

# **From Rags to Riches**

A Story of Abu Dhabi

Students Edition

By

**Mohammed Al Fahim**

Retold by

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Edited by

**Melanie Gobert**

## **Foreword**

I was very happy to learn Dr. Melanie Gobert has chosen my book Rags to Riches – The story of Abu Dhabi for her research project at the Higher Colleges of Technology. It was with all my best wishes and whole hearted willingness gave her my consent for the same. I was told that the aim of her project was to re work the contents of the book in a more simplified manner to make it easier for the school and college students to comprehend, understand and to make use of its historical value and information in their professional lives. I am satisfied now as she has accomplished her work with par excellence without losing the essentials of the original content.

My intentions while writing the book was only to record my experiences and memories of the difficult; but rich past of this country's history and its struggle over a period of time which lead us to enjoy the wonderful present of fullness and social satisfaction.

Present is the byproduct of the past; therefore, we cannot neglect to understand the historical knowledge which takes us to succeed in our profession and life.

My book gives an insight into various historical aspects that made Abu Dhabi what it is today. With her keen interest and enthusiasm she made it simpler in its readability, content and orientation for the students.

Well done Melanie, and I wish you and the new lot of its readers to become Richer and Richer in all aspects. All the best

**Mohammed Al Fahim**

Author

## **Introduction**

From Rags to Riches: A Story of Abu Dhabi, Student's Edition, is a must read for all young Emiratis. To quote H.H. the late great Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, founder of the modern United Arab Emirates, "A nation without a past is a nation without a present or a future." Thus it is the obligation of every citizen to become knowledgeable about the past so they can know who they are in the present and decide what they want to be in the future.

From Rags to Riches tells the story of Abu Dhabi from the pre-oil era until the 1990s through the eyes of local businessman, Mohammad Al Fahim, who grew up in Abu Dhabi and Al Ain in the 1950s and 60s. Mr Al Fahim has documented a very important time period in the history of the UAE through the eyes of his childhood in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and his knowledge of the people and the region. He writes of the poverty of the one-room school

house coupled with the shared sense of community of the people, the harsh trips across the desert by camel caravan from

Abu Dhabi to Al Ain paired with the arrival of the first automobiles on desert sands without roads, the novelty and wonder of his first airplane flight from Das Island coupled with the death of his mother in childbirth due to a lack of hospitals and qualified medical staff. Amber Haque, PhD, Associate Professor of Psychology at United Arab Emirates University, writes that, “The young will, of course, model their elders,” and calls *From Rags to Riches: A Story of Abu Dhabi* “an excellent resource on identity and national legacy for the local youth” that should “actually be a part of course curriculum at the undergraduate level for all college students.”\*

This Student’s Edition has been simplified into graded English for English Language Learners by Dr. Patrick Dougherty. Dr. Dougherty has been a high school and university educator for more than twenty years in the United States, Japan, Bangladesh, and the United Arab Emirates. He has written two English textbooks, more than twenty monographs and articles, edited three collections of prose and poetry, and is a published short story writer and poet. The simplification of *From Rags to Riches*, Student’s Edition was made possible by a grant from the Emirates Foundation (#2009/182).

From the editor, Student’s Edition

*\*Haque, A. (2007). Preserving cultural identity in the 21st century: Challenges to the Emirati youth. Journal of Social Affairs, 24, 13-31.*