

EI-468

JAMES (HERBERT AMERIGO) J. PAVAN
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INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PhD
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ITALY, 1932
AGE 3
PASSAGE ON "LA SAVOIE"

LEVINE: This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service,
and today is April 26, 1994. I'm here with James
Pavan. We're in Staten Island, Mr. Pavan's home. Uh,
Mr. Pavan came from Italy in 1932 when he was three-
and-a-half years old.

PAVAN: Well, I didn't come from Italy. We, my mother took us
to visit her mother and her uncles.

LEVINE: In . . .

PAVAN: Yeah.

LEVINE: In the United States.

PAVAN: No, we lived in the United States.

LEVINE: Oh, you were born in the United States.

PAVAN: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. Then you went to Italy when you were . . .

PAVAN: Yeah. My mother took the three of us, that's the, uh . . .

LEVINE: The twins, your brothers.

PAVAN: Right.

LEVINE: And you.

PAVAN: And we stayed there for about a year-and-a-half.

LEVINE: I see. So when you came back you came to Ellis Island, through Ellis Island.

PAVAN: Right.

LEVINE: And so if you were there for about a year-and-a-half, you were roughly five years old.

PAVAN: No, I'd say probably close to four.

LEVINE: Okay. So you were four years old when you went through Ellis Island.

PAVAN: Right.

LEVINE: And came back to this country?

PAVAN: Uh-huh.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, it sounds, it seems to me that you have a better than average memory, so even though you were young, there'll be some things that you remember about Italy and about coming back.

PAVAN: Oh, yeah. Uh . . .

LEVINE: Let's start at the beginning with your birth date, and where you were born.

PAVAN: Uh, to be exact, 55 Wharton Street in Lower Manhattan.

LEVINE: Huh.

PAVAN: In the house.

LEVINE: (she laughs) And have you heard any stories about your birth? Were there any, was there anything that your mother would tell about the day you were born, or anything like that? Sometimes . . .

PAVAN: No, the only stories she, uh, she ever told me, she went shopping one day, and she left me out in the, uh,

in the baby carriage, and I'm not bragging, but apparently I was a good looking kid. Was. And somebody tried to kidnap me.

LEVINE: Really? When you were an infant?

PAVAN: She said I was about six months old.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

PAVAN: And . . .

LEVINE: What, she saw them do it, and . . .

PAVAN: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: Recovered you?

PAVAN: Uh-huh. (they laugh) She was small, but she was tough.

LEVINE: Okay. And, so you, and what was your birth date?

PAVAN: Uh, my first name was Herbert Amerigo Pavan, and the reason my father named me Herbert, because the first time he voted, and Herbert Hoover was elected that day, I had it changed subsequently, but that was it.

LEVINE: And did, and why did he name you Amerigo? Do you

know?

PAVAN: For America.

LEVINE: He had come . . .

PAVAN: Because he came, he came here in 1926, then he sent for my mother who came here in 1927.

LEVINE: And you were the oldest child.

PAVAN: Yeah. Well, there's eighteen months' difference between us.

LEVINE: And what's the date of your birth, the day you were born?

PAVAN: It was a Tuesday, November 5th, election day, 1928.

LEVINE: Okay. And, uh, let's see. Do you remember anything before you left the United States and went to Italy?

PAVAN: Mmm, not really, no.

LEVINE: Now, what was the reason why, why you went to Italy at that time, when you were three?

PAVAN: Well, it wasn't my reason, it was my mother's reason. She wanted to see her mother and her brothers.

LEVINE: And . . .

PAVAN: She just wanted to visit.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So you and your twin brothers.

PAVAN: Right.

LEVINE: And your mother.

PAVAN: Uh-huh.

LEVINE: Went over.

PAVAN: Right.

LEVINE: And your father stayed here?

PAVAN: Well, he had to work.

LEVINE: Yeah. Uh-huh. Okay. What was your father's name?

PAVAN: Isadore, Isadoro. There was an O at the end instead of an E.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And, uh, your mother's name?

PAVAN: Palmira Radegonda, well, Pavan.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And, uh, now, is this what you just said?
Yeah, Pal . . .

PAVAN: Palmira.

LEVINE: Yeah. Why don't you spell it for the tape?

PAVAN: P-A-L-M-I-R-A.

LEVINE: And her first name, how do you spell that?

PAVAN: No, that was her maiden name. Palmira was her first name.

LEVINE: Oh, oh, okay. So what, would you spell her maiden name, then, for the tape?

PAVAN: And, uh, what was your mother like when you were a little boy? How do you remember your mother?

LEVINE: Very sweet, but she was always very sick. She had all kinds of stomach problems. She died young, forty-eight. But, uh, there wasn't anything she wouldn't do for you. The best cook in the world.

LEVINE: Do you remember any things that she cooked when you were little that you liked?

PAVAN: Oh, God. Homemade ravioli. You didn't buy them frozen like you do now. And, uh, oh, when we went through the Depression it was like macaroni five days

a week, but then on Sunday you had a meal you wouldn't believe. And another thing I couldn't forget, I used to love to play ball, and we'd have a meal at twelve o'clock on the button, appetizers, you know, cold cuts and, uh, macaroni, and meat of one kind or another, and now that I look back I say how could you go out and play softball at two o'clock? (they laugh) But, uh, as I said, uh, she was always very sick, and we moved, my wife and I, we moved here on May 1, 1958, and she was in the hospital. She passed away two weeks later. And . . .

LEVINE: Was she living with you at that time?

PAVAN: No. No, she was living with my father.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, um, was she a religious woman?

PAVAN: Uh, they were religious to a point, like, I had friends of mine say they were Roman Catholics, like I am. And I says, "Yes, you're N.P."

LEVINE: Which is?

PAVAN: Non-practicing.

LEVINE: I see. (she laughs)

PAVAN: Uh, they sent us to parochial school, I went to Catholic high school. Then on my own I went to Manhattan College with, you know, Catholic. But when they came from Italy, the religious orders in Italy were overbearing and all they cared for was themselves. So they never could practice, although they believed.

LEVINE: Okay. Um, let's see. How about grandparents? Did you know your grandparents at all when you were little?

PAVAN: Uh, I knew my grandmother in Italy, my grandfather I knew very shortly when we went there, and he died at the dinner table. He choked.

LEVINE: Were you at the dinner table?

PAVAN: It was a great big dinner, and that was their practice, then. They would, you know, invite everybody, all of them, it was a small town.

LEVINE: What was the name of the town in Italy where you were?

PAVAN: Uh, Bannia, B-A-N-N-I-A. It's in the province of Udine, U-D-I-N-E. Beautiful country, oh.

LEVINE: Describe it what it looks like, looked like.

PAVAN: It was just south of Austria and the Alps. Now, my father's house, which he sold to my uncle on my mother's side, was, I'd say, uh, a small mansion, marble floors, and my brothers and I slept upstairs, you looked out, and you could see the snow on the Alps. It was absolutely gorgeous. In fact, the thing I remember most about that house, my brother George, well, I can't tell which one now.

LEVINE: What are your brothers' names? George and . . .

PAVAN: Alfred. Alfred, uh, passed away. (he clears his throat) He had a bad habit, sleepwalking. Now, we were upstairs, and we had this curved staircase, and this one, early in the morning, I heard this noise, and here he is, walking in his sleep. And I see him walking towards the stairs, and I tried to grab him. I didn't. And he went bbbbbbbb, all the way down. Fortunately, I guess at that age you don't get hurt that much. But, uh, there's so many things I remember about Italy at that stage. My, uh, uncle had, who owned the house then, had this tank, it was about six feet in diameter, in the backyard. And you know what

was in it? Trout and eels. So whenever they wanted a meal, get the net, bingo. And in front of the house there was a brook, and you could see the eels. I love eel. You know, a lot of people think that they're not that delicious, but, anyway, and whenever they ran short they'd go in the brook in front of the house, bingo. In, in the tank.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything else about the food when you were in Italy?

PAVAN: Mmm, not the first, not when I was three.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything else about the town, uh, what, did people, were people farmers? What did people do?

PAVAN: Basically they were farmers, dairy farmers. And, uh, well, I had two uncles, and the one thing I remember most was my mother getting so mad at them. They were her brothers. And this one day they dressed me in a white, no, she did, in a white velvet suit. Well, shorts and, they took me hunting. (Dr. Levine laughs) When I came back, I was muddy, and she let them have it.

LEVINE: What were you hunting?

PAVAN: They were hunting rabbits. I wasn't. They were. But they'd drag me along and, through mud and, you know, whatever.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything else about your uncles?

PAVAN: Um, they were like my twin brothers. Black and white. One was the nicest, and the other was, you know, somebody that sometimes you wouldn't trust.

LEVINE: What were your uncles' names?

PAVAN: Uh, Oswaldo, and Francesco.

LEVINE: Did they . . .

PAVAN: Razzegunda[ph].

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Did they take you places with them, besides going hunting? Did they ever take you along anywhere else?

PAVAN: Hmm, not that I can really remember.

LEVINE: And what did they do for work in Italy?

PAVAN: Well, everybody in Italy worked in the, well, you

either were a farmer, or you worked in Torazzo[ph].
You know where Torazzo[ph] is?

LEVINE: And, uh, let's see. Your grand . . . (disturbance
to the microphone) Okay. Uh, so your mother went to
see her mother?

PAVAN: And her brothers.

LEVINE: And her brothers.

PAVAN: My uncles.

LEVINE: Right. And what do you remember about your
grandmother?

PAVAN: She, the thing I remembered most, she favored the
uncle I didn't like. (they laugh) For some reason
or other. But, uh . . . (disturbance to the
microphone)

LEVINE: Maybe we can pause for a second. This seems to be on
back . . . (break in tape) Okay. Uh, so you were
talking about your grandmother, that your mother went
to see. Do you have any memories of her over there?

PAVAN: Hmm, not really, not over there.

LEVINE: Later she came over here?

PAVAN: Yeah, for, uh, while I was in the service, when I came home she was living with us, but she didn't like, uh, well, she didn't have any friends really, and she decided to go back.

LEVINE: Okay. Uh, is there anything else you remember about, uh, what people did in the town, maybe for recreation, for amusement, uh . . .

PAVAN: At that point in time, no.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, you remember a lot, for a three-year-old. My gosh! Is there anything else you can think of before we talk about coming back here?

PAVAN: Hmm, not off the top of my head.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, if you think of something. Okay. So then your mother stayed for a while, and then she just decided it was time to come back here?

PAVAN: Yeah, she just wanted to visit, as I says, her mother and brothers. And, uh, I don't think and, again I'm supposing, I don't think she was very comfortable here.

LEVINE: Oh. Why do you say that?

PAVAN: Well, uh, we were living in Little Italy. By the way, I never changed my name. It was always pavan. If You want a little story?

LEVINE: Yeah.

PAVAN: The last time Italy won a war was in 1870, believe it or not. And they fought Austria. And they annexed the southern part of Austria. So my great-great-grandparents were Austrian, then my grandparents became, you know, were born in what was now Italy, and my mother and father were born in Italy. And people keep asking me, "When did you change your name? It must have been Pavonne, Pavanni?" Never. It actually was an Austrian name.

LEVINE: So, uh, let's see. Do you remember the name of the ship that you came back on?

PAVAN: The Savoy.

LEVINE: What do you remember about it?

PAVAN: I got lost on it. (Dr. Levine laughs) No, I really did. I, you know, I started wandering around and, uh,

every corridor looks the same, and back and forth, back and forth. I started crying. That I'll never forget. And the steward took me by the hand, and fortunately he knew where our room was, and he led me back. And that's the only thing I remember about being on board that ship.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you remember the accommodations? Were you in steerage, or were you in a cabin?

PAVAN: In a cabin.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So your mother, you think your mother had second thoughts about coming back here?

PAVAN: No, no. She, uh, she did what she wanted to do, and she came back, and then we lived in, uh, then it was Bleeker Street or Mulberry, you know, down in Little Italy.

LEVINE: Could you describe what Little Italy was like when you were a boy?

PAVAN: Hmm, I can remember where we lived. It was an apartment house, and there was one bathroom, and that was at the end of the hall. So if you had to go bad, and there were a couple of people waiting in front of

you. But, uh . . .

LEVINE: Was this in one of those tenement buildings? Was it, how many apartments were in there?

PAVAN: Oh, God, I couldn't even guess. But, uh, it was just, uh, at that point in time, a comfortable place to live and, uh, people started coming over, you know, immigrants, that my parents knew, and they all settled down there. And then after a while it became one happy family. All I can remember was a happy time, and, you know, other than anything specific.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, I jumped ahead a little bit. Tell me, do you remember when the boat, The Savoy, came into the New York Harbor?

PAVAN: You know, it's funny you ask that question. I was just wondering the same thing, as to how we got to Ellis Island, and I just can't remember.

LEVINE: Well, uh, do you remember Ellis Island at all?

PAVAN: Oh, yes. (he laughs) Very definitely. Uh, I don't know if I told you this story before, but when you got to Ellis Island, you had to have a bath. Did I?

LEVINE: No.

PAVAN: No? And . . . (he clears his throat) The matron would give you a bath, and then you'd go out. And she gave my brother Alfred a bath. My brother George didn't want to be seen naked in front of a strange woman, at least. And all, he went into the bath, and all of a sudden I heard this shouting and screaming. This poor matron came out. She was soaked to the skin. He saw her . . . Vroom! And he just showered her. "I can't give him a bath!" And, uh, my mother had to do it, after she took hers. And . . .

LEVINE: So everybody had a bath, and then what happened?

PAVAN: There are blanks. We obviously got back to, uh, New York, where we lived, you know, downtown.

LEVINE: Did somebody meet you and your mother and brothers at Ellis Island? Do you remember that?

PAVAN: All I can remember is being there.

LEVINE: Can you, do you remember what it looked like, at all, to a little boy coming through?

PAVAN: Mmm, all I can remember was that big bath. Oh,

there's that picture I, my daughter brought.

LEVINE: Isn't that nice?

PAVAN: Because we went there two years ago, my older daughter. And, uh, well, a lot of it's closed now, except for the main building. And she came two weeks ago. And, bingo.

LEVINE: So this is Ellis Island month. Okay. Well, um, so, uh, let's see, you, um, you got, you're not sure how you got from Ellis Island to Little Italy that day?

PAVAN: No. I assume it would have to be some kind of a ferry.

LEVINE: Do you remember the reunion with your father? Did you remember him at all?

PAVAN: Hmm, not really. No.

LEVINE: Do you remember what it was like getting used to having him around after you came back?

PAVAN: Oh, that was no problem. I never had a problem with my father.

LEVINE: What kind of a man was he? How would you describe

him?

PAVAN: Very kind, hardworking, too hard. And, uh, I'd say, now, this is, I'd say a loving husband, a loving father, only one time . . . (he clears his throat)
Did he ever lay a hand on me, and I was definitely wrong. He only slapped me once my whole life.

LEVINE: Do you remember the occasion?

PAVAN: Yeah. We were going to see my uncle and, well, his brother and their family in Hoboken, and he said, "You be downstairs at six o'clock." So what do we do? My brothers and I, we went down to what we used to call The White Mountains. It was an empty block and literally made of rock.

LEVINE: In Hoboken?

PAVAN: No, in The Bronx. And, uh, next thing I know, I turn around, and there he is. He said, "I told you . . ."
Now, this is in Italian. At one point, I can speak, I could speak perfect Italian. "Six o'clock I want you in front of the house. And what are you doing here?" Pow, and that was it.

LEVINE: How would he discipline you generally if he didn't lay

a hand on you? What did he do? What was his . . .

PAVAN: He, uh, never had to, I'm proud to say. Because I went to Catholic high school, paid my own tuition.

LEVINE: I take it you were a good student.

PAVAN: Yes. When you get 99 in geometry regents, and, I'll never forget his name, Brother Edward, he said, "I wouldn't give you a hundred, because nobody's perfect." I said, "But what did I do wrong?" "You left out a period." But, uh, no, he was really proud of me. And then after I graduated high school, I went into the service.

LEVINE: Well, before we get into that part, is there anything else about your younger life in Little Italy, anything about, uh, the Catholic school there, or the community there, anything . . .

PAVAN: No, I didn't start Catholic school till we moved to the Bronx.

LEVINE: Oh, okay. Is there anything more about life in Little Italy that you can recall? Anything about other people immigrating, that came into the community, or . . .

PAVAN: No, as I said, friends of my father and mother who immigrated, you know, later on, they all settled down there.

LEVINE: Was it typical for people to take in borders at that time, people who were coming from Europe? No.

PAVAN: They, as far as I could remember, they would write and ask, like, their friends, my father, or somebody else, to get them, uh, a place to stay, so that when they came over they wouldn't have to, you know, be sleeping on the streets.

LEVINE: They'd have an apartment?

PAVAN: Yeah. They'd have, you know, a place to live.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

PAVAN: But other than that, the only thing I can vaguely remember was this big church, and I can't even think of the name of it now, but it was a beautiful church.

LEVINE: Well, do you know why it was that you went to Catholic school when your mother and father weren't really, uh . . .

PAVAN: Practicing?

LEVINE: Practicing?

PAVAN: Um, the neighborhood that we lived in in the Bronx, there were two schools. Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and P.S. 45, which now you would call a junior high, and we went to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and the best thing that ever happened?

LEVINE: It was a good school.

PAVAN: Oh!

LEVINE: How old were you when you moved to the Bronx?

PAVAN: Uh, I'd say probably going on six.

LEVINE: Oh, I see. So you never went to school in Little Italy?

PAVAN: No.

LEVINE: Yeah, you went only . . .

PAVAN: No.

LEVINE: I see.

PAVAN: And at that time they didn't have kindergarten, so you started right off in the first grade.

LEVINE: So, uh, let's see. Do you remember, like, your father. What was your father doing for work in this country?

PAVAN: Uh, construction, Torazzo[ph].

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

PAVAN: Uh, he was a laborer. Because then laborers and mechanics, mechanics did the fine work, and laborers did the hard work, and he did that till he retired.

LEVINE: So, um, how was it that you happened to move to the Bronx? Do you know why the family moved?

PAVAN: I know they didn't ask me. (they laugh) No, it's, um . . .

LEVINE: Was it also an Italian community that you moved into?

PAVAN: Yeah. But, uh, basically the Bronx then was the place to go.

LEVINE: Oh, it was like the country a little bit?

PAVAN: Yeah. And, uh, we went into one apartment, then we moved to another, and the family that owned two houses away, I'll never forget it, in fact, their name was Auletta. It was three stories. They occupied the first one. And the people in the second one moved out, and they asked my mother and father to move in. And we were there like twenty-two years.

LEVINE: Wow. How do you spell Auletta?

PAVAN: A-U-L-E-T-T-A.

LEVINE: And so they were good friends of your mother's and father's?

PAVAN: Yeah. Well, they asked my mother and father if we would, like, you know, take the second floor, which we did. It was a railroad flat but, uh, it had seven rooms, and, uh, my father put down tile floors, did a lot of work for them. And the rent was expensive. Twenty-four dollars a month. And . . .

LEVINE: Now, did you have certain chores as the oldest son? Did you have certain duties growing up?

PAVAN: Uh, I would help my father, like, he was a great one for saying something like, "We're going to have to do

this floor," like the ground floor, in tile. "It'll only take about three hours." So you worked till two in the morning. And the other things was helping him with the grapes. When I say the grapes, he made his own wine. And, I'm talking about three hundred cases of grapes.

LEVINE: Where did he make it?

PAVAN: No, he's, well, he bought the grapes at the railroad yard, and then he'd make it downstairs. And, uh, so the grapes would be delivered, and me and my brother would have to bring them downstairs. Then we'd have to open the crates, crush them. Then they didn't have, you know, electrical structures. You had to do it by hand. So who opened the crate, the other guy would dump it in, and boom.

LEVINE: Wow.

PAVAN: Great times, really. The funniest thing was, uh, you ever hear of grappa[ph]?

LEVINE: I think I have, but tell me.

PAVAN: It's like Italian moonshine. After you make the grapes, there are all the leavings, right, the crushed

grapes, and whatnot.

LEVINE: Like the skins and all that, of the grapes?

PAVAN: Yeah. Then he had this copper tank, and you pour it in, and a little tube, a funnel, with cotton, and a gallon. Now, this stuff was potent. I mean, right, he'd boil it, and booooo. It would drip out. I'd say a hundred and sixty, sometimes a hundred and eighty proof. I mean, you only had that with black coffee. You didn't drink it like you would. And the funniest thing that I can remember, I was home one day, and, I was going to college. The doorbell rang, and my mother and father were both working. And I went to the door, and I said, "Who is it?" "FBI." I said, "FBI?" And I said, "Come on up." "We want to talk to George Pavan." "Why?" "Well, he dodged the draft." I said, "He just got out of the service two months ago." Somebody had used his name, with a phony address. Anyway, to make a long story short, at that time the authorities didn't mind you making wine, but grappa[ph] was a no-no. My mother comes home, and it was a cold day, this guy was Irish. (he laughs) And she said, uh, "Would you like a cup of coffee?" He said, "Yes, I'd love . . ." Well, she's telling

me, and I'm telling him, I says, "It's black coffee, espresso." "Oh, no, I love it." What does she do? She brings out the bottle of grappa. I says, "Oh, boy, here we go." And, uh, you know, he poured some in his coffee. He says, "This stuff is good, but don't do it in front of another agent." Oh, great times.

LEVINE: Oh, boy. Did, were there any social occasions that were around the wine making as far as your father and his friends or, was it . . .

PAVAN: Social? No. Just labor.

LEVINE: Just hard work, huh? Yeah. Uh-huh. Uh, let's see. Okay. So you went to Catholic school. Then you graduated. And did you work at all before you went to college, or did you go right to college after you graduated high school?

PAVAN: Uh, a week-and-a-half later I was in Uncle Sam's army.

LEVINE: Oh. You were drafted?

PAVAN: No. I would have been drafted in November, but I knew I wanted to go to college, so I figured if I wait till November then you had to serve two years. So then I'd

be getting out in November, and I'd miss a whole semester. So I volunteered.

LEVINE: What branch?

PAVAN: The army.

LEVINE: And what happened to you in the army?

PAVAN: Uh, I took basic training in Alabama in July and August, and if you think it gets hot up here, try running five miles when it's ninety-five degrees. And, uh, I had my only leave, I got home in September. They had given me tickets for a train. After a week, I got out of the train, went to the West Coast, next thing, we're on a boat, and we went to Korea. Now, this was, uh, to relieve the guys that actually fought in World War Two. So I spent two years there, and I came back and started college. And Uncle Sam thought I did such a good job that in 1950 when the war really broke out . . .

LEVINE: What year were you in?

PAVAN: '46 to '48, then '50 to '51. As I said, Uncle Sam thought I did such a good job, when the actual war broke out, which they knew was going to happen. We

had practiced this, like three o'clock in the morning, everybody get out, they're coming down. Anyway, make a long story short, I get this notice to, uh, that I'm being called back. So I went down to Reserve headquarters. I go into Reserves on one, on two bases, number one, that if I did go back I'd have my rank, and, number two, I'd only be called back in case of war. So I get my notice, and, uh, I went down to Reserve headquarters, I said, "Oh, this is not a war."

They said, "What do you mean?" I said, "President Truman said it's a police action." "Yeah, okay. You report to Fort Hood." And that was it. And we were down there for ten days of extensive training, and they put us on a train, nobody knew what the heck was going on. Again, we hit Frisco, they put us on a boat. In the meantime, McArthur looks like he's going to go through China, conquer Russia. I said, "Why the heck are we going there?" Halfway over, the Chinese invaded, and we found out why. So, exciting times. You know, being in the service is funny. When you're in there, you complain and gripe about the bad things. And then when you get out, years later, you laugh at them. You really do. "You remember what happened?" "Oh, yeah, wasn't that great?" (he laughs)

LEVINE: Where were you sent, and where you for the next, uh, what, two years? Were you, were you back in again for two years?

PAVAN: Uh, a year-and-a-half.

LEVINE: A year-and-a-half. And where were you stationed?

PAVAN: Uh, all over. But when we landed there in Pusan[ph], which is the southernmost part of Korea, the Chinese were coming down like, uh, we had to build, I was in the engineers. We built a barbed wire fence fourteen miles across the southern part of the peninsula. But then, uh, MacArthur pulled a real, he was a shrewd man. He went around him, and invaded Hinchon[ph], which was in southern Korea, well, about a hundred miles south, and then effectively had them trapped. And that turned the whole war around. But we were going back and forth, back and forth. That's when I got to hate the Air Force. They had one railroad, one rail going north, one coming south. Now, when we pushed them back, or when they pushed us back, the Air Force would bomb every bridge. There was like a bridge sometimes every two hundred yards. So when we pushed them back, we'd have to rebuild each and every

bridge. And I'm saying to myself, "Why don't they bomb every third bridge, or fourth bridge?" Ah, well.

LEVINE: How do you think about your war experiences now?

PAVAN: Pardon me?

LEVINE: How do you think about your war experiences now? What effect do you think it had on you?

PAVAN: None.

LEVINE: None?

PAVAN: I think, uh, if anything, it was for the best.

LEVINE: Why?

PAVAN: Uh, it gave me more discipline, not that I was undisciplined, but it gives you a lot of discipline, uh, first of all, following orders. And it taught me not to do stupid things. If you want an example, we were building this bridge across this river, and the sergeant didn't particularly like me, and my friend from New Orleans. You know, if you have to go, don't . . .

LEVINE: No, no. This is great. This is terrific.

PAVAN: So he had us on top of the pilings, and we had to direct the I-beams, put them down, and he, "Okay, one more." I says, "Sarge, you got the wrong one." "Don't tell me!" I says, "Sarge, you got the wrong one." Because Larry and I had to cut them out, you know, to measurement. He said, "We're going to put this one up." So the crane lifts it up, and it doesn't fit. And, like I jerk, I said, "I told you so." So I come down on the, you know, the crane, the cable. He said, "We're going to put one more up." I said, "Can't it wait till tomorrow?" He said, "Tomorrow never comes." I said, "So then why worry about it?" Get back to the compound, there's the lieutenant with a shovel. I said, "What's this for?" He said, "You see that six by six I marked off? Start digging." I said, "But why?" "You don't talk to sergeants that way." I said, "Yes, sir." I started digging, and this very good friend of mine, he's walking by, he says, "Jimmy, what are you doing?" And I says, "I'm digging a six by six." He runs into the shed, grabs a shovel, and he starts helping me. Well, he ends up doing his own. (he laughs) Ah, it

was, uh, basically good times, you know. Uh, we were all very friendly. You had to be. You know, you're living together, you worked together. I mean, as I said, we went from one bivouac[ph] to another, you know, wherever the job was needed. And, uh, you slept in a tent with twelve, eleven other people.

LEVINE: You didn't grow to dislike authority as a result of being . . .

PAVAN: Oh, no. It's, the only time I ever did something that I consider wrong, we were in this desolated area, and they had the mess tent in the woods, so the enemy couldn't see it. Then we got this ninety day wonder, a corporal. And we just used to walk after breakfast, lunch you had C rations, but he decides we're going to march. Okay. So, being the next officer, or non-commissioner, we, uh, we start marching. And there was a little trail that led to the mess tent. I said, "Corporal, we have to make a right here." And again, "Don't tell me." And we keep marching and marching. Then he realized it was wrong, but by that time I threw my mess kit at him. You know, you didn't have plates and silverware and whatnot. So after that incident we went out and started working on the

bridge, came back, and lieutenant says, "The captain wants to see you." I says, "Uh-oh." He says, "You're being considered for a court marshal." I said, "Why? I didn't hit him." He says, "If you had, you definitely would have been." I got moved from corporal to PFC, which I eventually became corporal again. But, uh, I said I can look back now and see some real happy times.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. How about the, how about the violence of war itself? Do you think that had any, any lasting effect on you?

PAVAN: No. I saw things I'd rather not see now, but we were going to work one day and there's this, I hate to use the word chink, but a dead Chinese in the rice paddy, and for the next two or three days we would swear that he moved. But he was, you know, he was dead. And, uh, another time we were up on top of a hill and this friend of mine, we went into this empty tank, Chinese tank, thank God. And as we were walking, I tripped. And what it was, the Chinese didn't particularly care to bury their dead, and this one had his arm, you know, just the crook of the arm, and my boot caught it, and, I said, "What the heck was that? Oh, God!"

But, uh, no, I, uh, the only time it really bothered me when we first got there and, as I said, the Chinese were invading, and just killing everybody. Our job was to fish the dead bodies out of the river, Americans, and load them on a truck like, woof! But, uh, other than that, you know, you got used to it.

LEVINE: Well, we have about five minutes more, so I want to . . .

PAVAN: I'll time you, okay. (they laugh)

LEVINE: I want to ask you about, um, about your life, then, after, after the service. Then you went to college?

PAVAN: Then I finished college.

LEVINE: And what was your, what was your, uh, interest? What did you want to do after that?

PAVAN: Well, when I first started I, uh, I was going to go premed. By the time I got home and started my duty here, I kept adding twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five, four years of med school, and two years of intern. I said, at that time you say, "I'll be an old man by then." So I always loved math, and I switched to math. Well, I was taking math anyway. I majored

in math, chemistry, and, uh, well, chemistry and physics were my minors.

LEVINE: So what did you do after you got out of college, for work?

PAVAN: Uh, I did nothing for about a month-and-a-half. My mother says to me, "Aren't you going to get a job?" I said, "Yeah. I'll look." I'm reading the Times, and I see this "math major, OOT, wanted." I had no idea what OOT meant. So I went down to this agency, and the guy was, I mean, you talk about free and easy, I came in, he said, uh, "You in a hurry?" I said, "No." "Here. If anybody comes in, give him this application. I'm going out to get a sandwich." And I'm saying, "Ooh, what the heck is this all about?" And, uh, he came back, I said, "This ad, math major, OOT. What does OOT mean?" "Out of town." He says, "You don't want that. I got a good job for you." You know, unbelievable. He picks up the phone. He says, "I want you go down, see this company, management trainee." I went down, I got hired, and the next thing you know I'm trading foreign exchange and, uh, managing their short-term portfolio, cash-wise, and I was with them for twenty-three years.

LEVINE: Wow. So how did you meet, when did you meet your wife?

PAVAN: I met my wife, uh, she worked for the company, and we had a ski trip, 1956. We were up in Vermont, and that's where I met her, and she hadn't lived in the Bronx, but she lived in Staten Island. And that commute, on weekends, was . . . (he laughs) So after nine months we got married.

LEVINE: What was your wife's, uh, name?

PAVAN: Rosemary.

LEVINE: Her maiden name?

PAVAN: Parker.

LEVINE: Parker. Uh-huh. And how many children do you have?

PAVAN: Four.

LEVINE: And their names?

PAVAN: Uh, Laura, in order. Mary, she's the one who gave me a grandson, by the way, and Robert, and Jimmy, that you saw.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And, uh, what would you say that you feel most proud of having done in your life?

PAVAN: Uh, raised a family. They, all four of them, none of them have ever given me a problem, believe me. And, uh, and I mentioned on the phone, I have to go in for surgery. My daughters called up, because one of them lives in Bayonne, the other one lives in Manhattan. They insisted on they coming, and I said, "No way. You're not going to hold my hadn." And I says, "No, absolutely not." The next night they called him, "Uh, we'll see you Wednesday night." I says, "I told you no." "We're telling you yes."

LEVINE: So let me ask you this. Um, do you think there are any values or attitudes that you learned from your mother and father that you passed along to your own children, or maybe there's a difference between what you learned from your mother and father and . . .

PAVAN: Well, basically, when I learned from them was hard work. Not the only thing, but, and, uh, respectful people. Oh, I have to tell you this one thing quickly. When, the second time I got, okay. The second time I got home from the service, I didn't have

any clothes. And, uh, I went to buy a suit, and my father said, "I'll buy it." I said, "No." Because you couldn't spend money over there, you know, I'm pretty well off. And my brother told me later on, he said, "You know, you hurt Papa." I said, "How?" "He wanted to buy you that suit." And it always stuck in my mind. But, uh, you know . . .

LEVINE: I'm sure you made him happy in other ways.

PAVAN: OH, yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. I think we're about at the end here. So, I think maybe we'll close here, and I want to thank you very much for a very interesting life story.

PAVAN: My pleasure.

LEVINE: Okay, I've been talking with . . .

PAVAN: Oh, as far as my father, when I graduated, I went to Manhattan College. (he clears his throat) He cried.

LEVINE: He was proud of you.

PAVAN: That he was.

LEVINE: Okay. I've been talking with James Pavan and it's April 26, 1994, and we're here in Staten Island. This is Janet Levine signing off for the National Park Service. Thanks.

PAVAN: Thank you.