

the county in the spring of 1883. The amount of taxable property at that time on the assessment roll was \$1,263,000. The first term of Circuit Court was held in May, 1883, with A. S. Bennett as presiding judge and T. A. McBride district attorney.

Beginning with the creation of the new county began a more permanent settlement. New settlers came into the county, and took up valuable claims along the many streams running into the Deschutes and Crooked rivers. Substantial buildings and houses were erected, and the agricultural and stock industries were rapidly increased. An unusual degree of prosperity prevailed, and as taxes were low and the farming and stock business profitable. Crook County soon became one of the wealthiest according to population in the state. Cattle, which had been at a low figure for years, rose to a fancy price, and many a cattleman who had been struggling in the business for so long awoke to find himself wealthy.

In the general election of 1884 the fol-

lowing county officers were chosen: County judge, F. A. McDonald; county clerk, A. C. Palmer; sheriff, J. M. Blakely; county commissioners, J. H. Garrett and G. L. Frizzell; assessor, M. D. Powell; treasurer, J. T. Bushnell; surveyor, W. R. McFarland; school superintendent, D. W. Aldridge; coroner, J. R. Sites. McDonald was appointed register of the U. S. land office at The Dalles in 1885, and Charles A. Van Houten was appointed as his successor in the office of county judge.

In the fall of 1885 the County Court let the contract for building a courthouse to H. A. Belknap, for \$5474, under which contract the building was completed in February, 1886.

The legislature of 1885 detached the Beaver Creek country from Grant County and made it a part of Crook County. Beaver proved to be a very valuable addition, as it is one of the wealthiest portions of the county, and added a large amount of taxable property.

A very heavy blow to Crook County was

there are level stretches, as we shall see later on, but high rolling hills, big mountains, grandly immense, most of which are clad in evergreen conifers, and precipitous, perpendicular, and sometimes over-hanging rim-rocks "over most of the country are," as Joaquin Miller would express it.

Prineville, the capital of the county, is near the center of the county, and holds down a portion of the Crooked river and Ochoco Creek bottoms, which are nearly level and about two thousand and six hundred feet above the sea. Rich, narrow, alluvial valleys extend four directions from the town. These valleys carry more or less of alkali, but produce immense crops of rye, wheat, oats, barley, alfalfa and the hardier vegetables, when properly irrigated.

To the northwest from Prineville, for ten miles there is a stretch of semi-desert, about five miles wide on an average, comparatively level, soil classed second-rate; it is raised from 30 to 150 feet above the creek and river bottoms. The soil is largely mineral and very productive when irrigated, and the longer it is cultivated the better it becomes. There are but few claims taken in this stretch, sage brush and the omnipresent road section hold the most of it.

To the north of this Grizzly butte, a spur of timbered mountains pushing westward, rises near two thousand feet above the country around it. To the west of this butte is the Haystack country, near three hundred square miles of good farming land, soil No. 1, but the want of water bars settlement, except near the hills, where springs are plentiful. To the north of Grizzly butte, Willow Creek valley, about forty square miles, is a rolling, excellent farming country. Although some three thousand feet above the sea, cereals of all kinds grow and ripen to perfection. This region has been the best grain section of the county, but the Haystack country now claims the honor. All through the northern portion of the county there are deep gorges, with sometimes small rich spots of bottom land. When clear, or cleared of stones—for stones here are like sin, found everywhere—produce the finest apples, peaches, pears, plums, prunes, melons, tomatoes, etc.

Passing on northward over rolling bunch grass hills, Hay Creek next attracts the view. There in the widening bottom lands of Hay Creek and its tributaries the B. S. & L. Co. have a vast expanse of alfalfa fields, the hay piled in numerous ricks and barns to insure the wintering of their stock that graze on a thousand hills. Hay Creek is a lower country than Prineville, six to eight hundred feet.

Northward from Hay Creek, over a series of hills eight miles, Lower Hay Creek and part of Lower Trout Creek comes in view. This being lower, rolls in its wealth of alfalfa, vegetables and fruit. Here we are near the north boundary line of our county. Thence eastward up Trout Creek seven miles the creek emerges from a huge gorge, or crack in mother earth, perpendicular at times, rock bound, rock tumbled, impassable to man or beast, for eight or nine miles Trout Creek boils and bubbles; then Upper Trout opens out, the valley extending southeasterly ten miles will not average over one-quarter of a mile wide, produces grain, alfalfa, fruits, berries and



MINING RESERVOIR AT HEAD OF OCHOCO CREEK.

the severe winter of 1884-5. Cattle, horses and sheep perished by the thousands, from lack of food and shelter, in the drifting snows, and the financial losses of the stockmen were enormous.

This short sketch is but a brief review of the early settlement and development of Crook County, embracing the period from 1865 to the formation of the county.

The thought that naturally comes to the reader is one of admiration for the energy and courage of the men who peopled Crook County from 1865 to 1889. The men who came here in the late '60s and early '70s were men of deliberate, serious purpose to do their level best by hard work, and grow up with the country. It was not a passion for a wild life in a new country, but an honest, intelligent purpose to build up the country by their industry and devotion to business.

What the future has in store for Crook County only the future can disclose, but

that it is something far beyond anything heretofore witnessed in its history, no one can doubt, and there are none who do not welcome the bright prospect with hearty gratification.

Topography and Climate.

Crook County, lying in the geographical center of the state of Oregon, contains, in round numbers, seven thousand square miles, exclusive of the Warm Springs Indian reservation in the extreme northwestern part of the county, and the Cascade mountains timber reservation, lopping off a slice of its western border. It occupies a place in the western part of the elevated plateau, between the Blue mountains on the east and the Cascade mountains on the west. I hope those who have never had the pleasure and pains of traveling "ye wild West" will not construe "plateau" as a level, far-reaching plain, for it is superlatively the reverse from level, although