

# Moscow, Jerusalem, and Richmond

This is a wall of epiphanies. I grew up next to this bank building (the First American Bank) that became Citizen's Home Insurance Company. I remember watching the sign painter put the company's name on the door to the new building when they expanded. I was fascinated by how smoothly his paint flowed from his pointed brush, which did graceful pirouettes across the glass. It was also when I learned what "Ins." and "Co." stood for. I was about 7.

I grew up in those buildings. I saw my mother work, and she became a model for me to work when I grew up, just as my father became a model for working until the job is done. It is where I explored the Board Room with its stuffed heads and ashtrays made of animal feet. So many ashtrays. I thought they were aesthetically unpleasing.

I went to William Fox Elementary School. I learned I would never get away with anything, and had panic attacks and difficulty reading until Mrs. Carter and the third grade. That was the year we also went to Washington DC on the train, which we caught from Broad Street Station (now the Science Museum).

Russia is where I learned about traveling without any luggage, the kindness of strangers, and how we all see the truth through different eyes. We see what validates our beliefs, and those beliefs cannot be changed from outside.

In Jerusalem I was told as I left the Christian Quarter (to walk the perimeter of the walled city) that I looked Jewish, so be careful when I got to the Muslim side. When I got to the Jewish side I stopped to rest, and a gentleman came up to ask if I needed help. I told him I was walking the perimeter of the Old City. He got ready to leave, then turned around and warned me, "Be careful when you get to the Arab side. You look like you could be Jewish."

Full circle.