

# Gail and Steve Humphreys

## Explore Iran

Spring 2015

4 Topics for photographs:

Art & Architecture, At work, People, Uniquely Iranian

A note to the viewer:

Gail (Simons) and Steve Humphreys went to Iran for a month in the spring of 2015 pursuing a long-held hope. Steve is a scholar of the Middle East, Gail is a well-traveled learner. The Iran we found was much different from what we expected.

In September, Gail presented a slide show to classmates who attended the September 2015 Conference at the College. Mary Dee Beall and Wendy Lycan Jackson videotaped the presentation. What we share here is a videotape of a slide show [**CLICK [HERE](#)**] As such, the pictures have lost some of their color. Nonetheless, we hope it will be interesting to viewers. Gail especially thanks Mary Dee and Wendy very much for all their efforts.

Because the color on the video is compromised, Gail shares a few sets of photos here, so you can see Iran in full color. But, don't miss the video. It really tells the story.

The video starts out with a 10-minute reading from Gail's diary on the ins and outs of buying a chador, the enveloping cloak women wear that covers them entirely except for the face. In Iran, all women wear a chador when entering a shrine. Some wear it as ordinary street attire. Those who do not wear a chador as street attire wear a thigh-length fitted jacket and slacks or jeans---even in hot weather. Almost all women show their faces.

After the chador-reading from her diary, Gail considers various topics:

1. How Iranian women push back against the requirement to wear a head scarf.  
Hint: lots of make-up, polished fingernails, florescent-colored shoes, pushed-back head scarves, nose jobs, and young daughters dressed in fashions they wish they could wear.
2. Why the nuclear deal with Iran could not totally prohibit Iranian nuclear activities.  
Hint: Iran's history as a Persian nation, the place of history-lauding poetry in Iranian life, the pride in being Iranian.

3. Iranians' frustration with Western cultural ignorance. "We are Persian, not Arab." Hint: the Muslim faith of Iranians is lived in shrines devoted to the Imams and their kin more than in the Arab-rooted mosques. The shrines are mobbed, the mosques are mostly empty---except de rigueur Fridays.

4. The sanctions as seen through Iranian eyes. Hint: Iranians believe the sanctions were imposed because the West sees Iran as a terrorist nation---to them, sanctions have little/nothing to do with nuclear ambitions; the sanctions have collapsed the Iranian middle class because they have brought on intense inflation; there is a back-door economy that brings goods in and out of the country.

5. Views of Iranian Life. Hint: nomads, picnics, and a day at the beach. Iranian architecture, tiles, and some of Gail's favorites from Iran. Hint: This isn't the U.S.A



# Art and Architecture

The Iranian Stories in Stone, Brick, Tile and  
Textile 500 B.C. to 1850 A.D.

Persepolis – Darius  
500 B.C.E



# Gonbad-e-Qabus Tomb Tower

Early 11th Century





Semnam Minaret,  
west of Damghan

11th Century



# Friday Mosque – Yazd

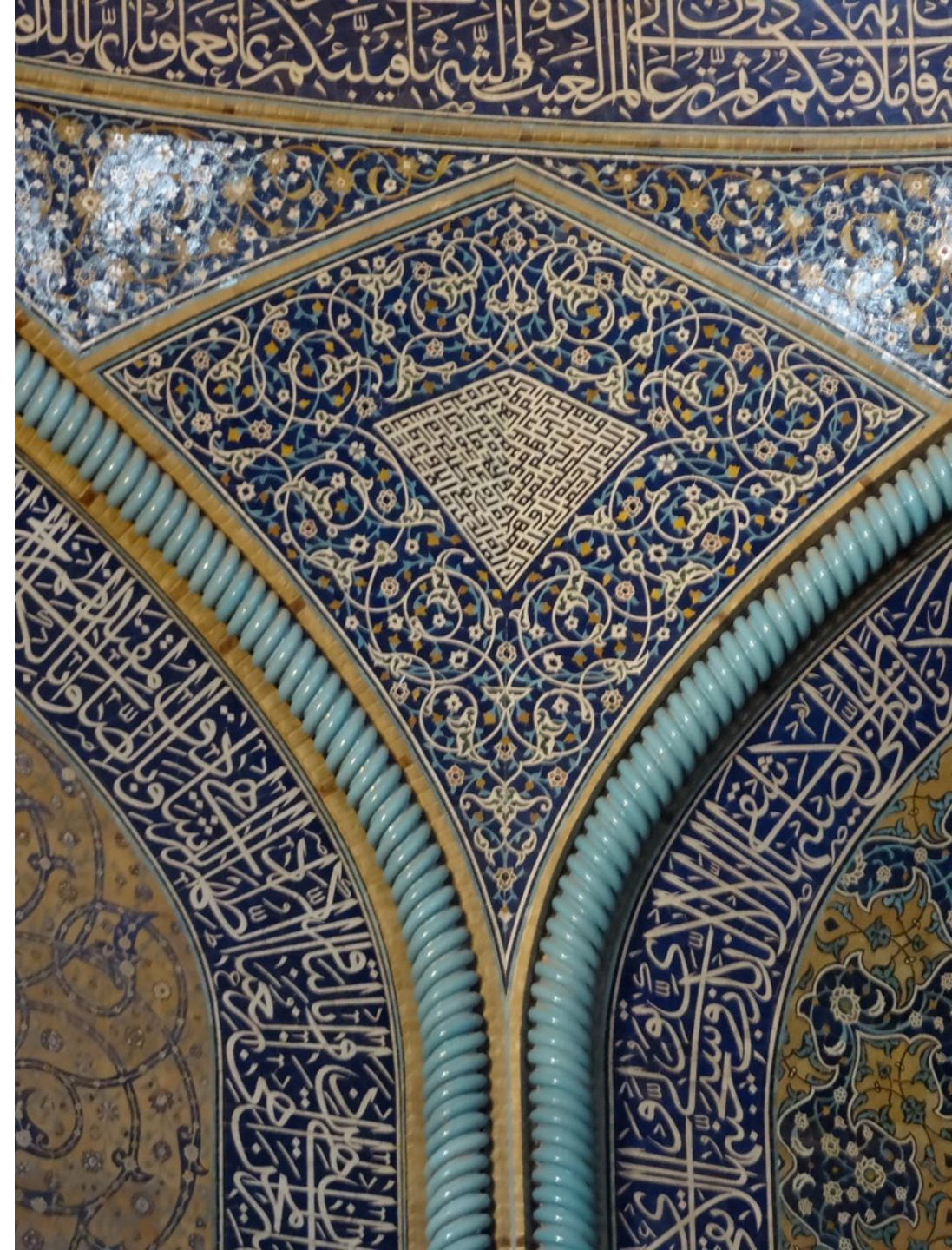
14th Century



# Chapel of Shah Abbas

- Isfahan

18th Century



# 19th Century Carpet



# Iranians at Work

From Carpet Weaving to Yoghurt Making,  
(not like the U.S.)

# Town Merchant



# Bread Makers



Calligrapher





# In-home Village Loom – Simple Cloth Weavings



Middle Class In-  
Home Weaver:  
Fine carpet/  
Aching Back



# Nomad Making Sheep's Milk Yogurt



# People

from modern to traditional,  
living life fully, even joyously,  
within the mores/constraints of Iranian life

# Modern Guy



# Daring Beach Garb

—

# Caspian Sea



# Peddler in the Park



# Reading Poetry in the Park





# Nomad Mother and Child in Tent



Iranian Woman  
in Full Make-up/  
Full Rebellion



# Uniquely Iranian

This is why we travel:  
a “House of Strength,”  
a dainty rose-rimmed plate holding a  
sheep's-head in broth,  
and more

# Sheep's Head Soup in Rose- Themed Soup Bowl

- Chalus



19th Century Tile  
-Rose and Bird Motif  
with European  
Influence

- Shiraz



# Family Picnic

Repeated all over Iran,  
in every venue



# Roadside Rose Water/Perfume Factory



# Ancient Art of Disciplined "War" Exercises.

## Zur Khaneh House of Strength

Note musicians in booth and  
Iranian accoutrements

