

## **First Memories of Vienna**

MR: He (Charlie) got a job in Washington and we looked for a place to live. We had acquired two cats—I am a magnet for animals. I had grown up in Connecticut countryside. Neither of us liked apartments. There were some new townhouses, but...and I found Vienna. I found a little ad for Vienna. No one knew where Vienna was. We were at my mother-in-laws, one Sunday afternoon. I'd come up every weekend. I still had my job down in Charlottesville. He'd started his new job. Every weekend, I'd come up to Washington and I'd scan the paper. I saw this cottage. I said 'where is Vienna?' and my mother-in-law said 'somewhere out there'. It was really rural. So we called the number and went out that afternoon and ended up with a verbal lease for a year. Just a handshake. We were very honest. They didn't want to rent for more than that.

CG: When was this?

MR: This was in 19—well, Charlie graduated in 1950, so it was still 1950. So we stayed there, we rented there, until we found this place in the spring of 1951. By the time everything was negotiated, we moved in here August 1, 1951. With the help of additions, we have lived here ever since.

I frequently, affectionately, said it was a dusty, little town. It had a couple of grocery stores, a tiny little drug store, at least one gas station if not two. I can remember, in the '50s, Charlie Barber's. I guess it was an ESSO station then, down at the corner of Beulah Road. We had two churches over on Church Street, literally. Wesley Methodist and Holy Comforter down over there. The Freeman house was there, just kind of there. It was still being lived in as I recall by Dorothy Freeman, who was the daughter of the family that built it. She married a Freeman, so it became known as the Freeman house. It was an interesting town. If you really wanted anything, you had to go to Falls Church to get it.

CG: What is your first memory of Vienna?

MR: That's a hard one. I think my first memory was trying to find the place. We were out, it's called Crescents Development out on Beulah Road, John Seekus development. The original property was about 50 acres. If you finally found your way into downtown Vienna, you went out Beulah road for I guess about two miles, and there was a long, dirt driveway into what was a very old house, I found out later. It had in back of it kind of a mother-in-law cottage in a way. The ground kind of suddenly sloped so it was a one-floor cottage, but on the rear side enough to have a parking garage under it. But it had a nice little screened-in porch, a good-sized living room, and kind of an old, big country kitchen, and a very generous-sized bedroom and the smallest bathroom you've ever seen. I don't know, it was the sense of at least we're not in an apartment, we're out in the countryside. We were both working and going to work everyday, so you really didn't get too much of an impression. They had some cats, which I enjoyed. I think I was just pleased at not having to live

in the city or anything. But I never had any real 'bang this is Vienna'. I was kind of intrigued by it. It was going out to farms and rural country, you know. This area used to be a really major dairy area. And Franklin Farms development, out in the county. Franklin Farms was a big dairy operation. And that all got sold eventually to development. Vienna was really rural. I think that we were so engrossed in getting anchored in Charlie's new job that we didn't really have time to relate to the community. I think that was it mainly the first year. We had a very nice relationship with our landlord and landlady and their cats, which went with me when we came here. They were happy to get rid of them. Funny things, like this beautiful spring morning, the first thaw of spring, my husband has to call the office and say he'll be late getting in because he has to put chains on the car. 'What!' The temperature must be 60. Well, everything has thawed so you couldn't get from the lower level up the drive to get out. That shows you where we lived. He never lived that down.