

Archaeological Site Report	SiteNo	9/2/004/0008
	Site Name	Taal Monument, Burger Square, Burgersdorp
	Date	
	Project	
	CaseNID	
	Coords	-30.993857, 26.331329

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Site Category: Monuments & Memorials

SiteComments:

Archive Import History: The Theological Seminary, now in Potchefstroom, started in Burghersdorp and it was the centre of a strong movement for the recognition of Dutch as an official language. This is commemorated by the 'Taalmonument' which stands on Burger Square, formerly the market square. After the occupation of the Cape Colony by England in 1806, English became the only official language of the Colony. When the Cape Colony was granted self government in 1854, the constitution provided that only English might be used in Parliament. The first representative of the Albert constituency, which included Burgersdorp, was J. A. Kruger. In 1856 he asked permission to speak in Dutch in the Legislative Assembly, using an interpreter, but the Speaker referred him to the constitution and refused the request. During 1857 and 1858 the Afrikaner voters in the constituency of Albert submitted four petitions to Parliament for the recognition of Dutch as a language for use in debates, but without success. In 1872 the Cape Colony was granted Responsible Government but still Dutch could not be used in the debating chambers. On 23rd August, 1878, the Boeren Beschermings Vereniging (Farmer's Protection Society) held a meeting on the farm Vinkelfontein under the Chairmanship of D. van den Heever, when it was once again resolved to insist on the recognition of 'our mother tongue' in Parliament. Burgersdorp became the centre of the language campaign and important congresses of the Afrikaner Bond were held there. The movement was supported by J. H. Hofmeyr as a matter of course. After proposing an unsuccessful motion in 1881, he succeeded on 9th June, 1882, in having the necessary amendment of the constitution adopted, by which the use of Dutch in Parliament was allowed. The first member to use this privilege was J. G. Luttig of Beaufort West. The increasing recognition of Dutch in education and in the public service of the Cape Colony dates from 1882. In 1890 Hofmeyr and others organised a language congress and founded the 'Taalbond' for the promotion of a knowledge of Dutch and a healthy nationalism. Considering that Burgersdorp played such an important part in this struggle, it was natural that a movement should originate there for the erection of a monument to commemorate the recognition of Dutch in the Cape Parliament. Money for it was collected in all parts of the country and it was unveiled on 18th January, 1893, by D. P. (Oom Daantjie) van den Heever, the chairman of the committee that erected the monument. Those present at the ceremony included J. H. Hofmeyr, Pieter Faure, N. F. de Waal and representatives of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. The monument suffered deliberate damage during the Anglo Boer War. First the finger was broken off; in March, 1900, the nose and right arm were chipped off and on Christmas night 1901, the monument was pushed off its pedestal and an arm and the face were removed. After the war Lord Milner had the monument taken down and removed completely. The inhabitants of Burgersdorp demanded that the Imperial Government restore their monument to them. A replica of it was made and erected on the same place in 1907. Because it was somewhat hidden by the Dutch Reformed church, it was moved to the Market Square, now Burger Square, in 1933 at the same time as the Burger Monument was moved there. No one knew what had happened to the original figure until 1939 when the problem was solved. It was found during excavations, deeply buried in the work yard of the Department of Public Works in King William's Town. The Cultural Society of Burgersdorp immediately took action and the damaged monument was returned to Burgersdorp where it is now carefully preserved. Proclaimed 1937 Visual Description: The monument consists of a figure of a woman pointing with a finger at a tablet held in her left arm. On the tablet are the words 'De overwinning der Hollandse Taal'. The figure stands on a massive granite base with suitable inscriptions. The monument originally stood on Church Square. Colours: Site

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Features: Condition: Construction Date: Materials: Catalogue: , No: , Significance Category:

Damage Types: