



# Mikhail Vasiljevich Lomonosov

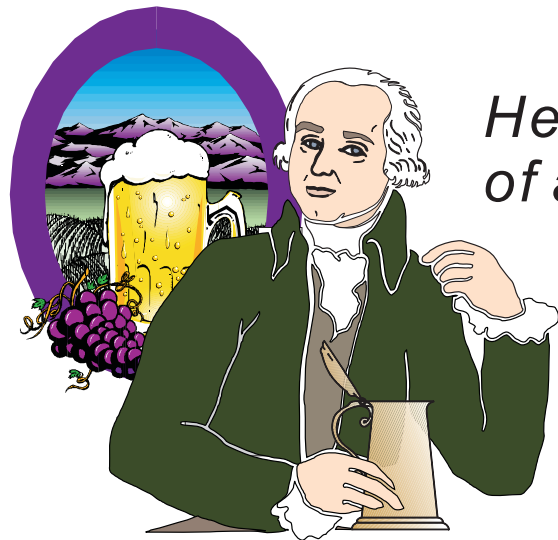
1711 - 1765

Mikhail Vasiljevich Lomonosov was a great Russian scientist and poet who laid the foundations for modern literary and scientific Russian; he was an artist, a physicist and a historian. As a physicist, Lomonosov was one of the first to develop the kinetic theory of heat, stating: *corpuscular (now atomic) motion suffices to explain heat*. It is recorded that he anticipated the law of mass conservation. According to him: *how much matter is added to any body, as much is taken away from another*. He also developed the wave theory of light.

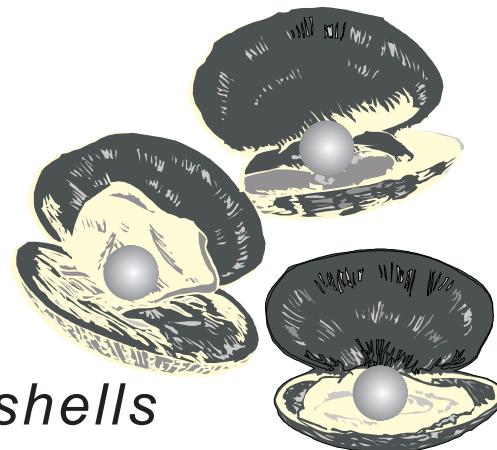
Mikhail Lomonosov was born on November 8th, 1711 in a village called Denisovka (now Lomonosovo) near the city of Arhangelsk. His family had a middle income, made mostly through sea fishing. When Mikhail was nine years old, his mother died, and his father married again. His step-mother turned out to be somewhat cruel, and hated the boy for his love of books.

At the age of ten, Lomonosov joined his father on his long voyages in the Arctic and to the New Land. By that time, he already knew the businesses of the coastal region: fishing, extraction of salt from sea water, gathering pearl shells and hunting seals and walruses. Life at home with his stepmother became unbearable, and Lomonosov decided to leave. At the end of 1730, without even saying goodbye (for his father could have prevented him from leaving), Lomonosov joined a string of fish sledges going to Moscow.

Concealing his peasant origin, and claiming to be the son of a nobleman, he was able to enter the Slavonic-Greek-Latin Academy. After five years of poverty Lomonosov was among the "best twelve" sent to the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences to continue his studies. There, owing to his diligence and purposefulness, Lomonosov was immediately noticed, and after only two months, was sent to Germany to study at Marburg University.



*He married the daughter of a brewer*



*He gathered pearl shells*



*Lomonosov developed the kinetic theory of heat*

In Marburg, he married the daughter of a German brewer, and they lived happily together until the end of their days. His stay in Germany almost ended in tragedy. His height and sturdy build attracted the attention of a Prussian officer who was enrolling recruits to Friedrich Wilhelm I's army. He was enlisted, through deceit, and sent to the inaccessible fortress of Vesel. Lomonosov could not cope with the Prussian military service and made a daring escape.

In 1741, Lomonosov returned to Russia. This marked the beginning of his scientific research at the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences. When a group of scientists rose in protest against certain customs in the Academy in 1742, Lomonosov was at the forefront. **The incident was treated as a serious offence, and the great scientist was taken into custody.** He spent 8 months under arrest, still working intently on his research, and only after he had fallen seriously ill was he released. He was awarded a chair at St. Petersburg in 1745. On the basis of experiments in his laboratory, he set up a glass factory to produce, in particular, stained glass mosaics.

In 1754, Lomonosov made a draft plan for the first Russian university, which is now Moscow State University. Lomonosov's scientific, literary, and public activity have taken their proper place in the history of world science. His name has been given to an underwater mountain ridge in the Arctic Ocean, a crater on the far side of the Moon, an equatorial counterflow in the Atlantic Ocean, an asteroid, and a mineral.

T.K.