

The MHSBC Website: its contributions and relationship to the Mennonite Historical Society of British Columbia.

The MHSBC website functions as the Society's primary public platform for enabling, promoting, and sustaining all of its core activities — archival preservation, research support, community engagement, fundraising, and education.

1. Supporting Archival Preservation and Access

The website is designed to funnel people toward the Society's archival resources and encourage their use.

- **Clear access information** — location, hours, contact details, and procedures for visiting the archives.
- **Descriptions of collections** — church records, genealogical materials, manuscripts, photos, audio-visual items, and private collections.
- **Guidance for researchers** — how to request materials, what types of records exist, and how the archives are organized.
- **Promotion of digitization efforts** — highlighting ongoing projects that preserve fragile materials and make them more accessible.

This directly supports the Society's mandate to *collect, preserve, and make available* Mennonite historical materials.

2. Supporting Research and Knowledge Dissemination

The site acts as a hub for research activity.

- **Publication access** — issues of *Roots & Branches* and information about other research outputs.
- **Project updates** — descriptions of historical or genealogical projects underway.
- **Calls for papers and academic partnerships** — encouraging scholarly engagement with Mennonite history.
- **Educational content** — background on Mennonite migrations, BC settlement history, and related themes.

This strengthens the Society's role as a research facilitator and knowledge resource.

3. Supporting Community Engagement

The website helps the Society connect with its community and broaden participation.

- **Event announcements** — exhibit openings, lectures, presentations, and museum collaborations.
- **News updates** — keeping members informed about Society activities and heritage initiatives.
- **Volunteer opportunities** — inviting community involvement in archival work or events.

This fosters a sense of shared heritage and encourages public involvement.

4. Supporting Fundraising and Membership

The Society relies heavily on community support, and the website makes that support easy.

- **Online membership renewal** — simple forms for joining or renewing.
- **Donation portals** — options for general donations, targeted campaigns, and tax-deductible giving.
- **Campaign visibility** — highlighting specific needs (e.g., equipment, digitization projects).

This infrastructure directly sustains the Society's financial health and operational capacity.

5. Supporting Organizational Transparency and Identity

The website reinforces the Society's credibility and mission.

- **Clear mission statement** — explaining the purpose and values of the organization.
- **Historical overview** — showing the Society's evolution since 1972.
- **Board and governance information** — demonstrating accountability and structure.

This helps build trust with donors, researchers, and community partners.

Summary

The MHSBC website **enables the Society to operate effectively**. It supports:

- Archival access and preservation
- Research and publication
- Community engagement and events
- Fundraising and membership
- Organizational identity and transparency

Respectfully submitted by Elmer G. Wiens, Webmaster