



Marcello Pavan

Interview Transcript 9 July 2018

Oral History Project

Reliving the past: Stories from our communities

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Interviewee: Marcello Pavan

Interviewer: Helen Thompson

Date: 9 July 2018

Transcription: Helen Thompson



Marcello Pavan

Italian market gardeners in Dubbo

Marcello and his family discuss his life as a new Italian migrant working on various projects in Australia before settling in Dubbo to run a successful market garden along the banks of the Macquarie River.

This is Helen Thompson interviewing Mr Marc Pavan at his home at 261 Macquarie Street, Dubbo. Also with us is his wife, Mrs Anna Pavan, and their nephew, Mr Renato De Marchi.

This recording, created on 9th July 2018 is part of Macquarie Regional Library's oral history project 'Reliving the past: stories from our communities.' Each recording contributes to the developing story of life in the Dubbo area.

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Interviewees:

(MP): Marcello Pavan

(AP): Anna Pavan

(RD): Renato De Marchi

[0:00:37] Interviewer (I): Thank you for your time today, Mr Pavan. Can you please tell me your full name?

(MP): Marcello Pavan.

[0:00:44] (I): And can you please tell me when and where you were born?

(MP): When I born? (clears throat) 22nd, the second, 1931. [22nd February 1931]

[0:00:54] (I): And whereabouts were you born at?

(MP): I born in Italy, town Monastier.

[0:01:04] (I): And what were your parents' names?

(MP): Parents, Edminia, my mother, Antonio, my father.

[0:01:13] (I): How many brothers and sisters did you have?

(MP): I got four brothers, and five sisters.¹

[0:01:19] (I): Does that make ten of you altogether?

(MP): Ten altogether.

[0:01:23] (I): That's a big family (both laugh). So, what job did you do before you came to Australia?

¹ Brothers: Giudio, Alfonso, Lino, and Gino. Sisters: Maria, Elisa (Renato's mother), Flora, Theresa, and Luigia.

(MP): Well, the time was just after the war. In Italy was no work at all. You know, and Emigration, it came from Australia, and make application. And I just joined to come in Australia.

[0:01:43] (I): And what year was it that you emigrated to Australia?

(MP): In 1952. I came here with a ship [“Castelbianca”] in May, and June and July.² I be in the Camp, in Bonegilla, for two months.³ Because there was a little bit of depression, not much work. And finished up, after taking me to Dubbo, to work for the Air Force.

[0:02:14] (I): So what day, what year, what - - -

(MP): The 1st of August I start in Dubbo, working on the Air Force [RAAF Stores Depot].⁴

[0:02:22] (I): And what kind of work did you do at the Air Force?

(MP): I was on the (clears throat) mechanic - we was the, repaired their cars and their trucks. You know, I was over there only three months, washing the machinery. That's right.

[0:02:37] (I): So assisting with some mechanical work?

(MP): That's right.

[0:02:40] (I): So, just getting back to when you came out to Australia, so, you were 21 years of age at the time? Is that right?

(MP): Beg your pardon?

[0:02:49] (I): You were 21 at the time?

(MP): 21, yes.

[0:02:52] (I): Did you have to pay for your passage? Pay for the ticket, or - -

(AP): You pay for the ticket to come in Australia?

² Mr Pavan disembarked at Melbourne on the ship “Castelbianco” in June 1952.

³ Bonegilla Migrant and Reception Centre was a camp near the small town of Bonegilla in northeast Victoria that was established to receive and train migrants to Australia during the post World War II immigration boom.

⁴ As per his Commonwealth of Australia New South Wales Income Tax Employee's Record for the 1952/1953 financial year, Mr Pavan worked at 'Stores Depot RAAF Dubbo', from 1st August 1952 to 15th October 1952.

(MP): Oh yes. I paid for the ticket.⁵ I can't remember now, it was over one hundred pounds, that time. But, you pay only ten pounds, when you left Italy, and you paid two pounds every month, every wage you can get the year, you know, for two years, I think.

(RD): So to pay it back.

(MP): For the men to pay it back. That's right.

(RD): Oh right.

(MP): You see, everybody got to do that. But a lot of people, you [they] never pay!

(MP): [Clears throat]. But, I didn't pay! (clears throat). I call my brother here, I got no trouble at all - he could help me straight away. A lot of people never pay, they can call somebody from over there, you got to pay straight away, another way, you - - -

(RD): Oh.

(MP): Oh yes (laughs).

(RD): loan scheme.

(MP): That's right (clears throat).

[0:03:56] (I): That's a lot of money.

(MP): (clears throat). Sorry about that. Yes.

[0:04:01] (I): So what did you know about Australia before you came?

(MP): Don't know anything about it! (both laugh) A lot of people said, you know, in Italy, "Oh, you want to go in Australia, really? Oh, the - (clears throat) - the black people eat the - the white one!" (everyone laughs) They said a lot worse things, you know, now, all of 60 year[s], you know. "Oh, Australia is very bad." But, I say, look, it was very bad, because - I say, I can go over there, because, still, the same town,

⁵ An Assisted Passage Scheme was introduced in 1951 where the Australian Government paid for fares and accommodation in migrant camps, such as Bonegilla, for Italian migrants, in return for several years' employment.

(N.S.W. Migration Heritage Centre, 'Journey to a new life : Italian migration in NSW', <http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/exhibition/journey/journey/index.html>)

where I come from, it was a lot of people here, I'd say, it's still alive, it's still here, (laughs), happy (laughs). Yes.

[0:04:41] (I): So did you come to Australia with any other members of your family? Was it just you that came out?

(MP): Only myself.

[0:04:47] (I): Only yourself. Uh-hm.

(MP): Yes.

[0:04:49] (I): Did you have any friends or relatives already in Australia? Did you have any family or relatives already in Australia?

(MP): No, nothing. Nothing.

(AP): Your brother?

(MP): Yes, I call my brother, after.

(AP): Yes, you called him up.

(RD): That was later, yes.

[0:05:03] (I): That was later.

(RD): Later.

(MP): Yes, later. They never say - he says how he got, then, his friend or brother, brought here (laughs).

[0:05:12] (I): So, you were then at the Bonegilla Training Centre.

(MP): That's right.

[0:05:16] (I): At Melbourne, for two months. Then you were in Dubbo, when you were at the Dubbo RAAF base.

(MP): Yes.

[0:05:23] (I): Um. Did you do anything else at the RAAF base? Did you help anyone else at the time?

(MP): Well, you know. I come in Dubbo, and I found Dubbo, good people. Friendly people. They say, "Why you got to go away?" I have a lot of friends, working here in Dubbo. "You finish up, you're going to Sydney". He write letters to me, you can come in Sydney, you can get job. I'd say "No, I can stay here". You know, I'm liking - I'm liking Dubbo. You know, I'd no like to go in Sydney (laughs).

(AP): Had you have anyone here in Australia, before, when, the time you were working here?

[0:06:04] (I): Because when you were at the RAAF base, did you mention before that you were helping a man build a house, at the same time, or - -
-

(MP): Ah, no, sir, the fella, he worked in the Air Force.

[0:06:13] (I): Yes. So you'd help him on the side, as well?

(MP): Yes, that's right. Yes, yes.

[0:06:16] (I): That was very helpful of you (laughs).

(MP): That's right.

[0:06:19] (I): Where was your next job, then, after you worked at the Dubbo RAAF base?

(MP): I beg your pardon?

[0:06:25] (I): Where was your next job? Where did you go to work at, after you'd been to the Dubbo RAAF Base?

(MP): (Clears throat). In Wellington. Baker's Swamp. That's on the property over there near Wellington ["Mehruda"].⁶

[0:06:34] (I): And how far out of Wellington was it?

(MP): Halfway Molong and Wellington.

[0:06:39] (I): So about 21 miles or something, was it?

(MP): That's right. Yes.

[0:06:42] (I): So, how did you get into town, to do your shopping?

(MP): By lift! (laughs). It take me about three or four hours to go into the town, another three or four hours to go back home. You know, only by lift, that time, I lucky, because, you know, the car, it can stop, it can take you. Not today!

[0:07:05] (I): No.

⁶ As per his Commonwealth of Australia New South Wales Income Tax Employee's Record for the 1952/1953 financial year, Mr Pavan worked on the property "Mehruda", Bakers Swamp via Dripstone, from 1st October 1952 to 17th April 1953. The employer name was recorded as 'Perpetual Trustee Company (Limited) Trustees of Estate late R. J. Warry'.

(MP): At that time, you know. Yes. I left there, and - I left there, at Wellington, and when - the property where, 7 o'clock in the morning, probably about 1 o'clock, or 11 o'clock, I'd be in Wellington.

(RD): In Wellington.

(MP): That's right. After that, I had a good meal, I have vege - (clears throat) a good meal, I have a glass of beer, I go visit ten minutes in the church. After, go get my groceries, back home.

[0:07:33] (I): So what did you have for a meal, generally?

(MP): Oh, that time, not much. Because I have a good cook. Never got a fridge.

[0:07:41] (I): Uh-hm.

(MP): I eat a lot of vegemite (others laugh), a lot of jam (he laughs), and bread (laughs).

[0:07:48] (I): So when you used to go into Wellington on Saturday mornings, you used to have a good meal there, then, did you?

(MP): That's right. Yes, yes. Saturday morning, yes.

[0:07:54] (I): What kind of a meal did you have, then?

(MP): Oh, well, I have a steak and egg, that's right. Greek people.

(RD): Greek cafe.

(MP): That's right. Yes,

(RD): Do you remember what that was called, the Greek cafe?

(MP): Ah, no. No.

(AP): It was like, that, there, that park?

(MP): Not over the park, no. I'd have a beer. And another thing, another time, in the pub. Enough said there! Always ten up in the bar, you know. And when you go in, because it opens 10 o'clock in the morning, when you go in, all over there along the front, you know, to wait for the beer. And soon when I can go inside, their served with, straight with a middy! A lot of people was over there waiting for the middy! (laughs) They were watching me (laughs). Yes.

[0:08:43] (I): That would have been good. Um - - -

(AP): [inaudible words].

(MP): That's right.

[0:08:50] (I): So, after you worked at - what sort of work did you do on the farm, actually, at Wellington?

(MP): Actually, I do nothing, I can tell you. The time, when I go, because, you know, I go over there, I like to go, at that time there was a lot of rabbits, to go around kill the rabbits, or something. No, I got to go, clean up around - on their yard, on the house. Clean up, you know. It was the tennis court, it was the grass about that high (gestures).

[0:09:18] (I): Uh-hm. A couple of feet.

(MP): You know, around. I cut the grass. I clean up the tennis court - takes me probably about a week, a week and a half. After that, I got nothing to do! You know, I start to give it water, you know, to get the grass to come up, and the boss, he come out, very cranky, and he said "No putting any more water! No watering! I got no water!" (everyone laughs)

(RD): Water - left in the tank (laughs).

(MP): And then the - that's right. And I never do anything. And the time never passed, you know. And the time was very hard. Yes.

[0:09:53] (I): How long do you think you were at - on that farm, working?

(MP): I have been working there for I think about six or eight months. After that, I come in Dubbo because it was, Christmas, I think so, come in Dubbo, so [inaudible words], one Italia[n] fella - he was here for many year[s], and I ask him if he get any jobs here in Dubbo, and he said, "I can have a look". Two week[s] after he write me letters, he had work in the Railway. "But you got to come here", he said, "to get a ticket to go, pass the ticket in Sydney", he said, "If you are able, you can get a job in the Railway". I went passed the ticket,

you know, and come back, and got a job in the Railway.⁷ Yes, I got in my tent, here in Dubbo, and I'd sleep in the tent, and work on the railway, on the bridge across the Macquarie River. That's right, yes.

[0:10:51] (I): So what kind of work were you doing on the bridge across the river? What kind of work were you doing on the bridge?

(MP): Only, only repair all the timber.

[0:10:58] (I): Uh-hm.

(MP): Because that time it was all timber. You know, all the timber repair, take away the old timber. But they never work much because, you know, (clears throat) at that time, there was so many trains go through. Because that track, all the sheep, everything go on, cattle, go on the train. And the boss, before go off to work, in the morning, he go have a look on the station, and it said how many trains. He give you, he say, "all right, eight o'clock, nine o'clock (clears throat), half past nine, he say, train go through." "All right (clears throat,) nine o'clock, smoko! (everyone laughs) All right, stop." Ah, now we start to work, "No, you can't start now, because, you know the train half past nine passing!" (everyone laughs). That's right. After the [stop] at 12 o'clock, another train coming! (laughs). That's right. I be over there for about 14 months, I think so.

[0:11:55] (I): Uh-hm. So, getting back to you - living in a tent at the time. So, whereabouts was your tent?

(MP): The tent?

[0:12:04] (I): Yes.

(MP): Oh, boy! (laughs). I've got a photo somewhere!

(RD): Now, where was it? Where was it?

(AP): Where? Where?

(MP): You know the Fitzroy Street - - -

[0:12:12] (I): Yes.

⁷ As per his Commonwealth of Australia New South Wales Income Tax Employee's Record for the 1952/1953, and 1953/1954 financial years, Mr Pavan started working for the Commissioner for Railways on 4th May 1953.

(MP): [clears throat] Where the pub over there in Fitzroy Street - just on the other side. Further along the railway.

(AP): The other side of the "Buncha".

(RD): The "Buncha".

(MP): Yes. That's right.

[0:12:22] (I): So the Railway Junction Hotel. You told me before that it was about 200 metres or something from there?

(MP): Yes, about 200 or more. That's right.

[0:12:29] (I): So was it sort of at the back of the Showground? Sort of, that sort of area?

(MP): That's right. Yes. Yes. I had a lot of trouble with the Showground!

[0:12:35] (I): Yes.

(MP): Because at that time, you know, he - the dog, he me, [inaudible words] in the Showground, he's barked to middle of night! (everyone laughs). Yes.

[0:12:45] (I): Was it sort of - over the railway line where it sort of curves around, sort of, heads up?

(MP): Yes. That's right, yes.

[0:12:53] (I): So just over the railway line, sort of there, sort of down from the hospital, towards the - - -?

(MP): That's right.

[0:12:57] (I): The Showground area?

(RD): Where Astley's are? The hardware place, or?

(MP): Where Astley's was, no, not there at that time. He was not in over there.

(RD): Yes, but in that area?

(MP): Yes, yes, in that area. Yes, that's right.

[0:13:10] (I): Yes. So, on that side, not on the side, like where - - -

(MP): No, no, no.

[0:13:13] (I): Where the Western College is?

(MP): That's right. Yes.

[0:13:13] (I): So, just on that curved area there. So, were the tents only for the railway employees? The tents that you stayed in? Were they just for the Railway workers?

(MP): Yes, that's right, yes.

[0:13:26] (I): Uh-hm.

(MP): The Railway. And have them there, four tents over there. Because you know, if you sleep in the tent, you get to camp in one. I think it was about four or five sleep. And the boss, and the other two people who work in the railway, Australia[ns], you sleep at home, but you have a tent over there! (laughs) You have a lot of Italia[n] people, working along the railway, you know, from here to go to Nyngan, or Bourke, or work along the railway, and the weekend, come in[to] Dubbo, and say "Where you sleep tonight?". "Oh," he said, "I don't know". "Well, do you want to sleep in the tent? You've got a tent over there". In the summer - not in the winter, because it's cold! (laughs)

(RD): Yes.

[0:14:13] (I): Yes.

(MP): That's right.

(RD): So, were they single tents, like one tent per person, or was it a big tent and everybody in - - -?

(MP): No, no. Only one, each person.

(RD): Yes.

(MP): One each person.

(AP): How big it was? How big?

(MP): Oh, not big. Not much.

[0:14:26] (I): Could you stand up in it, or did you have to crawl into it?

(MP): Oh, you can stand up, you know.

[0:14:29] (I): You could stand up. Uh-hm.

(MP): You can go in, yes.

(AP): We've got a photo.

(MP): I've got a photo.

(AP): It's somewhere.

[0:14:34] (I): Really?

(AP): Yes.

[0:14:35] (I): That would be lovely to have a look at, one day! So, what where the tents made of?

(AP): But I don't know where it is.

[0:14:40] (I): What was the tents made of?

(MP): Here at Dubbo Railway.

[0:14:43] (I): Was it like a canvas, or?

(AP): Canvas?

[0:14:46] (I): The tents, what were they made of?

(RD): What was the tents - - -

(MP): Yes, yes, yes.

(RD): Canvas?

(MP): Tents, that's right, yes.

[0:14:52] (I): Did they leak when it rained?

(MP): Why, you have a little - (clears throat), in Dubbo, you know, one at top, another one in case it rains, you know, and the other, it gets a little bit drip - it can go out.

[0:15:06] (I): Um hm.

(MP): Yes. That's right.

[0:15:07] (I): So I imagine it was really cold in winter, and quite hot in summer?

(MP): Oh yes, cold in the winter! And plenty of mosquitoes in the summer (everyone laughs). Yes.

[0:15:14] (I): So it was only the railway workers in the tents, wasn't it? They didn't have any railway workers' families, or anything else there? It was just the railway workers?

(MP): No.

(AP): It was only the men working? Or any of their family?

(MP): Yes, some, some - - -

(AP): Some of them have their family?

(MP): Some of them have their family.

[0:15:32] (I): Uh-hm.

(MP): You know, they have a tent from the Railway. That's right. There was one family over there, next to me, you know, Australia[n] people. Because he work in the Railway, he got a tent.

[0:15:44] (I): Uh-hm.

(MP): In that time. Yes.

[0:15:49] (I): So, how did you do any cooking or washing, or that sort of stuff?

(MP): Cooking - I got a Primo here, (laughs), I got a little Primo⁸ - - -

(AP): Gas.

[0:15:47] (I): Uh-hm.

(MP): No gas, petrol.

(RD): Kero.

(AP): Kerosene.

(MP): Kerosene. That's right, yes. And that's what I cook in! (laughs)

[0:16:04] (I): Uh-hm.

(AP): You said you used to, with a shovel, you put a shovel - - -.

(MP): Oh, well, when I was in the Railway, you know, in the wintertime, you make a fire all the time, you know, and dinner time, was because I work across the river over there. In Talbragar Street, there was a butcher, and a lot of the time, I go, you know, up to the butcher, and get a steak, and the fire go over there, on the shovel, and I cook the steak, I eat it! (everyone laughs) Many time[s] (laughs).

[0:16:39] (I): Very innovative. So, did you ever go to the Railway Junction Hotel, at all, there? Is that where the railway workers used to go? Over there at all?

⁸ Primus kerosene stove.

(MP): Oh - you see, I never drink much beer. I go over there, I probably have one beer. As I said, yes, not much, no.

[0:16:57] (I): Did they have any meals there, at that time, or - - -

(MP): No, no.

[0:17:00] (I): No. So, while you were working for the railway in Dubbo, did you happen to see when Queen Elizabeth II visited Dubbo on 10th February in 1954?

(MP): That's right. Yes. That's where I spend a lot of time, you know, the Railway, to prepare the trains. You know, for the Queen when they come here. That's right. Yes, I saw the Queen, you know, when they come here. Yes. But that day, you know, I got to stay on the Railway. Because, you know, when the people come in to - that's where you got to go. That's right, yes.

[0:17:37] (I): So that's what you did, on that day?

(MP): That's right.

[0:17:45] (I): So you didn't actually get to see the Queen, but you got to see lots of visitors getting on and off trains, to go and see the Queen?

(MP): That's right.

(AP): Special job for her, look after - - - (everyone laughs).

[0:17:51] (I): Yes. So what job did you do next, after you finished working for the Railway?

(MP): After working [for] the Railway, I left the Railway, I went to an Italia[n] company [Electric Power Transmission Pty Ltd], to do electricity, one line electricity to Dubbo to Narromine.⁹ That's why I left the Railway, because, you know, this Italia[n] company, it paid a lot more money, you know. And it paid a little bit of bonus, too. You know, being here in Dubbo, to Narromine, one line - electricity line. After with that company, I went to Sydney, you know, and never get

⁹ Per his Commonwealth of Australia New South Wales Income Tax Employee's Record for the 1954/1955 financial year, Mr Pavan worked for Electric Power Transmission Pty Ltd, from 30th July 1954 to 8th November 1954.

any more jobs for a little while, but, he said, you've got every job with that company, all over Australia. Because he do all electricity lines.

[0:18:48] (I): Uh-hm.

(MP): A couple of friend of mine, he'd been working - you know, with here, he said "Ah, no, there's no money here." He said, "You'd better go to Cooma." That's why I went to Cooma. To start work over there in Cooma. I'd been working in the first job on the Public Work[s] [Department of Public Works].¹⁰ All right, on the Public Work[s], you know, where labour, I do the labour, for the one, the Greek fella, to - putting up timber, on the barrack[s].

This Greek fella, he go, in the morning, he get a paper, he go in the toilet, read the paper (everyone laughs). I, you know, I like to do some working, I start to - putting timber on. Oh boy, the supervisor come over there. Now the supervisor there, the union, the fella the union, he's come over there, "You only labourer, not carpenter, you finish work here!" (laughs). "All right", I say, "I finish", but, my supervisor, he was Dutch. He was good fella. He said, "no worry, Marc", he said, "I give you job to you" (laughs). "I give you job to you". All right. He gave me 60 foot foundations to do, two foot wide, and two foot deep, sixteen that way, fourteen this way, sixteen this way, and fourteen this way, another fourteen in the middle here. All right. I do a beautiful floor, you know. In two day[s], I finish the job. He said, "Oh boy", he said, "You should go stay here two months, now you've got to clean up every - -" (laughs). Anyway, I stay over there another - I think about another week or so, and one, a friend of mine, work in the tunnel, you know, with a company - he was the engineer, Italia[n], he look for men. He said, "Do you want to come

¹⁰ As per his Commonwealth of Australia New South Wales Income Tax Employee's Record for the 1954/1955 financial year, Mr Pavan worked for the Department of Public Works, with the address 'P.O. Adaminaby Dam', from 10th November 1954 to 25th January 1955.

work with Rossi?" [John B. Rossi at Allied Constructions Pty Ltd].¹¹ All right, I left over there, you know, in the - in paper [document], you see, and in the afternoon I left, I finish in the Public Work[s].

[0:21:03] (I): Uh-hm.

(MP): And, in the afternoon I working in the other company [Allied Constructions Pty Ltd]. Same day! [25th January 1955]. That's right (laughs). After that, you know, I think, carry on all the time. Yes. I stay over there for about two or three months. After that, I went to French company [Etudes Et Enterprises], you know.¹² In Kenny's Knob.¹³ I do over there unto when I come back to Dubbo. Over three year[s]. Yes. I start a shaft, me and the other[s], from the bottom, right up 350 metre! In three sections.

[0:21:36] (I): So, on the Snowy Mountains Scheme?

(MP): That's right. Yes see, I take my daughter over there a few year back, to show where I been working, but you can't go down that way! After that was happened to - - -

(AP): America.

(MP): To America. You know, because he scared - anybody can go over there and can throw something, you know, you can do something to the shaft. Yes, because I like to show my daughter, "Look, I've been working that one", but now, you can't go down any more.

¹¹ As per a written personal reference dated 3rd January 1956 from John B. Rossi, Resident Engineer, Mr Pavan worked for Allied Constructions at Tumut Pond Access Tunnel as a miner from January 1955 to January 1956. As per his Commonwealth of Australia New South Wales Income Tax Employee's Record for the 1954/1955 financial year, Mr Pavan worked for Allied Constructions Pty Ltd, from 25th January 1955 to 22nd June 1955. As per his Commonwealth of Australia New South Wales Income Tax Employee's Record for the 1955/1956 financial year, Mr Pavan worked for Allied Constructions (Contractors) Pty Ltd, from 24th August 1955 to 16th December 1955.

¹² As per a Certificate of Service record, Mr Pavan, Leading Hand Miner, 1st Class, worked for Etudes Et Enterprises, T1 Power Station, Snowy Mountain Development, from 4th January 1956 to 2nd June 1959.

¹³ Address on Mr Pavan's Certificate of Service record: 'Etudes Et Enterprises, T1 Power Station, Snowy Mountain Development, Kenny's Knob, via Cabramurra 4S. N.S.W.'

[0:22:10] (I): So, they've closed the road off.

(MP): That's right.

[0:22:13] (I): So when did you return to Dubbo, from Cooma?

(MP): Because I - the fella have a property here - - -

[0:22:22] (I): Yes.

(MP): Before, when I work in the Railway, I come here, helping him, work on the garden. And that time, you know, on the veggie garden, was good money. Because there was no Cole[s], no Woolie[s], everybody supply corner shop, it make good money. And, everybody - was about 14 market garden[s] in Dubbo, everybody employ people, everybody, you know, make good money. So, when Cole[s] and Woolie[s] come in, you know at that time, there was 6,000 people in Dubbo. Now, there is about 50 [thousand], no market garden[s].

[0:23:02] (I): Uh-hm.

(MP): Because Woolie[s] and Cole[s], it killed all the little fella[s].
That's right.

[0:23:07] (I): Yes.

(MP): Yes.

[0:23:09] (I): So, when did you buy the property here at 261 Macquarie Street?

(MP): This one?

[0:23:15] (I): Yes.

(MP): (laughs)

[0:23:17] (I): Uh-hm.

(AP): When?

(RD): When?

[0:23:18] (I): When did you buy - - -

(AP): When you buy?

(MP): Ah, '59.

[0:23:22] (I): Uh-hm.

(MP): Yes, sorry. '59, I bought. Yes.

[0:23:25] (I): So - - -

(MP): But there was no[t] this two house[s]. It was only our house
(laughs).

[0:23:29] (I): So the old house on the corner of the - - -

(MP): On the corner over there, yes.

[0:23:31] (I): - side street there.

(MP): Not the [road], was not ours, there.¹⁴ That's right.

[0:23:35] (I): Then did the block, basically, go through - - -

(MP): Twenty, yes. To Tamworth Street.

[0:23:39] (I): Tamworth Street?

(MP): Twenty acres.

[0:23:41] (I) Twenty acres. Uh-hm. And did you say before that you bought it in partnership, with another man?

(MP): Yes, that's Joe [Guiseppe] Battistel.



Marcello Pavan (left) and Guiseppe Battistel with a truck loaded with lettuces at their property, before 1964.

[0:23:49] (I): Uh-hm (pause). And - (rustling paper) did you also lease another block, here as well?

¹⁴ Mr Pavan was referring to the land on the other side of Bligh Street.

(MP): Well, after, down on the Sandy Beach, over there, on the other side of the road. It was one fella, Australia[n] fella. I said to him, "You want to sell the land?" I said, I can sell the land, I can got the irrigation, because he got a pump in the river, to get - he got two block[s] on the other side. He was already – subdivide two blocks. He said, "I can sell the land", he said, irrigation, is on the other block. I can use it. He see myself have a look, he said, "Yes", he said, "I can sell". I said - well, your Dad [Renato's father Ettore De Marchi] come in - - -

(RD): Come in, yes.

(MP): That's right. And buy the plot together, there. But, before that, that land, it was belonged to Chinese people!

[0:24:46] (I): I guess, yes.

(MP): And every weekend, over there, it [they] played two-up! The Chinese people (everyone laughs). That's right. Every weekend, over there, it played two-up (laughs). Yes, the Chinese.

[0:25:00] (I): Yes, there were Chinese market gardeners in Dubbo, quite early, so - - -

(MP): Yes.

[0:25:05] (I): So, when you did have that land leased down there, was that with Guiseppe Battistel and your brother-in-law Ettore De Marchi?

(MP): Yes.

[0:25:17] (I): And it was leased from Ross Dunbar, was it?

(MP): Ross Dunbar, yes. Ross Dunbar. That's right, yes.

(RD): Purchased from him.

(AP): Yes.

(RD): Bought from him.

(MP): Yes, yes.

(AP): Yes.

[0:25:29] (I): Yes (pause). So when did you go back to Italy?

(MP): When I back to Italy? 1964.

[0:25:38] (I): Why did you go back to Italy?

(MP): (laughs). I saved two thousand pounds, to buy lovely woman!
(everyone laughs).

[0:25:48] (I): So, how did you meet your future wife? How did you meet Anna?

(MP): Well, when I'm down, back over there, because she have a brother here - I go over there, to take her - brother's regards, you know, and one day, I said to her, "You want to come in Australia?" I said "Let me know", I said. "I let you know in a week time" [she said]. After that, she said, "Yes, I'll come in Australia" (laughs).

[0:26:16] (I): Oh, that's lovely. So, when did you and your wife, Anna, return to Australia? When did you come back to Australia?

(MP): When I come back to Australia, it was - - -

(AP): 1964.

(MP): '64.

(AP): In October.

(MP): In October. You are (looks at Mrs Pavan), your birthday? On the ship.

(AP): That's right.

(MP): That's right.

[0:26:38] (I): Do you remember the name of that ship?

(AP): Oh yes, it "Galileo Galilei".

(MP): That's the one, beautiful ship.

(RD): Yes?

(MP): Yes. That's the second trip I doing, from Italy to Australia.

(AP): Italy to Australia.

(MP): Yes. Beautiful ship.

(AP): Beautiful.

(MP): Yes.

(AP): Beautiful ship, if you are - well!

[0:26:54] (I): Well off?

(MP): Yes, but Anna was homesick, she was not well! (laughs)

(AP): I was sea-sick!

(I): Oh, I see!

(AP): I was sea-sick. Yes.

[0:27:06] (I): So, did you come straight back to Dubbo? When you arrived in Australia?

(MP): Straight. Yes.

(AP): Straight.

(MP): Yes. Straight to Dubbo.

[0:27:15] (I): So, then you lived in the little old house that used to be on the corner?

(MP): That's right. Yes.

(AP): We share the house with the Bastistels. And, the Battistels went back to Italy - in '65.

(MP): At some year after, yes.

(AP): In '65.



The De Marchi, Soane, and Giovanni families in Dubbo near the Macquarie River, ca. 1954.¹⁵

¹⁵ From left at back: Aldo Mastellotto, Mrs Elisa De Marchi, Ettore De Marchi, Mrs Sloave, Toni Soave (previous owner of 261 Macquarie Street), Maria Giovanni. Front row from left: Isolina Dogao and infant, Gion Soave, Mery Soave (standing), Emidio Giovanni, Borta Giovanni, and another unknown girl.

(MP): Yes.

(AP): And - - -

(MP): Your mother?

(AP): Yes. And when we, yes - and when we came back home, we stayed together, to the house, 'till we build, where - - -

(MP): The house here.

(AP): The house here.

[0:27:55] (I): Yes, it's a lovely two storey house, here. And, I believe you told me before, that you had to build it in sections, did you? (laughs).

(MP): At that time, that time, I had a bit of trouble with the council, because, you know, you know when I'm building here, you know, one only building. I build up the garage here, in case the flood come in, I can put all my gear here. After when the garage was here, you know, I built the house.

(AP): And we had to go back and - because, before, when you bought the farm, that year, they used to go, nearly every year, under the flood. Here. But the Burrendong Dam, it wasn't built. But the dam, it was finished in 1966, I think.

(MP): Yes, yes.

(AP): And then, we didn't have any more flood[s].

(MP): And when we bought the place here, you know, '55 was flood, up to '59. Everybody said, "You're mad! You buy the flood!" (laughs).

But when I buy, you know, I never get any flood, to - - -

(AP): 'Seventy - - -

(MP): '71. Or '72.

(AP): '71 or '72.

[0:29:12] (I): February 1971, was it?

(MP): That's right.

(AP): '71.

(MP): And the Burrendong Dam, it finished, '69.

(AP): '69.

(MP): '69.

(RD): (shows a photo) Got your glasses?

(AP): Oh. That's (laughs) the "Galileo Galilei".

(RD): That's the ship.

(MP): Yes. (laughs)

[0:29:24] (I): That's lovely, isn't it? A lovely photo of the ship, from - - -

(AP): Yes.

[0:29:27] (I): Renato's phone.

(AP): Beautiful if you are well! (everyone laughs). But I did spend a lot of time in the hospital (Mr Pavan clears his throat). All across to the Red Sea, I was at the hospital, till my birthday.

[0:29:44:1] (I): Uh-hm.

(AP): On the 14 October.

(MP): That's lovely. Yes.

(AP): The nurse, she stayed on the ship, she told me, she said, "You've got to be put in the Dining Room for tea tonight". And I said, "No way I will be there, after two week I've being spend - at the hospital". And she said - I said, "Look my hair! (pause) "Look at the way I look!" And she said, "You do not have to worry about - - -". So she did take me in the - my room, and she had a hairdresser to do my hair, and a - she want me to put the best dress, in me - dress I had with me, and I didn't know what they normally do, and when we were sitting at the table, for meal, I remember, I was holding myself, you know, in the table, and, and I hear this piano chord in the back, the music, singing "Happy birthday" in Italian. And I turn around - I couldn't believe it was for me! (everyone laughs) There was a cake, and two bottles of champagne, because I turn twenty.

[0:31:09] (I): Wasn't that lovely.

(MP): That's right. In the ship.

(AP): In the ship. Yes. That was my little story. (laughs)

[0:31:16] (I): That's beautiful. So when did you have your two children, and what were their names?

(MP): Well, the first one, when you are twenty.

(AP): Was in '65. 1965.

(MP): Yes.

(AP): Mara was born - in July '65.

(MP): And Danny comes - - -

(AP): And Danny was in '67. In October, yes.

[0:31:42] (I): And what schools did they go to in Dubbo?

(AP): Both St. John's College. Mara did St. John's College 'till leaving Year 10, and then she did Year 11 and 12 in South High.¹⁶

[0:32:01] (I): South Hay?

(AP): South High, is it?

[0:32:04] (I): Oh, South High, yes, sorry. (laughs)

(AP): And Danny, he did Stannies College in Bathurst, in Year 11 and 12.¹⁷

[0:32:14] (I): Uh-hm.

(MP): After, they went - after they went, Wagga. Danny.

(AP): Oh well, then they went on, yes. Yes.

[0:32:24] (I): To do other things. So, now we might talk a bit more about your market gardening business. So, what kind of vegetables did you grow?

(MP): Oh, carrot, lettuce, cabbage, spinach, (clears throat), pumpkin, oh, a lot of, beetroot.

(AP): Onion.

(MP): Onion.

(RD): Watermelon.

(MP): Watermelon.

(RD): Tomatoes.

(MP): That's right.

¹⁶ South Dubbo High School.

¹⁷ St. Stanislaus' College, Bathurst.

(RD): Potatoes.

(MP): No, not potatoes!

(RD): Yes, you did! Down on the river.

(AP): Oh, there were potatoes in down there - - -

(MP): Oh, yes, yes, down there. That's right. Yes, down on the bottom, there.

(AP): Near to the Sandy Beach.

(MP): That's right. Yes. (laughs)

[0:32:52] (I): And grapes, was it, as well?

(RD): Grapes?

(AP): Grapes.

(MP): I have the grapes for make wine! (laughs).

[0:32:56] (I): Oh, yes. (laughs)

(AP): No. We had a table grapes - Waltham Cross.

(MP): Yes.

(AP): And, Waltham Cross, and - the Ladyfinger (pause). Yes, I can remember that.



Marcello Pavan inspecting his grapes for hail damage after a hailstorm in 2001.

[0:33:10] (I): So how many acres did you have under cultivation?

(MP): Well, it was only 20 acres here. That's right. After that, we had 30 acres over there. 50 acres altogether. Yes.

[0:33:24] (I): And - - -

(AP): But we had three families then.

[0:33:27] (I): Uh-hm.

(AP): And then, what year it was, with – 1977? yes, we sold - - -

(RD): We sold, yes.

(MP): We sold to the town.

(AP): We sold the 30 acres.

(AP): The Sandy Beach.

(MP): To the Council.

(AP): To the Council.

(MP): Yes.

(AP): And then, because us and the Battistels, we were in the one block - - -

[0:33:56] (I): Uh-hm.

(AP): So, they want to subdivide the 10 acre - - -

(MP): Each.

(AP): Each, for the right, so we - we subdivide, and then, we went for ourselves, and you know, everyone went - - -.

(S:) That's right.

(AP): In their own way.

[0:33:56] (I): Uh-hm.

(AP): So, they were from '59, you bought - - -.

(MP): Yes.

(AP): 'Till '77, with - with someone else. (dog barks) Yes.

[0:34:24] (I): So did you also have some property out on the Narromine Road, at one stage?

(MP): Yes. Yes. 40 acres. Yes. For about 10 or more years.

(AP): '78 we bought it.

(MP): Yes. '78. (dog barks)

(AP): And we sold - - - (pauses). I should have, make it, made (everyone laughs) - fresh up my memory, before, so - I can't remember, now.

(MP): It's a while - I can't remember.

(AP): 10 year.

[0:34:56] (I): So about 10 years, was it? From about 1978, maybe?

(AP): '78 to '88. Yes. I think it, that, we about there, 10 to 12 years, we had at that farm.

(MP): That's right. Yes.

[0:35:05] (I): Is that were Lovell's Turf is now, is it?

(AP): That's right.

(MP): Yes.

(AP): Lovell's. Lovell's Turf.

[0:35:12] (I): And what kind of vegetables did you grow out there?

(MP): Oh, anything like here. That's right. Actually, the soil over there was a little bit sandy, and you grow a lot more good veggie over there, in the winter time, because the soil, it get warmer very quicker. That's right. You put in a lot of lettuce over there in the winter time.

(AP): And carrot[s].

(MP): And carrot[s]. That's right.

(AP): Because, the carrot[s] over there, you dig out in the winter, because there was a lot of sandy soil, they were lovely and smooth and - - -.

(MP): Clean.

(AP): Beautiful.

(MP): More clean.

(AP): Beautiful carrots, there, than here.

[0:35:49.5] (I): And so how did you water your crops?

(MP): Water? (dog barks)

(RD): How did you irrigate them?

[0:35:57] (I): Yes, sorry.

(AP): We flood in Macquarie Street, and sprinkle in Narromine Road.

[0:36:10] (I): So, did you have, sort of, like, metal pipes and things up and down in the rows, here?

(AP): Yes. Yes.



Cabbages growing on the Pavans' property, with irrigation pipe.

[0:36:16] (I) And some sort of a sprinkler system out at - - -

(AP): Yes.

[0:36:18] (I) The Narromine Road one.

(AP): Yes. Oh, mainly in the summer, we used to flood, because, you know, the lettuce and the cabbage, they absorb a lot better in the summer, the one underneath, it is to keep it, you know - - -

(MP): The water on the top.

(MP): So they go bad, the water staying, and they hot, you know, they go bad. That's right. You give you flood - you know. That's right.

[0:36:45] (I): Um, before we talk about the floods, just while you are still talking about the property out on the Narromine Road, did you have a really bad hailstorm or something out there, that you mentioned to me, before? (laughs)

(MP): One hailstorm.

(AP): And it was eighty - - -

(MP): Seven.

(AP): '87. We never forget that!

(MP): That's right.

(AP): We had a big order, it was the long weekend in October, and I never forget that! (laughs). It was a - we had a big order, and we thought, well, we go with a truck this morning, so we can fit everything in the truck. And, we had rain here. The more we go toward the - - -.

(MP): The property.

(AP): - the farm over there, we saw branch[es] broken, leave[s] in the middle of the road, and we thought, "Oh, dear! That doesn't look good!" We opened the gate, we didn't say a "boo" [to] each other, (laughs), we drove around, and what we saw, we saw everything destroyed there. So, we shut the gate. For two week[s], we never going back.

(MP): That's right.

(AP): The hailstorm destroy everything.

(MP): Everything, everything.

(AP): Even the carrots, that were under - under the ground. So, this much - you know, about two centimetres from the ground, had been chopped up.

(RD): Chopped up.

(MP): That's right. That's right.

(AP): The neighbour, she said, "I was going to ring you, that night, but I thought you - we'd better leave you (laughs), to have a good night's sleep!" (everyone laughs). It hurt to take!

(MP): That's right.

(AP): You know, they can - we can see their side. Yes. It really break your heart. But - - -.

(MP): Oh, well.

(AP): You know, it meant to be, that way. The veggie - Australia is such a big country, you need it here and there, to have a - a bad luck, you know, in the veggie line, so the price - it go up! (everyone laughs). So, the year, after with - the dry, the farm, we put it in, a lot of veggie, and goodness me, you know, because there was a lot of hailstorm around, a lot of damage, and water, and - we never [before] sell a carrot, a bag of carrot[s], for either - up to \$25 dollar a bag!

[0:39:17] (I): For carrots.

(MP): That's right.

(AP): For carrot[s]. We couldn't believe, you know!

(MP): Oh yes, and the spinach, it was - - -

(AP): The veggie, and the spinach, it were a couple of dollar[s].

(MP): That's right, yes. Yes.

(AP): Which we only get at [got] 50 cents, we used to have at 50 cents. So, that's why, we thought, you know (laughs), when you hear disaster here and there, good luck for the people! (laughs). You know. Yes. For the price changing, anyway, after the disaster. Sorry, you can script it out! (everyone laughs).

[0:39:55] (I): No, that's wonderful! No. So, we might talk about the floods again, now. So, you had your first flood through here in, when you were here, in February 1971. So I imagine you lost a lot of fruit and vegetables and things in that particular flood?

(MP): Oh, yes. That's right. When the flood come in, you lost everything, because it bring lots of dirt, and you know, and when the water go on the top, you know, it stay over there for two or three day[s] - all go bad. That's right. It go rotten.

(AP): And what about where we're still the three partners. The grapes. In February, I think, it January or February, we got a flood. I remember that Danny was only three year[s] old. And the grapes, they were all mature - - -

(MP): Yes. Yes.

(AP): They were pulled.

(MP): Yes.

(AP): So, I wonder what the year - well, three year old, Danny - because, we had the paper [newspaper article].¹⁸

[0:41:08] (I): Yes, it would have been that February 1971, then, I think, that Danny was born - in 1967.

(AP): And then the men, they had to go - went to, cut all this timber in the forest, to put the grapes higher.

(MP): That's right.

(AP): Do you remember? Do you remember, Renato?

(RD): Yes.

(AP): They put it higher.

(MP): You remember that?

(RD): Yes.

(AP): Yes.

(RD): Yes. Because they were all this high, I suppose [about 6 feet].

(MP): That's right.

(RD): All under the water. So they raised them all up. [They were raised to about 10 feet high].¹⁹

[0:41:34] (I): So they'd be above the flood water next time.

(MP): Yes.

(AP): Yes.

[0:41:38] (I): That's good thinking! (everyone laugh).

(AP): At least we had a safe place if a flood did come again! (everyone laughs). We can still make the wine! (laughs)

[0:41:50] (I): So, did you have this house built by then? By the 1971 flood?

(AP): Yes, yes, yes. We were in the house.

[0:41:58] (I): So, how did you sell your produce? Was the - - -

(AP): Why, it was a good year. What year started the new, the - market? We used to sell every two week[s] in the market[s] they

¹⁸ 'Marcello can take a few knocks', *Daily Liberal*, 25 February 1971, p. 7.

¹⁹ Heights provided by Renato De Marchi (Email, 12 August 2018).

used to have in the Showground. We used to take our produce there.

But then, they changed, and they put it, along to -

(MP): The riverbank.

(AP): Where they are now, to the riverbank.

[0:42:29] (I): So near the Visitors' Information Centre area, now?

(AP): Yes. But, before, it was at the - - -

(MP): Showground.

(AP): The Showground, in a pavilion, there.

(MP): Yes.

(AP): And, that it was - it should be, 10 year[s] before.

(MP): Gladly. (laughs)

(AP): Because, it was hard work, but it was the satisfaction, to take the veggie there - it come back with empty truck. We used to sell, you know, in the cheaper – cheaper, but a good price, because, it was cash money, for example, and – and come home, everything, everything - - -.

(MP): Empty! (laughs)

(AP): Is gone. Is not destroyed, or - - -

(MP): That's right.

(AP): Or you can pick the next leaf of lettuce - especially the lettuce, if you are not cutting - when is the time for cut - the next week - - -

(MP): Is no good.

(AP): You never cut any more. Because, the heat, and - - -

[0:43:27] (I): Yes.

(AP): It doesn't keep, anyway.

(MP): No. You've got to cut when it's ready. That's right.

[0:43:32] (I): So, did you sell some produce from under the house, here? Did you keep some, and sell any from here, as well?

(MP): Yes, yes.

(AP): Well that - it was before.

[0:43:38] (I): Did you sell anything from the house?

(MP): Yes.

[0:43:40] (I): So, that was before, was it?

(AP): Yes, and it was before, when we had the three partner[s].

(MP): That's right.

[0:43:45] (I): Uh-hm.

(AP): Between the '59 till '77 (pause) we used to have a wonderful - -
-

(MP): Income.

(AP): Wonderful income, and we had people come from the farm, we tell order from other people, from the farm, and they usually pay in a big bulk, sort of thing. Two, three, bag of carrots, two, three, case[s] of lettuce, and - we had a lovely - quite a few year[s], you know, we did wonderful – wonderful for - - -

[0:44:21] (I): So they just used to come to the property here, and - - -

(AP): Yes, yes.

[0:44:24] (I): And do their shopping from here.

(AP): Yes. Yes. Yes, that's right. Yes. That is also - - -

(RD): So it was under that - under that house, on the other side? [The shop was under the Battistels' new house next to the Pavans' house].

(MP): That's right, yes.

(AP): They used to come that way - - -

(MP): Yes. On this side (laughs). That's right.

(AP): The driveway over on this way.²⁰

[0:44:39] (I): Uh-hm.

(AP): So, it was straight. We were, the three of us, selling in the shop, plus we had on the Friday - Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, another lady. And the men were packing.

(MP): The carrot[s], everything.

²⁰ The shop was on the ground floor of the Battistels' new house, and customers could drive down the right hand side of the Battistels' house, and drive out past the Pavans' house (Email from Renato De Marchi, 12 August 2018).

(AP): The carrot[s], and - and it was - a good flow, innovative, then. Yes - yes, it was a good time. A good year! (everyone laughs) A good few years, yes.

[0:45:11] (I): So, then, did you have floods in about 1998, and then in two in 1990, was it?

(MP): Yes.



Marcello Pavan on the balcony at the back of his house, during the 1990 flood.

[0:45:18] (I): And, then a big one in, 2010?

(MP): That's right. That's the last one, yes.

[0:45:27] (I): So - how was your house affected by these floods? (laughs)

(AP): Oh - - -

(MP): Well, look - only, you've got to clean up, down the bottom [in the garage], you know, because the water never come, like in '55. You know, (clears throat), and you - that's what you got to do! Take out everything down the bottom, and bring up to the top [to the house].

(RD): Try and move everything up here?

(AP): Yes.

(MP): That's right.

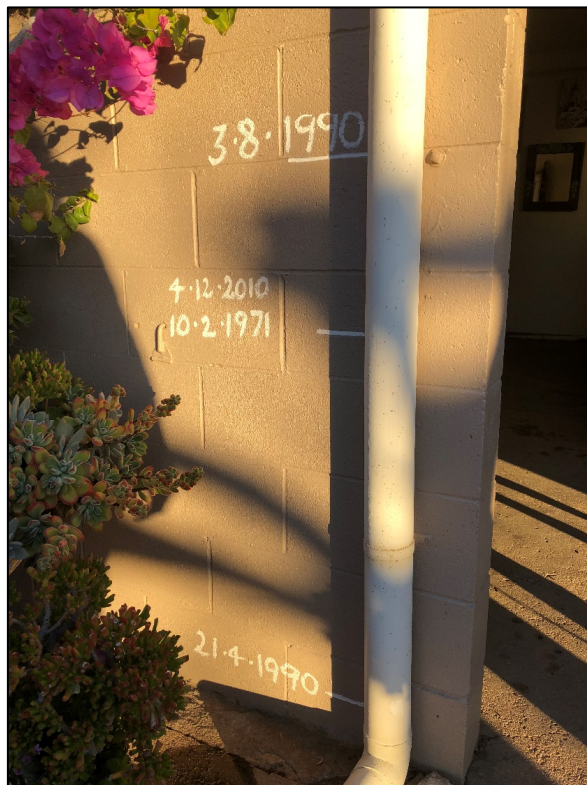
(RD): But it made a mess downstairs, didn't it, all the mud, and - - -

[0:45:58] (I): Yes.

(MP): Oh, yes! Oh yes.

(RD): - And silt, and ugh - - -

(MP): That's right. You got to use a lot of water after (laughs), to wash to mud! (laughs). Yes. (clears throat)



Flood markers on the side of the garage door underneath the Pavans' house, July 2018.

(AP): A lot of people think, you know, after the flood, some flood, they bring a lot of goodness.

(MP): No.

(AP): Not for us, really. (half laughs) Not for us, because - where it come it in, it come from the weir - and the back, here - it was quite a current that went through, so, it take away a lot of the soil.

(MP): The soil, see - it been, it been ploughed, and they [the floods] take away the soil. Yes.

(AP): But, up - up further, to the river, it's a bit higher, so it's not so bad. But where the flood go through, it always leave a big mess.

[0:46:52] (I): So, have you had any problems with grasshoppers, or - over the years?

(AP): Grasshoppers? Oh! (laughs)

(MP): One year, (laughs), it clean up everything! (laughs) Oh, yes.

(RD): I remember that year! [2004]

(MP): I can't remember, now, what year, you know, it start - I plant the cabbage, you know, and next morning, no more cabbage! (everyone laughs) Nothing! (laughs). That's right, the grasshopper[s].

(AP): We had a lot of experiences even with the mice! With the mice.

[Early 1970s]

(MP): That's right, yes. Yes.

(AP): We had a lot of the beans.

(MP): Yes.

(AP): Where the big olive tree, there. And your mum [Renato's mother], she come in the morning, to pick the beans. "Ah, where's the beans here?"

(MP): All was gone! [laughs]

(AP): All chewed up, in the - in the little tiny bit[s]. [Mr Pavan laughs]. Worse than grasshopper[s]! They chewed up everything! They - went through it overnight.

(MP): Yes.

[0:47:51] (I): So, a mouse plague.

(RD): Mouse plague.

(AP): The mice.

(MP): That's right.

(RD): Do you remember the grasshopper plague, where you here then?

[0:47:57] (I): I can, vaguely remember, one in our back yard of my house, over in West Dubbo, yes.²¹

²¹ The interviewer remembers the grasshopper plague in Dubbo in 2004.

(RD): Ah.

[0:48:01] (I): So, yes.

(RD): Because the streets were like - carpeted in grasshoppers, it was unbelievable!

(MP): Oh, yes.

(AP): We - we were chipping, thinning out the lettuce - every week we had to sew our crop of lettuce, to have a lettuce, continually.

(MP): Every week. Yes.

(AP): And, I said to Marc, "Oh, boy. You hear, this grasshopper, come out!" And - anyway, he said, "Oh well, I let the water go, so they can scare away, [inaudible words], you know, you can scare away" [the grasshoppers]. We come (laughs), we come home, for lunch, we go back to finish the [thinning] out the lettuce - - -

(MP): No more!

(AP): - No more lettuce! (everyone laughs).

(MP): That's right. Oh yes.

(A)): Clean it up!

(MP): Clean up very quick!

(AP): In a few hours, they clean it up!

(MP): Yes.

(AP): Everything! (pause) Yes, we went through all of that, as well.

(MP): Oh, yes.

[Short break in recording] (sound of door opening, and Renato De Marchi and Mrs Pavan speaking as he leaves, in the background)

[0:48:58] (I): I hadn't thought about mice!

(MP): Oh yes. Had trouble with the mice.

[0:48:58] (I): Yes. Because we used to have problems out at the farm, with mice, actually, when I grew up, too.

(MP): That's right. Yes.

[0:49:06] (I): In the grain sheds, and things. (sound of door closing in the background)

(MP): Yes. Oh, no, it was very bad, that year, with the mice. Yes.
(clears throat) Yes.

[0:49:12] (I): No.

(AP): (whispers as she returns to her chair) Sorry about that.

[0:49:18] (I): So, you had problems with floods, and mouse plagues, and grasshopper plagues, and hail! I suppose there was drought years, as well? (Interviewer and Mr Pavan laugh)

(AP): Now - the drought, we sold everything.

(MP): That's right.

[0:49:33] (I): So when did you retire from doing market gardening?

(MP): Oh, well, because, you know, (clears throat), I have a little bit - too much, for me, working, and I say, "No more, now". That's right. Yes.

(AP): I think what stop us mainly - ah, just the year before, we decided to sell, we had to buy water. And we finished our, um, quote - - -

(MP): Quote, quota - the water, on the river. Yes.

(AP): And, and we find out, you know, to pay water, continually - the price of the veggie, and get the water, and we used to do the work ourselves, we thought, "It's not going to carry on". So - it was time for us, to - - -

(MP): To, to stop.

(AP): To leave.

(MP): Yes.

(AP): For, you know, age, plus all these expenses, plus all the hard work, and not to get any -

(MP): Any income.

(AP): Income.

[0:50:41] (I): Yes.

(AP): So, that's what - it stop us, mainly.

[0:50:46] So, was that about 2007, or - - -

(AP): 2007. I think it was two thousand - between 2005, 2007. We notice we had an - also - a lot of the seed, the pricing went sky high! You know. I remember, we used to buy it with two to three hundred dollar[s] - to buy, you know, some of the seed, you know. Which, it changed the price to seven or eight hundred dollars! You know, in the same price, we used to buy the same seed, in the - in the year, it went up, so much - - -

(MP): Lot, lot of. That's right, yes.

(AP): And we thought, we are - we doing the wrong thing. You know, at the end of the month, we used to look at the income, and the expenses. And I said, "All the hard - our hard work, where's the money?" So, that's just another thing.

(MP): Yes.

[0:51:53] (I): So I suppose you were probably pleased with that decision, when the 2010 flood come along, you weren't actually, still, in market gardening?

(AP): No. No. (pause) We - actually, that time, Marc was quite unwell. He had to spend a bit of time at the hospital, for different things. And, everything come - - -

(MP): Everything come to the end. Yes (laughs)

[0:52:20] (I): So, did you obtain Australian citizenship?

(AP): Yes. What do - - -

[0:52:29] (I): Oh, did you become Australian citizens?

(AP): Oh, yes, yes. After 5 year[s], was here.

(MP): Oh, yes.

(AP): After 5 year[s], you know, you can apply for that.

(AP): Marc did the same thing.

(MP): Oh, yes. That's right.

(AP): Yes, we did.

(MP): You see, after the 12 year[s], I been back home, in Italy, with an Australia[n] passport. That's right.

(AP): And I did too.

(MP): That's right, yes.

(AP): I did too. Which - really affect, affect my brother, my own (Mr Pavan laughs) - and Mum and Dad! (everyone laughs). "Oh, you got an Australian passport!" (laughs) "And are you still Italian, aren't you?" (everyone laughs)

[0:53:08] (I): So what year was that, when you went back - to Italy?

(AP): That - it was '73.

(I): Uh-hm.

(AP): The daughter was seven, and -

(MP): That's right.

(AP): And Danny was five. We had a lovely trip, then.

[0:53:24] (I): So, is there anything else you'd like to talk about, that we haven't covered in this interview?

(AP): Well, what we can say - I'm 54 year[s], I'm here [in Australia], and you are sixty - - -?

(MP): 64.

(AP): 64. No, 67, you've got - longer than I.

(MP): Yes.

(AP): Yes.

(MP): No.

[0:53:50.1] (I): That's a long time.

(AP): And - - -

(MP): Not 64. Sixty - sorry, 66.

(AP): 66. Yes. And I'm 54 - year[s] I'm here. And, I can't say, you know, the people of Australia - it was hard, at the first few year[s], not having language - it was hard. But, having our business, in the market garden, and had a little shop, it help us - it help me, anyway, a lot. Learning, and meeting a lot of people, and I did meet a lot - wonderful, country people, there still today, you know, after all these

year[s], some of them, they still recognize you in - and, we have to say, we are in the best country in the world, anyway!

(MP): Oh, yes.

(AP): And - in Dubbo, it's our second home town, anyway.

(MP): Ah, no. I like Dubbo, when I come here, and I'm still here in Dubbo. That's right. Now, it beautiful.

(AP): Actually, for me now, I like to get close to the family, because, we only the two of us, in Dubbo. But, unfortunately Marc said, "This is the way I want to live, this is the way I want to be". And - - -

(MP): Look. Alright, I can go, I can go, up to my daughter over there. You know. I can make a friend over there, but the friend start to talk about 3 or 4 year[s] back, I don't know anything about! You know. I can go to my son's - same thing! Here, I can talk 60 year back!

[0:56:03] (I) Yes.

(MP): That's right. I've got so many friend[s] here.

(AP): And we meet a lot - we mix a lot with our church. And we meet a lot of lovely people, and I have to say, in our home, we receive so many - priests and, people, at the least, people come in out of the people, and feel at home, and I love to - - -. Well, it must be - it must be a blessing, to have the people like that, to come - how I can put it? (Mr Pavan laughs). You know, we are very lucky, anyway. We are very lucky, to mix with the lovely people, and we've got a lovely family, even if our families are not a lot around, but, they are not that far. Like, I left Italy, and - and I couldn't go back quicker enough for a lot of the thing[s] - at least my family -

(MP): Oh, yes.

(AP): - they can -

(MP): Yes. You see, I am being - - -

(AP): They can come in a few hours, they are home!

(MP): I'm being involved with the St. Vincent de Paul, you know, and every Friday, for about three and a half hours, I go over there, you

know, help the people, you know. Give you food - or clothes. That's right.

[0:57:36] (I): So where's that at, sorry? Where do you go on Fridays?

(AP): St. Vincent de Paul.

[0:57:43] (I): Oh, St. Vincent de Paul.

(MP): Yes, St. Vincent de Paul.

[0:57:45] (I): Yes.

(AP): Yes.

[0:57:46] (I): 'Cause I think you've done quite a bit of volunteer work over the years, haven't you Mr Pavan?

(MP): Yes.

[0:57:51] (I): Mr Pavan. So, so yes.

(AP): We try to do our best for - for our community.

(MP): That's right.

(AP): And we've got a lovely community, anyway. With, you know - at least if we go to the church, it's a lot like another family, there. We love - we just miss our grandchildren.

[0:58:14] (I): Yes, that would be hard, not having them in the same town.

(MP): Yes.

(AP): But anyway, we lucky, we still in contact, and - with technology today, you know, you've only got to press the button, and you can talk to them.

(MP): Oh yes. (laughs)

(AP): And, it's wonderful.

(MP): Different - different when I come in Australia! You know, when I come in Australia, to have a [communication] from here to Italy, take about three months! (laughs) Yes, because everything go with the ship!

[0:58:45] (I): So you would have to send it by letter.

(MP): Yes. That's right.

(MP): Now, you can get the mobile phone, you can talk, and you can see the people! (laughs)

[0:58:53] (I): Yes, it's amazing.

(MP): Yes. Oh, yes.

(AP): I think we've got enough, here now.

[0:58:59] (I): Well, Mr and Mrs Pavan, thank you very much for your time, this afternoon. It's been very enjoyable, speaking with you.

(MP): That's good.

[0:59:06] (I): Thank you.

(AP): Thank you, too!

(MP): Thank you.

(AP): For putting up with us, and (Mr Pavan laughs) - and we've got a box of chocolates, and we should share the box of chocolates!²²
(everyone laughs) Thank you, Helen.

This story will form part of Macquarie Regional Library's Oral history Project. The interview was conducted by Helen Thompson on the 9 July 2018.

²² This discussion relates to a box of chocolates that the interviewer gave Mr and Mrs Pavan as a thank you present before the interview.