

The farm of La Haye Sainte. ¹

As with La Belle Alliance through history one has tried to explain the name of this farm by fantasy. Some people see in the name the one of Hyacinthe, of one of the owners of the farm. ² Others take as a source a small chapel which would have existed in the hedge, surrounding the farm.

However, the name of La Haye Sainte is coming from the word “haye” which means a meadow enclosed by hedges and which was in the possession of a family called Sainte. In a list of fiefs of 1386 one can find a road called del Spinne Sainte condist de Bruxelles, and in that time the family of Sainte was then liege to the lord of Braine l'Alleud.

Names, composed of a combination of a family name and a word indicating a site, more often occur in the region.

The farm was built before 1536 by the Moitomont's, a family of rich farmers from Braine l'Alleud. In 1618 they sold the farm to Jean Glibert, another representative of one of the rich farmer families of that time.

Being unable to support the farm, it was bought back by his father Henry Glibert and Francois Boucquéau, his son-in-law. At that time the farm had 60 hectares of fields and meadows.

Henry Glibert died in 1664 and his son-in-law took over the farm until he died in 1687.

In 1696 the farm was destroyed by war and the widow of Boucquéau handed over the farm to her son Francois, who also accepted the debts.

Francois Boucquéau was able to reconstruct and enlarge the farm. In 1696 he also bought the farm of Le Caillou.

When he died in 1770, his son, Jean Baptiste, succeeded him. He established himself at Le Caillou and rented La Haye Sainte.

When he died in 1775, the heirs sold the farm to Charles-Henri Ghislain Boot de Velthem, count of Saint Empire and chamberlain of the Austrian emperor for the price of 27.000 guilders. At his death, in 1829, the farm came into the hands of the family Spoelberg, and then to the one of Cornet d'Elzius from Chenoy.

In June 1815 the farm was rented to a man called Pierre Moreau. According to the local tradition he fell into despair having seen the farm after the battle and from 18th August 1815 until late into the 19th century the farm was inhabited by the family of Martin Viseur. In 1889 Théodore de Dobbeleer moved in and his descendants still run the farm. ³

During the battle of Waterloo, the farm of La Haye Sainte escaped relatively unharmed; only the great barn had been on fire. This the reason why it has kept its original character of that time. ⁴

The farm consists of a series of outbuildings around a courtyard. In 1815 the roofs of those buildings were covered with slate tiles. ⁵ On the north-and south-side of the farm there were in 1815 a kitchen-garden and an orchard respectively.

The south part of the farm itself was formed by a large barn. Through this barn there was a passage way for carriages, and it was for this reason that the barn had two gates, one in the east and one in the west-side. The first one ended in the courtyard, the second one in the fields

adjoining the farm.⁶⁻⁷ The barn stood somewhat back from the extreme southwest corner of the farm.⁸

On the courtyard, near the east gate of the barn there was a small pond.⁹ The southeast corner of the farm was closed off by a wall. This wall ended as a door on the east-side of the barn.¹⁰ This wall continued on the east side towards the main entrance gate of the farm. This gate was vaulted by a small roof and was round shaped on top.¹¹ On the inner side of the gate there was a dovecot.¹² Nowadays, this gate is permanently closed.

Parallel to the Brussels road, north of the main gate and on the west side of the farm were a few small pigsties.¹³ On the east-wall of these stables is a small tablet which states:

“A la mémoire des combattants français qui se sacrifièrent héroïquement devant les murs de La Haye Sainte. Le 18 juin 1815. Société Belge d'Etudes Napoléoniennes. 1965.”

The northern part of the farm is mostly formed by the 17th century dwelling-house. Between this house and the pigsties there was a small door. This door too was covered by a small roof.¹⁴

The east wall of the house was fully blind. Since 1815 it had a white-marble tablet stating:

“Les officiers du 2e bataillon léger de la Légion Allemande du Roi, en mémoire de leur frères d'armes et amis du régiment, qui tombèrent en défendant cette ferme le 18 Juin 1815: capitaine (breveté major) Adolphe Bösewiel; capitaine William Wiegmann, capitaine William Schaumann, enseigne Ernest Robertson.”¹⁵

In 1847 this tablet was replaced by a metal one. It was erected on the initiative of Prince George, the later king of Hannover. It bears the text:

“Die Offiziere des 2ten leichten Bataillons, Königlich Deutsche Legion, ihren in der Verteidigung dieser Meyerey am 18ten Juni 1815 gefallenen Waffenbrüdern: Major H. Bösewiel, Capitain W. Schaumann, Fähndrich F. von Robertson, und 46 Unteroffiziere und Jäger vom 2ten leichten Bataillon. Wieder hergestellt durch seine Königliche Hoheit den Kronprinzen Georg von Hannover am 18ten Juni 1847 und zugleich gewidmet den eben daselbst bei dieser Gelegenheit gefallenen: Capitain H. von Marschalk vom 1ten leichten Bataillon, Capitain C. von Wurmb vom 5ten Linien Bataillon, in Anerkennung des von Ihnen bewiesenen Hannöverschen Heldenmuthes.”

On the courtyard, the house had a door and three large barred windows. On the first floor there were three barred windows too, but smaller in size and only in the western part.¹⁶ On the roof there were two rows of dormer-windows; those of the upper row, four, were a bit smaller than those in the lower row, three in all.¹⁷

Against the northern facade of the house there was a small stone construction, containing a natural well, which has dried up by now.¹⁸ In the same wall there were a door and three larger and one smaller barred window.¹⁹

The remainder of the north side of the complex of the farm was formed by stables which continued in an L-shape towards stables on the west side and which ended at the large barn.

In their facades which were directed towards the courtyard there were ten doors, smaller square openings and some larger rectangular ones. The extreme south end of the stables was formed by a vaulted gate, which led from the courtyard to the fields on this side of the farm. The top side of the entrance to this gate was round-shaped, the gate itself straight.²⁰ The northern wall of the stables contained probably a few openings and the west wall may have been completely blind.²¹

The farm itself measured 60 meters long and 50 meters wide.²²

On the north side of the farm there was a kitchen-garden was bordered by hedges on its north and west side. On the east side there was a wall composed of boulders and which was prolonged on the east side of the farm complex.²³ Between the garden and the farmbuilding itself there was a small open area and a terrace.²⁴ Against the wall there was a small stone rectangular construction with a pointy roof; this was used as a storage for fire-wood.²⁵ The kitchen-garden measured 60 x 80 meters.

In 1815 there was an orchard on the south side of the farm; it leaned against the Brussels road and its east side was a bit longer than her west side. Having a width of 80 meters, here it measured 200 meters long.²⁶ The orchard was completely bordered by a hedge, except for its north side: here was the farm.²⁷ Nowadays, the orchard is a meadow and there are still some hedges on the south and east edge. The whole complex of the farm of La Haye Sainte measured about 360 meters long and 80 meters wide.²⁸

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1.This note is mainly based upon:

Logie, J. Waterloo,l'évitable défaite p.118-119

Winand Aerts, in his unpublished notes as well as in: La Haye Sainte. In: Bulletin SBEN, no.16 September 1955 p.16-17

Etudes (manuscript) p.92-97

² Aerts, W. La Haye Sainte. In: Bulletin van de SBEN, 1955 nr.16 p.16

3. In 1997 the farm was owned by the count Louis Cornet d'Elzuis. Cf. The Waterloo Journal.Vol.18 nr.3 p.4

4. The farm has not been reconstructed contradictory to the assertions of J.Tarliens and Wauters. In: La Belgique ancienne et moderne.Brussel.1859

5.Cf. deed of sale dated 20th March 1775. Cf.Aerts, W. – Etudes (manuscript) p.92-97

6. The historian A.H.Kennedy-Herbert depicts the second gate as having a round-shaped upper side (see his sketch-book). In: NAM, nr.7303-73

Also see: Sketch and notes relating to the battle of Waterloo. In: Gloucestershire Record Office. D1833/25

According to major G.Baring the west gate of the barn was burned during the night of the 17th of June in the main position. In: NHA, Hann.41.XXI.nr.152.p.41-47

The print of Reeve (1816) confirms this by showing the absence of the gate.

Schwertfeger and Shaw Kennedy show in the east-wall no gate but a door.

Cf. Schwertfeger, B. Geschichte der Königlich Deutschen Legion.1803-1816

Shaw Kennedy, J. Notes on the battle of Waterloo p.94

7. The top of east wall of the barn had in 1815 three large round holes, which still exist.

Additionally there were three smaller square openings to the left of the gate. In the west wall there are five of such openings, as well as a small door. All these date from after 1815.

The small annex against the north wall is post-1815.

Both Von Beamish and Schwertfeger situate in this wall in the middle a small door, of which the existence in 1815 is uncertain. Shaw Kennedy doesn't depict it in his plan.

In: Beamish L.von. Geschichte der Königlich Deutschen Legion plate VI

Schwertfeger, B. Geschichte der Königlich Deutschen Legion.Hannover.1907

Shaw Kennedy, J. Notes on the battle of Waterloo p.94

8. Plans of B.Schwertfeger, J.Shaw Kennedy, Craan and the sketch of the British historian Herbert Kennedy dated 1894. In: NAM, nr.7303-73

Also see the sketch in: Sketch and notes relating to the battle of Waterloo. In: Gloucestershire Record Office. D1833/25

Anonymous sketch of the west-side of the farm in the Gloucestershire Record office

nr.D1833/Z5

This situation can also be found on a plan of W.Aerts in the private collection of L.Sloos, at Schiedam, the Netherlands. It is in the files of the collection Goedvolk, made after 1938. The fact that it was made after that year can be derived from the note on the map that the roof of the barn had burned out in that year. However, another source it claims it was in 1936. Cf. the Times of 14th December 1936.

Since 1938 the barn has been enlarged a bit more towards the east, so that in 1815 it stood back even more. In Von Beamish' plan the barn doesn't stand back.

9.Aerts, W. – Etudes (manuscript) p.92-97

Plans of:

Beamish, L.von Geschichte der Königlich Deutschen Legion.Hannover.1832

Schwertfeger, B.Geschichte der Königlich Deutschen Legion.Hannover.1907

Bowden, S. Armies at Waterloo p.219

Howarth, D. Waterloo, a near run thing p.141

Adkin, M. The Waterloo companion p.367

10. In the files of the former museum of sergeant major Cotton there is a photograph from around 1920, depicting this door. In: NAM, nr. PH 7905/4 box 118

Also see: Aerts, W. – Etudes (manuscript) p.92-97

11. The direction of the small roof was north-south, and not east-west as the print of Rouse shows. Also see: Aerts, W. – Etudes (manuscript) p.92-97

12. Cf. plans of B.Schwertfeger, L.Von Beamish, J.Shaw Kennedy etc.

13.Now, these stables are a bit higher than the outer wall, but in 1815 these must have been of the same heigth. Cf. Aerts, W. – Etudes (manuscript) p.92-97

14.Cf. Prints of Rouse and Bowyer.

Plans of J.Shaw Kennedy, L.Von Beamish and B.Schwertfeger.

15.Cf. Aerts, W. – Etudes (manuscript) p.92-97

The original must be in English.

16. Nowadays, there is also a door on the left side, between the left and the middle room. Both doors can be reached by a few steps.

17.Cf. Prints of Bowyer and Rouse.

The painting of A.Northern. In: Chalfont,lord. Waterloo, battle of three armies p.94-95.

18. Cf. plans of B.Schwertfeger, W.Aerts and J.Shaw Kennedy. Also see: Weller, J. Wellington at Waterloo picture nr.33
Aerts claims that the well could only be reached from indoors.

19. Shaw Kennedy, J. Notes on the battle of Waterloo p.95-96
Baring in: NHA, Hann.41.XXI.nr.152.p.41-47
Cf. plans of L.Von Beamish, W.Aerts, B.Schwertfeger and D.Howarth

The existence of this door is denied by captain Tomkinson (16th regiment of light dragoons).
In: The diary of a cavalry officer etc. p.304

20.Cf. Print of Reeve (1816)
Sketch of A.H.Kennedy-Herbert. In: NAM, nr.7303-73

21. A picture dated 1979 shows a small annex along this wall, as does the Waterloo-panorama. There are no references to the situation of 1815. Cf. Chalfont, lord.
Waterloo,battle of three armies p.138

22.Plan of W.Aerts. In another source Aerts gives for the courtyard 60 x 60 meters.
Cf. La Haye Sainte. In: Bulletin van de SBEN, 1955 nr.16 p.17

23.Cf. plans of L.Von Beamish, B.Schwertfeger, J.Weller and D.Howarth.
Account of major Baring. In: NHA, Hann.41.XXI.nr.152.p.41-47
Note about the role of Hannoverian troops. In: NHA, Hann.41.XXI.nr.156.p.27-49
The wall must have ended sloping down. In the early twentieth century a few strong stone buttresses have been constructed on its eastern side.

24.Cf. plan of J.Weller. In: Wellington at Waterloo - picture 33
The terrace is not explicitly shown on the old plan of L.Von Beamish and B.Schwertfeger.

25.Cf. plan of W.Aerts. For illustrations:
Logie, J. – Waterloo L’evitable défaite p.118
Navez, L. – Le champ de bataille et le pays etc. p.168
Rouse (1816)
Sketch of the historian A.H.Kennedy-Herbert. In: NAM, nr.7303-73

26.Cf. Craan, W.B. - Plan du champ de bataille de Waterloo dit de la Belle Alliance etc.
Siborne gives 219, Navez 250 , Schwertfeger 280 and Aerts 300 meter. In: Siborne, W.
History of the war etc. Vol.II p.336
Navez, L. – Le champ de bataille et le pays de Waterloo p.51
Schwertfeger, B. Geschichte der Königlich Deutschen Legion.Hannover.1907
Aerts, W. – Etudes (manuscript) p.92-97

27.Cf. Rouse (1816) and the plans of Craan, L.Von Beamish, B.Schwertfeger.

Also see:

Account of major G.Baring. In: NHA, Hann.41.XXI.nr.152.p.41-47

General Hanoverian account. In: NHA, Hann.41.XXI.nr.156.p.27-49

28.W.Craan says it was 300 x 80 meters, S.Bowden 225 x 50 meters and J.Weller 340 x 70 meters.

Cf. Craan, W.B.- Plan du champ de bataille de Waterloo dit de la Belle Alliance etc.

Bowden, S. Armies at Waterloo p.219

Weller, J. Wellington at Waterloo