided with the building of a major road along the Dalmatian Coast. This road would bring in many tourists to the villages. So, virtually overnight, the people of Drašnice moved down closer to the coastline where their main source of income is now tourism.

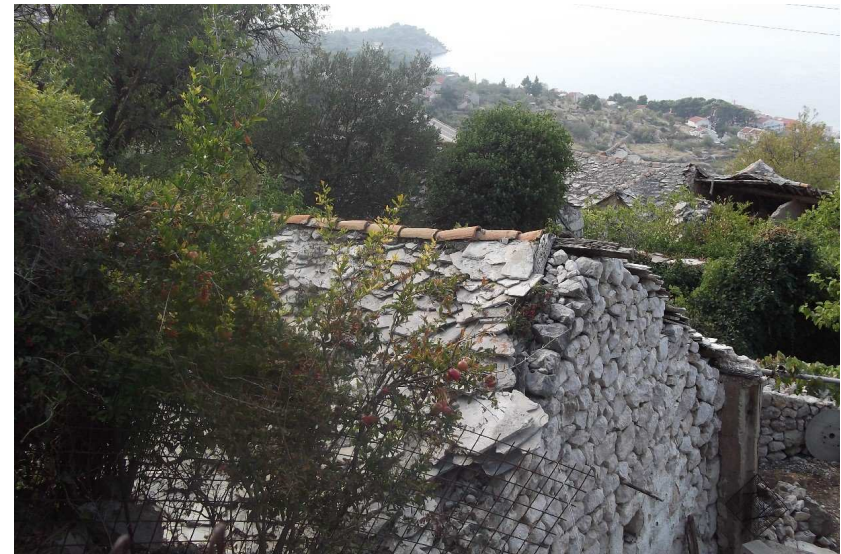


Waterfront view of Drašnice.

Drašnice is located ten kilometres from Makarska, and is looking out to the Island Hvar. It has a resident population of 300 people. Drašnice is the closest village to the mountains and sea. The village is very steep and the beaches (made up of pebbles) seem to be a continuance of the mountains – dropping steeply down into the ocean. The Stari Selo (old village), which is mostly damaged by the earthquake, is spilt into sectors according to family. In the map of the Stari Selo, you can see my Baba's sector – Alači.



Detailed map of Drašnice's Stari Selo.



In the centre of the Stari Selo.

From interviewing Darinka Anich (my Baba), I learnt the way of life back when she was a girl. She lived in the Stari Selo, which is up the mountain so to protect the villages from invaders. They used donkeys to transport food and get water from the wells. As there was no refrigeration, food was preserved using salt or kept in cool cellars down by the water called "Konoba". In summer, women and children would go across to the island Hvar to pull grass to feed livestock such as horses, pigs and sheep back in Drašnice. The men stayed back in the village.

This is different to the current way of life in Drašnice. On my visit there I found that nearly every home is now available to partially become a rental apartment in the busy season of July and August. There are many places to eat (restaurants, bakeries, grocery stores), all ready for tourists. Also, like Sućuraj, there is a lack of older children for the same reason.

Chapter Three

# The Journey to the New Land



First off, Darinka Anich, or my Baba; she was 11 when she left for New Zealand from Drašnice. She left to New Zealand with her family in 1937. But they didn't go blindly into an unknown country. Darinka's father, Ante Alać, had already gone to New Zealand to "scout" ahead. He did this when Darinka was just a baby and her sister was not born. He went to see relatives but also got a feel for what New Zealand was like.

The Alać family did not emigrate because they were poor but because they were wealthy. This sounds wrong but I will explain. Her father owned a large house on a big plot of land. They also had plenty of food. The father was getting older and weaker and could not work the land as much as when was younger. Also, having two daughters and no sons meant there was no one else to work the land. Also, Ante Alać (Darinka's father) was worried that men from the village would marry his daughters and take some of his land. Also, Ante feared war would break out in Europe again (which it did, WW2, 1939). So being in a smaller country with a small army, being under the rule of the Austro-Hungrians (Axis powers) and being one of the few places in Europe with access to the sea, he had reason to worry.

So Ante, again, went to New Zealand by himself and found a place to stay. He sent back the word to the rest of his family and they sold all their land and belongings that they did not need any more. The family went to Split by bus. Darinka, being young, didn't grasp all of this at the time and didn't know the significance of emigrating. She was just excited as Split was the first big city she had been to.

From Split, they went to Genoa, Italy, to make the journey on a ship. The ship mainly consisted of Yugoslavs but there were some English and Italians in 1st class. She stayed with 40 girls and women in one room. She didn't know where she was going or what to expect. She was treated well on the Italian boat and was taken to the 1st class cabins with all the other children on Christmas day. It probably helped that Italian was very easy to learn for her. It took them 5 weeks to get to Sydney, Australia and she had to farewell friends she made as they left to live in Australia. She boarded an

English ship with her family and went to Auckland. The journey for her was probably the least stressful out of all the experiences I look at – her family was wealthy with the peace of mind that there are people you can trust, family or friends, with a roof to live under.

Darinka's journey was considerably easier than others. Ante Anich (My Dida), left Sućuraj from the age of 13 all by himself, to go to his father who was already in New Zealand. They saw new opportunities in New Zealand. A community of Dalmatians had already settled in New Zealand, sending back positive news about the new land. At that time, New Zealand with its kauri gum and Australia with its gold saw a massive influx of immigrants into the countries to utilize these raw resources. Eighty per cent of gum diggers in New Zealand were Yugoslavs. Also the New Zealand government hired many Dalmatians to work on dams and bridges that are still being used today. Much before all this, in 1922, a wine disease "phylloxera" caused up to a thousand men from Drašnice alone to emigrate as their main source of income – their grape vines to turn into wine for export, were destroyed.



Dalmatian gum diggers in New Zealand.

Many Dalmatians who also immigrated to New Zealand were in refugee camps during WW2. The men were fighting as Partisans, and the women and children were taken to refugee camps. Dida's sister Lukre, with her two young children walked 15 km from Sućuraj to Selca on the island of Hvar and waited for a Partisan connection. Pavao and Tonka Jeličić, with their mother were taken to the island of Vis for 2 months to wait for a British boat. They took them to a refugee camp in Alexandra, Egypt. They were there for 16-18 months. Many Dalmatians living in New Zealand have been at this camp. Some people were even born in the refugee camps like a close family friend of mine, Jordana. She was born in Egypt while in a refugee camp.

Unfortunately, Dida's mother, oldest and youngest sisters Kate and Valentina and three young children were unable to be picked up by the British as there was no more room. The Germans took them from Sućuraj to Makarska by boat at 2am in the morning from the Sveta Jure church. They were then trucked from Makarska to camps in Slavonia (Eastern Croatia). It was an Ustachi controlled camp who worked for the Germans. The women and children were hungry and cousin Ivan Kumarić went to local families begging for food. My great-grandmother Lucija died in the camp from malnutrition. When they returned to Sućuraj after the war, all the houses were burned to the ground and there were no floors or roofs. My Dida worked hard in New Zealand to pay to have her remains taken to Sućuraj from the camp.



Ante Anich (my Dida) returning grave of his mother, Lucija Anić, to Sućuraj.



The grave of Lucija Anić in more recent times.

Nikica Urlić, from Drašnice, had a much different journey than previous Dalmatians. Unlike them, he was much older when he left and had a better understanding of current events so knew why he was leaving. He came to New Zealand in 1960 at the age of about 27 to 28 years old. Dalmatia was part of Yugoslavia at the time which was under the rule of Josip Tito. He was a communist/socialist leader and had just nationalized all private property making it public wealth. Nikica and his father disliked the idea of this as it would mean they would earn less money from business and that their business would be out of their control and at the mercy of the government. Also, Tito made it so that Yugoslavia disregarded the Church. This was another reason for Nikica to leave.

His father went to New Zealand first and some of his relatives were already there. He went by boat which took 6 weeks. It was filled with other Europeans, but Nikica wasn't classed as a refugee, but as an immigrant as he wanted rights that came along with it. He was able to do this by using his uncle, who was established in New Zealand, as a sponsor. He knew that the New Zealand government was more likely to accept him into the country if he was an immigrant, not a refugee seeking asylum.





**The Beauty of Dalmatia;** View from the top of the Fortica in Hvar.

Chapter Four

# How They Managed in New Zealand

This chapter will be a very brief overview of some personal impressions and experiences of Dalmatians after entering New Zealand. I know that this chapter itself could be made into many separate books and has been by other people but I will just provide a brief overview.

I found from interviews that most Dalmatians first impressions and experiences in New Zealand were similar. Most of them stayed in a boarding house in Auckland before moving elsewhere, usually up north or out to West Auckland. Their first impressions were mostly seeing sand and waves for the first time as the Adriatic is extremely calm and the beaches are rocky. Also, the difference in clothes and way of life was something all the people I interviewed picked up on, as well as that all the buildings were made of wood, not stone. Also because of their village background, they found that very modern things in New Zealand, like tap water, power and metal roads seemed very foreign to them. The fact that they were now on the other side of the world and the seasons had changed was another big impression.

All of the people I interviewed who came here when they were young. They all were able to pick up English firstly by example, then by going to school. This was easier for them than their parents or other Dalmatians that emigrated later on in life as languages are easier to learn for children. This was different for Nikica Urlić as he came later in life (27-28 years old) and English was harder for him. But luckily he was, like many other Dalmatians, a big man who is ideal for physical labour. He worked in the freezing works for four years although he could not speak English very well. For the most part, Dalmatians settled in well and even established extremely good businesses taking the skills from Dalmatian village life and applying them in a bigger market. A good example of this is Villa Maria Winery, a very successful Dalmatian owned wine business established in New Zealand.

Many Dalmatians were in displaced or separated families while immigrating to New Zealand. Although Darinka Anich came out with her whole family, many others did not. Ante Anich had to go by boat to New Zealand by himself at the age of 13 as his father and other relatives were already here. This is a similar story for Nikica Urlić and Paul Jeličić as they both had fathers “scout” ahead for places to stay and jobs.

Although most Dalmatians were treated well when in New Zealand, not all Yugoslavs were readily accepted as New Zealand citizens after entering the country. This was in the 1950’s as Yugoslavia was

under the communist/socialist rule of Josip Tito. Ante and Darinka Anich (my Baba and Dida) had to undergo an investigation by New Zealand authorities as they had already bought a house, owned a business and had four young children. He was a politician with the local council, so had to be a New Zealand citizen. Both arrived in New Zealand as children on their father's passports so had minimal documentation. They had to prove that they had assimilated into the New Zealand way of life. It is interesting that my four oldest aunts and uncles had to prove that they were New Zealand citizens by birth and not "aliens" although their parents were technically classed as "aliens".

See below for interview notes of my Baba for New Zealand citizenship in 1957.

AUCKLAND 27.6.57.

NOTES OF INTERVIEW:

Mrs Darinka ANICH

She says that she was born at Drasnice in Yugoslavia on 4.5.1926. Her father had been naturalized in N.Z. but returned to live in Yugoslavia for two lengthy periods. He returned to N.Z. in 1938 bringing his family with him, and farmed at Henderson, where he now lives in retirement.

Mrs Anich went to primary school in Drasnice until leaving for N.Z. She arrived here at the beginning of 1938 and went to primary school in Waitakere until she was 14, finishing at Standard 5. She helped her father at home for 2 years, until they shifted to another farm in Henderson, and then she went full time to Druleigh College in Auckland for a year learning dressmaking. She never took a job, but lived on the farm for almost 3 years, until her marriage on 5.10.46.

Since then she has lived in Warkworth with her husband and helps him in his business.

She has four children, three of school age. One of the girls employed at the restaurant goes to the house at lunch and dinner times to look after the children, while Mrs Arnich looks after the shop and cooks for the restaurant.



She is kept fully occupied with the shop and her home and family, so that she does not **need** to join associations to meet people. She takes part in the social life of the town with her husband, who is on the Town Council. She has spend most of her life here in N.Z. and has only vague memories of Yugoslavia. She has no desire to ever go there. Her whole family are N.Z'ers. She does not know any other way of life than ours, and will continue to live as a full N.Z. citizen obeying the laws etc. as she has always done.

She will take the oath of allegiance but would prefer not to attend a ceremony. She has always been regarded as a New Zealander by everyone and would "feel a fool."

She knows lots of Yugoslavs, as her family live at Henderson, but there are only a couple of families in the Warkworth district and she has New Zealand friends only in the town. The girls in the shop are New Zealanders.

Her husband could do with a man so has applied for an entry permit to bring in an 18 year old nephew to work for him.

- - - - -

Mrs Anich is small and <sup>lightly</sup> ~~highly~~ built, with fair complexion and hair. She is completely assimilated and it would be hard to pick her as a Yugoslav. Just occasionally she says "dè" for "the" when she is talking a lot.

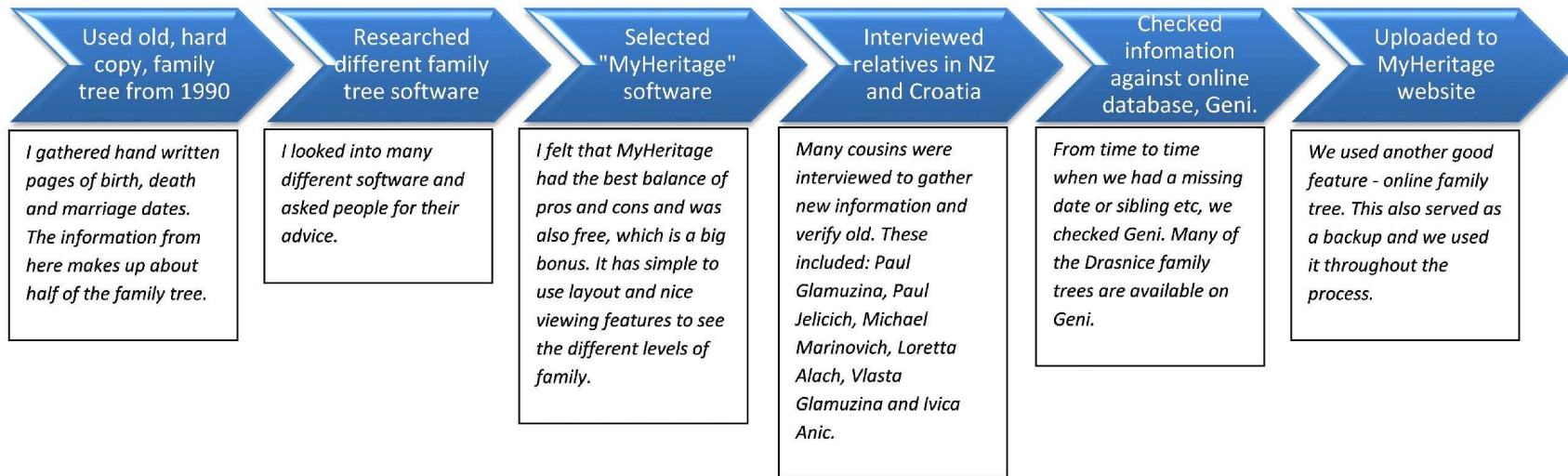
She is quite suitable for naturalization. They keep the restaurant premises in spotless conditions, and serve good food, well prepared, at reasonable prices, so that the business is thriving.

  
J. Gaunt  
Field Naturalization Officer.

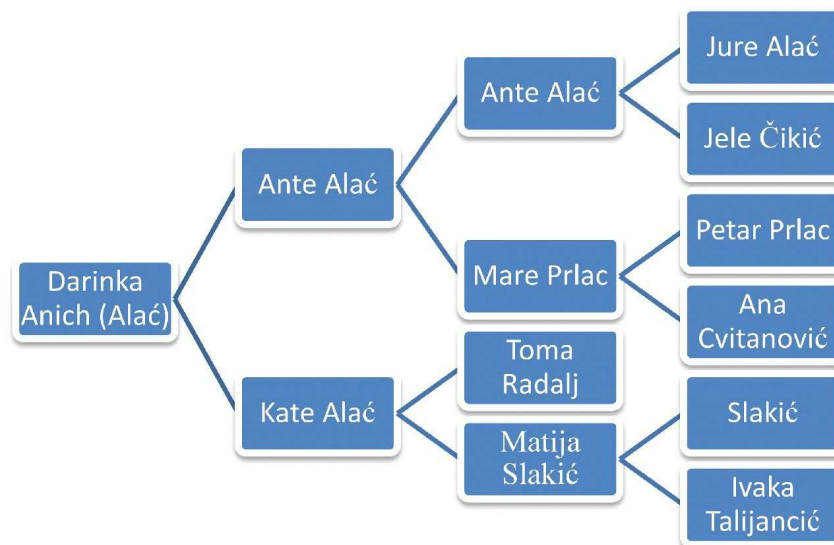
Chapter Five

# My Family Tree

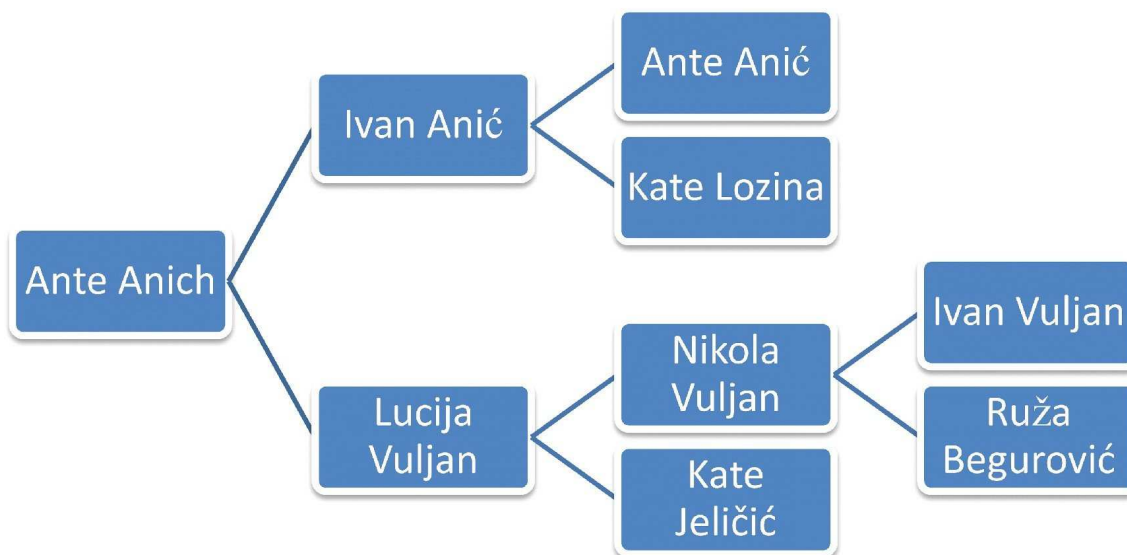
Another large part about learning about the journey from Dalmatia to New Zealand is my own heritage. Alongside researching for this book, I gathered much information about my family tree (my mother's side only). I decided to put the process of how I did this into a flow chart. I learnt that Dalmatians only had a first name and a last name, no middle name. So this made it difficult as many had the same name as their Baba and Dida (eg. Ante Alać). Most had nicknames but these were not legal names. Examples from my family are "Vlah" for Ivan AniĆ, which means "from over the hills" as he was from Slivno. Also, "Mrkica" for Ante Alać; this means "little dark" as he had dark skin.



This is a summary of my Baba's family tree. The full family tree is in MyHeritage and a diagram is attached to the back of this book.



This is the summary of my Dida's family tree. There are still many gaps.





The Anić family name is not common for Dalmatians in New Zealand, and Sućuraj. The history for its origins is that it came originally from Buna Rijeka in Herzegovina, south-west of Mostar. This is a beautiful spring which feeds into the Nevretva Rijeka. The Roman Catholics went different directions with some going up to Bunjevci, Serbia near Hungary. Others went to Dalmatia. Two brothers, Ivan and Josip Anić came from Slivno to Sućuraj. Ivan is my pra-Dida and Josip is Paul Jeličić's Dida.



The mouth of the famous fresh water spring of Buna Rijeka in Bosnia.

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