

A History of Doha and Bidda

Historical references to Doha and Bidda before 1850

1681: First mention of Bidda (now part of Doha)

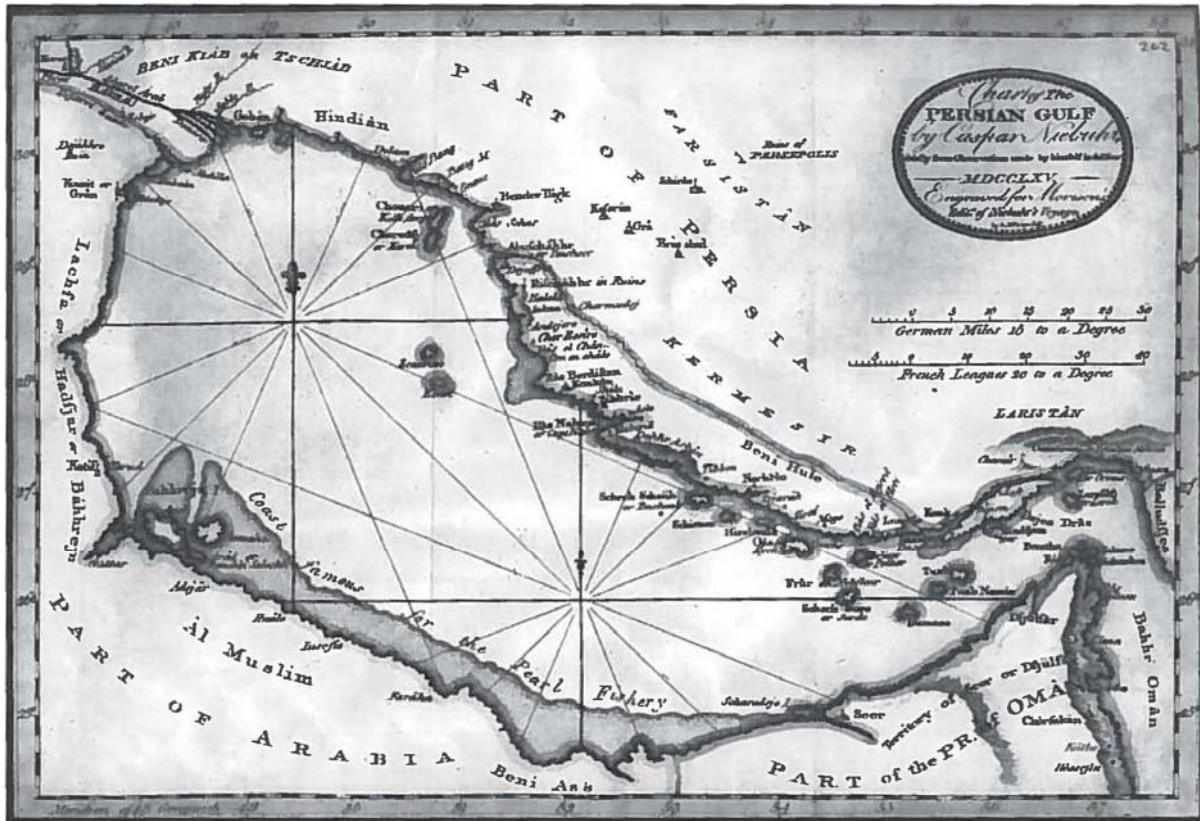
Bidda was the first part of Doha to be founded, and was later absorbed into the larger town of Doha, which originally began as a separate settlement. The first possible mention of Bidda is in the records of the Carmelite Convent, which refers to a sheikh and fortress at "Bide". Mentioned after Zubara in a list of place names going round the coast of Qatar, it is in the correct position to refer to Bidda.

Billecocq, X.B. (2010) *Le Qatar Et Les Francais*. Paris: Collections Relations Internationales & Culture.

1765: Carsten Niebuhr's map

Carsten Niebuhr, the sole survivor of an ill-fated six year journey across the Middle East, was one of the first western explorers to visit the Arabian peninsula. Niebuhr's map of the Gulf produced in 1765 shows the towns of "Huale" (Huwaila) "Yusofie" (Yusufiya) and "Faraha" (Freiha), "Adsjar" (possibly al Khor) as well as "Gattar" (probably Bidda). However, the area of Qatar is not accurately portrayed and the sites are in the wrong order on the coast. It is thought that Niebuhr did not visit Qatar but based his map on second-hand information from local Arabs and English sea captains.

Carter, R. (2012) *Sea of Pearls. Seven Thousand Years of the Industry that Shaped the Gulf*. London: Arabian Publishing.



Carsten Niebuhr's Map of the Gulf

1801: First description and first British attempt to attack Bidda

David Seton, the British representative in Muscat from 1800-1809, sailed to Bidda with the ruler of Oman, and provided the first description of the town and its defences.

“On the Northern hillock is a fortified House with a Wall and Square tower, in the Valley a breast Work with two Guns, and on the southern hillock two large huts with some kind of defence, and half a Mile to the Southward near the ridge is another Square building with a flag staff, under the Northern hillock is a sandy beach on which two Buglas, one Dow & one Botella [all kinds of boats] were drawn up with a breast work of Stones”.

The town had recently been settled by members of the Sudan tribe [Al-Suwaidi], originally from Abu Dhabi and Oman, whom Seton considered to be pirates. He attempted to attack Bidda but found that the water was too shallow to bring his warship close enough to bombard the town. He gave up and returned to Muscat.

Seton, D. (1995) *The journals of David Seton in the Gulf 1800-1809*. Edited by Sultan Mohammed al-Qasimi. Exeter: Exeter University Press

1820: Major Colebrook's report on the Persian Gulf littoral

When the British naval surveyor Lt. R.H. Colebrook visited in 1820, the town had been largely abandoned, but he made it clear that it had previously been much larger.

“Guttur – Or UlBudee [Al-Bidda], once a considerable town, is protected by two square Ghurries[forts] near the sea shore; but containing no fresh water they are incapable of

defence except against sudden incursions of Bedouins, another Ghurry is situated two miles inland and has fresh water with it. This could contain two hundred men. There are remaining at UlBudee about 250 men, but the original inhabitants, who may be expected to return from Bahrein, will augment them to 900 or 1,000 men, and if the Doasir [Dawasir, i.e. Al-Dosari] tribe, who frequent the place as divers, again settle in it, from 600 to 800 men.”

Rahman, H. (2005) *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years 1627-1916*. London: Thames & Hudson

1820: Qatar and the General Treaty of Peace

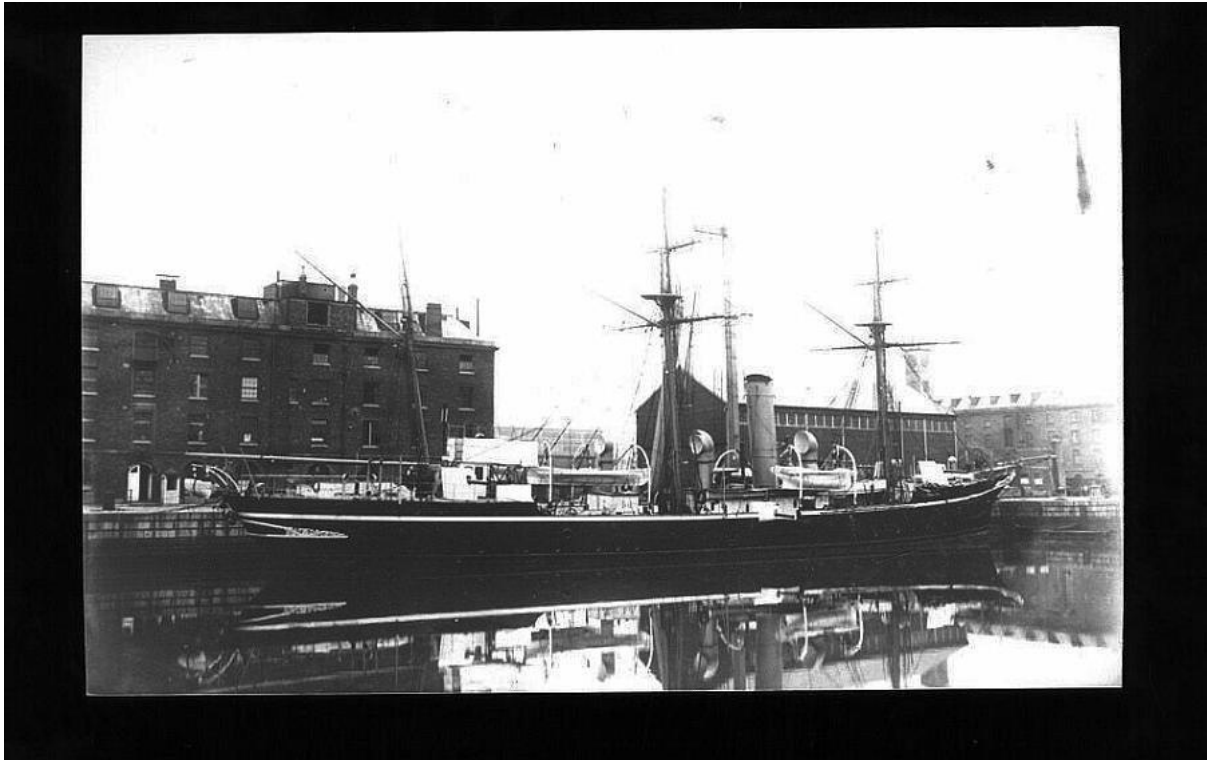
In early 1820 Bidda was the only port in Qatar from which trading vessels regularly sailed. Although Bidda was a focal point in the region, when the General Treaty of Peace was signed in January 1820 between the British East India Company and all the chiefs of the Trucial States (now the UAE, then including Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qawain and Ras al-Khaimah). Qatar was not a signatory. The British authorities in the Gulf therefore did not ask Qatar to fly the prescribed Trucial flag.

Rahman, H. (2005) *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years 1627-1916*. London: Thames & Hudson

1821: The Vestal's bombardment of Bidda

Bidda was in the limelight again in 1821, when the British East India Company's brig Vestal bombarded and destroyed the town as punishment for a perceived violation of the peace at sea. The fact that no-one at Bidda had signed up to the maritime treaty and indeed had no idea why they were being punished, did not matter to the British, who considered themselves protectors of those who had suffered the violation. The bombardment forced three or four hundred of the inhabitants to quit the town and take shelter temporarily on the islands between Qatar and Abu Dhabi.

Rahman, H. (2005) *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years 1627-1916*. London: Thames & Hudson



A photograph of HMS Vestal

1823: Visit of John MacLeod to Bidda

In January 1823, during an exploratory voyage along the Arabian coast, Captain John MacLeod, the Political Resident in the Gulf (December 1822 to September 1823), paid a visit to Bidda. MacLeod met Sheikh Buhur bin Jubrun, the chief of the Al Bu 'Ainain tribe and observed that Bidda was the only port featuring a substantial number of trading vessels at the time. By this time Doha had been founded a little distance from Bidda, and can be seen as a separate settlement on a map of 1823 (see below). Tradition holds that Doha was founded by the Al Bu 'Ainain, so Buhur bin Jubrun can probably be considered the founder of the new town. It is interesting that McLeod refers to meeting him at Bidda rather than Doha. This is because for some decades observers tended to conflate Bidda and Doha' due to their close proximity (just over 1 km apart) and referred to both as Bidda, even before they had grown together into a single town. It also seems likely that at this time the Al Bu 'Ainain were more powerful than the Sudan and Buhur bin Jubrun was regarded as the ruler of both towns.

Rahman, H. (2005) *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years 1627-1916*. London: Thames & Hudson

1823: Lieutenant Guy and Lieutenant Brucks' map of Doha and Bidda

The twin towns of Doha and Bidda, were mapped for the first time by Lieutenants Guy and Brucks of the Bombay Marine in 1823. A remarkable sketch of Doha and Bidda viewed from the sea was added to the map by Houghton and Powell. Later, Brucks provided a written description.

“Al Bidder Town is situated at the bottom of a harbour, formed by the reefs before mentioned.... This place contains four hundred Arabs of the Nahune (Na'im), Dooasir (Dawasir), and Abookara (Al Bu Kuwara) Tribes, and is frequented by the Monasir (Manasir)

and other wandering tribes. In the pearl season the inhabitants are augmented to about twelve hundred, it being convenient to the banks, and so completely sheltered. The people are mostly fishermen; they have one or two trading boats, and, like all the other inhabitants of this coast, take a large share of the pearl fishery. They are subject to Bahrain. Cattle and poultry are procurable here, but they are very dear. Water, pretty good, can also be procured. The defences are a small Ghuree [fort] in the town, two or three towers, indifferent, and a Ghuree a mile to the north-westward of the town, on the rising ground.”

Regarding the population it is likely that Brucks is referring to adult men only, but even so it is clear that the town was still small. Although Brucks evidently saw and mapped the two separate components (Bidda and Doha), he still referred to them under the single name of Bidda. Note too that the Sheikh of Bahrain was considered to be the overall ruler of the Bidda at this time.

Brucks, G.B. (1829) *Memoir descriptive of the Navigation of the Gulf of Persia* in R.H. Thomas (ed) *Selections from the records of the Bombay Government No XXIV* (1985) New York: Oleander press.



Panoramic view of Doha and Bidda in 1823

1828: Destruction of Al Bu 'Ainain Fort in Doha

In 1828 the Sheikh of Bahrain imprisoned the most important man in Doha, Muhammad bin Khamis of the Al Bu 'Ainain tribe (who had succeeded Buhur bin Jubran) for having killed a resident of Bahrain. The resulting conflict caused the ruler of Bahrain to destroy the Al Bu Aynayn fort in Doha and evict the tribe, settling its members in the villages of Fuwairit and Ruwais. Clearly Bahrain was still able to enforce its rule over Qatar at this time. Later maps and descriptions do not show a fort in Doha but refer to a large round tower with flagstaff at the sheikh's house. This was perhaps the surviving round corner-tower of the fort depicted by Houghton and Powell on Guy and Brucks' map.

Zahlan, R. S. (1979) *The Creation of Qatar*. London: Routledge

1839-1841: Bidda becomes a sanctuary for pirates

In the absence of an effective chief on the Qatar coast, Bidda became a sanctuary for foreign outlaws, forcing Britain to intervene. In November 1839 an outlaw from Abu Dhabi, Ghuleta, took shelter at Bidda. A.H. Nott, Commander of the Clive, came to Bidda and demanded that Salemin bin Nasir al-Suwaidi, the chief of the Sudan tribe at Bidda, surrender Ghuleta. Al-Suwaidi obliged and also arrested the pirate Jasim bin Jabir Raqraqi, along with his associates when they attacked a boat from Ras al-Khaimah which had arrived at Bidda.

Rahman, H. (2005) *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years 1627-1916*. London: Thames & Hudson

1841: Bidda bombarded by the British again

In 1841, Doha was again subjected to bombardment by British ships, on account of Salemin bin Nasir al-Suwaidi being unwilling or unable to pay a fine of 300 dollars for the piracies previously conducted by Raqraqi. After the British took a few shots at his fort, Al-Suwaidi came forward with the fine. He could not pay entirely in cash so offered, amongst other items, 42 silver bracelets, one sword, one silver hair ornament, four pairs (gold) earrings, two daggers, nine bead necklaces and two silver ear-rings to supplement the money available. Thus the sheikh's family and the women of the Sudan tribe paid for the misdeeds Raqraqi.

Rahman, H. (2005) *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years 1627-1916*. London: Thames &Hudson ;Zahlan, R. S. (1979) *The Creation of Qatar*. London: Routledge

1843: Isa Bin Tarif settles in Bidda

Isa bin Tarif, head of the powerful Al Bin Ali tribe and former sheikh of Huwailah, once the most important town in Qatar, Huwailah, moved to Bidda and Doha in May 1843. He forced the (evidently bankrupt) Sudan to leave Bidda (they later returned) and installed his relatives and allies, including members of the Ma'adhid (to whom the Al Thani family belong), and the Al Bu Kuwara. The Al Bu 'Ainain returned from exile, but to Wakra rather than Doha, where they stayed until their final departure to Jubayl, Saudi Arabia, in 1909. At this time Isa Bin Tarif was still loyal to Bahrain, but had begun to meddle in its politics.

Rahman, H. (2005) *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years 1627-1916*. London: Thames & Hudson

1847: Bin Tarif defeated at the Battle of Umm Suwayyah

In 1847, Isa Bin Tarif grew increasingly suspicious of the new ruler of Bahrain, Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa, who was manoeuvring on the north-west coast of Qatar. Bin Tarif changed allegiance to support the old ruler of Bahrain, Sheikh Abdullah, whom he had previously helped to depose. In November 1847, he led a coalition consisting of around 600 men to Umm Suwayyah (near Al Khor), where they met the Bahraini troops commanded by Sheikh Mohammad bin Khalifa. A battle was fought on 17th November, in which Bin Tarif and 80 of his men were killed, and the coalition of Qatari tribes defeated. Some say that the battle took place at Fuwairit rather than Umm Suwayyah.

Rahman, H. (2005) *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years 1627-1916*. London: Thames & Hudson

Doha and Bidda 1850 - 1870: The rise of the Al Thani family and conflicts with Bahrain

1848-1850: The Al Thani family move to Doha

The Al Thani family is a branch of the Maadhid tribe, who originally lived in the Jabrin oasis in southern Nejd and claim descent from the Bani Tamim tribe of central Arabia. In the 18th century they moved to the south of Qatar, then to Zubara, and then, in the early 19th century, to Fuwairit. After the defeat of Bin Tarif they took advantage of the power vacuum left by his death, and under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammad bin Thani they moved from Fuwairit to Doha, sometime between 1848 and 1850.

Adham, K. (2011) 'Rediscovering the Island: Doha's Urbanity from Pearls to spectacle' in Elsheshtawy, Y (ed) *The Evolving Arab city*. London: Routledge; Rahman, H. (2005) *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years 1627-1916*. London: Thames & Hudson

1851-1853: The Al Thani attempt to shake off Bahraini rule

Hostilities between the Al Khalifa of Bahrain and Faisal bin Turki, the Emir of the Second Saudi State, gave Mohammed bin Thani the opportunity to play the two powers off against each other. First he declared for Faisal and took control of Doha's main water supply by seizing its guard tower (the Burj al-Mai). Later a peace agreement was reached and the town (presumably including both Bidda and Doha) was returned to Al Khalifa over lordship, with Mohammed bin Thani remaining as its sheikh. Relations broke down again in 1852, leading to a Bahraini blockade of Doha, but a further peace agreement restored the status quo.

Rahman, H. (2005) *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years 1627-1916*. London: Thames & Hudson

1860-1864: Constable and Stiffe's first edition of *The Persian Gulf Pilot*

Captain C.G. Constable and Lieutenant A.W. Stiffe drew the first detailed map of Bidda and Doha in 1860, which showed two walled towns of approximately the same size, Bidda in the northwest with a square fort and Doha in the southeast with a round tower at its western side. In between is a square fort which can be identified as a new fortification built by the Musallam tribe around 1850 with the support of the rulers of Bahrain, who wished to impose firmer control of Bidda and Doha. This later became the Turkish Fort (Qal'at Al-Askar), which after 1915 became the site of the Amiri Diwan, the home of the Al Thani rulers of Qatar. Between Doha and Bidda there is a spread of housing, identified as Little Doha (Dohat al-Saghira, later Dowaihat), also said to have been founded by the Musallam, and considered a third town by Constable and Stiffe. This later became fully part of Doha and included the areas of Jasra and Suq Waqif. This spread of settlement in the mid 19th century marks the beginning of the growing together of Bidda and Doha into a single town.

Constable and Stiffe's description of the Doha area was published in the *Persian Gulf Pilot* in 1864.

"Doheh [Doha] is a town partly walled round, with several towers, half a mile S.W. by W. from Ras Nesseh; it extends about 800 yards along the beach. The sheikh's house is at a large round tower (with the flagstaff) on the beach, about the centre of the town; to the

west of this tower is a small bight, where boats are hauled up to repair... Between this town and Al Bidda, and almost connected with Doheh, is a distinct town, recently built, called Doheh Saghireh (Little Doha), which has a new square fort at the south-west corner, built on the rising ground at the back of the town... Al Bidda – there is only 400 yards of open space between this town and Little Doheh; the three towns together extend one mile along the coast. Bidda is built up the side of the rising ground; there is a fort in the town, where the Sheikh's flag is shown, and two towers on the highest part of the land behind the town, one of which is the first thing seen from the sea. One mile and a half to south-eastwards of the town is a tower near the wells, with a little cultivation; with this exception the whole country is desert."

The Persian Gulf Pilot, First Edition, 1879. Archive Editions.



Constable and Stiffe's map of Doha and Bidda

1862/3: William Palgrave visits Bidda and Doha

Palgrave was a gentleman traveller who stayed for some days with Mohammed bin Thani in Doha. Palgrave's reliability is questionable: he confused Doha and Bidda, and thought he was staying in Bidda when in fact he was in Doha. He nonetheless provided an interesting description:

"The town of Bedaa' [meaning Doha] itself was soon explored. It owns a long narrow and dirty market-place, where some Bahreyn shopkeepers and artisans ply their business on a small scale; for the rest, Bedaa' consists of a mass of little narrow dingy houses, separated by irregular lanes. The total amount of its inhabitants when on land, which is not often the case, reaches about six thousand; a few colonists from Hasa come hither to try their fortune and grumble at the country... If we go down to the beach, we find there line on line of huge black boats, whose grooved edges show where the divers' cords have been let down, for a rope is always tied round the waist of the plunger, while the other end is held by his companions, and by this they draw him up when required.

My first visit was to Dowhah [i.e. Bidda], a village to the north of Bedaa' [Doha], and of about half its size; it is situated, as its name of "inlet" or "creek" imports, in a small deep

bay, where the cliffs behind, sixty or eighty feet high, give it a somewhat picturesque appearance. But the houses of Dowhah are even lower and meaner than at Bedaa', and the market-place is narrower and dirtier. Two castles overtop the place: one stands on the neighbouring cliff, the other within the town itself: the chief is a small sub-collector to Ebn-Thanee."

Palgrave, W. G. (1866) *Narrative of a year's journey through Central and Eastern Arabia (1862-1863)*. Macmillan

1867: Doha is destroyed by the forces of Bahrain and Abu Dhabi

Frustrated by the growing power of Mohammed Bin Thani and their corresponding loss of control of the Qatar Peninsula, the ruler of Bahrain launched a devastating attack on Doha and Wakra in alliance with the ruler of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Zayed bin Khalifa Al-Nahyan. Both towns were said to have been temporarily "blotted out of existence". This angered the British, who deposed the ruler of Bahrain (Mohammed bin Khalifa Al-Khalifa) and forced heavy reparations out of Bahrain and Abu Dhabi. It only strengthened Mohammed Bin Thani's position in the long run.

Rahman, H. (2005) *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years 1627-1916*. London: Thames & Hudson

1868: Agreement signed between Mohammed Bin Thani and the British

Following the British intervention in Bahrain, Mohammed bin Thani signed an agreement with the British not to join forces with his erstwhile enemy Mohammed bin Khalifa, the deposed former ruler of Bahrain. In this agreement he was referred to as "Mahomed bin Sane'e, of Guttar", perhaps implying some kind of primacy over the other sheikhs and tribes of Qatar. A later British official (Prideaux) observed in 1909 that this agreement marked British recognition of Bin Thani's independence from Bahrain.

Rahman, H. (2005) *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years 1627-1916*. London: Thames & Hudson

Doha and Bidda 1871 - 1915: The Re-establishment of Ottoman Rule

1871: Ottoman presence in Doha begins

In 1871, the governor of Baghdad, Midhat Pasha, re-established Ottoman rule in the province of Al-Hasa (eastern Saudi Arabia), and attempted to extend Ottoman jurisdiction as far as Doha. They had ruled Al-Hasa 300 years before and considered Qatar to be part of that province. The Kuwaiti ruler, an ally of the Ottomans, Sheikh Abdullah bin Sabah, was sent to Qatar with four Ottoman flags in order to persuade the Al Thani to accept Ottoman rule. Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammad Al-Thani, the eldest son of the Mohammed bin Thani and by now effectively the ruler on behalf of his aged father, accepted one of the flags and hoisted it above his own house. A second flag was given to his father Sheikh Mohammad bin Thani, who, perhaps conscious of his previous commitments to Britain, continued to fly the Arab flag above his house in Doha and sent the Ottoman flag to Wakra. The other two went to Al-Khor (then Khor al-Shaqiq) and Khor Al-Udaid (now on the Saudi side of the border in the south). Shortly after, the Ottoman authorities at Al-Hasa sent a detachment of 100 troops and a field gun to Doha under the command of Major Ömer Bey, which arrived in December 1871. They installed themselves in the former Musallam fort between Doha and Bidda, which became known as Qal'at Al-Aksar. Sheikh Jassim was given an Ottoman rank, *qaim-makam*, and the administration was entrusted to his hands.

Rahman, H. (2005) *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years 1627-1916*. London: Thames & Hudson;
Kursun, Z. (2010) *The Ottomans in Qatar*. Gorgias PrLlc

1871: Description by Major Ömer Bey, Ottoman Commander

The head of the Ottoman forces provided a very brief description of Doha, using the old name Bidda for the combined town. "The town of Al-Bidda is the administrative centre. It has approximately 1,000 houses and a population of 4,000."

Kursun, Z. (2010) *The Ottomans in Qatar*. Gorgias PrLlc

1878: Sheikh Jasim bin Mohammed al-Thani becomes ruler of Qatar

On the 18th of December 1878, Sheikh Mohammed bin Thani died. He was succeeded by his son, Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed Al-Thani, who had already been acting as ruler for some years.

1879-1884: Tribal attacks on Doha and hostilities with Abu Dhabi

Doha was attacked several times by members of the Bani Hajir, Naim, Manasir and Awamir tribes. In 1884 the imminence of an attack by the Ajman tribe was so great that no one dared to go to the pearl fisheries that season.

Zahlan, R. S. (1979) *The Creation of Qatar*. London: Routledge; Rahman, H. (2005) *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years 1627-1916*. London: Thames & Hudson;

1887: Sheikh Jasim retires from Bidda for the first time

Sheikh Jasim's relations with the Ottomans became strained over the years as they failed to support him during a long dispute with Zayed bin Khalifa of Abu Dhabi. Things deteriorated further when the Turks attempted to establish a customs house at Bidda. In response Jasim attempted repeatedly but unsuccessfully to resign as *qaim-makam*, and eventually retired to Dha'ain, a small coastal village just next to Sumaisma. Once there, he declared that he was no longer responsible for the administration of the country, which would in future be 'first referred to God and then to the Turkish Government'. However, Sheikh Jasim's tactical retreat created lawlessness in Bidda. In July 1887, two British Indian Banian traders were attacked and wounded by the residents of Bidda. All the British Indian residents at Bidda were subsequently removed to Bahrain and a fine was eventually levied by the British.

Rahman, H. (2005) *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years 1627-1916*. London: Thames & Hudson

1888: Doha raided by Abu Dhabi

A drawn-out war with Abu Dhabi, triggered by disputes over the ownership of Khor Al-Udaid, came to a climax with a raid on Doha that resulted in the death of the son of Sheikh Jassim. Retaliatory raids by Qatari forces reached as far as the Bani Yas heartland in the Liwa Oasis in 1889.

Zahlan, R. S. (1979) *The Creation of Qatar*. London: Routledge

1893: Battle of Wajba

In protest at Ottoman administrative reforms, Sheikh Jassim once again attempted to resign as *qaim-makam*, and stopped paying taxes. In a heavy-handed response, Mehmed Hafiz Pasha marched into Qatar with more than 200 soldiers, 100 mounted gendarmes and 40 cavalry, and arrested Jassim's brother and other leading men of Doha. Jassim moved to Wajbah, then 12km west of Doha, with his Bedouin allies (Manasir, Bani Hajir and others), and the Turks moved to meet his forces. Facing unexpected resistance and overwhelmed by numbers, the Turks retreated back to their fort in Doha, losing half their forces along the way. It was unquestionably a humiliation for the Turks, but to avoid losing what little foothold they still retained in Qatar, and in the light of the recommendations of the Sultan himself and following an investigation, the Ottoman government did not avenge this defeat but pardoned Jassim and allowed the previous status quo to be restored.

Rahman, H. (2005) *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years 1627-1916*. London: Thames & Hudson;
Kursun, Z. (2010) *The Ottomans in Qatar*. Gorgias PrLlc

1893: Ottoman official report

"The town of Qatar [Qatar kasabası] has about 200 houses [probably an error for 2000] and is said to have a population of 6000 and consists of two parts, namely of a western section inhabited by the al-Bu Kevarah [Al Bu Kuwara] and Sudan tribes, called al-Beda', and of an eastern section called Doha where the other tribes live."

Kursun, Z. (2010) *The Ottomans in Qatar*. Gorgias PrLlc

1904: Hermann Burchardt, German traveller

By the time of the visit of Hermann Burchardt, who provided the first photographs of the town, Doha and Little Doha (including the Turkish fort) seem to have been regarded as a single component and a new district of Doha had sprung up: Salata. His photos of the fort confirm his observation the Turkish garrison was under-resourced and in decay.

“On January 26 we arrived in Doha, where the garrison of Qatar is stationed. I was quartered with the Commander, a major...Three neighbouring towns are distinguished. Doha, with the garrison, and al-Bida'a, and As-Solata. The garrison consisted of 1 tabur [250 men at most] with two old cannon. Soldiers, military officers, and administrative officers with their families dwell in miserable mud houses, and the state of health is not good; particularly common are eye diseases. At one time scurvy was also common; better nutrition for the soldiers has eliminated this disease completely.

A long row of larger boats used in pearl diving testified to the importance of this enterprise. In the pearl season, the number of inhabitants here swells by thousands; all foodstuffs rise in price, and often 1/4 talleri is paid for a goatskin of fresh water. An old, intelligent Arab said that pearl diving isn't such a profitable livelihood at all. It involves a respectable amount of capital, for equipping a good sailboat with food and advances for the crew require at least 15,000 rupees, and only in exceptional cases can one count on greater interest than 4 per cent.”

Burchardt, H. (1906), *Ost-Arabien von Basra bis Maskat auf Grundeigener Reisen. Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin*, Berlin



28 January 1904

K1339

Photograph of Doha in 1904

1905: Assassination of Ahmed bin Mohammed Al-Thani

Soon after the Battle of Wajba, the elderly Sheikh Jassim had moved into semi-retirement in Lusail, delegating the running of Doha to his younger brother, Ahmed. Jassim might have considered Ahmed to be his natural successor as ruler, but in December 1905 Ahmed was assassinated by a disgruntled tribesman, and Jassim once again had to take up full responsibility.

Althani M.A.J. 2012 *Jassim the Leader*. Profile Books, London

1908: J G Lorimer, Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf and 'Oman

Between 1905 and 1907 the British administration gathered a vast and invaluable trove of information relating to each village, town, settlement and tribe of the Gulf, including those of Qatar. This enterprise was led by John Gordon Lorimer, an energetic administrator with an unrivalled knowledge of the region. He described the districts of the town: by now Doha and Bidda were listed as just two out of nine districts of greater Doha. He counted and listed each of the tribes and peoples that lived in Doha at the time, and explained how they lived.

“By pearl diving, sea fishing and a small maritime carrying trade. About 850 pearl-boats, 60 sea-going boats running to Oman, the Persian Coast and Basrah, and 9- fishing boats are owned at Dohah. Pearls are the only export...Foreign trade is chiefly with Bahrain...Dohah itself possesses only one well of brackish water, named Ain Walad Sa'id, which is a half mile to the south of the Dohah quarter, but there is a group of others called Mushairib with fairly good water, at 1 mile to the west of the Doha quarter. Three miles inland is Bir-al-Jadidah, a large masonry well of indifferent water on which the town mainly depends for its supply. A mile beyond to the southwards are the wells of Na'aajah, from which the Sheikhs of the Al Thani, the other notables of Dohah town, and the officers of the Turkish garrison obtain their drinking water. The Turkish troops obtain most of their water from Mushairib, where there is a military outpost of 8 men in a tower to watch the wells. The soldiers now have a vegetable garden at this place; and scurvy, which was formerly common among the garrison, has disappeared.”

Lorimer , J.G. (1986) *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Originally published 1915)

1913: Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al-Thani becomes ruler of Qatar

On the 17th of July 1913, Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed al-Thani died while still in office. He was succeeded by his son, Sheikh Abdullah bin Jasim an-Thani. Sheikh Abdullah had been the 'right hand man' of Sheikh Jasim for several years, and the succession was a peaceful one.

Tuson, P. (1991) *Records of Qatar 1820-1960*. Vol. 5 1916-1935. Archive Editions.



Photograph of Sheikh Jassim bin Mohammed al-Thani

1913: Agreement to withdraw Turkish troops under the Anglo-Ottoman Convention

In 1913 an agreement was made between Britain and the Ottomans for the latter to withdraw from Qatar. This was part of a wider agreement intended to define the limits of Ottoman jurisdiction in the Gulf. The provisions were not enacted in Qatar, however, and the Ottoman garrison remained in place until 1915.

Kursun, Z. (2010) *The Ottomans in Qatar*. Gorgias PrLlc

1915: Ottoman troops forced out of Bidda

By 1915 Britain and Turkey were at war. Fearing the consequences, a large number of Ottoman troops escaped Doha by fleeing to the district of Tangistan on the Persian coast. The remainder fled on the night of 19th-20th August 2015, following the arrival of British warships from Bahrain. The following telegram was sent from Doha.

“On threatening to land troops from [the ship] Dalhousie the fort and trenches were evacuated by the Turkish detachment during the night. This morning an armed party was landed without opposition and seized store(s) which included one mountain gun, two field guns. The breech blocks of these guns had been removed. Besides tents there were 14 rifles, 120 cases ammunition and 500 projectiles. For the field guns no powder was found. The ammunition and rifles and part of the military stores were on the advice of the Political Officer given to the Sheikh of Qatar who has given us every assistance. The projectiles, tents

and military stores were destroyed as all the Tangistani dhows have for some time been in hiding but the guns were taken on board HMS Pyramus.”

So ended the 43 years of Ottoman control in Qatar.

Rahman, H. (2005) *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years 1627-1916*. London: Thames & Hudson

Doha 1916 - 1971: From a British Protectorate to Independence

1916: Doha made capital of British Protectorate of Qatar

After extensive negotiations, an Anglo-Qatari treaty was signed on 3 November 1916 between Sheikh Abdullah Al-Thani and Major Percy Cox, Political Resident. Qatar was placed under the British Trucial system of administration, becoming the ninth and last of the Trucial States. Doha was made the capital of the British Protectorate of Qatar.

Rahman, H. (2005) *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years 1627-1916*. London: Thames & Hudson



Photograph of Major Percy Cox, Political Resident

1923: First negotiations over oil concession

As early as 1923, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company sought an oil concession in Qatar. They negotiated with the British authorities for a concession to cover the entire Arab littoral of the Persian Gulf. In 1926 Sheikh Abdullah granted the Company 18 months in which to negotiate for an oil concession within his territory, although they did not take advantage of this, and negotiations did not proceed.

Tuson, P. (1991) *Records of Qatar 1820-1960*. Vol. 5 1916-1935. Archive Editions.

1925-1930s: The crash of the pearling industry, and worldwide economic depression

The Japanese perfection of the cultured pearl, which first appeared in the region in 1925, proved a disaster for the Gulf's pearling industry. Pearls lost their cachet, prices for natural pearls plummeted, and the Gulf's harvests could not be sold. The majority of the people of the Gulf towns, including Doha, were burdened by debt and lost their sole source of income. From 1929 the worldwide economic depression made matters even worse, and poverty forced many people to leave the peninsula or live in dismal conditions. Some left their families in Doha and commuted to the eastern province of Saudi Arabia in search of jobs.

Carter, R.A., 2012. *Sea of Pearls: Seven Thousand Years of the Industry that Shaped the Gulf*, London: Arabian Publishing.

1935: Oil concession signed

In 1932, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company obtained renewed permission from Sheikh Abdullah to make a geological exploration of the Qatar peninsula, this time for two years. This time, in January 1933, they began geological explorations in Qatar. Negotiations over the concession were lengthy and continued until 1935, when the Commercial agreement of the Qatar oil concession was signed on 17th May by Sheikh Abdullah and Mr C.C. Myles of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company Ltd. In 1937 the concession was transferred to Petroleum Development (Qatar) Ltd, and they began oil exploration in Qatar, encouraged by the discovery of oil in Bahrain five years earlier.

Tuson, P. (1991) *Records of Qatar 1820-1960. Vol. 5 1916-1935. Archive Editions.*

1939: First oil strike

The first oil strike in the Qatar oil fields was made by Petroleum Development (Qatar) Ltd, in October 1939. A telegram from the Political Agent in Bahrain to the Political Resident in the Gulf, dated 11 October 1939, simply read "Development, Qatar, have had slight show of oil in their test well near Zekrit. Drilling continues." Within months, another telegram described tests of the well as being "highly satisfactory", and a further two wells were drilled.

Tuson, P. (1991) *Records of Qatar 1820-1960. Vol 6. Archive Editions*; El Mallakh, R. (1979) *Qatar: Development of an oil economy. Palgrave Macmillan*

The 1940s: A description of Doha in the 1940s

During the 1940s, the main market place in Doha stretched from the two-storey custom house at the harbour almost to Al-Asmakh road, half a mile to the west. The marketplace—known at one point as Souk al-Zalam, the dark market – ran parallel to, and east, of the fort, separated from it only by a large vacant parcel of land. Another segment of this market stretched even further to the south and was chiefly a fish market. Between these two marketplaces there was an open space reserved as a camel market.

The housing stock was composed of a few hundred simple, one floor dwellings huddled closely together along narrow, winding alleys. Other structures that dotted the cityscape included the barasti and the Bedouin tents. The most prominent house during these days was the old palace in Slatat built by Sheikh Abdallah bin Jasim in the first decade of the twentieth century, which was used for both living and governance. The house was

abandoned during the recession years of the 1930s until renovated as Doha's National Museum in the early 1970s.

Adham, K. (2011) 'Rediscovering the Island: Doha's Urbanity from Pearls to spectacle' in Elsheshtawy, Y (ed) *The Evolving Arab city*. London: Routledge



Aerial view in 1947 showing Bidda in the background, Doha in the foreground, and the Amiri Diwan in-between

1947: Oil drilling begins again

Drilling was suspended in 1941, as the progress of the Second World War made it difficult to ensure the security of the oil company's operations in the area. The war years brought renewed hardship to Doha, parts of which are clearly abandoned and in a state of collapse in 1947 aerial imagery. Drilling began again in 1947.

Othman , N. (1984) *With Their Bare Hands: The Story of the Oil Industry in Qatar*. London: Longman Group

1949: Sheikh Ali bin Abdullah al-Thani becomes ruler of Qatar

On the 20th of August 1949, Sheikh Abdullah bin Jasim al-Thani abdicated from power in Qatar. He was succeeded by his son Sheikh Ali bin Abdullah al-Thani.

Tuson, P. (1991) *Records of Qatar 1820-1960*. Vol 6. Archive Editions.

1949: Othman's description of Doha in the 1940s

"In 1949 Doha was dominated by the Fort, which stood on the exact spot where the Diwan al Emiri now stands. In those days the sea lapped the walls of the Fort. Other houses, built by Sheikhs and wealthy merchants, contributed a splash of elegance and colour to the generally monotonous background of sand and limestone. Merchant's houses were usually two-storeyed structures of the typical Arab-Islamic architecture seen throughout the Gulf region. Each house displayed its own special features, whether through colour wash applied to the roof, or the pattern in which the bamboo roof covering was laid. A further sign of

family wealth was the use of stained glass in small arcs above the window openings. Inside, the walls would be ornately decorated and inscribed with exquisite Islamic inscriptions.

Some of the merchants' houses incorporated a wind-tower, which provided a natural system of air-conditioning. The less fortunate had to rely on occasional cool breezes from the sea, for not only were there no air-conditioning systems in Doha in 1949, there was no electricity, except for a handful of generators supplying the Fort, the oil company's headquarters, and the houses of a few leading merchants.

Doha was full of mosques. The most popular and important were the Sheikh's Mosque alongside the Fort, the al-Ahmad Mosque and the Jassem [al-Qubaib] Mosque. All three mosques have been demolished and rebuilt since that time, including, sadly, the al-Qubaib Mosque, which was unique in its architecture and quite the most beautiful mosque to be found anywhere in Qatar. The main open-air mosque used at major festivals such as the Eid al-Fitr, which follows the holy month of Ramadhan fast, was in al-Jassrah.

The centre of activity in Doha was the market place. The main market place was Souq Waqif which was divided into two parts. One section specialised in fish. This was situated between the present Bismillah Hotel and the cross-roads of Baharna and Najjada streets. The other section, the general market, stretched from Baharat al Jufari to the harbour. These two sections were separated by a large open area which served as the camel market. Here the al-badiyah – people of the desert – would assemble to buy and sell camels, and to trade their typical produce of the Bedouin economy, animal fats, camelhair textile products such as blankets and carpets, and firewood, in exchange for provisions and utensils.”

Othman , N. (1984) *With Their Bare Hands: The Story of the Oil Industry in Qatar*. London: Longman Group

1949: Sir John Arthur Wilton. First British Political Agent in Qatar

The loss of pearling revenues, prolonged global recession and war years had not been kind to Doha, as seen in Wilton's description of Doha around 1949.

“The appearance of the capital, Doha, suggested the aftermath of an air raid as unoccupied and even occupied houses crumbled into decay. In the countryside, at its best a harsh and barren moonscape of a land, the desert advanced pitilessly against the few patches of cultivation. Walled gardens and date groves bore signs of drought and neglect as the laborious business of irrigation from deep wells by donkey-power was not sustained... There was only one house in Doha with plumbing, electricity and even rudimentary air-conditioning installed by the Oil Company to house its representative when one could be spared to reside there.”

Wilton, Sir J.A. (unpub) Doha 1949-50. From Papers of Sir John Wilton, archive held at University of Exeter, reference number GB29 EUL MS 264

1949: Lord Charles Spencer Denman account of Doha

A more cheerful perspective was given by Lord Denman, then a visiting businessman in Doha.

“I don't remember it as falling down, I remember it as a typical mud building Arab town. There were no fine buildings or anything like that, it was like a rabbit warren with the little narrow streets going through. Our job was to bring in all the building materials for developing the place once they had some oil money. They were building the hospital, and we were largely responsible for that. John Harris won a competition to design the hospital, he was quite a young man. This was his first big contract and he went on working throughout the Middle East and the Far East, Dubai and Hong Kong.”

(Interviewed by Frances Gillespie in 2010)

1949: First oil exports from Qatar

In December 1949, Qatar became an exporter of crude oil, with its first shipment to Europe. The shipment originated from the onshore Dukhan field. In 1949 Qatar produced just 730,000 barrels of oil, but annual quantities extracted quickly rose to 12,268,000 in 1950 and 50,558,000 in 1957.

El Mallakh, R. (1979) *Qatar: Development of an oil economy*. Palgrave Macmillan

1950-53: Description of Doha by Aziza Plant, wife of the British Advisor

“Doha was a big village in which everyone knew one another. There was no telephone, and very few people even had radios. There was hardly enough water for washing or cooking, and the little there was came from wells in the desert, which we used to boil and filter. There was no electricity, and of course no air-conditioning. Women didn't go to work, and there was no formal education except for the Koranic schools. All women wore the face mask, called a batula, and the overveil. Even the younger girls aged twelve and over wore the batula in those days...at first, they cried, and the dark blue colour of the batula covered their eyes and faces, but after a few days they got used to it.”

1955: Development in Doha

“It was around 1955 that a true sense of development began to be felt in the city. Asphalt roads were extended and lit; a new desalination plant was constructed with pipes connecting it to many houses nearby; an electric plant was built in Kahraba Street near Mushereib; new schools began admitting students; and a new hospital, Al-Remailiah, opened its doors for the first time in the country, followed by maternity and children's hospitals.

To accommodate the population growth and the changing urban life, the government of Qatar in 1972 contracted the first foreign planning consultant, the British-based Llewelyn-Davies, to supply a master plan for Doha extending through to 1990. Llewelyn-Davies presented several proposals for different parts of the city and advised the Planning Department of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs on planning legislation. One of their recommendations for the central areas of the city was to acquire a number of older neighbourhoods from their residents and clear them for redesign and redevelopment.

The new action plan of land acquisition caused an immediate inflation in real-estate speculation. Among the obvious consequences of the urban renewal policy recommended

by Llewelyn-Davies was the change in the demographic mix in the city centre. I recall that on Friday afternoons, thousands of low-income, Asian workers, who mainly lived around the downtown area, or commuted from other parts of the city, filled the streets of Doha's central area."

Adham, K. (2011) 'Rediscovering the Island: Doha's Urbanity from Pearls to spectacle' in Elsheshtawy, Y (ed) *The Evolving Arab city*. London: Routledge

1956: Gulf Archaeologist Geoffrey Bibby visits Doha

"Doha had changed since I was last there six years before. Then we had had to leave our vehicle outside the town, as the streets were too narrow for anything but donkey-carts. Now broad paved roads met at the new mosque by the half-completed new palace in the centre of the town; the ring-road was half-finished, and was already marked out for its dual carriageway."

1957: Hunting Survey produces first detailed map of Doha

The first detailed map of Doha was produced by Hunting Aerosurveys Ltd, based on aerial photographs taken of the city in 1956.

1960: Sheikh Ahmad bin Ali al-Thani becomes ruler of Qatar

On the 24th of October 1960, Sheikh Ali bin Abdullah al-Thani abdicated from power in Qatar. He was succeeded by his son, Sheikh Ahmad bin Ali al-Thani.

1970: Creation of a deep water port at Doha

Before June 1966, Qatar's only deep-water port was the oil tanker terminal at Umm Said. Due to a wide coral bar situated between Doha's waterfront and the deeper waters of the Gulf, Doha was inaccessible. However, in 1970 Penta International of Japan was contracted to dredge a channel 27 feet deep, 350 feet wide and 3.5 miles long. When Doha's deep water port was completed, the estimated total expenditure was QR 144 million. Since 1971 and the completion of Doha's port, imports have risen steadily. Between 1975 and 1976 cargo distributed through Doha increased by 770,000 tons to 1.2 million tons.

El Mallakh, R. (1979) *Qatar: Development of an oil economy*. Palgrave Macmillan

1971: Qatar declares Independence

In 1968, the British Government announced that it would terminate all its defence commitments east of Suez by the end of 1971, which meant the termination of the protection treaties it held with the Gulf States. Negotiations took place between Qatar and the other Gulf States with a view to creating a Federation of Arab Emirates, but Qatar became angered by the continued interference of the British, and began the process of independence in 1970. A provisional constitution was drawn up on the 2nd of April 1970. On the 3rd of September 1971, the Prime Minister and Heir Apparent, Khalifa bin Hamad al-Thani, announced a new Anglo-Qatari treaty of friendship and co-operation, formally terminating the old treaties of protection. The new constitution was published, establishing the independent statehood of Qatar.

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