



E. La Forest. Taken at Kamloops by J. Brown, 1886. Born Feb. 16, 1866 Oregon City, Oregon. Died December 3, 1935 at Mill Valley, California.

EMILE LA FOREST

Although he stayed in the interior of British Columbia for only sixteen years, Emile La Forest became one of the best known and liked characters of the stage-coach era, becoming a familiar figure to every resident of the Cariboo road.

He was born in Oregon City in 1866, and when he was thirteen years old became station boy on the Oregon-California Railroad. He had somehow already mastered an elegant copper-plate calligraphy, excellent powers of self-expression, and real competence with figures.

In 1880 he went north to the excitement of C.P.R. construction at Yale, and was soon appointed to the Dominion Telegraph office at Cache Creek. Next year he drove his first stage coach on the Cariboo road — a tough assignment on this difficult and dangerous route even for men of experience. But this fifteen-year-old loved it, and it became his life.

He was soon appointed driver for J. B. Leighton's weekly stage, carrying mail to the Okanagan by contract. He left Cache Creek at 3 a.m., changed horses at Savona's Ferry (where there was as yet no bridge), and spent the night in Kamloops. Next day he changed horses at Duck and Pringle's (Monte Creek), and so on to Grande Prairie (now Westwold) where he often saw Henry Ingram's retired Cariboo camels — and finally reached his destination at the head of Okanagan Lake.

During the summers of 1884 and '85 La Forest turned to another form of transport; he became the purser on the "Peerless", pride of J. A. Mara's inland fleet of sternwheelers. But their activity was much reduced when the railway was completed, and he reverted to the road.

He was appointed driver for F. J. Barnard's BX Company on the Cariboo road, and soon became known as one of the best. Not only was his handling of the teams superb, but he was considerate of his passengers, and very competent in the considerable business of carrying freight. Unlike most of the fraternity — and most of the passengers — he was a strict teetotaller, and this perhaps enhanced his reputation for reliability.

In 1896 business was slackening along the Cariboo, and La Forest therefore transferred to Wells-Fargo, working out of San Francisco until about 1920. Even in retirement he loved to drive, and his handling of a stage coach was an acclaimed feature of many parades. The last such occasion was the Chicago World Fair of 1933. He died two years later.

This photo of Emile La Forest was taken in Kamloops by J. L. Browne in 1886.

MARY BALF
KAMLOOPS MUSEUM



Court House built in 1908-09 as seen before the growth of trees.

PROVINCIAL COURT HOUSE, KAMLOOPS, B.C.

One of the oldest and most distinctive looking buildings in the city of Kamloops is the Provincial Court House. Completed in 1909 this large brick and stone building, because of its dominant position overlooking Seymour and Victoria at First Avenue, has become a landmark. Except for interior changes and additions to the Land Registry Office in the back, the Court House appears today much as it would have when built.

The first court house had been built in 1873 at the extreme west end of the settlement. Its whitewashed logs held a central courtroom, with jail cells opening directly at the side. A new one was built at the corner of Victoria and First in 1885, and an adjoining jail added the next year. The old building continued to be used for meetings, including those of the early city councils, and for band practices, and was finally destroyed in the Cosmopolitan Hotel fire in 1902.

The present court house construction was started in 1907 and was in use by 1909. Designed by Messrs. Honeyman and Curtis of Vancouver, the style they adopted was described by *The Sentinel* as "a freely treated version of late English domestic gothic, with details quite characteristically early renaissance." Later trees were planted and now constitute a green oasis in the downtown area. They include two varieties — the sweet-scented linden or 'lime' and the Japanese gigko.

From the early cattle rustling trials to the Fred Quilt inquest in 1972, the dignified courtroom has had an impressive sixty-five years. In the last few years, with the growth of the area, the Court House has become excessively crowded. It is hoped that when it is finally evacuated for newer premises the building, because it is, itself, a beautiful period piece, will be used to house the Kamloops Museum.

This picture, originally a popular postcard, was taken soon after the completion of the Court House in 1909 and is in the photo collection at the Kamloops Museum.

ESLIE MOBBS
Kamloops College