

Interviewer: Joshua D. Koenig

### INTERVIEW AND TAPE SUMMARY

Name: Verka G. Ambuehl

Date and Place of Birth: Granite City, IL 1925-May 22

Address: [REDACTED]

Telephone Number: [REDACTED]

Interview Date, Time, and Place: Nov. 15, 2001 12:30 PM in my home

Interview Summary (attach additional sheets, as needed):

Range of discussion of Verka's life. Interview primarily focuses  
on the effect which Lincoln Place had on her life. Other topics  
include: household chores, food, holidays, community interaction,  
overseas adoption, Orthodox church, and loss of community.

Note any special circumstances involving the interview:

None

### Biographical Summary of Venka Ambuehl

Venka Ambuehl was born in Granite City, Illinois on May 22nd, 1925. When her parents left Bulgaria for the United States, Venka's mother was already pregnant with her. Her father, along with her uncle had left Bulgaria and moved to Lincoln Place in Granite City. Venka's father returned to Bulgaria in order to retrieve his wife, and move the family to Lincoln Place. Venka remembers the many chores such as ironing and cleaning she performed within her strict Macedonian family. She also recalls the games that she would play with her childhood friends. Growing up, Venka's circle of friends was comprised of numerous ethnic backgrounds, which as she explains, was the reason that Lincoln Place was a special place to grow up.

It was here in Lincoln Place, that Venka met her future husband. On Friday evenings there would be a dance at the Lincoln Place Community center. One evening, Leland Ambuehl attended a dance, and the couple began dating. Leland was sent off to the war, but upon his return, the two were married. While Leland was in the Army, Venka worked in the payroll department at both American Steel, and Union Starch. She continued her employment even after his return.

In 1959, the Ambuehls flew to Macedonia in order to adopt two children; a boy and a girl. The couple returned with Tommy, age two and one half, and Cathy, age six months. Venka says that this was the most memorable experience of her entire life. She and her husband attempted to adopt children within the United States, but the system was not working for them. When a friend had told them of the possibility to adopt children from overseas, Venka and Leland jumped at the chance.

In her lifetime, family has been very important to Venka. She lived next door to her parents until they passed on. Her father even helped build the home in which she and Leland still

live today. She is also very active in the Orthodox Church. Much of her free time is spent preparing and cooking for the church bake sale, which she does very happily. Venka has stated that she has had a wonderful life, and that she thanks God that her father came here.