

young thrifty timber, on the waters of Elkhorn creek (Dogs head on the Map.)

Here we learned a little of the ways of settling this new country.<sup>1</sup> The lands had been surveyed into townships, but not into sections, & of course not yet in Market. About 40 families had settled themselves about this grove. They had, in the absence of all other law, met & made a law for themselves. They have surveyed the township & ascertained that section 16, the school section, was within the grove, & they staked it off & appointed commissioners to take care of it, preserve the timber &c. so as to make it valuable as possible when the township should be regularly settled according to law. They had also meted & bounded every mans *wood land*, allowing each family 40 acres of timber, & as much *Prairie* as he pleased to take up. Timber being the great desideratum of the country, they would not allow any one man to monopolise. Forty acres was thought to be sufficient timber land, to make & sustain the fence, buildings & fires of a farm.

As this land was not in market at the time, & the pre-emption law having run out, we asked what security they had, that speculators would not buy their lands & improvements, or make them pay what their own improvements were worth? The reply was, that there was an understanding in the country, equivalent to a law of the land, that the settlers should sustain each other against the speculator, & no settler should bid on anothers land.

If a speculator should bid on a settlers farm, he was knocked down & dragged out of the office, & if the striker was prosecuted & fined, the settlers paid the expense by common consent among themselves. But before a fine

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<sup>1</sup> In *Western Pioneer*, ii, p. 33, the author says: "At Elkhorn Grove we stopped for breakfast, before taking a twelve-mile prairie, at what we afterwards found to be a backslidden deacon's. We did not think it necessary to announce our profession for so short a stay and from not seeing any thing like religion about the premises. Being curious to know how the settlers managed to secure their lands when they came into market, all being now 'squatters,' we asked many questions."— Ed.