

**Mennonite Historical Society
of
British Columbia
*March 1996***

NEWSLETTER

Dear Members and Friends,

We are pleased to remind you of our next Heritage Lecture and to report on a most interesting project that is in part sponsored by your Society.

HERITAGE LECTURE

March 30, 1996 at 7:00 PM - Clearbrook Community Centre

Dr. Abraham Friesen

Topic: Persecution of the Anabaptists in the Reformation

Dr. Abraham Friesen is a Canadian, born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba, but now a resident in California. He was educated in Winnipeg where he earned a BA and MA in Canadian and American History at the University of Manitoba. After writing his dissertation at the Institute for European History, Mainz, Germany, Dr. Friesen was awarded a Doctorate in Early, Medieval, and Modern European History by Stanford University in 1967.

Dr. Friesen is now at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he is Professor of Renaissance and Reformation History. He is also a Fellow of the Institute for European History, Mainz, Germany, and a Fellow of the Centre for Mennonite Studies at the University of Winnipeg.

Dr. Friesen has published numerous books including, "Reformation and Utopia: The Marxist Interpretation of the Reformation and its Antecedents", and "Thomas Muenster, a Destroyer of the Godless". He was also the Editor and Chief Translator of "P.M. Friesen: The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia, 1789-1910", and has written and published some 40 essays on his chosen specialty.

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COMING EVENT: **May 11, 1996 - The Annual Meeting**
Speaker: Dr. Walter Klaassen

ZAPOROSHJE PROJECT

At a well attended meeting on February 17, 1996, over 200 members and friends heard Dr. Harvey Dyck describe the "Zaporoshje Project". Harvey has recently gained access to the official Russian and Soviet Archives for the Southern Ukraine in the City of Zaporoshje and has negotiated permission to microfilm and bring to Canada records that pertain to the Mennonite Community in Russia.

Many of our people suffered dispossession, poverty, cruel hardship, and all too often death at the hands of the Soviets. Their number is still unknown, but is most certainly in the tens of thousands. Most of them went to their death with their specific fate unknown, and often nameless. For the past 70 years it has been thought that all data of their fate was either lost, or possibly never even recorded. Now we find that this is not the case. Soviet Archives are quite extensive and detailed on these matters and for the moment are open to our inspection. The purpose of the Zaporoshje Project is to collect copies of these Archives so that we may identify our brethren and attempt to finally lay them to rest by recording their names and individual fates for posterity.

Your Directors believe this is a most worthwhile project and have agreed to support this work. Our share of the cost of the first phase of this project is \$10,000. Since Harvey's lecture on this subject we have raised about \$3,000 towards this total. As you can see we will need more, and ask for your support.

We all have budgets and can do only so much; but there is a way in which we can all increase our donation without much further sacrifice, and that is:

"tell a friend"

If you tell a friend who was not at the meeting about this project, and this friend supports us to the same degree as you have, then you have in effect doubled your own contribution and it hasn't cost you a cent.

All help will be most appreciated because we believe that we must seize this opportunity, no, this *duty*, to commemorate the sufferings of our less fortunate brethren.

The Directors