

Starting at the CIA, Moving to Vienna

FL: I was recruited. I actually went to work for the CIA in 1947. My clearance went through. At that time, you didn't even breathe that you worked for the CIA. I'm almost embarrassed to say I hardly knew I was applying for the CIA. I thought I was working for the State Department. A man told me to come back later. He wanted to talk to me. He gave me an address. 2430 East Street, which turned out to be CIA. I filled in the papers. I didn't hear anything. I didn't know anything about clearance or anything. But then my clearance came through. They called me in 1947 to come to work for them.

I happen to have a good memory. We didn't have computers at that time. I pretty much handled all the documents that came into the Agency. People would come around and say 'have you seen such-and-such a report.' 'Yeah, I have.' What got me started was the Documents Library. We started outgrowing a house. We had to get another house. The agency was starting to talk about getting a location for the big building, which is in Langley now. They were going back and forth, we didn't know whether they were going to build in Langley, whether they were going to build in Fort Meade, or up on the hill. We bought a house in Greenbelt on the contingency that if the Agency decided to move over to Virginia, I'd be able to cancel the contract. We had everything scheduled. The house would take about a year to build. So since they were simple-type home, you had to choose the color of the refrigerator, the roof, and the shingles. All of a sudden, the Agency decided to build the headquarters in Langley. Supposedly, the big story was that someone happened to fly over—one of the builders, one of the people responsible. They looked down and went 'hey, that looks like a nice place to build.' It happened to be in Langley. At that point, I canceled the contract, because, remember the Beltway wasn't built, the Washington-Baltimore Parkway was being completed. Actually, we could use the Washington-Baltimore Parkway. But this side of the circle hadn't been built. I started to think, 'I'm going to have to go all the way through Washington to get to Langley.' Of course, it took a couple of years to build. So I started thinking. I cancelled the contract, got my money back after a while. They weren't too happy, but they were selling houses, they didn't have a real problem.

One day, I happened to go by the bulletin-board. I looked and there was a house for sale in Vienna. We had looked in Virginia, we had looked all over, trying to find something in our house range. At that time, we had three children and Louise was expecting our fourth. So, we came up to see the house, and Louise was expecting so it was really hard for her to get up the steps. That's how close it was for the baby to be born. As it was, the baby—Vicky—was born in Prince George's Hospital. That was our new house on Cherry Street—220 Cherry Street. When we came over, we noticed a lot of young children on the block. In fact, there were children all over the place. We had a big yard. 220 Cherry Street, where it is, has a big block. Nice little house.