***SAVING A PART OF THE WORLD***

Not a single tourist coming to our region will fail to visit Ascania-Nova, the Biosphere Reserve in Kherson oblast – on the beautiful steppe grounds where animals feel free because the artificially created conditions here are identical to those in which they lived before. The reserve is famous, while little is known about its creator whose lifelong dream was giving animals a safe place where they would always be welcome and feel at home.

Frederick E. Pfalz-Fein was born to a well-to-do family of Russian Germans on April 16th, 1863, in the village of Ascania-Nova. At the age of 11 Frederick got only excellent examination marks, and, as a form of encouragement, his father allowed setting an open-air cage.

That was only the beginning. In 1882, when all the Dorpat University students were on holidays, F. E. Pfalz-Fein toured around the largest Botanical Gardens and Zoos of the world. A few years later he founded his own Botanical and Zoological Garden investing almost all his money in it. Along with that, he modernized his native village by building a post-office and a hospital, providing water-supply, a telephone line and electricity. Emperor Nikolay II presented Frederick with a Przhewalsky horse; in five years aurochs were brought to Ascania-Nova.

Unfortunately, in December 1905, at the height of the Revolutionary uprising, the ignorant peasants destroyed much of the Pfalz-Feins’ property. The Reserve was miraculously saved by a troop of soldiers.

In 13 years Frederick moved to Germany forever. It was difficult to part with his creation. He dreamt of at least seeing it once again which was not to happen: Frederick E. Pfalz-Fein passed away on August 2, 1920, in the German Health Resort of Bad Kissingen. His gravestone is decorated with two steppe eagles’ images and there is an inscription on it: «Here lies the famous creator of ‘Ascania-Nova’».

An outstanding biologist and a good sportsman (he was a wonderful fencer), Frederick E. Pfalz-Fein never gave up: he saved a great number of the animal species which would otherwise have become extinct. He saved a part of this world.