

Saudi Arabia Video Collection

Saudi Arabia: The Race With Time

Pacific Productions (1982)

60 minutes, color

This video (recorded off the air) explores the ways the discovery of oil in the 1970's has changed Saudi Arabia and its people. Before Saudi Arabia struck oil, it was a poverty stricken country. Several Saudi businessmen are interviewed about how their lives have changed since that time. One Saudi explains how fast the country became modernized, and how stressful a process it was. The people explain that the government is not the only one benefiting from the new-found wealth; every Saudi gets his share. The government provides free medical coverage for all and large loans with no interest for those who want to buy houses or marry. However, the new system is not flawless. Many Saudis would like to see a return to old ways. Thus the Saudi Arabian government is left trying to balance between a traditional desert kingdom and a modern government. One of their efforts to appease each citizen is the allowance of any Saudi to visit any one of the princes to make a complaint or request. The video also discusses the way that Sharia, or Islamic law, is applied in Saudi Arabia and how it has kept the country relatively safe. The influence of migrant workers is emphasized in the video. With the influx of foreign workers to the wealthy country, things are bound to change and many Saudis are leery of these changes. For this reason it seems many Saudis are returning to their roots, including those of Islam. The video also has a very interesting segment on the educational system, which consists of several interviews with Saudis involved in the schools. This video does a good job of explaining how Saudi Arabia's new wealth has changed the country, as well as what it could mean for the future.
