

**HISTORICAL REVIEW****The 150th anniversary of Novo-Olexandriya Institute of Agriculture and Forestry:  
professor V.V. Dokuchaiev's activities based on the documents  
from the state archives of Kharkiv region**

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the two anniversaries which are going to be celebrated in 2019 – the 150th anniversary of Novo-Olexandriya Institute of Agriculture and Forestry (Poland) and the 125th anniversary of the first Department of Genetic Soil Science established at this Institute by Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev. Despite the exclusive role of this educational institution in the history of Poland and Ukraine, its history still remains a little-studied scientific issue. The aim of this publication is to study the activities of Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev on the reformation of Novo-Olexandriya Institute from 1892 till 1895 on the basis of the archival documents exported from Poland to Kharkiv at the beginning of the First World War. Available documents allow us to fully appreciate the scope of the reformatory activities of Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev on the reorganization of the Institute. The activities of the scientist aimed at realizing his idea of uniting agrarian education, science and practice contributed to the transformation of the Institute into a recognized world-known school for training highly qualified agronomists and foresters.

**Keywords:** Novo-Olexandriya Institute of Agriculture and Forestry, Kharkiv NAU named after V.V. Dokuchaiev, the Institute of Soil Science and Plant Cultivation – National Research Institute, scientific Soil Science, agrarian education and science.

In 2019 the scientists of Kharkiv NAU named after V.V. Dokuchaiev (Ukraine) and National Research Institute of Plant Cultivation and Soil Science in Pulawy (the Republic of Poland) are going to celebrate two grand anniversaries

– the 150th anniversary of Novo-Olexandriya Institute of Agriculture and Forestry and the 125th anniversary of the world's first Department of Genetic Soil Science established at this Institute by professor V.V. Dokuchaiev.

The history of Novo-Olexandriya Institute on many issues reflects the dramatic history of Poland that was temporarily deprived of its state independence at the end of the XVIIIth century. The desire of the Poles to restore Rzeczpospolita was the main cause of the national liberation uprisings which greatly affected the development of the first higher agricultural educational institution in the history of Poland and Ukraine. The Institute was established by the decree of the Russian Emperor Alexander I on the initiative of the Polish community, primarily by Stanislaw Staszic, the Chairman of Warsaw Society of Science Friends. On October 5 (September, 23) in 1816 the Institute of Agriculture in Marimont, near Warsaw, was established. This agrarian high school is one of the oldest in Europe. Recently it celebrated its 200th anniversary.

Located close to Warsaw the Institute of Agriculture (since 1840 – the Institute of Agriculture and Forestry) in Marimont became the center to spread the revolutionary ideas among the Polish youth. This led to the transfer of the educational institution as far as 130 km south of Warsaw, to the area of Nova Olexandriya in the province of Lublin (this Russified name was given to the Polish town of Pulawy during 1846–1918). In 1862 the Polytechnic and Agricultural-Forestry Institute was established in the former

palace of Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, a descendant of the ancient Lithuanian-Polish gentry.

According to the new Statute of May 20, 1862, the Polytechnic and Agricultural-Forestry Institute was established by amalgamation of the Institute of Agriculture and Forestry in Marimont and Warsaw Real Gymnasium. There were five departments at the Institute: the department of civil engineers, the mechanical and mining department providing a three-year course and the agricultural and forestry department with a two-year training course. About 500 students were planned to study at all the departments. However, after moving to Novo-Olexandriya, the Institute functioned only for six months. The January uprising of 1863 and active participation of the students and lecturers in it led to the closure of the educational institution for almost seven years.

Only in 1869 the Institute in Novo-Olexandriya resumed its activities. However the suspicions of the Russian officials as for the unreliability of the local student community hampered taking the corresponding decision. The Committee on the Affairs of the Polish Kingdom was discussing the issue of the restoration of the Institute for eight days – from May 27 to June 3, 1869. It was located in the former estate of Prince A. Czartoryski, the Head of the National Government during the years of 1830–1831. The Russian officials guessed that unwanted memories of the prominent ideologue of the Polish statehood would strengthen the free-thinking of the local students.

Finally, according to the new Statute of June 8, 1869, Novo-Olexandriya Institute of Agriculture and Forestry was founded. The newly established institute was subjected to complete Russification: the Russian language became official and obligatory for all the lecturers and students; the Institute itself was deprived of the right to train scientists among its best graduates. According to the Polish researchers, the reorganization of Novo-Olexandriya Institute of Agriculture and Forestry under the Statute of 1869 eventually resulted in the complete destruction of the Institute by Russian Government the higher education in Poland [3, p. 25]. The Institute, located within the borders of ethnic Poland, ceased serving the needs of the Polish state and became an influential Russian center of agrarian education and science training specialists primarily for the southern provinces of Russia.

Particularly fruitful in the history of Novo-Olexandriya Institute of Agriculture and Forestry was the period when it was headed by a professor at the Department of Geology and Paleontology of St. Petersburg University, a true state adviser, V.V. Dokuchaiev (1846–1903) [1, p. 1].

Much was written about the founder of Genetic Soil Science Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev by his contemporaries [4–6]. In 1903 by the order of the Free Economic Society the fifth volume of the big edition «Soil Science» was published and it was entirely devoted to the memory of Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev. The colleagues and the students

of a great scientist such as P.V. Ototsky, A.R. Ferhmin, N.A. Bogoslovsky, A.A. Yarilov, O.P. Pavlov, G.F. Morozov and others made public their memoirs, essays and articles in which they told about the scientific, pedagogical and social activities of the scientist [5]. A number of scientific papers by the researchers and scholars of KhNAU are also devoted to the scientific, pedagogical, reformatory and public work of Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev [7–11].

The aim of this article is to study the activities of Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev to reform Novo-Olexandriya Institute within the years of 1892–1895. The research is made on the basis of the archival documents exported from Poland to Kharkiv at the beginning of the First World War.

Consequently, the original basis of our research is the documents that were kept on permanent storage in the archives of the Institute until 1970, when they were transferred to the State Archive of Kharkiv Region (hereinafter – SAKhR). The orderly list of the documents at that time testified that the materials for the years of 1816–1919, later transferred to the SAKhR, were completed from the «number of separate documents of different times». The list includes 146 documents which allow to discover the little-known pages from the history of the Institute at the time when it was located on the territory of the Kingdom of Poland – in Marimont and Novo-Olexandriya.

In particular, among the materials of the Collection 669 «Novo-Olexandriya Institute of Agriculture and Forestry of the Ministry of Public Education, the town of Nova Oleksandriya» there is a «Personal Folder of Dokuchaiev Vasyl Vasyliovych, a Professor at St. Petersburg University, the Temporary Director of the Institute». This Folder comprises the documents covering the period from September 3, 1892 till November 3, 1903 [1]. The materials, different in content and origin, were collected in one folder «Personal Documents» in 1906, after Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev's death on October 26, 1903. Among the documents there are quite a lot of manuscripts, in particular, those, written by V.V. Dokuchaiev personally. For some period of time these documents were stored at the Research Institute of Soil Science (now – NSC «The Institute of Soil Science and Agrochemistry named after O.N. Sokolovsky», NAAS of Ukraine), as evidenced by the seals on many pages [1, p. 1, 4]. At that time there were 18 pages in the folder, now there are 122 ones. Probably, by the time when the documents were transferred to the SAKhR the folder was completed from various sources. It contains administrative orders, official circulars, business travel documents (at least one-third of all the documents in this folder), personal travel tickets of V.V. Dokuchaiev with an original signature and a seal, telegrams and documents on postal items, financial documents, etc. The documents presented in the archive allow to recreate the little-known pages of V.V. Dokuchaiev's work as the Head of the Institute in Novo-Olexandriya.

Another important source for our article was «The Personal Folder of Sibirtsev M.M., an associate professor at the Department of Soil Science». The contained documents cover the period from March 3, 1893 till May 2, 1901. The significant sources are Mykola Mykhailovych's official documents concerning his work after graduating from St. Petersburg University and the time when he was employed at Novo-Oleksandriya Institute as an associate professor at the Department of Soil Science. The characteristics and recommendations to M.M. Sibirtsev were given by his teacher, Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev [2, p. 1–2, 2 back, 12–15]. The dates in the paper are given according to the archival documents, on the Old Style.

Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev was sent for a business trip to Novo-Oleksandriya as a member of the Special Government Commission just in 1891. The fact is that in April, 1890 as a result of spreading the revolutionary ideas among the students, the Institute was closed. The Commission, with Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev included, was tasked to decide on the expediency of preserving the two last agricultural universities in the Empire – Novo-Oleksandriya Institute and Petrovsk Agricultural Academy. As a result of his business trip, in the conditions of the difficult inner situation, a bad drought, a crop failure and the terrible famine in 1891–1892 Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev convinced the Russian government officials of the need to preserve and reform higher agricultural education in the Empire.

Nowadays in the scientific literature there is practically no mention of the terrible drought and the crop failure in 1891–1892, which resulted in the famine spreading over the significant part of the state with a population of 35 million people. Then more than 500 thousand people died of hunger and the epidemic of cholera. At that time Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev, being already a recognized scholar, the author of «The Russian Chernozem» (1883), responded quickly to the terrible disaster. In St. Petersburg he gave a special public lecture and published in «The Government Bulletin» a series of articles on the issues related to the drought. In 1892 he published his monograph «Our Steppes Then and Now» and the fee for this monograph was conferred on to the victims of the famine. All the efforts of the scientist were aimed at determining the causes of a drought and preventing a crop failure and a famine in the future. Therefore the main aim of the paper, according to its author, was to spread scientific agronomic knowledge among landowners and farmers and create an integrated system of agrarian education – from the elementary to the University level.

On June 30, 1892 the Emperor Alexander III, at the request of the Minister of Public Education, signed an order on the business trip of a professor at St. Petersburg University V.V. Dokuchaiev to Novo-Oleksandriya to head up the Institute of Agriculture and Forestry in the 1892/93 academic year [1, p. 14]. On August 28, 1892, according to the government decree, the admission of students to Novo-Oleksandriya Institute was resumed [1, p. 4].

Among the documents kept in the SAKhR we find the «Certificate» dated September 12, 1892, issued by the Department of Public Education «to the Temporary Director of the Institute ... a professor at St. Petersburg University, a true state adviser Dokuchaiev, for a free passage from St. Petersburg to New Olexandriya and his residence in this ... town for the period till July 1, 1893» [1, p. 5]. Initially it was just the period of Dokuchaiev's business trip to Poland. On the proposal of the Minister of Education the decision to extend the term of a business trip to Novo-Olexandriya for the academic year of 1893/94 was signed by the Emperor on July 19, 1893 [1, p. 52]. The similar decision to extend the business trip and head up the Institute in 1894/95 academic year was approved by the Emperor on July 23, 1894 [1, p. 91].

On September 19, 1892 the Trustee of Warsaw School District O.L. Apuchtin wrote a letter to P.V. Eimont, the Director of the Institute in 1883–1892 (the latter appealed to the Minister of Public Education to resign just on August, 26) and asked him to hand on all the management duties to Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev on the «legal grounds» and circularly inform all the employees about the appointment of a new Director [1, p. 6]. V.V. Dokuchaiev arrived at the institute on September 20 and the very next day, on September 21, he started carrying out his duties. The document is stored in the SAKhR: «The Temporary Director of the institute V.V. Dokuchaiev accepts visitors daily, except for the weekend, from 11 to 12 a.m.» [1, p. 11].

As the Head of the Institute, just on September 21, V.V. Dokuchaiev immediately «demanded from the Heads of all the educational and auxiliary departments of the Institute to evidence of the volume and value of the property they were in charge of». These data are reflected in the table, which provides information about the structural units of the educational institution and the monetary value of their property [1, p. 12, 12 back, 13].

Dokuchaiev's staying in Novo-Oleksandriya was marked by numerous business trips. Only in the academic year of 1892/93 there were more than ten such trips. In the archive there are a lot of documents signed by the Trustee of Warsaw Educational district O.L. Apuchtin on Dokuchaiev's business trips to Warsaw, St. Petersburg and many other cities and towns of the Russian Empire during 1892–1895 [1, p. 17, 24–26, 28, 30, 32, 39, 43, 48–49, 77, 89]. During the time of Professor Dokuchaiev's business trips to St. Petersburg, all his correspondence received in Novo-Oleksandriya, had to be sent to St. Petersburg University (mineralogical office) [1, p. 18].

At the same time the Director of the Institute in Novo-Oleksandriya did not quit carrying out his duties in St. Petersburg. The archive preserves a power of attorney dated January 27, 1893 written personally by Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev. According to this power of attorney he instructed a private associate professor at St. Petersburg University P.A. Zemiatchensky (later a well-known Soviet mineralogist) to receive the shipment sent to him from Tomsk. It

contained «four boxes of rocks weighing five poods and eleven pounds» [1, p. 20, 20 back].

While being on his business trips Dokuchaiev's responsibilities in Novo-Olexandriya were initially performed by an inspector of the Institute K.I. Malevsky and then, because of his illness, by a member of the Council of the Institute, Professor O.I. Skvortsov (the Director of the Institute in 1905–1908) [1, p. 22, 97]. In the Russian capital V.V. Dokuchaiev solved issues on the curricula and the training programs [1, p. 21], as well as general reforming the Institute. Professor O.I. Skvortsov reported: «I have just received a telegram from V.V. Dokuchaiev ... At the joint meeting of the Departments of Laws and Economics the reform was approved unanimously» [1, p. 35].

On January 5, 1894 the world's first Department of Genetic Soil Science was established at the Institute, headed by Dokuchaiev's student, associate professor M.M. Sybirtsev, the author of the first manual on Scientific Soil Science. The archival documents testify that on January 23, 1894 the Russian Emperor, on the submission of the Minister of Education, approved the appointment of Sybirtsev as an associate professor at Novo-Olexandriya Institute «at the Department of Soil Science and the appropriate Departments of Geology ... provided he will obtain his Master's degree no later than January 1, 1896» [2, p. 63].

M.M. Sybirtsev was appointed to this post on the recommendation of V.V. Dokuchaiev: «He will be one of the best forces in the Institution I am in charge of» [2, p. 2]. The thesis to obtain a Master's degree was defended by M.M. Sybirtsev on May 4, 1896 at Moscow University. At the request of the Minister of Public Education and then with the permission of the Emperor he got the opportunity to extend the term of his work at the thesis in view of his significant scientific achievements [2, p. 65]. For the collection of soils, the cartogram and the soil diagram of the Kingdom of Poland M.M. Sybirtsev was awarded the Golden Medal at the All-Russian Agricultural Exhibition in Moscow on December 15, 1895. The certificate for this award is stored in the SAKhR [2, p. 21]. Thus, the replenishment of the Institute with highly qualified scientific and pedagogical personnel was an undeniable merit of Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev.

The scientific authority of Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev was exceptionally high. So, the Head of the Department of Industrial Schools of the Ministry of Public Education appealed to V.V. Dokuchaiev on March 2, 1894, with the request to review the paper «Agricultural Statistics of European Russia» (Moscow, 1893), which was written by O.F. Fortunatov, an extraordinary professor at Petrovsk Agricultural Academy [1, p. 66, 66 back]. The book was reviewed and the same year its author, Professor O.F. Fortunatov, was invited to Novo-Olexandriya Institute. There he established the Department of General, Agricultural and Forestry Statistics, which he headed up till 1899.

The documents on the financial insurance of Professor Dokuchaiev's activities, as the Head of the Institute, are of great interest. The official correspondence between him and the Trustee of Warsaw educational district O.L. Apuchtin proves that Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev received a salary appointed for his post as the Director of the Institute and also retained his salary for the post of a Professor at St. Petersburg University [1, p. 14–16, 56, 91]. The Russian Emperor personally approved annually the decision on such dual funding indicating with his own hand: «Acceptable» on the relevant documents [1, p. 56 back, 91].

However, Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev's lifestyle was extremely tense. His student Professor V.I. Vernadsky characterized Vasyl Vasyliovych as a man «full of thoughts, initiatives and activities» [2, p. 5]. The number of his responsibilities and public duties were overwhelming. It is known that by the highest decree on the Civilian office dated March 15, 1895 V.V. Dokuchaiev was appointed a member of the Academic Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture and State Property keeping the posts he already occupied [1, p. 108].

On May 10, 1895 a letter was received by Dokuchaiev from the Office of the Trustee of Warsaw Educational District about the extension of his business trip to Novo-Oleksandriya for the year of 1895/96 in accordance with the Emperor's Decree dated April 15, with all the payments preserved [1, p. 109, 109 back.]. However, on August 11, 1895 a petition was sent by V.V. Dokuchaiev to the Minister of Education with the request «to release him from carrying out the duties to manage Novo-Olexandriya Institute ... due to a nervous overwork and the need for constant medical consultations» [1, p. 110]. On August 17, 1895 the Trustee of Warsaw Education District proposed V.V. Dokuchaiev to hand on the management of the Institute «in all its parts to the counselor O.I. Skvortsov» [1, p. 110]. The act on handing on the Institute to Professor O.I. Skvortsov as «temporarily acting Director till the time of the special instructions» was signed up on April 20, 1895 [1, p. 112].

All the latest documents in this archival folder are telegrams and orders dealing with the death of V.V. Dokuchaiev on October 26, 1903 [1, p. 115–119, 121]. In particular, among the documents there are circular orders signed by the Director of the Institute in 1902–1905 Professor P.V. Budrin on holding a memorial service for the dead in the Institute church and an emergency meeting of the Institute Council [1, p. 115]. On behalf of the Council, the Professors at the Institute O.I. Skvortsov, K.D. Glinka and P.F. Barakov were sent to St. Petersburg to «pay the last honor to the honorary member and the former Temporary Director of Novo-Olexandriya Institute Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev» [1, p. 117].

The first page of this folder is a document without a date, signed by the colleagues of the great scientist – professors O.I. Skvortsov and P.F. Barakov. In this document,

probably compiled shortly after V.V. Dokuchaiev's death, the idea of paying special honor to the memory of the outstanding scientist is expressed. It was decided to set up Professor Dokuchaiev's portrait in the boardroom of the Council of Novo-Olexandriya Institute. It will «constantly remind the current and the future staff of the Institute about the principles and ideals of higher agrarian education that the great reorganizer of Novo-Olexandriya Institute V.V. Dokuchaiev was so much eager to implement» [1, p. 3].

With great gratitude we note that the Will of Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev's colleagues and associates has been implemented into life by the scientists of the National Research Institute of Plant Cultivation and Soil Science in Pulawy (the Republic of Poland). Today a portrait and a memorial plaque have been set up in the Hall of Traditions at this Institute to honor Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev. The Polish scholars highly value both the scientist's activities as the founder of Scientific Soil Science and his contribution to the transformation of the Institute in Pulawy into an academic institution on the university principles [5, p. 80].

The further analysis of the document signed by professors O.I. Skvortsov and P.F. Barakov indicates to versatility of Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev's activities.

Firstly, Vasyl Vasyliovych's colleagues noted the uniqueness of his scientific work, since all his actions «as one of the few representatives of pure science ... were aimed at the benefit of agriculture and forestry». Having chosen «the soil» as the subject of his study he became the founder of a special field of knowledge – Soil Science. Professor Dokuchaiev did not limit his activities to pure «desk work». He did his research based on the results of his study of two provinces – Nyzhniy Novgorod and Poltava and proved the practical value of the methods proposed by him to study soils. He developed a scientific classification of soils and the criteria for their natural properties evaluation. «This is an immortal merit of V.V. Dokuchaiev before the society, since only such evaluation, based on strict scientific study, is completely objective and provides a rational basis for land taxation» [1, p. 2]. At the same time Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev's colleagues highly appreciated his experiments in the fields of «the expeditions of the Forestry Department to find the best methods of farming management in our broad steppes» and noted that they «gave valuable results both for establishing the methods to develop steppe forestry and for the detailed study of the climate of steppes» [1, p. 2].

Secondly, «Dokuchaiev's activities are connected directly with Novo-Olexandriya Institute to which he devoted almost three years of his life» [1, p. 2]. His work on this post was of entirely reformatory nature since he both developed a detailed plan for the reorganization of Novo-Olexandriya Institute and initiated the implementation of this plan. The main idea of these transformations, directly belonged to V.V. Dokuchaiev, was as follows: to create

such an institution where agronomists and foresters are to obtain both thorough scientific knowledge and sufficient practical training in agriculture and forestry. To implement this idea, a number of new «disciplines» (soil science, the theory of microorganisms, dendrology, agricultural and forestry statistics, jurisprudence, etc.) were introduced; practical classes in classrooms, laboratories, fields and forests were put on a fundamentally new basis [1, p. 2 back].

Therefore, according to Professors O.I. Skvortsov and P.F. Barakov, Novo-Olexandriya Institute of Agriculture and Forestry of that time was a complete creation of V.V. Dokuchaiev. As for the reorganization of the Institute, Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev embodied the «ideal of all his life: science for life and practice only on the basis of science» [1, p. 3].

Thus, involving archival documents into the scientific research provides an opportunity to expand the knowledge of the history of Novo-Olexandriya Institute of Agriculture and Forestry, the 150th anniversary of which we are going to celebrate in 2019. Available documents allow better evaluate the scope of reformatory efforts by Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev to reorganize this higher educational institution in Poland. The scientist's work aimed at realizing his idea of the unity of agrarian education, science and practice resulted in an exceptional fact: the peripheral educational institution became a recognized high school in the world to train specialists in Soil Science and Forestry. Professor V.V. Dokuchaiev's plan to reorganize Novo-Olexandriya Institute turned out to be so efficient that later on Moscow Agricultural Institute, St. Petersburg Forestry Institute, Agricultural department of Riga Polytechnic and Kyiv Polytechnic Institute were reformed the same way. Taking into account the fact that the study of the history of agrarian education and science in Ukraine remains an important issue for contemporary Ukrainian country study, the documents on the history of the oldest Ukrainian agrarian institution, stored in SAKhR, constitute an important source of unique information. The study of the history of agrarian education and science is important for joint research of Ukrainian and Polish scholars.

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