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**ORAL HISTORY NARRATIVES MUSCATATUCK STATE DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER WITH
LELAND VERRICK
JUNE 8, 2004
INTERVIEWERS: JENNIE TODD AND STEVE SAVAGE
RECORD ID: 142-DO**

LV: LELAND VERRICK

JT: JENNIE TODD

SS: STEVE SAVAGE

[TITLE]

[00:00:12]

JT: It's June 8, 2004 and this is Leland Verrick.

LV: I used to take the clients out at the hospital every day. I had all the jobs. I'd work on 5A and those modules over there.

SS: In the modules?

LV: Yeah, I worked in the nursery and everything and I used to work in the kitchen.

SS: You did all kinds of stuff when you were out there.

LV: I used to take them down to the kitchen.

SS: How old were you Leland when you first got to Muscatatuck do you know?

LV: I don't know.

SS: Were you a little kid, big kid, adult?

LV: Big kid.

[00:01:00]

SS: You were a big kid when you got there. So did you live with your family before that?

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[00:01:03]

LV: Yeah and they put me out there.

SS: So do you remember when you went out there when you first got there?

LV: I don't know what day I went out there.

SS: Do you remember going out there with your family and them dropping you off or whatever?

LV: No my foster mom dropped me off.

SS: So you were living in a foster home and they took you out there?

LV: No I was living with my foster mom in my hometown.

SS: Which hometown was that?

LV: New Albany.

SS: And so then you went to Muscatatuck?

LV: Yeah.

[00:01:31]

SS: And about how old were you do you remember?

LV: No I don't.

JT: Were you out of school when you went there?

LV: Yeah.

SS: Did you go to school in New Albany?

LV: Yeah.

SS: How many years do you remember?

LV: I don't remember.

SS: So you went to Muscatatuck. What do you remember first about going to Muscatatuck? What are some of the first things you remember?

[00:01:51]

LV: They used to give me jobs. I signed up for jobs out there working for the client stuff and mopped the floor stuff for them, put them to bed, put diapers, bathe them and all that.

[00:02:06]

SS: So you worked a lot with the other people that lived there?

LV: There was attendants.

SS: Yeah you worked with the attendants?

LV: Yeah, we used to take them back there and bathe them and all that.

JT: When you talk about them were they little children or were they people your age?

LV: Yeah, people like tenants used to work on the modules. I used to help them.

JT: Help them bathe people?

LV: Yeah.

SS: How old were the people that you working with and helping?

LV: I don't know.

JT: Were they little kids or your age or older than you?

LV: They were like in the wheelchair.

[00:02:39]

JT: But they could have been your age?

LV: Yeah.

JT: They just needed a lot of help?

LV: Yeah. We put them in bed we did.

JT: Did you like doing that?

LV: Oh yeah I got paid for it. I made a lot of money out there.

JT: What did your foster mom tell you about going to Muscatatuck? Did she tell you what it would be like when you went there?

LV: I wasn't too bad out there.

[00:03:01]

JT: But before you went there did you go visit it and see what it was like?

[00:03:05]

LV: No I just stayed out there.

SS: Just went out the first time and just stayed when you got there?

LV: Yeah.

JT: And when you stayed out there did you have your own room or did you share rooms with a lot of other guys?

LV: Dormitory.

SS: Dormitory. Tell us about the dormitory.

LV: It was a great big one.

JT: A lot of people in it?

LV: Yeah.

JT: What was your room like?

[00:03:32]

LV: It was like the dormitory, we had all the beds to make.

JT: So all the beds were in one room?

LV: Yeah that's why they closed all them modules down cause they're going to close it up.

SS: So there were a whole bunch of beds in a big room, is that the way it was?

LV: Yeah.

SS: 10 of them, 20 of them, more?

LV: It was more. It was like 4 rows of beds.

SS: Was it all men?

LV: Yeah.

[00:04:00]

JT: Did you have some good friends there?

[00:04:01]

LV: Yeah and every night I used to get up and get my commissary book every weekend, go to commissary and get my stuff and every night we mopped the floor and we could watch TV of a night before we go to bed.

JT: What was it like living with that many people in the same room?

LV: It didn't bother me, I liked them.

JT: What was it like though? I've never lived with that many people.

LV: They had 2 rooms like if you get bad they lock you up for it.

JT: What's getting bad? What would be an example?

LV: Like if you take off or something and they'd have to go get you and they lock you up for it.

SS: Like if you ran off with a friend or left the campus or left your dorm or something?

LV: Yeah and they'd lock you up.

[00:04:48]

JT: Where would they lock you up?

LV: They got 2 rooms inside the building like you go in the hallway they've got 2 rooms in the dormitory and it's cold.

JT: It was cold?

LV: Yeah.

JT: Did you ever get locked up?

LV: No.

JT: Did you know anyone that did?

LV: Yeah a bunch of them did.

SS: How long did they have to stay in the lockup?

LV: For a long time, until they learned to behave.

[00:05:17]

JT: What did they say about it?

[00:05:19]

LV: They didn't say much. They brought the food up for them.

SS: Start us off at the beginning of a day and maybe walk us through a day. What was a day like for you? So you'd be asleep and did somebody come in and wake everybody up?

LV: Yeah, I had to get up every morning for breakfast because if you don't a supervisor comes in and wakes you up.

SS: And about what time was that? Do you remember what time?

LV: No.

SS: 6, 7?

LV: I don't know what time you get up.

SS: Just early?

LV: Yeah.

SS: So you get up. Did you shower or just go to breakfast?

[00:05:56]

LV: Go shower and stuff like that.

SS: And then you went off to breakfast. Did you eat in the dorm or in the cafeteria?

LV: Cafeteria.

JT: Was it good?

LV: Yeah.

SS: So you'd walk down to a cafeteria from your dorm?

LV: I used to work in the kitchen.

SS: The same kitchens?

LV: Yeah, doing dishes for them, I worked on the food truck, take the food down in the kitchen.

SS: You did a little bit of everything.

[00:06:25]

LV: Yeah, I made good money.

[00:06:27]

SS: How old are you now by the way?

LV: 57. I'll be 58 this year.

SS: Because we first met in about 1981 or '82 probably, maybe '83. So I would have been 32. You're a little bit older than I am. You would have been about 37 or 8 back then, something like that when we first met. So you lived there from sometime in you would like a teenager you think?

LV: Yeah and I got out, I did.

SS: I'm thinking then when I first met you here you were just here, you had just gotten to DSI, is that about right?

LV: Yeah.

SS: You were living in a group home?

LV: Yeah, I was living in 2 group homes and I got out.

SS: How old were you when you moved out of Muscatatuck, do you remember?

[00:07:28]

LV: I don't remember.

SS: 30 something is what I'm thinking.

JT: How did you happen to move out? Did you just want to or how did you happen to leave?

LV: I went to a group home up here.

SS: Did you tell the people at Muscatatuck you wanted to get out or did they just say it's time for you to go or what?

LV: They let me out.

JT: Was it your idea? Did you say, "Hey, I want to go somewhere else"?

LV: Yeah and they let me out. They talked to me from Muscatatuck so I'm living at Columbus now.

SS: Did you work in the workshop in Jennings County when it was there?

[00:08:04]

LV: No, here.

[00:08:06]

SS: This is the only workshop you've been in?

LV: Yeah.

SS: Well tell us some more about the work you did. Tell us more about working with the people?

LV: I'd take care of them, take them over to the hospital and all that.

JT: They probably missed you once you left. It sounds like you did a lot of good work.

LV: Yeah, I made good money.

JT: Do you make as much money here?

LV: Yeah.

JT: Well good, you're still making good money.

LV: Yeah, we are.

SS: Leland's been one of the people in the workshop here for a long time. He does good work.

[00:08:40]

JT: So what was it like at holidays at Muscatatuck?

LV: Oh we used to get Christmas presents every year, Christmas.

JT: And what was that like? What would you do? Would you have a Christmas tree and everybody decorated it?

LV: Yeah, used to pass out presents out for us.

SS: Did your foster family ever come visit?

LV: No.

SS: Do you have any other family around?

LV: No.

SS: So the group home and all those people kind of became your family?

[00:09:21]

LV: Yeah.

[00:09:27]

JT: What were the staff like? Were the staff good to you?

LV: Yeah.

JT: Did you have favorite staff?

LV: Yeah. We could stay up and watch TV all night but we had to go to bed.

JT: You had to get up early, right?

LV: Yeah.

JT: You needed to be rested.

SS: Do you remember any of the staff names that you liked, any people that you worked with that you liked?

LV: I don't remember now. That's been a long time ago.

SS: What did you like about living there?

[00:09:57]

LV: It was pretty good. It was really nice.

SS: Is there anything special that you enjoyed?

LV: We used to go out on the porch every night and sit down.

SS: Did they have chairs for you to sit on out there?

LV: Benches.

JT: Did picnics and things like that happen in the summer?

LV: No. We used to go out to camp.

SS: What was camp like?

LV: It was really nice.

SS: What did you do at camp?

[00:10:26]

LV: We went fishing and stuff.

[00:10:30]

JT: Leland would you have been there in the time that it was self-sufficient where you guys had, you grew all your food?

LV: No they paid for our own food. We didn't have to pay none of it.

SS: But was it still a farm? Was there still some farm when you were there?

LV: Yeah, but they closed that down too.

JT: I was trying to remember when they closed that down. Was that in the 50's or the 60's?

SS: I want to say 60's.

JT: So you wouldn't have been there then.

SS: He might have just gotten there. Was there still cows and stuff out there when you got there?

LV: Yeah.

[00:11:07]

SS: And barns where the animals lived?

LV: Yeah.

SS: Did you ever do any of that work?

LV: No.

SS: Who did that work?

LV: People did.

SS: Staff or people who lived there?

LV: I think the staff did.

SS: Were they raising crops, corn or anything?

LV: They was getting milk for us to have milk to drink.

SS: From the cows that lived there?

[00:11:34]

LV: Yeah.

[00:11:36]

SS: So somebody was milking the cows?

LV: Yeah.

SS: But you didn't do that work.

LV: Nope.

SS: What about women that lived there? Did you have women who were friends that lived there?

LV: I didn't see any women. I was on the boy's module.

JT: So you didn't see any women at all when you guys ate lunch or dinner together?

LV: No.

SS: Go to camp and pretty much kept you separate?

LV: Yeah.

[00:12:04]

JT: What was that like?

LV: Oh it was very nice.

JT: So you liked not seeing the women?

LV: Yeah.

SS: Was there anything you didn't like about living out there? Were there things that bothered you?

LV: No, it was okay.

SS: It was okay. People were by and large pretty much all right with you?

LV: Yeah.

[00:12:25]

JT: Well now that you've lived in your new place for a pretty long time, probably 20 years, you lived in Muscatatuck maybe 20 years and you've lived in the group home 20 years, which if you had your choice and they said okay, you're going to move again, would you want to stay where you are or would you want to move back to Muscatatuck?

[00:12:44]

LV: No, stay where I'm at. I can't go back there cause they're going to close it up.

SS: What if you could go back? What if they weren't closing it?

LV: They are closing it because see the government is closing that up cause they're going to get everybody out.

SS: Why do you think they're getting everybody out?

LV: I don't know cause they're going to close it up for something.

JT: Did you like it well enough that if you could go back there you'd ever want to go back there to live?

LV: No, I'm going to stay where I'm at.

SS: You like it better here?

LV: Yeah.

[00:13:20]

JT: Tell me about your new place. How is it different than living at Muscatatuck? Obviously there's not 4 rows of beds.

LV: It's real nice.

SS: How many people do you live with now?

LV: I'm living by myself.

JT: So that's a big difference for you Leland.

LV: I've got neighbors where I live at.

JT: Do you like that? Do you like living by yourself?

LV: Yeah.

JT: So that's probably a lot more quiet, just you versus I think when we have a house full of people how noisy it is and if you were sleeping in 4 rows of other men I bet all that snoring and yelling and talking got pretty loud.

[00:13:59]

LV: Yeah.

[00:14:01]

JT: I guess you get used to it but I bet it was different than what it is now.

LV: Yeah.

SS: Can you remember a story or something that happened out there, just something that you liked that was a good story about maybe going somewhere or some party?

LV: No.

SS: Anything that happened like a birthday?

LV: No.

SS: Did you go visiting?

LV: No.

SS: When you were out there did friends, did people you got to know, did they ever leave before you did?

[00:14:30]

LV: No.

SS: You were one of the first people you think?

LV: Yeah.

JT: Was it sad to say goodbye to everybody?

LV: Yeah.

JT: Well you know Steve and I are trying to put together a bunch of stories and basically it's just people's memories and that's why I feel like we're asking you all these questions and I guess we're hoping is that maybe one of these questions will help you think of a story so that we have Leland's story, instead of Steve and Jenny asking Leland questions. So we're asking you all these questions to try and maybe help jog your memory but what we'd really like, is like Steve was saying, if there's a story, if there was a person that was special to you or if there was something that you can remember.

LV: I don't remember nothing out there. When I moved out it's been a long time ago.

[00:15:26]

SS: Was there a person that you liked working with, one of the other clients?

[00:15:30]

LV: I used to work by myself with the clients. Oh I'm sleepy.

JT: So not all the clients got to work with other clients, right?

LV: No.

JT: So you must have been like if you look at jobs it must have been at a different level or a different rank than some of the other people that lived there?

LV: Yeah.

JT: Did you see much of that? Were there a lot of clients that got to help other clients?

LV: No.

JT: So just a few like you.

LV: Yeah.

[00:15:58]

JT: Do you think the other clients were treated as pretty fair?

LV: Yeah, like I was.

SS: I was just thinking about holidays Leland and like you told us at Christmas you got presents. And one of the things I know was a big deal out there was Halloween.

LV: Yeah. We went to a Halloween dance and that's it, yeah.

SS: Tell me a little bit about Halloween.

LV: Not very much. I didn't go to Halloween. I stayed home.

SS: Oh you didn't go to the dances?

LV: No, I stayed home.

SS: How come?

LV: I didn't want to go. They said we didn't have to go, I didn't want to go so they didn't make me so I just stayed home in my module.

[00:16:35]

SS: You didn't have to?

[00:16:36]

LV: No.

SS: What were some of the rules that they had out there?

LV: I don't know, a bunch of them.

SS: Tell me a couple of them.

LV: I don't remember now.

SS: What were some that you had to follow? Were there things that you had to do?

LV: Yeah, had to follow the rules out there.

SS: Like? You said you was you had to stay, there were places you could go or couldn't go?

LV: That's right.

JT: You said you couldn't run off.

LV: No.

SS: What else besides you couldn't run off?

[00:17:10]

LV: I don't know, stay around the module.

SS: You talked about being able to watch TV. With lots of people in the room how did you decide who got to watch?

LV: Who was cleaning the floor up, who was mopping it.

SS: Who was mopping got to decide?

LV: Yeah.

SS: That's interesting. So if there were a whole bunch of people in there and you were watching, do you remember the shows you watched?

LV: No.

[00:17:43]

SS: Just on a Sunday night if you were watching the TV what if you had a disagreement and the guy sitting next to you said, "I want to watch the other show"?

[00:17:49]

LV: They'd shut it off if they did.

SS: So they couldn't decide?

LV: No.

SS: Church on Sunday?

LV: No, I didn't go to church. I stayed home.

SS: You didn't go, some people did?

LV: Yes.

JT: Did you play any sports while you were down there and go outside?

LV: I played baseball, that's all.

JT: Did you like that?

LV: Yeah.

[00:18:12]

JT: Did you have a team or just whoever showed up?

LV: Yeah, we had a team.

SS: Special Olympics?

LV: Yeah.

SS: Still do that?

LV: No not no more.

SS: Not any more? Too old?

LV: Yeah.

SS: Me too.

[00:18:25]

JT: What position did you like to play? Did you pitch or play second base or outfield?

[00:18:30]

LV: Outfield I imagine.

SS: Good hitter?

LV: Yeah.

SS: Any home runs, get some people in?

LV: Yeah, base hits, that's all I did.

SS: What was the best thing you remember?

LV: I don't remember nothing out there now.

SS: You remember a few things, you've already told us a few.

LV: Yeah.

SS: Was there anything you really liked?

LV: It was okay.

[00:18:59]

SS: How about the food?

LV: Yeah, it was okay too.

SS: What do you remember about eating?

LV: It was pretty good.

SS: What did they have?

LV: I don't know what they have out there.

SS: You said they had milk from the cows.

LV: Yeah, they had breakfast.

SS: Did you stay in the dorm the whole time you were there or did you ever move into a smaller unit?

[00:19:22]

LV: No just dorm.

[00:19:23]

SS: Just stayed in the dorm the whole time.

LV: Yeah.

SS: You said you would sometimes leave though.

LV: You had to get permission.

SS: And then where did you go when you went?

LV: Oh I went out and walk around and came back.

SS: Did you ever leave without permission?

LV: No I asked for permission.

SS: You were good, you followed the rules.

LV: Yeah.

[00:19:47]

SS: Did you ever know anybody that passed away over there that died while you were there?

LV: No.

SS: What happened when you sick?

LV: Had to go to the hospital.

SS: Did you go there or somewhere else?

LV: No I go to hospital.

SS: Where was the hospital?

LV: Muscatatuck.

JT: So the hospital was on grounds?

LV: Yeah.

[00:20:12]

JT: Do you remember being sick?

[00:20:14]

LV: No, I had a tooth pulled.

SS: Where did that happen?

LV: At the dentist office.

SS: Again on the grounds or somewhere else?

LV: On the grounds.

SS: You didn't go into town to get it done?

LV: No.

SS: They brought in a dentist.

JT: Did you ever go into town?

LV: No.

JT: Never?

[00:20:32]

LV: No.

SS: You got to go to camp?

LV: Yeah.

JT: Where was camp?

SS: Do you remember where the camp was?

LV: No.

SS: There's a camp right on the edge of the grounds. It's kind of behind.

JT: So it's on grounds too?

[00:20:47]

SS: It's on Muscatatuck River or reservoir, yeah there's a reservoir. Camp Holland, that's right. And you got to do what when you went to Camp Holland?

[00:20:57]

LV: I don't know fish probably.

SS: Mostly fishing. Did you eat any of the fish you caught?

LV: No.

SS: Just caught them and throw them back?

JT: I like to fish.

SS: Did you ever see movies when you were there?

LV: No.

SS: They didn't show any movies?

LV: Yeah they showed movies but I didn't go.

SS: Oh okay you just stayed in your room?

JT: Well now someone told me that you guys used to do musicals there and there was bowling alley there. Were you there during that time?

[00:21:31]

LV: I didn't go no bowling. I stayed on the module.

JT: So you never left.

LV: Nope.

SS: You didn't do much socializing. Do you go out and do things now?

LV: In my own apartment I do.

SS: Do you go bowling or go to movies here?

LV: No.

SS: Not much, come to work, go home?

JT: Do you have friends over?

[00:21:51]

LV: No.

[00:21:51]

JT: Fix dinner for anybody?

LV: I work back there in the shop doing Wal-Mart boxes, that's about it. Oh I'm tired.

SS: Well you were asking me about a woman that works here.

LV: Yeah, Sheila.

SS: And then who was the other person, your friend? Your girlfriend.

LV: Liz, yeah.

SS: Liz, yeah, do you and Liz go out and do things?

LV: Yeah, we do once in a while.

SS: Good, what do you guys do?

LV: Go out to garage sales and that's it.

SS: Go where?

[00:22:23]

LV: Garage sales.

JT: Garage sales.

SS: What do you get at garage sales? What do you do when you're out there?

LV: Hunt for stuff.

JT: What do you like to look for?

LV: I don't know.

SS: NASCAR stuff?

LV: No, I don't buy that stuff.

SS: You don't buy NASCAR stuff?

[00:22:39]

LV: No.

[00:22:40]

SS: No sports stuff. What does Liz look for?

LV: She buys stuff, I don't. I just look around.

SS: What does she buy?

LV: I don't know, ask her.

SS: Okay, maybe I will. All right. Have we bothered you enough today?

LV: Yeah.

SS: Can I come back sometime and ask you some more questions?

LV: Yeah, that'd be all right.

SS: You've been great thanks.

END OF INTERVIEW