

HIDDEN LESSONS
FROM HISTORY

HIDDEN LESSONS FROM HISTORY

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*To my husband Michael, my companion in the
many adventures that helped make this book a reality.*

and

*To my mom, who inspired my love of learning
and taught me that life is a work in progress.*

“History...is so apt to surround her heroes with an atmosphere of imaginary brightness”

- James Fenimore Cooper

AUTHOR’S NOTE

In the quest to shape a favorable narrative of the past, we sometimes disregard important context, details, and facts. As is often the case, our picture of history can sometimes be blurred by half-truths; part myth, and part reality.

This book represents the convergence of two different adventures: one behind the camera and the other researching the truth behind the photos I took. The first adventure was a fifteen-year journey that took me all over the world. Along the way, I recorded my experiences taking photographs of famous and not so famous scenes.

During my travels, I began to realize how little I knew about the history behind the photos I was taking. I collected stories and observations that left me with many questions. This curiosity led me to my second adventure: researching the hidden history behind my favorite photos. I used hundreds of sources to help curate stories that bring the photographic collection in this book to life.

As you read through this book, you’ll find little-known historical facts, inconvenient truths, and heroes whose contributions were lost by time. What I learned through my research far exceeded anything I could have hoped for. The stories in this book challenged my own perceptions about history, and helped me gain broader insight into the truth of our shared experience. I am fortunate, grateful, and honored to share these lessons with you.

The central photo (right) captures the glistening gold dome and colorful geometric patterns that adorn the Dome of the Rock mosque on the Temple Mount. The black and white photo (below) captures rabbis in prayer at the Western Wall which is also a part of the Temple Mount complex.



TEMPLE MOUNT / Jerusalem

More than half the world belongs to one of the religions that trace their origins back to the prophet Abraham. Despite common ancestry and history, these religions have been trapped in bloody and violent conflict and competition for more than two thousand years.

The city of Jerusalem was founded more than four thousand years ago and was named after the Canaanite god Shalem. As the Bible's Book of Genesis tells, Abraham, the founder of Judaism, led his tribe from Ur to Canaan under a new, monotheistic covenant.

Abraham plays a significant role in other religions too. Muslims believe Abraham's son Ishmael was the father of the Arab people. Christians are also direct descendants from Abraham, though the New Testament tells us of how Jesus and his earliest followers rebelled against Jewish institutions.

Jerusalem plays a central role for all religions that trace their origin back to Abraham. No site in the city is more contested than the Temple Mount. Once home of the most holy ancient Jewish temples, it is also the site where the Quran tells us Mohammed is believed to have ascended to heaven. It is also the scene of some of the most dramatic events leading up to Jesus's crucifixion in the Bible. The site has been fought over throughout history — despite the fact all its combatants can trace their roots back to a common history.



This aerial photo captures the entire Temple Mount including the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. The black and white photo taken between dawn and midday prayers shows the Temple Mount basked in early morning light.

“The view of Jerusalem is the history of the world; it is more; it is the history of earth and of heaven.”

-Benjamin Disraeli