



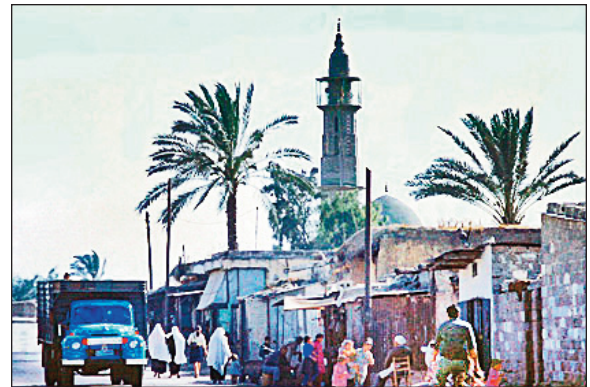
This album of 76 photographs illustrates “Gaza,” the memoir of my two years living and working there. When I arrived, Israel’s military occupation was in its third year, and most people thought it was temporary. But *occupation* would eventually become *siege*. More than a half century has passed since then, and one would now be hard pressed to locate most of the sites I photographed. Progress altered or replaced some of them, while war obliterated the rest.

But what of the people? The smiling boy with his leg in a cast... Nursing students bursting with pride on their graduation day... The several generations of caretakers of the British military cemetery... The medical missionaries whose devotion led them to practice in this “last place on earth...” Or my Palestinian friends, whose unbounded aspirations couldn’t be contained by miles of barbed-wire...

That faraway place and those good people were never forgotten and remain lovingly remembered.

Don Roberts
April 2025

Above: The Israeli-built security road linking Gaza’s northern border crossing with its beach.

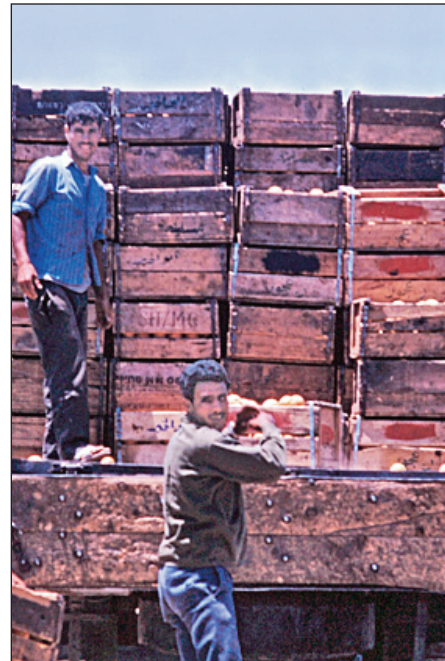


Above: the minaret of Katib al-Wilaya Mosque and cross atop the Church of St. Porphyrius, said to be the third-oldest church in Christendom. Clockwise from top right: Abdel Wahib outside his rug weaving workshop with dyed wool drying in the sun; a typical street scene; the Center of Culture and Light library where I worked; "al-Jundi," the decapitated statue of an Arab soldier and a humiliating reminder of the Six Day War; and Palestine Square, the center of Gaza City, just outside the hospital gate.





Gaza's greatest resource: its bright, beautiful children, who took advantage of every opportunity to learn. The 25 miles of white sandy Mediterranean seashore were scarcely used for recreation, mainly serving a fishing industry unchanged since Biblical times. The backbone of Gaza's economy was citrus fruit. Tons of sweet Jaffa oranges from Gaza's vast groves were still exported worldwide.



On the northern beach, only a tangle of rusty barbed wire leading across the sand and into the surf marked the border between Israel and the occupied Gaza Strip.

THE MISSION



The Tranquil Garden Just Inside the Compound Gate



The Church

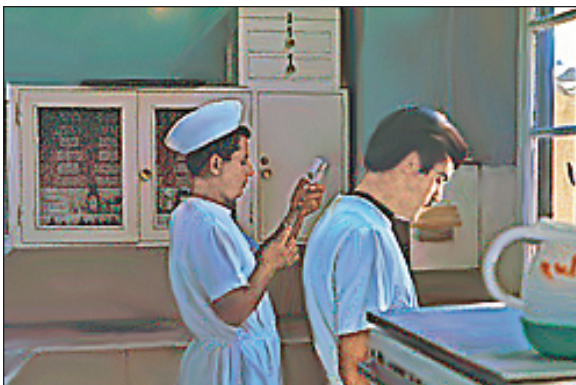
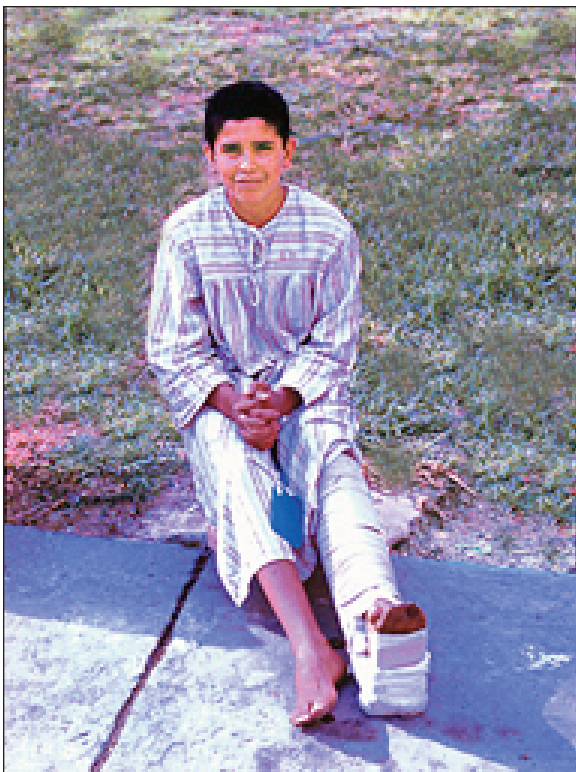


The Hospital, Centerpiece of the Compound





The Newly Constructed Laboratory and Blood Bank





Mavis Pate, Ann Dwyer and Dr. Jean Dickman

THE MISSION FAMILY

In 1971, what we spoke of as the Mission Family numbered nineteen adults and eight children. What we most held in common were our affection for the Palestinian people who'd been banished to this strip of land and our determination to make their lives better. We were a pretend family, and over time those ties loosened and came undone. Most of the nineteen have retired to their heavenly rest, but I fondly remember each of them and remain grateful for the kindness, patience and guidance they bestowed on me. Missing from the photos are: Glynda Chambers, Dr. Roy McGlamery and Patty Moore. (Bertha Jane Marshall and Ava Nell McWhorter are seen on page six.)



Jarrell and Shirley Peach, with Cari and Jay



Judy Adams



Joanna Wright



Orlene McGlamery



Anne and Ed Nicholas



Dr. Merrill Moore



Ken and Lenore Mullican, with Debbie and Kenny



The Nursing School and Girls Dormitory

THE NURSES

The School of Health Sciences graduated a dozen or so nurses each year, half of them young men. Islam required adults to be cared for by nurses of their own gender. There was no other opportunity for higher education in the Gaza Strip, and more than a hundred high school graduates applied for admission each year. The chosen few were not only intelligent but also open-hearted and kind. Along with classroom studies, they gained hands-on experience on the hospital wards. Nurses were the life blood of the hospital. For some of the men, their nursing diploma was the first step toward a distinguished medical career.



The Graduates, 1971



The Capping Ceremony, 1971, with Ava Nell McWhorter (left) and Bertha Jane Marshall (right).





GOOD FRIENDS, GOOD TIMES

(Left) Weekend Travels to Caesarea
and En Route to the Dead Sea

We referred to the young men in the nursing program, without disrespect, as “the boys.” Their parents were native to what was now Israel, and they were of the first generation born in Gaza’s refugee camps. All were Muslim and every bit as intelligent, kind and generous as anyone I’ve ever known. Their friendship became the great joy of my time in Gaza.



Ibrahim Behader, Jomah al-Jazaar,
Mohammed Hassouna, Mohammed Nasman



Adel Abu Mari



Mohammed Hassouna and Ibrahim Behader



Abdullah Abu el-Oef and Abdel Jawad al-Haj



Spring Training with Rafik and Husney in the lead.

THE ROAD

FROM ISRAEL TO EGYPT

It was 27 miles of one of the world's oldest highways, linking the cradles of civilization: the valleys of the Euphrates and the Nile. To drive that road in 1970-72 was to experience the entire other world that was Gaza: the ancient ways of threshing wheat or harvesting dates; the Bedouin who lived in tents and answered to no one; a WWI military cemetery as well as rusting military vehicles and minefields from the Six Day War; beautiful groves of date palms in contrast to the crowded refugee camps nearby.



Threshing Wheat



Israel, North of Its Border with Gaza



The Date Harvest



The British WWI Military Cemetery



The Cemetery's Caretaker Family



Deir al-Balah



Maghazi Refugee Camp



A Bedouin Woman



A Bedouin Encampment



Egyptian Armored Vehicle from the Six Day War



Another Reminder of that War



El-Arish, Occupied Egypt



200 Miles to Cairo

BETHLEHEM



Five miles separate Bethlehem and Jerusalem.



Tourist Shops on Manger Square



Bethlehem Schoolgirls



Manger Square



The Belfry of St. Mary's Church on Manger Square



Ripe Olives



The Olive Harvest

JERUSALEM



The Dome of the Rock



Prayer and Ritual at the Western Wall



Rock-Cut Tombs in the Kidron Valley



Moshe Dayan in the Old City