

## THE HISTORY OF KHERSON

Rendered by *Olha Liashenko, April 2018*

Edited by *Iryna Pereilyha*

The territory of modern Kherson has been inhabited since ancient times. The burials and material finds discovered in various parts of the city testify to the human presence already during the Neolithic Period. The history of Kherson began with the Act of Cathrine II of June 8, 1778. The city, with a shipbuilding yard, a trading port and a fortress, which had to become the base for the fleet, was built in the mouth of the Dnipro. The name was given to the city in honor of the ancient colony of Chersonesus. Potemkin, who was a favorite of Empress Catherine II, pointed to the place where it was necessary to found the new city. He was appointed Governor-General of the city and later considered Kherson his brainchild. The famous architects and engineers of the time Starov, Sitnikov, Bourgeois, Korsakov and others were involved in the construction of Kherson.

The construction of the fleet brought Kherson to the world level. Kherson became the economic and political center of Novorossia (meaning 'New Russia' - so they called the region of the Northern Black Sea Coast then). The construction of the fortress and the city was handled by F. Hannibal and later the military engineer Korsakov. Admiral Ushakov continued the construction. Today the main avenue of the city bears his name. In the 19th century, the development of Kherson as a port continued. Wool, lard, wheat, copper and fish were shipped from here. Instead, they brought in cloth, silk, spices. In 1803, Kherson became the center of Kherson hubernia (a large administrative unit in the south of the present-day Ukraine). In 1806, the shipbuilding yard was built. There was a constant influx of labour and an increase in the number of people and construction. The coat of arms and the flag of the city were established.

The growth of Kherson's repute in the world market allowed its administration to receive good incomes and taxes to the city treasury. This, in turn, allowed the opening of the first educational institutions. The first public school was

built in 1813; it was followed by a grammar school for boys, the school of merchant shipping and the rural agricultural school. The theater and the library were built in the second half of the 19th century; the archaeological and natural history museums were established, too. Soon, the Nikolaev-Kherson railway was opened. The railway connected Kherson with the large cities of the country in 1907, and the first electrical power station started working in 1908.

On the night from 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> January 1918, Soviet power was established in Kherson. Within the period from March 1917 to April 1920, power in the city was repeatedly changed – the city was under the control of the Austro-German troops, Hetman Skoropadsky, the Directory of the UNR and the Entente troops, which, however, were followed by more than 70 years of Soviet power.

Over the years of industrialization Kherson turned into a major industrial centre. The electric machine building plant, the confectionery factory, the canning and the cotton processing plants were built and the construction of one of the largest elevators in the country was completed.

With the outbreak of World War II, many enterprises were evacuated to the east. In the city the Kherson Partisan Detachment was active, the core of which consisted of the local workers. The largest secret organization of Kherson was the group "Centre", led by the partisan Komkov. I. Kulik, the head of the youth secret organization, was posthumously awarded the title of the Hero of the Soviet Union. A monument to him stands in the park planted on the territory of the former Kherson Fortress.

On March 13, 1944 Kherson was liberated from the Nazis. The city was quickly rebuilt and revived into an industrial, agricultural and cultural centre in the south of Ukraine. The sea trading port became one of the leading ports on the Black Sea. The river port, the railway and the airlines provided the connections of the city with the rest of the world.

In 1951 the construction of Kherson's shipbuilding plant started, and three years later the first tankers "The Kherson", "The Grozny", "The Kakhovka", "The Kerch" were launched. In December 1952, the largest cotton factory in the USSR started operating. A trolleybus connection was opened. In March 1977, the construction of an automobile bridge across the Dnipro began in Kherson, which connected the city with the left bank and the Crimea.

At present, Kherson is still an important industrial center in the south of Ukraine.

*Based on the article compiled by V. Kovalenyn: [http://ukraine – in.ua/istoriya-gorodov – ukrainy/istoriya – khersona](http://ukraine-in.ua/istoriya-gorodov-ukrainy/istoriya-khersona)*

**Supervisor: *Hanna O. Sheldahayeva***