As we could see, all roads and wagontracks had disappeared, and the only guide we had for our journey was the use of our maps and surveyor instruments. Mr. Dayton located the corner of Township 95, Range 44, which was situated on the line of demarcation between Plymouth and Sioux Counties, and this corner then became our starting point. We found this location after proceeding across the prairie for about an hour. From this point, then, we set our compass. The chain drawers now pulled off their jackets and went to work. The township line was followed, and each time we touched the government stakes. We proceeded along this line northward for six miles and came to the place where today the well established farm of our good friend Van Der Stoep is situated.

Then, due to an error made by the chain drawers, it was necessary for them to retrace their steps southward for three miles, to a point where the error had been made.

In the meantime our cook prepared our noon meal, and to that we all did full justice. There were no wells around from which we could obtain water. We therefore proceeded to a nearby slough where we dug a hole not more than 18 inches deep where we found an abundance of delicious water, enough with which to make our coffee and for our other needs.

The situation and quality of the land pleased us more and more as we made our way northward, for there opened to us the most beautiful situation imaginable, the naturally rolling scenery, and the fat bottom land.

Often on our journey there would burst forth from someone the exclamation: “Oh, what a beautiful view, and such rich land! Where could any better land be found than right here – would that all Hollanders could be here now to see this for themselves!”
Now we stood on the southeast corner for Township 95, Range 45, and from this point we now made preparations to move eastward. Our map indicated that about three miles eastward lay the Floyd River twisting through the prairie, and on the banks of that stream we planned to make our camp for the night. Our surveyor’s instruments were already placed and pointing Eastwards, and our flagman was about to walk out to a proper position so that the chain drawers could proceed in a straight line, when we spotted an object on the horizon to the north of us. As the figure approached us we stopped our work, for we were not expecting anyone from that direction.

“What could that be,” exclaimed Van Den Bos, “What is it?” We waited. Suddenly we recognized the figure to be a man on horseback. He apparently had not as yet discovered us. We knew that there were no white settlements as much as one hundred miles to the north of us at that time. We now perceived the person approaching us to be a stranger, and he now caught sight of us and we could see that he was totally surprised—as much so as we had been. Although he had been riding at a full gallop over the prairie, he now stopped dead in his tracks.

We also stood motionless, all six of us. One of our men was holding a long pole, which had on it a flag, not representative of any nationality, but merely a white handkerchief waving in the breeze. As the rider from the north came nearer, we saw that it was an Indian carrying a small rifle.

We had no shooting irons with us for they were all in the wagon which was with the cook. He had proceeded on ahead with the wagon and all of our provisions and arms. He was on his way to the Floyd River to the East, in order to prepare a camp site for us and to make ready our evening meal. We knew that as evening came we would be exhausted from the day’s activities, and we looked forward to a tasty meal, and a good night’s rest.

The Indian gazed in wonder at us, and appeared to be fascinated with our moving needle on the compass. He was also, no doubt, in wonderment at our likely “Dutch” appearance, and we, of course, were amazed to see him. He may have noted our apprehension at his unexpected appearance. We may
have looked more like fearful men than as immigrant surveyors. Whether we spoke to him in Dutch, German, English, or French, it made no difference. All he would reply was the typical “Hugh.” He would only shrug his shoulders in answer to our questions. On both sides then, the conversation was without meaning, and the Indian sensing this perhaps, turned his horse and left us as quickly as he had come. He, no doubt, concluded that we were not the savages he had probably been on the lookout for.

We now continued with our measurements Eastwards and shortly after sunset arrived at our prepared camp. The bacon lay frying in the pan, the coffee was brewing, the bread was sliced, and we proceeded at once to enjoy our evening meal. We were situation on the West bank of the Floyd River near the spot where the East Orange Railroad station is located.

But behold! While we were telling our cook about our meeting with the Indian visitor—and as we were enjoying, there on the prairie, a mug of hot coffee held in one hand, and in the other a hunk of bread with pork—we saw on the East bank of the rippling Floyd River a flickering camp fire around which some shapes were moving—wherein we observed our Indian visitors and some of his fellows.

We cannot deny that we now viewed the situation with considerable more than mere romance, for we together held a “Council-of-War,” and determined to keep close watch during the night over our mules, and to maintain a defensive posture, also, to assume a peaceful attitude.

Van Den Bos and Van Der Waa, with a small dog, took on the first watch while the rest of us went into the tent to sleep, and soon we were enjoying deep slumber, most of us most likely having dreams about Indians and scalping, etc. Suddenly Van Den Bos leaped inside our tent with the cry, “Boys! Here they come!” Never was sleep more quickly driven from us! We all sprang up and rushed out of the tent. Everything was deathly still outside. We moved forward in the direction where our good friend Dirk had seen the Indian in order to get a view of our enemy, but no red man was to be seen. At last we discovered the soft breeze was moving the clumps of weeds so that it appeared to our guards that Indians were about.
We all once more laid down to rest, and when we awoke the next morning no Indians were to be seen anywhere. It is quite possible that the innocent natives were more afraid of us than we were of them.

(To be continued)