Sholokhov, Mikhail Aleksandrovich (1905-84)

- Soviet novelist and Nobel laureate, Mikhail Sholokhov was born in “stanitsa” Vyoshenskaya (a village on the lower Don River, Russia), in a peasant family and was raised among Cossacks.

- His was a teenager when the ordeal of the Civil War descended on his country. Young Sholokhov took an active part in it and was twice saved from death by a lucky chance.

- Upon arriving in Moscow in 1922, he became a member of the Young Guard literary group. His short stories and satirical articles on topics of the day began to appear in the Young Communist League newspapers and magazines.

- In the mid-twenties Sholokhov returned to the Don, moved to stanitsa Vyoshenskaya, which has ever since been his permanent home. His major writings realistically and dramatically depict the lives of the people of this region.

- In 1926 he published two volumes of stories: Tales of the Don and The Azure Steppe. Next, he began writing The Silent Don/Tikhii Don (4 volumes, 1928-40), published in two volumes in English as And Quiet Flows the Don (1934) and The Don Flows Home to the Sea (1940).

- Social realities, particularly collectivization and the effect it had on the life of the Cossacks, prompted him to temporarily put aside this main work of his life, and in the early 1930s Sholokhov produced the first part of the novel Virgin Soil Upturned (2 volumes, 1932-60), the first volume published (1935) in England as Virgin Soil Upturned and in the U.S. as Seeds of Tomorrow, and the second volume translated as Harvest on the Don (1960).

- Sholokhov is also famous for his story The Fate of a Man (1956), some journalistic writings, and the novel They Fought for Their Motherland, a trilogy inspired by the Great Patriotic War (World War II); the first volume was published in 1959.

- He received the Stalin Prize in 1941, the Order of Lenin in 1955, and the Lenin Prize in 1960. He was awarded the 1965 Nobel Prize in literature.