

Resilience and Revival: Heritage in Post-Conflict Cities

A Digital Scrapbook of UNESCO Sites and Cultural Landmarks
in Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and Philadelphia



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Pasts Rebuilt, Futures Reimagined

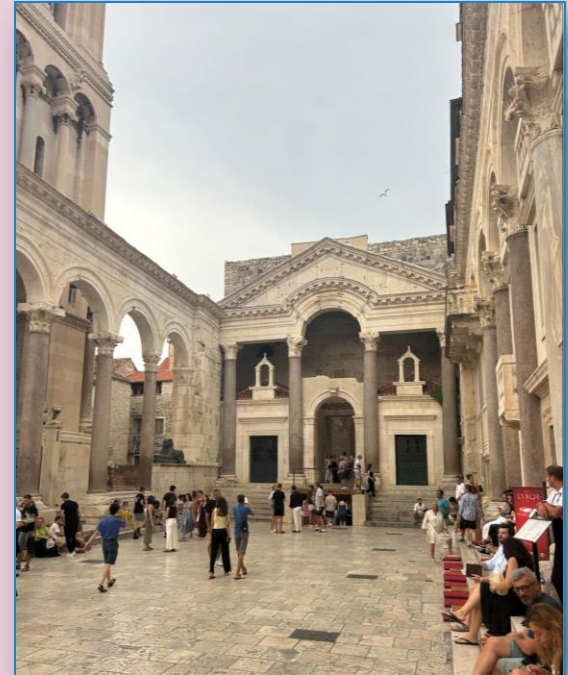
This scrapbook showcases our journey through UNESCO World Heritage Sites and cultural landmarks in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Philadelphia as part of the OWHC Young Travelling Scholarship. Each page highlights an important site we visited: places where history, memory, and identity intersect. From ancient Roman palaces and medieval city walls to reconstructed bridges and living marketplaces, these sites reveal how heritage can endure conflict, foster resilience, and continue to shape communities today.

Through photos, reflections, and stories, we hope to capture how cultural heritage is not only preserved, but also reimagined. It bridges the past and present, and most importantly offers hope for the future!

Split, Croatia

📍 Diocletian's Palace

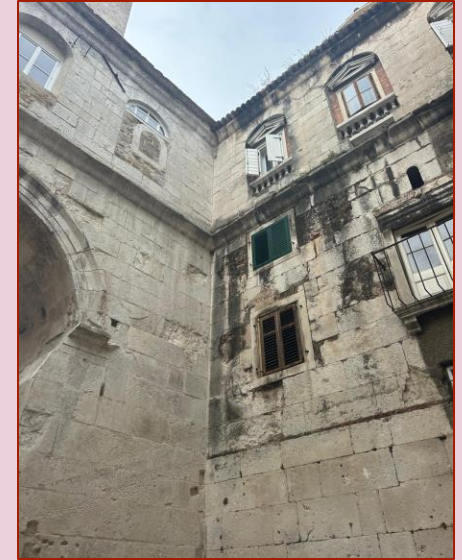
As we took a guided tour of Diocletian's Palace, we learned that it was built in the 4th century as the Roman emperor's retirement residence, yet over time it became the foundation of the city of Split itself. Walking through the ancient stone walls, we saw how temples were converted into churches and how Roman basements still support the bustling streets above. It's incredible to think that people live, shop, and gather daily in the same spaces that once housed an emperor! Heritage here isn't frozen in time, it's continuously reimagined.



Split, Croatia

Cathedral of Saint Domnius

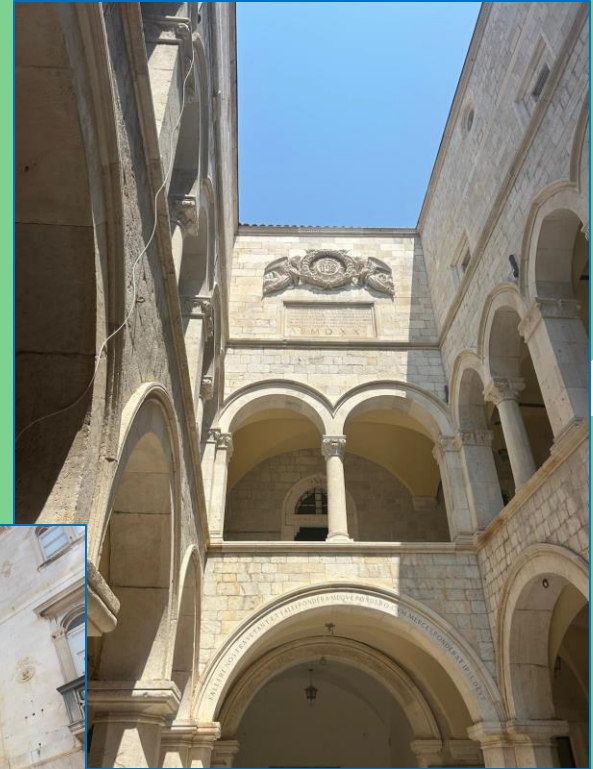
On our tour of the Cathedral of Saint Domnius, we learned that it was originally built as Diocletian's mausoleum in the 4th century. Ironically, the resting place of an emperor who persecuted Christians became one of the oldest Catholic cathedrals still in use today. Its bell tower rises over Split, offering sweeping views of the city and sea, while the interior holds intricate stone carvings and centuries of worship. Standing inside, it was surreal to see layers of empire, faith, and community all preserved in one living space!



Dubrovnik, Croatia

Old Town Walls

Walking along Dubrovnik's Old Town walls, we learned they were first built in the Middle Ages and later reinforced to protect the city from sea attacks and earthquakes. The walls stretch nearly two kilometers and surround the old city with fortresses, gates, and towers. From the top, we could see the red-tiled roofs, narrow streets, and the Adriatic Sea stretching endlessly beyond. These walls are more than just a monument; they have protected the city for centuries and continue to represent its resilience today!



Dubrovnik, Croatia

Rector's Palace

During our visit to the Rector's Palace, we learned how it once served as the seat of government for the Republic of Ragusa, with the elected rector living there during his one-month term. The palace blends Gothic, Renaissance, and Baroque styles, a reflection of the city's long history of cultural exchange. Inside, the grand halls and council chambers showed how Dubrovnik balanced politics and diplomacy, while the open courtyard showed traces of past performances and gatherings. Standing there, it felt like the building still carried the spirit of a city shaped by independence.



Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina



📍 Stari Most and the Old Bazaar

Visiting Stari Most (Old Bridge), we learned how the bridge, originally built in the 16th century by the Ottomans, was destroyed during the war in the 1990s and later rebuilt stone by stone. Today, it has become a powerful symbol of hope and reconciliation, connecting the two sides of Mostar once again. Just steps away, the Old Bazaar (Bazar Kujundžiluk) still buzzes with life, lined with cobblestone streets and shops showcasing Ottoman-era craftsmanship. Together, the bridge and bazaar reminded us how heritage can carry both painful memories and renewed strength!



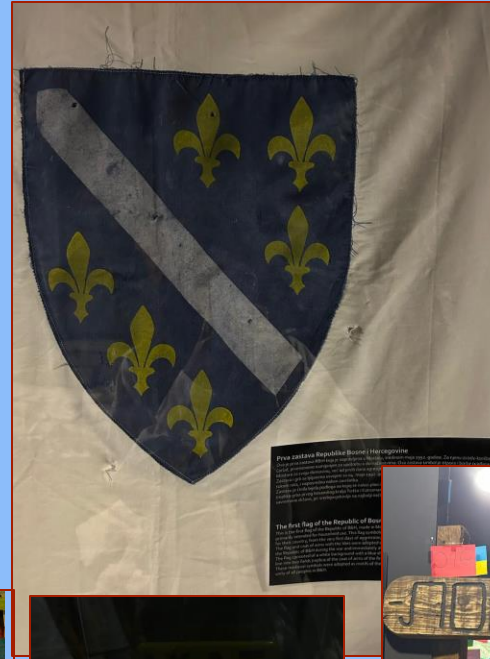
Old Bridge Pictured in Background!



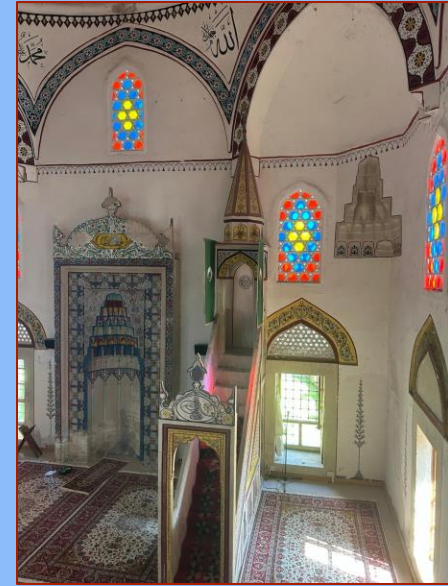
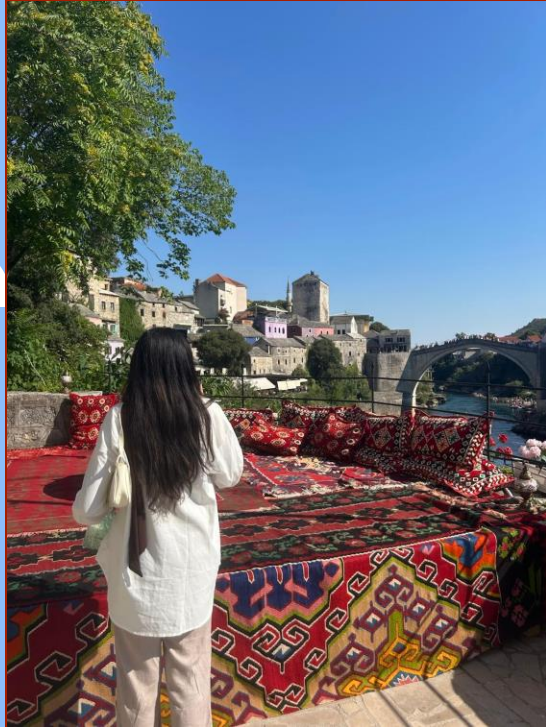
Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Museum of War and Genocide Victims

At the Museum of War and Genocide Victims, we learned about the city's recent history in a direct and personal way. The exhibits share testimonies, photographs, and artifacts from the Bosnian War, preserving the experiences of those who suffered loss. One of the most memorable parts was a space where visitors could write notes to the Bosnian people, many of which expressed calls for peace and reconciliation. This emphasized that heritage is not only about celebrating the past but also about remembering difficult histories that continue to shape the present.



Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina



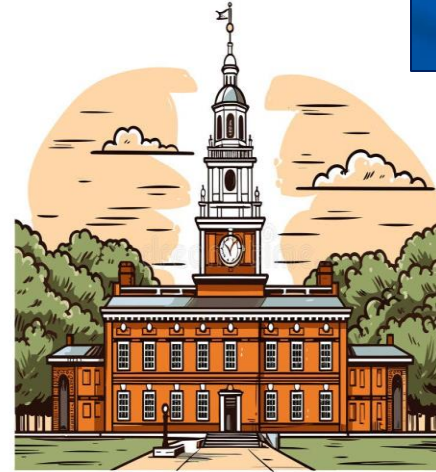
Koski Mehmed Pasha Mosque & its Minaret

Visiting the Koski Mehmed Pasha Mosque, we learned how this 17th-century Ottoman mosque reflects the rich cultural and religious history of Mostar. Its interior holds delicate calligraphy and colorful designs, while the climb up the narrow minaret rewarded us with sweeping views of the city, the Neretva River, and the iconic Stari Most below. Standing at the top, it was easy to see how the mosque is both a place of worship and a living landmark, offering a perspective that ties together Mostar's history, beauty, and resilience.

Philadelphia, USA!

Independence Hall

Philadelphia is home to Independence Hall, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the birthplace of both the U.S. Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. In 2015, Philadelphia also became the first World Heritage City in the United States, recognized by the Global Philadelphia Association. Visiting Independence Hall reminded us of its global significance as a symbol of democracy, freedom, and civic heritage. Even though we study in this city, we had never fully realized the depth of its history. It was meaningful to reconnect with our own city in a new way!



Philly



More Pictures of Our Trip!

