

Archaeological research Location Bashkir Camp Wijhe

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In august the Historical Association Wijhe approached us with the question of we could conduct an additional research to the possible location of the Bashkir camp in 1813. The main goal was to determine if there could still be archaeological remains of the camp in the ground.

In consultation with historians of RAAP we concluded that a literature and archive research would not answer this question. We concluded that a field research was needed to determine if there could be remains of the camp present.

In the memorial book 1913 the camp was described to be on a sandy height north of the village of Wijhe. The Historical Association pointed the area between the Stationsweg, Oranjelaan, Julianalaan en Willem de Zwijgerlaan as a plausible location of the Bashkir Camp.

Because the area is densely built and hardened only the backyard of Stationsweg 16 as the only real open space was suitable for research. Because an excavation was not preferred, since the parcel will also in the future still be in use as a garden, there was chosen for a less damaging method: metal detection.

Intensive use of the site as an encampment will have had an impact on the soil in the form of traces of use. This also includes a spread of metal objects (weaponry, buttons, coins, utensils). Therefore metal detection may be able to endorse the use of the site as a camp location, while this method will cause relatively minor disturbance to the soil.

In addition, by hand three boreholes were drilled to determine the nature and structure of the soil. The natural subsoil consists of cover sand from the Pleistocene. On this Pleistocene sand there is a cover layer originated from agricultural fertilization by heather sods in the era before the 18th century. These soil layers were still intact, so this means that if there would be any remains from the Bashkir camp, these also would still be present.

The site is investigated by two types of metal detectors. There was a great number of hits, mainly caused by garbage (beer caps, tin foil) and recent coins like eurocents. In 8 cases however there were objects discovered from the era of the Bashkir occupation or before that.

Conclusions

- In accordance to the historical information the soil drilling proves the location is situated on a cover sand height.
- The soil is intact, so possible traces of the Bashkir camp will also be unharmed.
- The density of metal objects from the same date as the camp is relatively high.

Archaeological remains can still be expected in the area. Not only in the backyard of Stationsweg 16, but also underneath surface hardening and even buildings. In particular deep traces like water wells, latrines or cooking pits.