

Bill Miner - the Grey Fox

In the Pacific Northwest in 1901

Chalk Courchane

“He is reputed to have been the originator of the phrase "Hands up!" an original song titled "The Ballad of Bill Miner" was written by singer/songwriter Phillip Mills (Eugene Quinn) and recorded by the San Francisco bay area band "The Blackout Cowboys". Legend has it that Bill Miner admonished his cohorts to fire their guns when in danger of capture but "do not kill a man". His aliases were: The Gentleman Robber or The Gentleman Bandit, for his unusual politeness while he was committing robberies and the Grey Fox.” Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

He was born as Ezra Allen Miner, some accounts say his birth was sometime about 1846 in Bowling Green, Kentucky but by other accounts say he was born in Jackson, Kentucky and still others in Michigan, he was the son of a schoolteacher and a footloose father, a miner who deserted his family before the boy was ten. He inherited his father's restlessness.

“Even something as simple as Bill Miner's date and place of birth have long remained a mystery. At different times during his career, Miner claimed to have been born in four separate locations, with Kentucky being the most widely accepted. During his first term in the California state prison at San Quentin, he claimed Michigan as his birthplace, but he never again made that claim.” <http://www.jcs-group.com/oldwest/outlaws/miner.html>

This account sounds possible: “Ezra Allen Miner was born in Vevay Township, Ingham County, Michigan, on December 27, 1846, to Joseph Miner (1810-1856) and his wife, Harriet Jane Cole (1816-1901). He had four siblings: Harriet R. (b. 1836), Henry C. (1840-1864), Mary Jane (1843-1920) and Joseph Benjamin (1853-1872).

In 1860, following the death of Joseph Miner Sr., the family moved to Placer County, California, except for Henry who had enlisted in the Union Army. Miner dropped the name "Ezra" and began using "William" in the early 1860s. “He never legally changed his first name (which he evidently didn't like), but regarded William Allen Miner as his true name throughout most of his life.” Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Throughout his criminal career he used a multitude of aliases but was always known formally as William Allen Miner.” http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?displaypage=output.cfm&file_id=10285

Most of his life is nearly legendary and there are many stories of how he got out West. One is that when he was just past thirteen, he ran away to California "to become a cowboy." [Even though he moved out with his mother and siblings in 1860.] Finding his way to beautiful San Diego he drifted from ranch to ranch working as a cowpuncher and a bullwhacker. In his late years he liked to brag of his skill

with a mule team when he was a youngster working in the tough California mining towns.

<http://lgroup.ca/thebxstagecoach/outlawbillminer/main.html>

In 1863 when he was in San Diego the Apaches went on the warpath. Brigadier General George Wright, commanding the Division of the Pacific, announced he would pay \$100 to any man who would ride through the Apache-infested country to deliver a message to a Colonel Corner, who was stationed in a fort on the Gila River. Wright was well known for his brutal treatment of the Spokane Indians some years earlier.

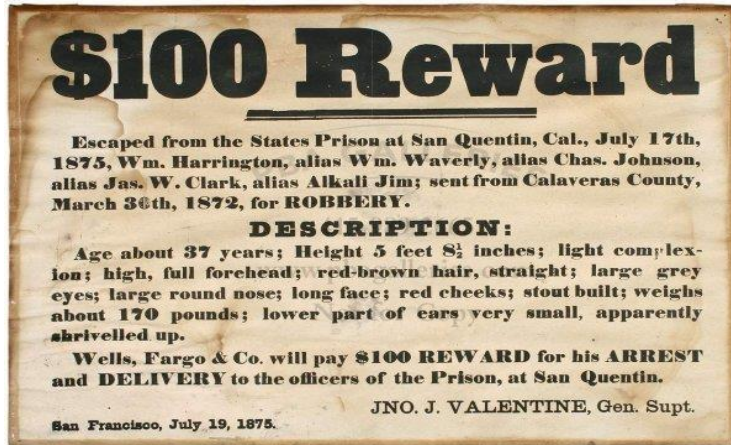
Miner, then as thin and slender as a jockey, volunteered and was given a "fast horse and General Wright's "God Speed". He rode all night, stopping off at the Tejon Ranch near Salt Lake to rest and feed his horse. Then he took off, swimming his horse across the Colorado River, to reach the colonel without incident. Within the hour he was back in the saddle, and the following morning rode up to General Wright's headquarters to receive \$100 in gold and the general's thanks.

When Miner had set out, several residents of San Diego gave him letters to be delivered to the fort and when Miner reported back that they had been delivered, some gave him \$5 and \$10 pieces for his trouble. This gave Miner an idea, and with General Wright's blessing, he began a one-man mail service from San Diego to the Gila River fort and other points, charging \$5, \$10, and \$25. But as fast as he earned the money, Miner spent it, and before long he was forced to turn over his horses and equipment to creditors.” <http://lgroup.ca/thebxstagecoach/outlawbillminer/main.html> “In 1865, Miner stole a \$50 watch and an expensive suit from a store. The theft of a horse enabled him to travel to San Francisco. On his way, he met a 15-year-old named John Sinclair. They rented horses, which they did not return, and on January 22, 1866, they robbed a ranch hand of \$80, though Miner returned \$10, securing his reputation as a Gentleman. They were captured the next day and were sentenced to three years in prison, followed by two more for the theft of the first horse. Miner was released after four years on July 12, 1870.” <http://www.rempgrc.gc.ca/hist/hh-ps/miner-eng.htm> [He was arrested for the first time in 1866 in San Joaquin County, California and served time there. He was shortly released but served more time at Placer County, California and later at Calaveras County, California. He was discharged in 1880. Wikipedia]

“In 1869, following the theft of his property by creditors, Bill, with a very inept horse robbed his first stagecoach in the Sonora desert, and got away for a while with a few hundred dollars. A posse came after Bill, and he was caught as his horse tired and dropped in the pursuit.” He went to San Quentin Prison, California. It is said that in Calaveras County, California celebrated by Mark Twain’s jumping frog story Miner robbed stage coaches carrying gold from the Sierra Nevada foothills. Bill Miner part 1, Ken Favrholt, Kamloops Museum Curator/Archivist, April 15, 1983, page 2.

“Miner then joined William Harrington aka Alkali Jim for a successful series of burglaries. In 1871, they were joined by Charlie Cooper. On January 23, 1871, the three men held up a train, where they stole a five dollar gold piece, as well as the watch and boots off Bill Cutler, the driver, although they returned them. They then opened a strongbox and took \$2,600 worth of gold dust and coins. They did not wear masks and because of the telegraph, their descriptions were widespread. They hid, but when Cooper went into town, the others escaped with the money.

In retaliation, Cooper went to San Francisco and told authorities where to find them. Both Miner and Alkali Jim were caught and sentenced to 13 years.” <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/hist/hhps/miner-eng.htm>



<http://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/3832173>

Above is a single letterpress sheet, approx. 12x17½", affixed to stiff paper and linen-backed. Rare Wells, Fargo & Co. reward poster, offering \$100 for the capture of "Wm. Harrington, alias Wm. Waverly, alias Chas. Johnson, alias Jas. W. Clark, alias Alkali Jim" issued following his escape from San Quentin Prison on July 17th, 1875. Alkali Jim, along with his partners Charles Cooper and William Miner, had been convicted in 1871 for the armed robbery of a Wells, Fargo & Co. stage coach near San Andreas, California. Alkali Jim is described as "Age about 37 years; Height 5 feet 8½ inches; light complexion; high full forehead; red-brown hair, straight; large grey eyes; large round nose; long face; red cheeks; stout built; weighs about 170 pounds; lower part of ears very small, apparently shriveled up." Heading: (Wells, Fargo & Co.)

Published: San Francisco Date: July 19, 1875 <http://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/3832173>

“Miner only served two years behind San Quentin’s prison walls before he masterminded his first escape. But his freedom lasted only a few hours and he was caught and sent to the hole.” Bill Miner part 1, Ken Favrholt, Kamloops Museum Curator/Archivist, April 15, 1983, page 2.

“Miner was released on July 14 1880, after serving nine years, and went to live with his sister, Mary Jane Wellman, in Colorado Springs to work for her husband’s mine. He did not stay for long.” <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/hist/hh-ps/miner-eng.htm> By this time he was in his mid-thirties and had spent almost half his life locked up.

“Miner’s next associate in crime was a farmhand named Arthur Pond. On September 1, 1880, they stole \$50 and two mail sacks in Ohio City, Colorado (an old gold and silver town now a ghost town). On October 14, they held up a stagecoach on the Del Norte route, and hit a jackpot of \$4,000. To elude authorities, Miner and Pond changed their names to William A. Morgan and Billy LeRoy. The authorities were not fooled. Pond was soon caught and sentenced to 10 years, although he escaped. He met first with his brother, then with Miner, and a new spree began. The Del Norte (Colorado) route was attacked on May 15 and again on May 18, 1881. While Miner

was buying supplies with this new money, the Pond brothers were caught and lynched by a mob of angry citizens outside the jail house. The loss of these boys did not derail Miner.”

<http://www.rcmpgrc.gc.ca/hist/hh-ps/miner-eng.htm>

But according to this account: “The same year that Bill Miner was released from San Quentin, he left California for Colorado, and met up with legendary Colorado highwayman, Bill Leroy one of the most daring of the Rocky Mountain highwaymen. Together they carried out several train and stagecoach robberies, but then vigilantes set out after them, later capturing and hanging Leroy.”

<http://wesmantoddshaw.hubpages.com/hub/Bill-Miner-The-Gentleman-Bandit>

As this story tells it: “Arthur Pond (alias Billy Leroy), had a short lived career as an outlaw. He terrorized stage coaches throughout southern Colorado, but met his demise when the Del Norte sheriff cornered him 11 miles east of Lake City. Determined to bring him to trial, Sheriff Armstrong snuck into town with his prisoner only to have a lynch mob take Billy Leroy and his brother and string them up to a cottonwood tree near the old Barlow Sanderson Stage Station. The next day, they propped the two outlaws up against the jail with the rope still wrapped around their necks.” http://www.boogiesdelnorte.com/town_history.html

According to Bill Miner and it is doubtful that these events occurred, “From San Francisco, Bill left aboard a ship for London, England. Though Bill never admitted to any train robberies, or other mischief in England, one can never be sure.

For several months he toured Europe. Though he denied holding up any trains, American Style, he recalled that he thought about it more than once.

In Turkey, after several adventures with desert bandits, Miner left Turkey and continued his travels to Africa. In Capetown, he got the idea of holding up a diamond train, but his better sense did prevail him "when I saw they (the guards) would be too much for me."

Reluctantly he left the diamond fields and sailed for South America, settling for a time in Rio de Janeiro, where he engaged in gun running and pulled a few jobs. A South American tour followed, but Miner yearned for the West and in about 1880 he returned to the United States.

<http://lgroup.ca/thebxstagecoach/outlawbillminer/main.html>

It wasn't long before he was back in business as a road agent. On November 8, 1881, he held up the Sonora, California stage, netting \$3,000. “Hands up and not a hair on your head will be harmed” Bill declared. One of their stage coach robberies was at Angel’s Camp the haunt of writer Bret Harte. They reportedly got \$4,000 here. Bill Miner part 1, Ken Favrholt, Kamloops Museum Curator/Archivist, April 15, 1983, page 3. Miner is said to have originated the expression, "Hands up," and was one of the first highwaymen to operate on the Pacific Coast.

“In 1881, Miner (now known as William Anderson), Jim Crum, Bill Miller and a man named Stanton Jones, "held-up" a stage between Sonora and Milton, California. All were captured

except Jones but only after some gunfire. Crum confessed. Miller and Miner were sentenced to 25 years each, Crum to twelve years.

Miner escaped once again but again was recaptured and thrown into the hole. He was released from San Quentin, California, on June 17, 1901, and two years later on September 23, 1903, with two others he "held-up " and robbed the Oregon Railroad and Navigation passenger train No. 6, at Mile Post 21, near Corbett, Oregon. One of his companions was badly wounded. The other was later arrested and both were sentenced to long terms, but Miner (now known as Bill Morgan), for whom a reward of \$1,300 had been offered, was not captured." They had dynamited the baggage car instead of the express car which turned the robbery into a fiasco.

He next appeared in Chicago, where, as a Pinkerton Agency report revealed, "he purchased an outfit of fashionable clothing, and in a few days went to Onondaga, Michigan, under the name of W. A. Morgan, a wealthy man from California." After losing most of his money across the Faro table, Miner returned to the outlaw trail, this time in the company of a young gunfighter named Stanton T. Jones of Chillicothe, Ohio, "who was the same type as myself."

<http://Ingroup.ca/thebxstagecoach/outlawbillminer/main.html>

"In March 1882, they again stopped the Del Norte stage in Colorado, but the loot this time was only a few hundred dollars. A posse took up the chase and for four days it was a run-and-fight battle through the canyons and gullies. Miner and Jones were excellent shots and the posse men turned back after three men had been shot out of their saddles."

<http://Ingroup.ca/thebxstagecoach/outlawbillminer/main.html>

"They met in Saguache County and were captured in San Juan, although they soon escaped to rob the Deming stagecoach line in New Mexico. Their next trip was to California by rail. There, Miner joined the team of Jim Crum, Ben Frazee and William Tod Hunter. Wearing masks, and referring to each other by number not name, they held up the Sonora train, getting \$3,800. All were captured. Crum was sentenced to 12 years, while Miner and Miller both got 25, although as usual, Miner did not serve his entire sentence.

When he and his cell mate, Joe Marshal, attempted to escape, Marshal was killed and Miner was shot in the cheek." <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/hist/hh-ps/miner-eng.htm>

Back in California Bill, now with a gang of new followers, robbed a few stagecoaches, and he and his entire gang were caught. This time Bill received a 25-year sentence in San Quentin, on June 17, 1901, he was released for good behavior. <http://wesmantoddshaw.hubpages.com/hub/Bill-Miner-The-Gentleman-Bandit>, <http://Ingroup.ca/thebxstagecoach/outlawbillminer/main.html>

"By this time the 54-year-old Bill Miner had a white mustache and soft smile giving the appearance of a peace-loving middle-aged gentleman. He even went straight. For two years, that is." <http://www.4jbranch.com/cokestories/Miner.htm>

Although generally armed, he reportedly never killed anyone and directed most of his criminal activities toward corporations rather than the public. Upon his release from San Quentin after 20 years, Miner discovered that stagecoaches had become obsolete; railroads now carried all the high-value cargo.” http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?displaypage=output.cfm&file_id=10285 “Miner was released from prison on June 17, 1901, at the age of 55. Retirement was not in his immediate future, however.”

“After leaving San Quentin, Miner made his way to Washington State ostensibly to visit his two sisters, Harriet and Mary Jane, the last surviving members of his family, and to regain his life. Louis W. Wellman (1840-1915) and his wife, Mary Jane (Miner), had a 160-acre homestead on Hannigan Road, south of Lynden in Whatcom County. Their daughter, Dora (1868-1933), was married to John J. Cryderman (1861-1953), a civil engineer, and he, in partnership with Wellman, owned an oyster bed on Samish Bay near Blanchard in Skagit County. Wellman gave Miner an opportunity to redeem himself and gave him gainful employment picking oysters. In reality, Miner had gone to Whatcom County to join forces with John E. "Jake" Terry (1853-1907), his former San Quentin cell mate. Terry had been released from the penitentiary on June 2, 1902, and he and Miner rendezvoused in Bellingham. Terry, alias "Cowboy Jake" was a career criminal and had lived in northwest Washington for many years. Most of his activities involved smuggling illegal aliens and opium, but he had also tried counterfeiting, albeit unsuccessfully. Terry took up residence in Sumas on the U.S.-Canadian Border. Locally, he was known as "Terrible Terry" because of his often erratic and violent behavior.”

http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?displaypage=output.cfm&file_id=10285

“Miner managed to stay out of trouble until the summer of 1903, when he was contacted by Gay Harshman, age 43, another acquaintance from San Quentin State Penitentiary. Harshman, also an habitual criminal, decided to rob a train and enlisted Miner’s assistance. Neither Harshman nor Miner knew the first thing about train holdups, but forged ahead with their plans. While picking oysters, Miner had befriended Charles Hoehn, a 17-year-old who lived in Equality Colony, a socialist community near Edison on Samish Bay, and inveigled the youth into joining the scheme.

On Saturday night, September 19, 1903, the bandits intended to rob the Oregon Railroad & Navigation Company (OR&N) passenger train to Chicago. They chose Clarnie, a small town 10 miles east of Portland, for the heist, theorizing that after the robbery they could hide in the big city of Portland. But nothing transpired as planned and the train sped on by the intended site of the robbery.

Undaunted, the trio made a second holdup attempt on Wednesday night, September 23, 1903, this time near Troutdale, 15 miles east of Portland. The gang used several sticks of dynamite to blow the doors off the express car. The messengers inside resisted with deadly force. A short gun battle ensued during which Harshman was hit in the head with a load of buckshot and presumed dead. Realizing the futility of the robbery attempt, Miner and Hoehn fled, leaving Harshman

behind. News of the holdup was immediately wired to Portland and a large posse, led by Multnomah County Sheriff William Storey and Captain James Nevins, head of the Pinkerton Detective Agency in Oregon, was dispatched to the scene on a special train. Harshman was found lying in a ditch, unconscious and bleeding profusely from a head wound. He was taken into custody and transported to Good Samaritan Hospital in Portland for medical treatment. Physicians thought Harshman would probably die without regaining consciousness, but he did not.

Meanwhile, Miner and Hoehn crossed the Columbia River to Washington in a rowboat. The pair split up, agreeing to meet in Tacoma before returning to Skagit County. There were no leads to their identities and the bandits avoided capture for a time. Harshman eventually recovered and related the details of the holdup, naming his confederates and where they could likely be found.

Captain Nevins ferreted out Hoehn's location through an informant and on Wednesday, October 7, 1903, had him arrested in Skagit County by Sheriff Charles A. Risbell (1869-1904). Hoehn soon confessed to the attempted robbery and fingered Miner as being involved. Miner learned of these developments from the *Bellingham Herald* and, fearing his own arrest, fled to Canada with the help of smuggler Jake Terry. He left behind at the Wellman residence Harshman's overcoat stained with blood. Sheriff Storey, armed with an arrest warrant, went to Bellingham, but he was a day late. Miner had already decamped, but Storey seized the bloody overcoat as evidence of his involvement in the crime.

Harshman and Hoehn were removed to Portland, Oregon, for trial. On Friday, November 13, 1903, Harshman, still suffering from his head wound, pleaded guilty to assault with a deadly weapon and the attempted holdup of a passenger train. Hoehn's case went to trial and he was found guilty of the same charges. Multnomah County Superior Court Judge John B. Cleland sentenced Harshman to 12 years and Hoehn to 10 years imprisonment at the Oregon State Penitentiary in Salem. Oregon Governor George E. Chamberlain commuted Hoehn's sentence because of his young age, and he was released from prison on November 14, 1907. Harshman was released on March 28, 1912, after serving more than eight years of his sentence.”

http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?displaypage=output.cfm&file_id=10285

“Meanwhile, Miner made his way to Princeton, British Columbia, and took up residence at the Schisler farm, using the alias George W. Edwards. He claimed to be a mining engineer who had a gold mine in Argentina. Miner befriended a fellow American named Jack Budd who had a ranch nearby the Schisler's. One source says that Jack Budd was his brother, Bill was to stay here and work, but still pretending to be a Southern gentleman. He made many friends in the area. Bill Miner part 2, Ken Favrholt, Kamloops Museum Curator/Archivist, April 22, 1983, page 1.

He moved to the Budd ranch in the summer of 1904 and made it his base of operations. In Princeton, Miner met another American named J. William Grell (1869-1927), alias William J. “Shorty” Dunn, and cultivated his friendship.”

http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?displaypage=output.cfm&file_id=10285

Miner persuaded Dunn to accompanying him on hunting trips and on cattle drives to the coast, one which happened to coincide with the holdup of a C. P. R. Trans-Continental at Silverdale, near Mission in the Fraser Valley. Bill Miner part 2, Ken Favrholt, Kamloops Museum Curator/Archivist, April 22, 1983, page 1.

“While living in British Columbia, Miner joined forces with Jake Terry in smuggling undocumented Chinese immigrants and opium across the border into the United States. At one time, Terry had worked as a railroad engineer and he had an understanding of rail operations as well as knowledge of the obscure border crossings in Whatcom County. Together, they hatched a plot to hold up a train in Canada. Miner recruited Dunn, who was pliant by nature, to participate in robbery. After due consideration, Terry and Miner decided to target the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) Transcontinental Express No. 1 at Mission, 40 miles east of Vancouver, where the steam locomotive stopped to take on water.”

http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?displaypage=output.cfm&file_id=10285

Later Miner and two accomplices, later identified as William “Shorty” Dunn and Jake Terry, were involved in the first train robbery in Canada. on September 10, 1904 at Silverdale about 40 miles east of Vancouver, just west of Mission City, British Columbia, "held-up" the Canadian Pacific Co.'s railway's transcontinental express, securing \$10,000 in gold dust and currency.

Miner also took a .38 revolver from an express messenger present on the train. For his capture \$5,000 reward was offered by the Government of the Dominion of Canada, \$5,000 by the Canadian Pacific and the Dominion Express Co. and \$1,500 by the Province of British Columbia.

The story goes like this: At 9:30 p.m. on Saturday, September 10, 1904, the CPR express train pulled under the water tower at Mission Station. The area was covered by dense ground fog, enabling the three bandits to climb aboard unnoticed. They hid on the platform behind the coal tender until the train left the station and then accosted engineer Nathaniel J. Scott and fireman Harry Freeman at gunpoint. Scott was forced to stop the train at Silverdale crossing, approximately five miles west of Mission, and there uncouple the engine and express car from the passenger cars. The brakeman, William Abbott, escaped from the train and ran back to Mission to report the crime, but the station agent didn't believe his story.

Miner had Scott move the engine and express car a few miles up the tracks and then forced the express messenger, Herbert Mitchell, to open the safe which contained \$6,000 in gold dust (Caribou gold dust from Ashcroft) and \$1,000 in cash, and registered mail. Before leaving, Miner collected the pouch of registered mail which contained \$50,000 in U.S. government bonds and an estimated \$250,000 in negotiable Australian securities. The holdup had taken only 30 minutes. To further delay the train, the bandits threw the fireman's shovel into the coal hamper feeding the engine.

This was the first successful train robbery in Canadian history. Historically there were just two train robberies attempted in Canada, both by Bill Miner and his gang. For the Mission robbery,

rewards totaling \$15,500 were offered for Bill, "dead or alive," by the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Canadian government, and the Province of British Columbia.

Upon reaching Vancouver, the train crew told the British Columbia Provincial Police and Canadian Pacific Railway detectives that the robbers had American accents and appeared to be professionals. The police enlisted the assistance of the Pinkerton Detective Agency, which had experience chasing train robbers. Captain James E. Dye, head of the Pinkerton office in Seattle, was eager to help and immediately dispatched several agents to the border. The British Columbia government and Canadian Pacific Railway offered rewards totaling \$11,500 for the capture of the bandits. Railroad officials were concerned because the Canadian Pacific was financially responsible for the stolen bonds and securities. The Canadian government was concerned that outlaws, thinking trains were easy prey, might start a crime wave.

The leads all went nowhere and after about a week the official hunt for the train robbers was discontinued. Captain Dye was convinced that Bill Miner was responsible for the heist as he was the only person who fit the gang-leader's description. Pinkerton detectives were still searching for Miner in connection with the Oregon Railroad & Navigation Co. train robbery committed one year earlier.

Miner convinced his partners that the bonds and securities were too big to fence, easy to trace, and therefore worthless. Aware that they might be useful in the future, however, he carefully hid these assets where no one else could find them. After dividing the gold and cash, the gang split up: Miner returned to the Budd ranch, Dunn to Princeton, and Terry to Sumas to resume smuggling.

It wasn't long before Miner was considered the prime suspect in the Canadian Pacific Railway robbery at Mission. Terry and Dunn, however, were unknown and remained in the clear. Miner hatched a plot to return the bonds and securities to the CPR without risking capture, using Terry as an intermediary. Mainly he wanted immunity from arrest and prosecution in Canada, but Terry could demand a handsome finders-fee from the railroad which the two crooks would then split. Terry attempted to pursue the scheme to extort the railroad, but the CPR feigned little interest, denying that any bonds or securities had been stolen.

"http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?displaypage=output.cfm&file_id=10285

It is often claimed that Miner was the robber, but neither he nor his accomplices were ever tied conclusively to the botched Silverdale heist. It is also widely reported that Silverdale's train robbery was the first in Canada, but Peter Grauer's definitive study ("Interred With Their Bones", 2005) cites a train robbery in Port Credit, Ontario 30 years prior as the first.

On Monday, October 2, 1905, the eastbound Great Northern Railway Flyer was held up at the Raymond brickyard, five miles north of Ballard (now part of Seattle) in King County,

Washington. Although the bandits were never apprehended, a British Columbia newspaper named Bill Miner and Jake Terry as the likely culprits.

Terry had been a railroad engineer and was familiar with the Great Northern route through the Puget Sound region. And the modus operandi was very similar to Miner's. A masked bandit snuck onto the platform in back of the coal tender as the train moved slowly out of Seattle. He then accosted the engineer, John Calder, and the fireman, Edward Goulett, and forced them to stop the train at a place along the tracks marked by a campfire. He was there joined by another masked bandit with an armload of dynamite, which they used to blow open the safe. It was rumored that the holdup men stole as much as \$36,000 in gold bullion, but the actual amount is unknown. The Great Northern Railway claimed the loss was approximately \$700, not counting the damage to the express car.

Terry was irate when the newspapers named him as a possible suspect in the Great Northern Railway robbery. He claimed he was sick in bed at the Mount Baker Hotel in Bellingham on that day and had no knowledge of Bill Miner's whereabouts. Great Northern offered a reward of \$5,000 for the arrest and conviction of each of the holdup men. Washington State Governor Alfred E. Mead (1861-1913) offered an additional \$1,000 reward for the capture of the bandits. But the crime went unsolved.” http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?displaypage=output.cfm&file_id=10285

“George Edwards (Bill Miner) carried on as before buying and selling cattle and horses, occasionally working as a ranch hand. Never short of cash and often on the move, he was well known and well liked in Princeton, Kamloops and the Nicola valley. On October 6, 1905, Bill Miner robbed the Overland Limited just outside Seattle. George Edwards had been working at Douglas Lake a little before that, or maybe he was at Princeton... When a fellow moves around a lot, no one notices when he comes and goes. But whenever a train gets robbed, the Pinkerton Detectives notice. From 1901 to 1906 there were several train robberies in several states throughout the U.S. attributed to Bill Miner but the Pinkertons could find neither hide nor hair of him.

Later in 1905 Bill Miner with four others rustled fifty head of horses near Spokane, and then sold them in Canada. Bill Miner part 2, Ken Favrholt, Kamloops Museum Curator/Archivist, April 22, 1983, page 1.



<https://truwestmagazine.com/the-gunfighters/>

“Dancing Girl Tattoo Identifies Bill Miner

Mail Clerk McQuarrie Declares He is Robber Leader

His Eyes Are Very Shifty

C.P. R. Detective Bullick Says He Can Recognize Family Resemblance – Saw Miner Stripped.

Kamloops, B.C., May 6. – (Special) - C.R. P. Detective Bullick, interviewed this morning said:

I have not the slightest doubt that the old man in custody is Bill Miner. I am well acquainted with Miner's sisters, and can recognize the family likeness even if I had not other proofs. Last night I saw the man stripped ... He was lathering his hands, and I asked him to turn them over, wishing to identify a stencil mark on his arm. He turned his hand over, but not enough for me to see all of it. I asked him again when he was wiping his face, and on his second refusal seized hold of the arm and turned it over.

“There was the dancing-girl tattoo, well known to be on Bill Miner's arm. Other marks correspond also. He has a scar on his hand which corresponds with the Pinkerton's description. His eyes also are unmistakable.

Asked why Miner did not put up a fight, Mr. Bullick said that Miner has never been of the desperate kind of robber, but has always been quiet, even when arrested the last time. He has a characteristic turn of the head, and his eyes are crafty as if always watching for a loophole of escape.

Mail Clerk McQuarrie was asked if he identified the old man as a train robber. He said, "Emphatically yes; I cannot be mistaken." The Province, Vancouver, British Columbia, May 16, 1906

"Bill Miner Had Checkered Career

Served Terms In American Prisons

His Adventures in Colorado and Other States Are Recounted ... Holdup of Stage in California.

Old Bill Miner has at last been captured. There is no doubt in the minds of the detectives and police now at Kamloops concerning the identity of the leader of the gang caught at Douglas Lake on Monday afternoon- he is the notorious train-robber for whose capture dead or alive large standing rewards have been offered for the past three years.

Last night Miner, alias Edwards, was stripped to the buff at the Kamloops jail, and detectives and police examined him as if he had been a strange insect under a laboratory microscope. There on the man's body were in plain sight all the distinguishing marks peculiar to Bill Miner. The mole here, the scar there, and the general measurements all told their story, but despite the complete identification Miner stoutly maintained that his name was Edwards, and that he had never heard of Old Bill Miner, whose name has for years in certain sections of the West been used to frighten naughty children into obedience.

The mere denial of Edwards that he had never heard of Old Bill Miner stamps the man as a most disobligng prevaricator, because the man's name is known to every person in the West where his operations, extending over a period of thirty years, have made him notorious.

If Old Bill Miner's history could be gathered from his own hand it would be most romantic reading. As it is, that part of his life of which the police have record is replete with spellbinding situations, for the old man has figured in many a daring holdup of stage and express train.

Apart from the probable leading part Bill Miner took in the C.P. R. holdup near Mission Junction in September, 1904, when \$7000 was lifted from an express car, Miner's most recent exploit as a train-robber occurred in September, 1903, when he and two companions held up and robbed an O.R. & N. train near a small way station known as Corbett."

With a more or less active criminal history for the last twoscore years on the coast, Miner is now getting to be a pretty old man. In June 17, 1901, he was liberated from San Quentin penitentiary, California, where he had been confined for twenty-five years. Then he came north, and is supposed to have lost no time in carrying out the O. R. & N. job two years ago. Since then the hunt for him has been continuous, but not until the present week was he located.

It is said to have been some time during the year 1879 that he was released from San Quentin after serving a number of years for stage robbery. Directly after he was set at liberty he was lost to the notice of the officers of that state, and for his reason it was rightly conjectured that he had enough California justice, and had departed for other fields, where official vigilance was more lax, and stages and cashboxes were quite numerous.

Early in November, 1880, however, he arrived in Denver, Col., and while there he met the noted Billy Leroy, who had become celebrated as one of the most daring Rocky Mountain highwaymen. Leroy had, on many occasions, given the United States Government and express companies of Colorado great trouble, but with an ingenuity that was considered little less than marvelous, he eluded capture. Upon Miner's arrival Leroy was much taken with the Californian's dashing tales of his many captures on the Pacific coast, and, upon invitation, readily linked to the destinies of his criminal future with those of the new arrival.

Enter Mr. Morgan.

As Miner prepared himself for the building of a criminal record in Colorado, he assumed the name of W. A. Morgan, but was familiarly known among his associates as California Billy. Together the pair, with a recklessness which highwaymen only can assume, did all the principal towns of Colorado, and finally in the early part of December, 880, were landed without a cent. They at once set out on a prospecting tour toward the southwestern part of Colorado. About the middle of the month they robbed the Del Norte stage, from which desperate piece of work they received some \$3000. Leroy was subsequently captured and hanged by a vigilance committee, not for this robbery in particular, but for a large number of previous misdeeds of a similar nature.

Miner, with his usual good-luck, escaped with all the booty and evaded the most vigilant search ever instituted in the state for a fugitive highwayman.

Robbed Stage Again.

Miner made good his escape, but soon returned to Denver. There Miner met Stanton T. Jones, formerly of Ohio, and the two started for the Rio Grande country on a foraging expedition. In March, 1881, they stopped the Del Norte stage again, but the booty they received paid them poorly for the risk they had run. Stealing two horses near Del Norte, they fled north again. After a tedious search lasting four days, the robbers were seen at about dusk riding leisurely across a bridge about forty miles from Del Norte. They were armed, but were finally covered by rifles of the officers and captured. Sheriff Brenaugh tied the two prisoners with bailing wire as well as he could, and, putting them on a freight wagon, started for Del Norte the same evening. They were compelled to camp at a place called Wagonwheel Gap for the night. Brenaugh and his companion, named Goodven, were so completely exhausted that they fell into a deep sleep about 11 o'clock that night, leaving the teamster in charge of the prisoners.

The Prisoners Escaped.

About 1 o'clock the officers were aroused by the loud cries of the teamster. Springing from their beds, they were startled by the sharp report of a pistol. The shot broke Goodven's arm. The officers at once realized that Miner and Jones had succeeded in untying themselves, and with a pistol that had been overlooked in the search were making a desperate fight. The second shot broke the sheriff's right arm at the shoulder, and the third and fourth shots struck Goodvin in the left arm, completely disabling him. The two desperado's then dashed away in the darkness, and were seen no more.

Miner went direct to San Francisco, traveling the entire distance on horseback, via Livermore to Oakland, arriving in San Francisco five days after the robbery.

Miner's Capture.

Miner was still pursued, and in company with another of his gang named Muller took off down the Sacramento River. Thither they were pursued by Captain Auil, under whom Miner had served four years in San Quentin. Auil came upon his men suddenly, and commenced firing at them. At almost the first round Muller threw down his gun and came running in with both hands in the air. Miner took flight, but was pursued by one of Auil's specials, and finally forced to surrender. Both Miner and Muller were taken to Sacramento.

The confession of Crum made the case an easy one. The culprits pleaded guilty. Miner and Muller getting twenty-five years each and Crum twelve years." The Province, Vancouver, British Columbia, May 16, 1906

He then lived at Hedley a few months where Dunn worked at the Nickel Plate Mine, presumably studying the shipments of gold to the coast.

"Again at the Budd Ranch in 1906, Miner made acquaintance with another drifter; an unemployed school teacher from Ontario named Louis "Scotty" Colquhoun. In the spring of that year Miner, Dunn and Colquhoun went ostensibly on a prospecting trip in the Kamloops area. They camped a week around the Barnhartvale and Robbins Range near C.P. R. mainline, talking to locals. Miner came to Kamloops to purchase food and even had a shave by a barber named Bayntun, later to become an alderman of Kamloops." Bill Miner part 2, Ken Favrholt, Kamloops Museum Curator/Archivist, April 22, 1983, page 1.

On May 8, 1906, eighteen miles east of Kamloops at Furrer, B. C., Bill Miner robbed the CPR for the second time. He was looking for a huge shipment of cash and gold collected for the San Francisco earthquake relief. The robbers compelled the engineer to uncouple the mail car and haul it a mile away, where they rifled it of registered mail. Miner believed the express packages were in the mail car and when he found they were not, he lost his nerve, abandoned the robbery and attempted escape.

That story goes like this: at about 11:30 p.m., the Canadian Pacific Imperial Limited #97 had just pulled out of Ducks Station (Monte) and was moving west when it was boarded by two men who jumped from the coal tender into the train's cab. The engineer and fireman, Joe Callin and J. Radcliffe were confronted with two pistols and heard the command, "Hands Up!" "And don't do anything foolish and you won't be harmed. Stop the train at milepost 116." This was about five miles away where a third outlaw joined them carrying a newspaper wrapped bundle of dynamite. The engineer and fireman were ordered to uncouple the mail and express car and move a few hundred yards ahead where the cars were inspected for valuables. Two clerks were in the mail and express car, one of them A. L. McQuarrie saw that the gang's leader had a large mustache that wasn't concealed by his mask and estimated him to be about 50 years old. Bill Miner part 1, Ken Favrholt, Kamloops Museum Curator/Archivist, April 15, 1983, page 1.

Unfortunately for Bill, Shorty, and Louis, they stopped the wrong train, got away with only 15 dollars and a bottle of Liver Pills. To make matters worse, somebody turned their horses loose. Attempting to escape on foot to the hills of south of Campbell Creek, it wasn't long before they were rounded up.

As the story goes: The next morning a British Columbia Provincial constable named William Fernie found the newspaper wrapped dynamite and the outlaw's foot tracks heading south toward Nicola Valley.

Fernie was reinforced later by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police under Sergeant J.J. Wilson and a group of trackers and cowboys under Chief Constable E.T.W. Pearse. Fernie had discovered Miner's gang and wisely waited for the others to arrive and at the same time Miner had seen Fernie. Miner and Colquhoun talked Dunn out of shooting Fernie and then they hurriedly left the area.

The Fernie and Wilson posse finally caught up with Miner, Dunn and Colquhoun near Quilchena as they sat and leisurely ate their lunch. Bill Miner part 1, Ken Favrholt, Kamloops Museum Curator/Archivist, April 15, 1983, page 3. When approached by Wilson Miner coolly announced that they were prospectors from Princeton. When Wilson told them that they fit the description of the robbers Dunn panicked and gun play erupted. Dunn was wounded and the other two captured without resistance. When found, Miner apparently surrendered to the arresting officers with his customary courteousness.

"The police found no less than three automatics, a colt .44, two .38 revolvers, and a rifle in possession of the gang. The .38 Smith and Wesson revolver taken from Miner was one stolen at the 1904 hold-up." Bill Miner part 3, Ken Favrholt, Kamloops Museum Curator/Archivist, April 15, 1983, page 4. Bill Miner an old-time outlaw seems to be more up on things than the famous Tom Horn who was not familiar with automatic pistols and was caught after he escaped from jail because he did not know how to operate an automatic. It cost Horn his life.

In spite of being positively identified as Bill Miner, the old bandit refused to admit anything insisting that he was George Edwards. Hundreds of supporters came to town to protest his arrest refusing to believe this popular old gent could be the most wanted outlaw in the West. Miner and his accomplices were convicted and sent to the B.C. Penitentiary at New Westminster. In a few months Miner escaped, fled to the U.S. and resumed his career.

<http://www.cowboycountrymagazine.com/2010/11/bill-miner/>

The capture of Bill Miner and his gang caused a great sensation in Kamloops. It was here that photographer Mary Spencer took her famous photographs of the Miner gang.

“A description of Miner was forwarded by the American Pinkerton Detective Agency. The tattoo mark at the base of his left thumb and another of a dancing girl on his body confirmed that the Mounties had “indeed got their man.” A Vancouver newspaper described as “a rather striking looking fellow, erect and active and does not appear to be within ten years of his age.”

Bill Miner part 3, Ken Favrholt, Kamloops Museum Curator/Archivist, April 15, 1983, page 4.

“The trial of the trio in the Kamloops Court House attracted a hundred spectators. “Dunn, who had to sit because of his leg wound, apparently laughed hysterically most of the time, while Colquhoun, a consumptive, coughed throughout. Miner though kept stoical throughout the proceedings. Two trials were actually held with Fred Fulton representing the crown, Alex McIntyre the defense, Judge P.A.E. Irving presiding. The final verdict pronounced all three men guilty on June 1, 1906.” Bill Miner part 3, Ken Favrholt, Kamloops Museum Curator/Archivist, April 15, 1983, page 4.

Two days after the trial the three men were escorted to the C.P.R. station in Kamloops.

Apparently the three were given cigars and departed in good humor. Bill Miner calling out to the onlookers that he “would be back.” By that time, Miner's celebrity status had risen to the point that the tracks were reputedly lined with throngs of supporters, many of whom expressed satisfaction with the fact that someone had taken the very unpopular CPR to task.

During the trial, Bill kept an egg in his pocket for good luck, and took it out and peered at it thoughtfully during the proceedings. "No jail can hold me, sir," Old Bill told the sentencing judge in the Kamloops court.

The headlines read: “An old time Pacific Coast stage and train robber. Escaped Aug. 8, 1907, from Westminster Penitentiary, British Columbia, where he was serving a life sentence.

"Old Bill" Miner, who escaped from the New Westminster Penitentiary, New Westminster, B. C., August 8, 1907, where he was serving a life sentence for the robbery of the Canadian Pacific R. R. train at Furrer, British Columbia, on the early morning of May 9, 1906, in his early criminal career was one of the most remarkable single-handed stage and train robbers who ever operated in the far West, always going about his work in a matter-of-fact way, never posing as a bad man, and never taking human life. He never belonged to any organized band of "hold-ups," generally worked alone until later years he picked up others to assist him.”

“On the morning of August 9, 1907, he made good his boast by crawling through a thirty-five-foot tunnel under the fence surrounding the brickyard in the New Westminster Penitentiary. Bill is remembered as one of Canada most notable bandit, a peaceful soul beloved by his friends and jailers alike.” <http://Ingroup.ca/thebxstagecoach/outlawbillminer/main.html> Large rewards induced a posse to take up the pursuit. He had headed for one of his hideouts in the Fraser Valley.

Meanwhile: “Louis Colquhoun was in the infirmary at the British Columbia Penitentiary, suffering from tuberculosis, when Miner's controversial escape occurred. He informed authorities he hadn't seen or spoken with Miner and had no knowledge of his intentions. Colquhoun died of TB in the penitentiary infirmary on Saturday, September 22, 1911.

For being a model prisoner, Shorty Dunn's life sentence was reduced to 15 years and he was paroled on May 25, 1915. He remained law abiding and was eventually granted Canadian citizenship under his true name, J. William Grell. Dunn spent his time prospecting for gold and drowned when his canoe overturned on the Tetsa River in far northern British Columbia in 1927.” By Daryl C. McClary, June 21, 2013 http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?displaypage=output.cfm&file_id=10285



Louis Colquhoun, May 14, 1906

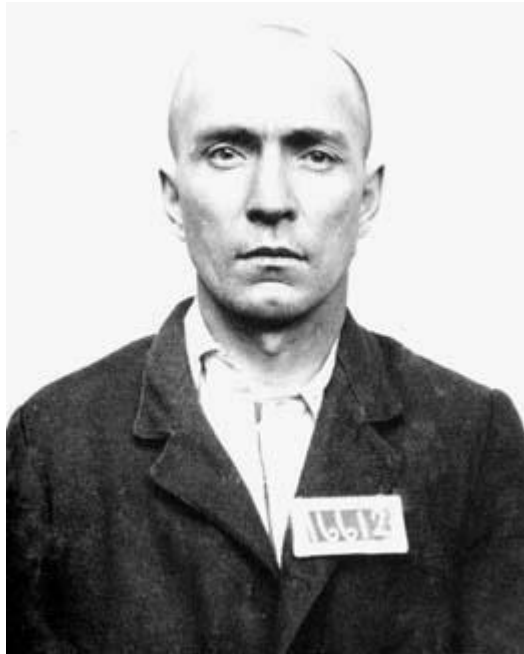
Photo by Mary Spencer, Courtesy British Columbia Archives (Image No. E-00152)



Shorty Dunn, Douglas Lake, May 14, 1906

Photo by Mary Spencer Courtesy British Columbia Archives (Image No. E-00155)

[“Both Bill Miner and his accomplice Shorty Dunn seem to have connections to the Columbia Plateau, and I am trying to see if I can connect Shorty Dunn to a woman in Wilbur. Unfortunately, not much is known about either of these men, but it is fun to speculate!” Sharon Seal, Wenatchee, Washington]



Jake Terry (1846-1913), San Quentin State Penitentiary, ca. 1896

Courtesy California State Archives

“Jake Terry’s association with Bill Miner ended abruptly on Friday, July 5, 1907, when he was killed in Sumas by Gust Lindey, a telegraph lineman, for sleeping with his wife, Anna. The postmortem determined that Terry had been shot twice in the head at close range with a .38 caliber revolver. Hundreds of curious spectators viewed the notorious outlaw’s body as it lay in state at the Albert R. Maulsby Undertaking Parlors in Bellingham. There was no funeral and no one appeared to mourn the death of "Terrible Terry." On Monday, July 8, he was buried in an unmarked grave in potter's field at Bayview Cemetery in Bellingham at public expense. (Whatcom County contract with Maulsby to bury the indigent paid only \$7.50. The cemetery received \$5 paid for the plot and the sexton \$2.50 for his services -- Maulsby received nothing for the cedar-plank casket and his work.) Although initially charged with first-degree murder, the case against Gust Lindey was dismissed on Saturday, October 12, 1907, by Whatcom County Judge Jeremiah Neterer upon motion of Prosecutor Virgil Peringer (1865-1945), when Sheriff Andrew Williams determined that he had acted in self-defense.”

http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?displaypage=output.cfm&file_id=10285

After he escaped from prison in 1907, he was never positively seen again in Canada, but he was rumored to have been seen down south of the border. Before he went to Canada he had been in Lewiston, Idaho.

“Bill Miner May Be In Seattle

Coat Which would Fit Train Robber Is Picked Up On The Docks

Seattle, Aug. 13. – A convict’s striped coat of the kind worn at the British Columbia penitentiary at New Westminster was picked up by M. M. Mitchell, of Ballard, on the Great Northern Docks about sundown Sunday night and taken to the police station.

With two notorious criminals, Herman Wendt, who escaped from McNeil Island, and Bill Miner, who with three companions dug his way out of the Canadian prison Thursday night, still at large, the local police are inclined to attach more than passing significance to the occurrence.

The coat is one which would fit Miner almost perfectly, as he is a small man and the garment is made for one of about 130 pounds. The coat is one which would fit Miner almost perfectly, as he is a small man and the garment is made for one of about 130 pounds. The government stamp which appears on the prison garb used at the McNeil Island prison is lacking and the clues all point to Miner as the wearer of the garment.

Friends in Seattle.

Miner is known to have numerous friends in this city and in Bellingham, and the police here were notified as soon as he made his escape, for it was thought that he was headed this way because he would have much better chance to keep out of sight of the police in the larger city.

Miner received a life sentence about a year ago for a daring holdup of a Canadian Pacific train. A year before he held up a train and made his escape with \$30,000 with which he bought a small ranch and lived quietly on it until he made his second attempt, in which he was caught.

Bill Miner is known to be a desperate character who will shoot to kill on the slightest provocation, and the police are watching all his old haunts in the restricted district and the saloons below Yesler Way for traces of him.

The coat is stained with dirt and water and has several fresh tears as if the wearer had made rapid progress in rough brush or heavy undergrowth. August 16, 1907 The Missoulian

“Pioneer resident recalls Bill Miner by Joyce Dunn

Herbert Hoffman (better known as Kreug), 78, is a story-teller who manages to make history come alive with his clear reminiscences of past events in the Chase, Shuswap and Kamloops area. Among these, his memorabilia of Bill Miner, is the most exciting of all!

Kreug’s story does not jibe on all points with recorded history. With apologies to historians and others involved in recording of Miner’s story, here is the saga a Kreug, then a seven-year-old boy, remembers it:

“We were living in Kamloops at the time when we heard Bill Miner had robbed the train. My parents knew of Bill Miner because the winter before he had stayed on Pemberton Range with a fellow by the name of Mr. Clark. Bill stayed there all winter.”

Kreug’s father George Henry Hoffman, retired section foreman of the CPR who worked in that capacity 18 years in Shuswap and seven years in Monte Creek, was vitally interested in Miner’s exploits which were front page news in those days.

Drawing information from his elders, his father in particular, Kreug’s story tells of Bill Miner in the habit of going down to the Monte Creek station “where he’s sit there in the station with operator Billy Plum, and listen to the telegraph.”

“Always like to know what’s going on there,” Bill Miner used to say, Kreug tells us with a twinkle in his eye, adding a little regretfully: “And that’s the way they finally traced him; as to who he was and who was robbing the train, because he was a telegrapher across the line.”

It all happened in 1906 and the general reaction? Couldn’t believe it!”

Here Kreug’s story develops quite drastically from other accounts. According to Kreug, Bill Miner got \$86,000 most of it in CPR securities; in cash he collected around \$80,000.

“Bill got on the train at Shuswap with his two pals, Shorty Dunn and Louis Colquhoun. As near as I can remember, Mat Crawford, the engineer on the train heard this voice behind him, saying “Hands Up!” At this point Kreug chuckles delightedly: “Old Crawford said he looked around and here was this great big gun (45 Colt revolver) and Bill Miner behind it with just these black eyes through the handkerchief over his face ...

“Stop the train!” was the bandit’s second command, and Kreug tells us that:

“When Crawford looked around, he told everyone afterwards ‘the hole in that gun looked as big as a tunnel.’ And then Crawford told me: “I didn’t argue, I stopped the train!”

Their horse were tied up on what is now called Miner’s Bluff, up above the railroad, Kreug said. There was no wagon road there then.

“Bill Miner and his gang made them unhook the engine from the passenger train and run it ahead for about a mile, and while this was happening the other two robbed the mail car and they got this money and the CRP securities. So what Bill Miner did, he went up on the bluff and hid these securities in a hole in the rocks, up there somewhere.

According to Kreug, it was by this time three or four in the morning and on the way to Campbell Meadows, situated directly above Miner’s Bluff, where Bill and his gang would camp for the rest of the night, they stopped at a home of an old trapper and his wife long enough “to make his wife get up and cook their breakfast, for which he gave her \$100!”

“They didn’t get very far,” Kreug recalls. “Head constable W. L. Fernie caught up to them with his posse. Shorty Dunn made a run for it when Fernie told them that they were under arrest. Shorty tried to get his horse to make a quick get-away, but too late! Fernie shot him through the leg. He got to be inspector after that.”

“They brought the three bandits to Kamloops. The jailer at that time was Antoine Penny, who only lived two doors from us. Dad, who had just delivered groceries at the jail, hollered up to him and told him that he was wanted there. I went up to the jail with Antoine. The old jail was situated where the old Provincial Home used to be.

“I was there when they brought them in!” Kreug says triumphantly, adding that “Shorty Dunn, who was wounded in the leg, said to Fernie “You might fix a man’s leg before you throw him in jail!” To which Fernie replied:

“You get in jail first and then we’ll look after your leg!”

“Bill didn’t say a word; not ‘til they came to take him to New Westminister Penitentiary, after the trial. They put three men on horseback, with their feet tied underneath the saddle, so that they couldn’t get away.”

“Bill Miner asked to be taken around the school. He always liked children.” Kreug adds with a smile.

“They brought the three prisoners around to the school, the old Stuart Wood School,” and then Bill Miner, “his two big pockets full of black-jack chewing gum, threw it over the fence to us in handfuls!” Kreug says, laughing at the memory. And then, “then there were some people painting a house right there, that had just been built. He (Bill Miner) turned around and said, “Ill be back to help you finish that job!”

“They took him to Savona and put him on the train. He had too many friends Bill did. But he wasn’t in the pen more than two months,” Kreug says happily. “Got out of jail because he promised to tell them where the CPR securities were.”

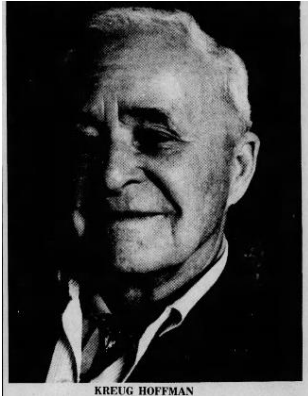
And show them he did, under guard, retracing his steps back to his cache in the rocks, said Kreug ...

Kreug has other memories too. He can remember the era of the paddle-steamers, the Ethel Ross, the Andover and the C. R. Lamb, operated by Captain William Louie, who sailed her from Enderby on Spallumchee River to Savona on Kamloops Lake.

He remembers the robbery in 1907 by the McLean brothers at Furrow, the spot we call Dallas today. Kreug can recall waiting for the train to come in at the Kamloops station, and seeing the lights on the train; the engine immobilized, as they found out later, by the holdup. How were

trains held up in those days besides just boarding them as the audacious Bill Miner did?" 'By putting a tie on the track and tying a red flag to it.'

It was Kreug Hoffman who suggested the name of "Fortune Drive" for the road from the Overlander bridge to North Kamloops; a fitting name which once belonged to his mother's (Lillian Hoffman); uncle Willian Fortune, "one of the original overlanders." *The Salmon Arm Observer*, October 5, 1977



"Card From "Bill Miner"

But It is Probably a Hoax

Vancouver, Sept. 16. – Is Bill Miner actually in Montana, the scene of the recent hold-up on the Great Northern railway?

This morning Chief of Police Chamberlin received in his mail a picture postcard which bore the name Miner as signature. The card represented a scene in the town of Billings, in the south eastern portion of the state, and Chief Chamberlin is inclined to look upon the card as a hoax. The signature, however, appears to be not unlike that of Bill Miner, who, in private life, sometimes signs himself "E. A. Miner." *The Calgary Herald (Calgary, Alberta) September 17, 1907*

The Provincial Police Department Superintendent F. S. Hussay "had received reports that the escapee had been in Spokane and also on the Flathead Reservation near Kalispell Montana. This investigation took place as a result of a tip received from an informant in Portland, Oregon. The informant, who reported to the Chief of Police in Portland, stated that Miner was living with an Indian girl on the reservation near Kalispell."

The private Pinkerton investigator set out to follow up on these reports in early February. He visited little towns near Kalispell like Dayton, Polson, St. Ignatius, Arlee, Ronan, Dixon and

Ravalli, and admitted he spent much time in saloons trying to pick up word of his elusive quarry."

From the Pinkerton Detective Agency, "Bill Miner Investigation Reports," B. C. Attorney General Correspondence, B. C. Archives, GR0424.

"The Government of The Province of British Columbia (seal), Provincial Police Department, Superintendent's Office. Feby. 14th 1910, Victoria.

The Honourable W. J. Bowser, K. C. Attorney-General, Victoria.

Sir:.. Re: Bill Miner alias Geo. W. Edwards

I have the honour to enclose herewith copies of the latest Pinkerton reports received at this office dated 8th and 9th instant.

If there is no information of value received, within a few days I would recommend that he operative employed in this case be withdrawn.

I have the honour to be, Sir, Your obedient servant, F. S. Hussay, Superintendent."

"KalisPELL, Mont., Tuesday, Feb. 8, 1910

No. 11 reports:

I spent the day and evening moving about town and visiting the saloons without learning anything of interest regarding the location of the Indian villages.

Surveyor Walker did not return to the West hotel, and the proprietor, D. B. Irish, did not know of anybody else in town who was as well posted as he on the Flathead Reservation. Hence I will see him.

I learned today that there are always several Indian camps about Somers the saw-mill town near Flathead Lake. At 10:00 I discontinued.

Respectfully submitted."

"KalisPELL, Mont., Wednesday, Feb. 9, 1910.

No. 11 reports:

All forenoon and afternoon I moved around town, visiting the saloons, without learning anything of interest regarding William Miner.

This evening I entered C. B. Marsden drug store and talked with Mr. Marsden, who has been all over the Flathead reservation, and is familiar with the Indians, there. From hm I learned that the Indian agent lived at the Mission, and the Indian agent kept record of the whereabouts of all the

Indians on the reservation, and that he did not allow any white men to live with the Indians, that was not married to a squaw, but many did so without his consent.

Mr. Marsden made me familiar with the different stage lines of the country and also some general information as to the country which will be very useful to me, and he also said that at Dayton I could get some good information from the storekeeper there who deals with the Indians.

This evening I again made several rounds of the different saloons, here without results.

At 10:00 p.m. I discontinued.

Respectfully submitted.”

“The Honourable W. J. Bowser, K. C. Attorney-General, Victoria. Feby 17th 10

Sir:.. Re: Bill Miner alias Geo. W. Edwards

I enclose Pinkerton reports of 10th and 11th instant. The operative employed on this case is still pursuing his enquiries on the Flathead Reservation, Mont. So far he has discovered nothing respecting the whereabouts of Mr. Miner. It may be advisable to allow him to continue for a few days longer although I am beginning to suspect that the information received by the police as to the whereabouts of this wily outlaw was not correct.”

“Both Bill Miner and his accomplice Shorty Dunn seem to have connections to the Columbia Plateau, and I am trying to see if I can connect Shorty Dunn to a woman in Wilbur.

Unfortunately not much is known about either of these men, but it is fun to speculate!”

Sharon Seal

Miner then robbed any number of trains from Oregon State. In July, 1909, he held up the Portland Oregon Bank, getting \$12,000.

Bill was now a stoop-shouldered old gentleman with snow-white hair, a large mustache, and a friendly smile. Despite his age, he was still an expert horseman and had retained his shooting eye.

Georgia's Real Robin Hood

Uncle Billy Miner,
A Train Robber
Of the Old School

By H. H. JEFFERSON.

AT midnight D. J. (Preacher) Fant released the brakes and moved the heavy throttle in the engine's cab of the Southern's No. 36. Steam and air shrieked through Atlanta's station, and the train of some six coaches rolled up the tracks for Washington.

Unsuspecting passengers waved through the chilled windows to their friends on the platform in the February air. Conductor Mooney began his habit-timed trek down the aisle collecting tickets from his fares. Engineer Fant settled himself in the engine's cab, watched his signals, resigned himself to the steel-toned melody of "passengair-passengair" from the rails and the heaving throb of the churning drivers. In the express car a small portable safe and a large stationary one held fortunes in their black, steel interiors.

Stabbing its long, lean finger of light ahead, the proud train cleared the yards and gathered speed for its long run.

"It's a pretty night," Fant commented, taking in the overhead stars.

"Sho' is, cap'n," replied his Negro fireman. "Hit sho' is!" And he started humming a plantation song.

Nobody on this train realized, or suspected, that terror had already hung out its greedy claws less than a hundred miles up the tracks; that danger sat astride the steel highway. Nobody reckoned that the dark hour of 3 o'clock would be a moment unparalleled in Georgia daring.

Bill Miner's horse was thirsty and he himself was hungry. Coming slowly over the ridge, he saw at the bottom of the hill in the afternoon's last light a modest farmhouse.

"Paddy," he stroked his horse's withers, "we will eat and drink."

Several minutes later he reined-in at the doorway. An elderly woman, sad of face, came out. Bill Miner, stylish with his mustaches, shrewd in his little black eyes, said, "Good evening, ma'am. I'd like to buy a bite to eat, and fresh water for my horse."

"You're welcome," she replied, humbly.

During the meal's course, Bill Miner drew the woman out. He was good at this. The woman was a widow. A mortgage hung over her farm, her last refuge. It was due. The villainous loan-shark was coming to collect—or take the roof from over her grayed head.

Bill Miner smiled in his slow, benevolent way. He drew a thick wallet from his shirt, counted out the money, and said, "There, ma'am." He laid it on the table beside her plate. "I don't like to see people a-worrying. I have a lot of it to do myself."

"But," the widow protested, "I can't pay this back any easier than I can pay the mortgage."

"I'm not a-worried about that, ma'am. I'm not asking you to pay it back." Bill Miner left



Bill Miner and his two confederates, Charley Hunter and Jim Hanford, shortly after their capture following the armed holdup and robbery of the Southern's No. 36.

the humble cottage. Down the road a-piece he turned into the timber and cut back to a point from which he could watch the house. He waited several days, camping secretly. The overlord finally came; the widow paid him off. The overlord turned back down the road astride his fine horse, twirling his moustaches in fiendish satisfaction.

At a turn in the road a man in a mask came suddenly out of the wood and, with a long-barrelled .44 six-shooter to punctuate his remarks, spoke in a soft but quick voice, "Gimme, mister. Gimme."

Bill Miner returned the money to his thick wallet and continued his way, whistling a western tune. He arrived at White Sulphur, Ga., and immediately made himself a part of the community. With him were two men, much younger than himself.

This nearly 80-year-old man won the community in no time at all. He was slight of figure, but equipped with an amazing personality and brilliant mind. With his companions he took up quarters in the old Bob Shore house between Lula and White Sulphur. To all intents, he was looking over the stand of walnut timber in the region, incident to purchasing. He spent some time in the railroad station, swapping talk with the operator—and when the telegraph instrument began its ticking code Bill Miner gave his ear to it.

A few days later, on Saturday afternoon, February 20, 1911, old Bill dropped in at Lev Pitman's store at White Sulphur and purchased a small bottle of kerosene.

At 3 o'clock the Southern's No. 36, driving at maximum

speed through the blackness, saw a red lantern swinging from side to side in the center of the track at Browning crossing, one and one-half miles north of White Sulphur.

Engineer Fant said to his fireman, "That's Tom Culpepper found trouble." Tom was section foreman.

Fant brought the train to a slow stop and leaned out of the cab. A man came up to the train out of the darkness and said, "A rail's broken ahead."

"Is it being repaired?"

"Yes, it is."

At that moment two men stepped up into the cab from the rear. One said, "Put up your hands!" Fant wheeled around and looked down the barrels of two .44's. He obeyed.

The man on the ground, Bill Miner, moved on down the track towards the baggage car. The corsairs in the cab, Charley Hunter and Jim Hanford, chased the Negro fireman off into the woods to enjoy his hysteria in solitude. Then one of the bandits left the cab and headed for the baggage car.

After 15 minutes Miner was back at the locomotive, commanding Fant to get down and follow. The engineer was taken to the express car. The doors were closed.

"Make the express messenger open that car," Miner commanded.

"He won't listen to me," Fant replied in desperation. "He won't do it."

Inside the car the express messenger was calling frantically for Conductor Mooney to hurry to the rescue. But Mooney was having his sands full with

(Continued on Page Four.)

Georgia Had a Real Robin Hood

(Continued From Page One.)

the passengers scared nigh to death.

"If you don't open this door, I'll blow it open!" Bill Miner called.

The baggage master opened the door, and, in the face of three .44's, reached readily for the ceiling.

"Give us the keys and open the safe!"

"I don't have the keys," W. B. Miller, the express messenger, replied. "And I can't open the safe."

Bill Miner turned to his two confederates. "Let's have the dynamite. We'll blow it open."

So saying, he skilfully placed the dynamite on top of the stationary safe, fixed a fuse, and moved everybody outside and down the track a-piece. After a moment a terrific explosion rent the air.

Miner leaped back into the car, then ran back to the door. "It didn't blow open. Push that

messenger back up here. He knows which safe's got the most money in it."

"I don't know which," Miller avowed. "They've both got sealed packages."

Miner then concentrated on the smaller, portable safe. He called out for confederate Charlie Hunter to take Fant back to the locomotive to get a shovel. When he returned with the shovel, Miner had him throw two shovelfuls of dirt up into the car. This he placed on top of the dynamite. Old Man Miner lit the fuse and jumped out. In a few moments another explosion stabbed the night.

Miner jumped back into the car and finished opening the small safe with a hammer. With the aid of his confederates he opened a canvas bag and began stuffing the money into it. Miner looked harassed. "Boys, we got to hurry. We've wasted too much time." He ordered everybody outside. "Fant, get back to your engine, and high-ball." As the train pulled away Miner ordered the express messenger to catch the tail-end of his car.

Bill Miner chuckled as the train sped down the track for Lula, four and one-half miles away. He turned to his confederates, "Let's go."

The news spread like wildfire. A train had been robbed in Georgia (only 29 years ago.) Poses gathered. Individuals mounted horses and took up their heavy guns. The man-hunt was on. The country was scoured. But Bill Miner and his confederates, Charley Hunter and Jim Hanford remained in the timber on a hill within sight of the spot. All during the day they watched the investigation's progress. They watched poses gather at the scene of the robbery and then head out across the country in every direction.

Bill Miner divided the swag, by weight, \$770 in Mexican currency, \$800 in United States currency; foreign gold, silver; Spanish, Brazil, Danish, and other South American republic money; a Howard watch, pearl ear screws, four gun metal purses, a silver mesh bag. The canvas bag and the lantern were hidden in the leaves against a log. Then they separated.

Shortly after 7 p. m. Bill Miner arrived at A. E. Kendall's home, 13 miles northwest of Dahlonega. Kendall took in

lodgers for the night. Miner talked awhile, then went to bed. Kendall didn't know who he was.

It wasn't long, then, until the door broke open and Walt Walters stepped in. Through another door came Sheriff John Sargeant and Jim Davis. Bill Miner said, "This is a rude awakening, but so be it."

Miner offered no resistance. He was handcuffed. Then Sargeant and Davis began arguing over the prisoner, for the reward money. Walters broke up the argument, saying, "Sargeant is the sheriff. Turn him over to him."

The poses captured Hanford and Hunter.

They brought old Bill Miner to Gainesville to one of the hotels. He talked congenially with his captors, quoted Scriptures, discussed the classics. He went on trial in Gainesville. The good women of the town went to the jail to convert him. But he reeled off chapter after chapter from the Bible. He knew more about the Bible than the women did. He was a paradoxical figure. He told his guests the express companies were robbing the people, and that he was merely getting their money back to be directed along helpful channels.

His activities had made him a character through the west and in British Columbia. Always, he was aiding the poor and distressed out of the funds of his robberies. Bill Miner was Robin Hood.

The jury returned a verdict of guilty. Before sentencing, the judge asked old Bill if he had anything to say. Bill stood up, as calm as a spring morn, and addressed the court: "Robbery, your honor, is robbery." Then he received his sentence of life imprisonment.

Old Bill Miner died at Milledgeville in the prison, marking the end of one of this country's most daring colorful careers. The final scene in his curious drama is marked now only by a change in the name of the crossing in Georgia where he held up his last train. It is no longer Browning Crossing. It is Miner's Crossing . . . and some say that, when the moon is right of a February night, a ghostly explosion can be heard there around 3 o'clock of a morning.

Bill Miner, although sentenced, was never condemned by any one.

Crusader--- Cleanup Fights

bank had a stock liability of \$14,000,000. Rogge helped the government, and recovered \$9,000,000. While with the SEC he showed how his brain worked in the case of the Bank of America and the Trans-America Corporation. We're all familiar with that. It was during that case that Louis B. Schwartz, his assistant in the Whelchel trial, drew up a brief on what constituted a security.

"This is something you never knew," Rogge smiled at Schwartz during the interview, "That your brief on that security caught my fancy. That made you my assistant."

"In May, 1939, I recognized several possibilities in what we might call 'special prosecution.' I decided to do the job. For some time I'd been in close contact with about 20 young men with legal training. They're my present assistants. That's how it started. A report came to me from New Orleans. Two days later James Monroe Smith fled to Canada. The ball started rolling. It's still rolling."

He leaned his head to one side, peering fondly at the bowl of thick sweet.

"How do you say you pronounce t-u-p-e-l-o in Georgia?"

RE SECTION

SUNDAY, MAY 5, 1940.

On Saturday, February 18, 1911, led a five-man gang in a daring hold-up of the Southern Railroad Express, enroute to New Orleans from New York, near White Sulphur Springs, Georgia, to get \$3,500. They were captured four days later and convicted of train robbery in Gainsville on March 3, 1911.

“But progress had caught up with Old Bill. News of the robbery clicked out over the telegraph wires to the Pinkerton office and to the local marshals. A posse was organized and Pinkerton operative W. H. Minster, using a map, ringed several swampy areas with his posse men, gradually closing in. Miner and his men were nodding over a small fire when the posse men crawled through the brush. "Rouse boys, the law is on us," he shouted to his men as he suddenly jerked awake, alerted by a sense of alarm sharpened by years of practice in eluding the chase. His men scrambled to their feet. Miner began firing from a kneeling position. The forest echoed with gunfire. Two of Miner's men went down under the fusillade, but Miner kept working his rifle. At last he realized the game was up and throwing down his rifle, he surrendered.

"Well, I guess you got me, boys," was his comment as Minster snapped on the handcuffs.

"What's your name?" asked the Pinkerton man. "William Morgan," was the prompt reply.

Minster studied the weather-beaten old face. "You look familiar to me," he said. After questioning Miner, he sent the train robber's picture to the main office in Chicago with the notation that the name Morgan was obviously false. William Pinkerton, took one look at the picture, then sent a reply back to his operative in Georgia:

"Morgan is Bill Miner, California's train and stage robber. Alias William Morgan, George Anderson, Sam Anderson, California Billy, Old Bill, Bill Budd and G. W. Edwards. Escaped from the New Westminster Penitentiary, Victoria, British Columbia." When Minster showed him the wire, Miner grinned. "That's me," he said.

He was convicted of train robbery and sentenced to life in the Georgia State Penitentiary at Milledgeville. But three times in as many years the old-time outlaw proved that at least for him, iron bars did not a prison make. Each time he escaped he was recaptured only a few days later. The last time, after he had walked through swamps in waist-deep water, he confided to the guards who had hunted him down with dogs:

"I guess I'm getting too old for this sort of thing."

“Miner circumscribed his criminal escapades with two rules of conduct. He never killed anyone (though in his younger days he had been dangerous in a tight spot), and he robbed only corporations, justifying these crimes on the basis that corporations robbed the common man. Thus, the public related to Bill Miner and he became a folk hero in two countries. Once he was even cheered by crowds while being returned to prison following an escape attempt. Few criminals have made this kind of impact on the public.” <http://www.jcs-group.com/oldwest/outlaws/miner.html>

Miner was sentenced to 20 years and Hunter and Hanford, who had pleaded guilty, received 15 years at hard labor. On March 15, Miner, now age 64, and his two confederates were sent to the Newton County Convict Camp at Covington, Georgia, to work on the chain gang.

On July 8, 1911, Miner, pleading poor health, was transferred to the Georgia State Prison Farm at Milledgeville. Three months later, on October 18, Miner and two other inmates escaped from the prison farm. He was captured on November 3 and returned to the Milledgeville prison.

Miner, accompanied by two prisoners, made another escape attempt on June 27, 1912, but was captured on July 3 in a swamp near Toombsboro, just 20 miles from the prison farm.” He would spend the last years of his life tending a flower garden and dictating his adventures to a friendly detective that got to like the old thief. http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?displaypage=output.cfm&file_id=10285

“By holding up a train in the state of Georgia in 1911, Miner earned himself the title "Last of the Old Time Bandits." <http://www.jcs-group.com/oldwest/outlaws/miner.html>

“Here Is The Life Story Of Old Bill Miner Told By Himself In U. S. Jail

Famous Bandit and Train Robber Tells His Own Story to Georgia Reporter – Has Been a Wanderer on Face of Globe – Never Shot a Man and Never Robbed the Poor – How He Was Caught the Last Time.

An interesting interview with “Old Bill” Miner, the most famous train bandit of the present day, who was recently sentenced to serve a twenty year sentence in the Gainesville penitentiary, was secured a few days ago by a newspaper man, who was permitted to speak to the notorious outlaw for about an hour. The article will be read with interest by the thousands of persons in this city who were “personally acquainted with the modern day Robin Hood.

Here is the story sent out from Gainesville.

In the condemned cell of the county jail here is confined the most remarkable man ever convicted in the Georgia courts, and one of the most notable criminals in the history of crime on the continent. He is none other than the famous Bill Miner, the train robber, the “Lifer” who escaped from Westminister penitentiary in British Columbia a couple of years ago, after serving three years of his term in attempting to rob a C. P. R. train near Ducks, B.C. His escape after a long period of model conduct, during which he professed Christianity, caused a great sensation in Canada at the time, and even led to a debate in the house of commons in Ottawa.

Study of Psychology

Bill Miner is a study in psychology, a man of iron nerve and desperate courage, he never took a life in all his wild career, not even when the door of liberty would have opened before him. His course has been marked by deeds of spontaneous kindness and benevolence as reckless as his crimes. A little man, undersized, and of slight build, with grizzled gray mustache and steely

eyes, his life's story reads stranger than fiction, as the following account, gleaned mostly from his own lips, show how he escaped:

Miner's escape from British Columbia was undoubtedly due to the fact that he behaved extraordinarily well in prison, and made friends with everyone he came in contact with. One afternoon, just after the prisoners had been sent out to their respective duties, his escape call was sounded, and guards were sent out, as Miner and three other prisoners had been found missing.

Found Tunnel

A large tunnel, running under the high wooden wall that surrounds the prison yards into a patch of shrubbery beyond was discovered, but no trace of the missing trio could be found. A careful and never relinquishing search was instituted, but nothing could be learned of the escaper three, and finally the case was turned over to the Pinkerton agency, who could do nothing to relieve the situation.

The grizzled old scamp does not admit that he received any outside or inside help in his escape. He says he went to California, after fleeing from Canada, and to secure funds, held up and robbed a stage coach. He secured enough booty to insure himself a trip across the world in perfect luxury.

"I then made my way to Europe, where I spent about six months," he says, "returning to America, where I went 'dead broke' from giving a poor widow most of my money in order to send her daughter to Hot Springs, Arkansas, for treatment which would cure her seemingly hopeless case of rheumatism. The balance I lost in gambling hall in a California town.

His Life Story.

"Let us begin at the beginning," he said, in relating the details of the picturesque life. "I was born in the family of a prosperous and law-abiding farmer in Bowling Green, Kentucky, in the year 1843. I attended school until I became 16, when, like the majority of us boys, I became imbued with the fever to go west. In company with two of my boy friends I made for Texas, going on through to California, where my first robbery was turned. Becoming short of funds we found ourselves in a hole, so they put it up to "Bill," as they called me."

Miner at once suggested train robbery, and as this meant another series of adventures to the trio of runaways, they at once began putting the plan into effect, and the authorities at a prominent California county seat were notified one day shortly afterwards, that a stage coach had been held up in about the nerviest style ever witnessed, and that \$75,000 was stolen.

Gave Booty to Friends

Miner says he gave the majority of the booty to his friends and secured them jobs, going into the vocation of mining. He was never caught for thar first hold-up.

After finding the trick so easy, he robbed several stage coaches, many of the jobs being turned by himself alone. He was very successful until he struck San Quentin, Oregon [California actually], where he was caught; in the attempt to rob a stage. The only reason given for his capture was that he gave up rather than shoot a fellow man, the driver, and Bill Miner doesn't regret his act as yet, for his skirts are as clear of murder as an angel's are of dirt.

A Twenty-Five Year Sentence

In the San Quentin courts he was sentenced to twenty-five years. However, on good behavior, he only served nine and was freed. When he inhaled the breath of liberty, he found himself short of funds. Three days afterwards a prominent express company of Oregon [California] found themselves \$25,000 short from a safe rifled near San Francisco, on the 'Frisco road. A few weeks later found Bill Miner in the mining camps of Australia.

"I was never caught for that robbery, nor even suspected," he says proudly.

Miner went from Australia to Turkey, and made the acquaintance of a slave dealer, who carried him around on his various slave-buying trips.

From Turkey to Australia

After touring about Australia, making money in the mining camps, he went to Europe, and finally, growing tired of foreign countries, returned to America, where he mined extensively. The love of adventure came back, and shortly after his return, another express train was robbed of a large sum in Oregon, and Miner was suspected. He fled, traveling from coast to coast in luxurious parlor cars, staying at the best hotels in the large cities, and occupying a box in some big theater every night.

His life of luxury, however, soon came to a termination. His funds grew short, and he had no means of accumulation, so he began to hobo his way back to the west, where he traveled on burros, slept in woods or hollow logs, his pipe and his plug his only consolations. Truly, life was like a gambler's purse.

Life Sentence in Canada

Miner soon wearied of life in a miner's camp so he decided to again hit the trail of the "dynamied safe." In 1906, he with two others, held up and robbed a Southern Pacific mail and express near San Quentin, Oregon. He was suspected of being the leader in the hold-up, and was carefully watched. He crossed into Canada, and was soon caught for the attempted robbery of a C.P.R. train, near Ducks, British Columbia. This came near being his undoing, and "Old Bill" Miner was arrested, tried and sentenced for life in the Westminister penitentiary, British Columbia.

After his escape and visit to Europe, he returned to mining in America.

“I came to a small Oregon town on the eve of Thanksgiving.” He said, “with a large amount of dust. I stepped into a store, and bought a cigar. A nicely dressed man came in and began ordering a large amount of groceries. My curiosity was aroused, and I inquired for whom he was buying so many eatables. He stated that he was a member of the relief committee of his town, buying groceries for a dinner to the places poor for Thanksgiving. I pulled out my bag of dust, and scraping a small amount into a tobacco sack, handed the remainder over to the groceryman, and said: “Here, pardner, take this, and give the poor people all it’ll buy.”

That broke Miner and he went into an adjoining state, and held up a stage coach. Shortly thereafter he spent every cent he had in trying to educate two young struggling hopefuls whom he met on his travels.

A Clerk in Philadelphia

Upon arriving in Pennsylvania in 1909, he got a job with a lumber concern in Philadelphia in the electrical department, and made good. He stayed with them until the spring of 1910, when he met a nice young man named Hunter, to whom he took a decided fancy. They roomed together until one day, the feverish desire for excitement was too much for Miner, and he persuaded Hunter to go with him on the road. They left for Georgia, worked at sawmills, and picked up odd jobs here and there, walking and hobbing, part of the time, and when a small stake was accumulated, taking to the cushions, until they got to Virginia, where they met a young fellow named Hanford, to whom they outlined their plans. Hanford left his parents’ threshold and joined the party.

The Culminating Robbery

They then came to Lula, Ga., where they secured employment with a sawmill, with which they worked for about two months, leaving one night about dusk, to be seen nor more for some time. The following morning, about 4 o’clock, authorities at Lula were notified of a daring robbery committed upon the express car of the Southwestern Limited, of the Southern railway; the big portable safe having been looted and a large amount taken. The three employees of the sawmill did not return for work that morning.

But no one suspected that the notorious Bill Miner was at his old game. The work of blowing the safe appeared to be crude, and suspicion was directed to local men, until a man about 70 years of age, was caught by two mountaineers near Gainesville, as a suspect.

Recognized Old Bill Miner.

He was brought to town, where a large party of railroad and express officials were awaiting arrests, and the prisoner was declared by a Pinkerton detective to be “Old Bill” Miner. The suspect kept a closed mouth and would reveal nothing, but the two other men captured confessed, and implicated Miner as being the leader. In town Miner was the target for thousands

of curious eyes, anxious to get a glimpse of the first bandit who ever held up a train in Georgia. He was tried and sentenced to twenty years in the penitentiary, mainly on the evidence of his companions in crime.

During his long period of criminal operation Miner has never been known to rob the poor and needy, confining his plundering to express companies and railroads. He declares he has educated over twenty-five boys and girls, and set on their feet many men who needed a helping hand. He possesses a splendid self-acquired education; a wonderful faculty for studying human natures; and has a tongue, wit and brain second to none. Although exceedingly wild from the age of sixteen, he never relaxed his attentions to religion, and he is as well versed on the Bible as many preachers. Apparently he has a code of morals all his own.

Pinkerton Says He'll Escape.

Miner is held in the condemned cell of the county jail, which is safer than any other section of the prison. He seems comfortably situated and never grumbles.

He is polite and courteous to every visitor that comes and never fails to hold up his end of the conversation. His chances of escape, so far as the building is concerned are very good, and a heavy guard is kept near his cell throughout the night. William Pinkerton, of Pinkerton's national detective agency, stated, while here on a trip for the specific purpose of seeing Miner, that the prisoner would never stay in a road camp, and that unless he died, Miner would not be in a Georgia jail for one year – and he is more than likely right.

Miner gets much sympathy on account of his fair and square ways and his old age. Every day he receives dainties and food from some of the best ladies in the town, many of them bringing it themselves, anxious to visit him at every possible chance. When his trial occurred before a special term of Hall county superior court, the entire enclosure around the bar was filled with ladies. He said nothing during the proceedings and the only words he uttered came after the sentence had been passed, when he arose and thanked the judge saying:

“Thanks, judge; robbery is robbery, and here's another case.”

He then turned to a large group of women and said that there was only one law in his case, and it was laid down by the ten commandments. He also said that whether or not he had robbed the Southern Express company, the courts had endeavored to rob him of what remained of his life, “but another guess was coming their way,” he remarked, with a shy wink.

Freak of Fortune

It will be an odd prank of fate, if Bill Miner, the most famous of American train robbers, should end his days in a remote Georgia prison, whose walls seldom hold anything more desperate than a poor unoffending revenue prisoner, taken from the mountains for earning his livelihood in the barren hills by manufacturing whiskey.

But it is a two-to-one shot that he will be heard from again, when his token of remembrance will be a hole in the wall of the Georgia prison, left as a memento of his historic visit.” The Calgary Herald, March 21, 1911

“After his 1911 capture and conviction for train robbery in Georgia, Bill Miner became a great favorite of the Georgia press. Several newspapers repeatedly interviewed him and then flattered him with their press releases. As the old bandit openly granted more interviews and talked freely to reporters, he inadvertently allowed glimpses into his character. The rapport that developed between the outlaw and the Georgia press afforded rare insights into Bill Miner the bandit and Bill Miner the man.” <http://www.jcs-group.com/oldwest/outlaws/miner.htm>

“Politically, Miner claimed he was a socialist, but when he had money, he thoroughly enjoyed living a fashionable life in high society, dressing in the latest style, and spending his money freely. Intellectually, he had a keen mind, and even though he had no formal schooling he was highly literate and had a good command of speech. This he owed to his mother, a schoolteacher who seems to have ensured that he received a decent education.” <http://www.jcs-group.com/oldwest/outlaws/miner.html>

“Throughout Miner's life he pursued women and engaged in numerous love affairs. He even became engaged to a socially prominent young woman in Michigan in 1880. Much mystery surrounds Miner's life as a result of his habitual lying and misleading statements. Over the years he used at least seven aliases and could spin a tale so convincing that to this day many are accepted as fact. Fanciful tales were as much a part of Bill Miner as was his ability to influence everyone around him. As he grew older the tales seemed to become truth to him. Bill Miner, like the people who extolled and idolized him, came to believe the legend he created.” <http://www.jcs-group.com/oldwest/outlaws/miner.html>

During his last “... Miner nearly drowned when a small boat the fugitives had stolen capsized. Miner ingested a large quantity of fetid swamp water and came down with a severe case of gastritis. He battled the affliction for more than a year before succumbing on Tuesday, September 2, 1913. He was buried in an unmarked grave at Memory Hill Cemetery in Milledgeville on September 8, 1913.

After the “wizened sixty-six-year-old relic of a man died, one of the largest newspapers in the Southeast ran a four-column photograph and two stories extolling him, all on the front page. One of these articles described him as "a kindly, lovable old man, whose thoughts were humorous, whose manner was that of one who was a friend to all humankind ... the most courtly, the most kindly spoken, the most venerable man ... one whom they all regard with affection and something of esteem." These words do not portray a great philanthropist, a well-known religious leader, or even a benevolent old southern statesman, but rather a stagecoach bandit and train robber, a criminal who from the age of eighteen had spent more than thirty-seven years behind bars. The words describe Old Bill Miner.” <http://www.jcs-group.com/oldwest/outlaws/miner.html>

“Bill Miner ... has been largely neglected by historians and writers of Western Americana. This is strange: Miner, during a criminal career spanning some fifty years, achieved notoriety throughout the western United States, as well as in Canada and the Deep South. No other Old West bandit accumulated such a lengthy and wide-ranging record. Even Jesse James's career lasted only one-third as long as Bill Miner's. Bill Miner robbed more stagecoaches and only one less train than did the James-Younger band.” <http://www.jcs-group.com/oldwest/outlaws/miner.html>

It is surprising that no full-length biography of Bill Miner has yet appeared. Countless books have been published about other bandits and bad men of the Old West, but comparatively little has been written about Bill Miner. Even after the release of the charming 1983 film *The Grey Fox* (in which he was played by Richard Farnsworth) which dramatized Miner's exploits as an aging train robber during the early years of this century and made him known to the modern public, no factual studies have appeared, with the exception of a chapter on Miner's Colorado career in *Bandit Years: A Gathering Of Wolves* (1987) by Mark Dugan and a chapter on his California exploits in *Badge and Buckshot: Lawlessness in Old California* (1988) by John Boessenecker.

But they eventually wrote a book about him.

A number of books about Miner or that have chapters on him such as "Interred With Their Bones: Bill Miner in Canada 1903-1907", by Peter Grauer and *Outlaw Tales of Washington* by Elizabeth Gibson, and *Old Bill Miner: Last of the Famous Western Bandits* by Frank W. Anderson are now out there.

His principal biography is *The Grey Fox: The True Story of Bill Miner, Last of the Old Time Bandits*, by Mark Dugan and John Boessenecker (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992).

Miner's time in British Columbia propelled his celebrity there in many ways since. B.C. restaurant chain, the Keg Steakhouse & Bar, have named drinks and their famous Billy Miner Pie after the train robber. Their early decor also showed many photos of Miner.

A mural depicting Miner's robbery near Monte Creek has been painted on the exterior south wall of Cactus Jacks Saloon & Dance Hall located in the building at the corner of 5th Avenue & Lansdowne Street in Kamloops, British Columbia.

Maple Ridge, British Columbia features the Billy Miner Pub which is located in historic Port Haney on the bank of the Fraser River. The pub is located in the original Bank of Montreal building built in the early 1900s.

Tin Whistle Brewing Co. a microbrewery from Penticton B.C. launched a Red Ale titled "Hands Up!" as a commemoration to Miner.

Some speculate that Miner left a hidden cache of loot in the forests south of Silverdale after the first robbery. Some believe he used these funds to fund his escape, while others surmise that there is still hidden loot to be found there.

Miner escaped in death as well. It was discovered several years ago his headstone was in the wrong location and name spelled wrong. A new headstone was put in the correct spot and spelled correctly. The old one was kept where it was.

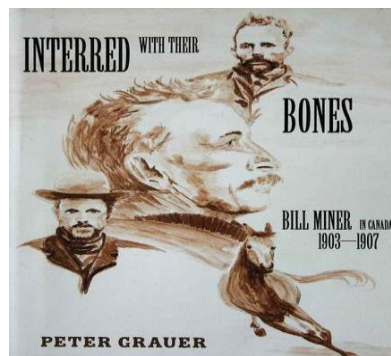
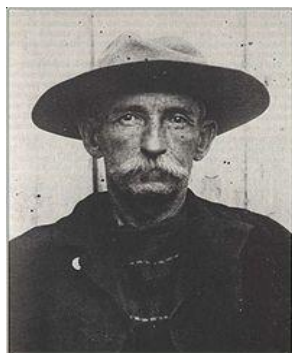
Mount Miner near Princeton, formerly Bald Mountain or Baldy, was renamed in Bill Miner's honor in response to a motion by the Princeton Board of Trade in 1952. Miner had lived on the ranch owned by Jack Budd, which was on the other side of this mountain from Princeton, while planning the robbery at Duck's. "Mount Miner" BC Geographical Names.



Bill Miner's gravestone, Memorial Hill Cemetery, Milledgeville, Georgia
Photo by Rob Leverett, Courtesy Find A Grave Memorial (Image No. 7968336)

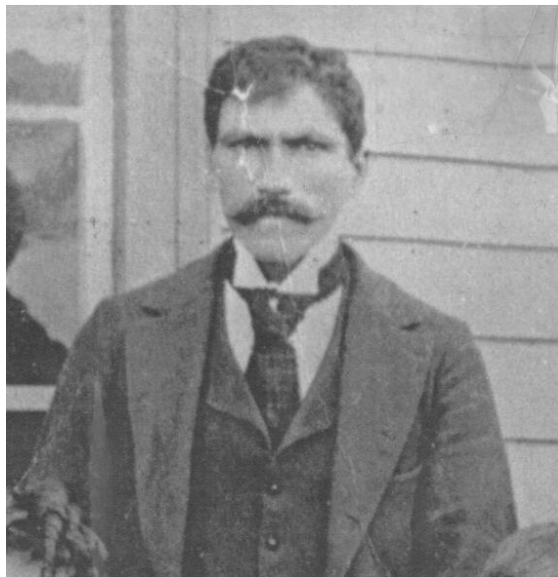
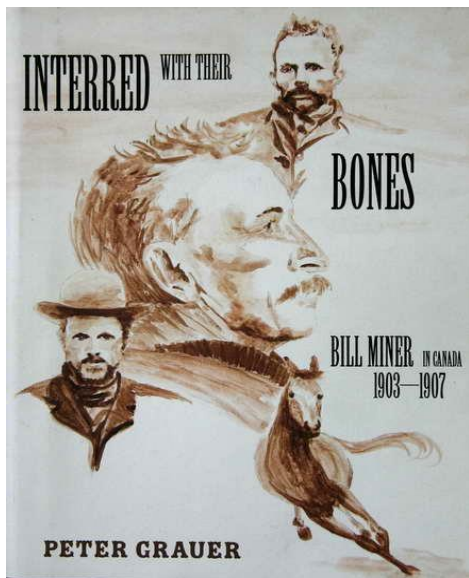
In February 1964, local historian James C. Bonner had a headstone placed on Bill Miner's grave. The engraving reads "Bill Miner -- The Last of the Famous Western Bandits, Born 1843, Died in the Milledgeville State Prison Sept. 2, 1914." The dates of birth and death were wrong, but it was a nice sentiment and underscored Miner's propensity to lie about his history."

http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?displaypage=output.cfm&file_id=10285





Bill Miner (1846-1913), San Quentin State Penitentiary, ca. 1881
Courtesy California State Archives



The author Peter Grauer passed away earlier this year, but his website is still maintained by his family. I think that his wife is planning to get his second book published this fall, and likely is very familiar with his research, so she might be a good resource for discovering more about the Montana connection to Bill Miner. And the Spokane connections, which I am most interested in.

Here is a link to that website: <http://www.billminer.ca/journal.htm>



ILLUSTRATED BY BERT SANDERSON

Bill Miner—last of the train robbers

By P. W. LUCE
Well-known Vancouver writer and humorist

There have been a newspaper man for 50 years and have handed my share of big stories. The biggest of all was the escape of Bill Miner from the New Westminster Penitentiary. It made the front page all over the continent, and the background is full of loose ends, strange rumors, and the stubborn silence of high authority.

Bill Miner was the last of the notorious train robbers. He was a lovable scoundrel who posed as a grown-up Boy Scout. He never robbed a man, and never fired a shot except in self-defence. He claimed that he robbed the

rich to help the poor, and thought of himself as the Robin Hood of the nineteenth century. Miner stopped his first stage-coach in Texas before he was 17. For the next few years he was a horse thief and cattle rustler in the southern states, with an occasional stage hold-up by way of variety. He was often caught and convicted, but usually escaped from jail.

\$10,000 price for his capture

BILL Miner was nearly 60 when his sentence expired.

Three months later he started a life sentence in the Oregon penitentiary for a train hold-up, but he escaped within two years, pulled off a few small jobs, made a big haul on an Oregon train, and then holed up at Haney, 26 miles east of Vancouver, with a price of \$10,000 on his head. He busied himself mending the shoes of poor children, but wouldn't do any cobbling for those able to pay.

Although apparently an exemplary character, Miner hadn't reformed. With two companions, he held up the CPR train west of Mission on September 19, 1904, and grabbed a package of Cariboo gold dust worth \$7,000 from the express car. They had expected to get their hands on a \$3,000 gold shipment from the Cariboo Consolidated, but this had been delayed.

Accomplice got \$10 as his share

HE who had been waiting at Campbell Creek with three horses allowed two of those to stray on the night of the hold-up. He got a blistering tongue lashing for his carelessness, and \$10 as his share of the spoils.

Rewards totaling \$11,500 were

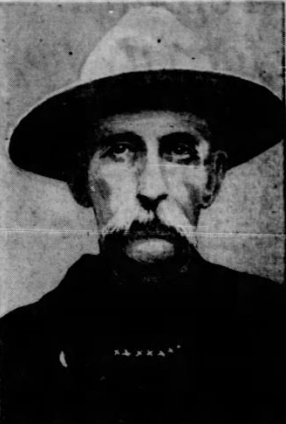
Train robbery was disastrous

IN the fall of 1905, Miner and four others rustled 30 head of horses near Spokane, and sold them in Canada. He lived the life of Riley in the little town of Hedley for a few months while planning a train hold-up which was expected to enrich his gang by \$35,000, but which turned out to be disastrous.



W. P. LUCE
... he was there

The story of a lovable scoundrel



"BILL" MINER
... last of a breed

His escape was long thought out

BILL Miner was an exemplary prisoner and a cunning impostor. He became deeply religious and had books on theology sent to him by outside friends. It is said some of these books were especially prepared, with bills of large denomination in the bindings, and that these were distributed by Bill where they would do him most good. Money is said to have also come to him in cakes and other delicacies.

After being in the penitentiary about a year, Miner developed a scalp rash which spread to his face. The doctor did not suspect the wily bandit was aggravating this by rubbing dirt into his skin, and allowed him to let his hair go uncropped and his mustache to grow, details which proved mighty useful when Miner made his getaway, but of which the public knew nothing till long after.

Morale was low on prison staff

AT that period the New Westminster Penitentiary was understaffed. The guards were dissatisfied with their low pay. The warden, Col. Whyte, was dying. His deputy, D. D. Bourke, was in bed with influenza. Discipline was at a deplorably low ebb.

On the afternoon of Aug. 8, 1907, Bill Miner was one of a gang of 21 in the brickyards. One of the convicts engaged the attention of the guard for five minutes, and Miner scuttled to a 15-foot fence, one of two that surrounded the penitentiary. A deep hole had been dug under the inner fence and covered with a pile of rubbish, obviously by some inside confederate.

Miner slipped through the hole and ran to the gate of the outer fence, where the lock and been broken. Once past this, he was in open country. It had been Miner's intention to make a lone get-away, but three other convicts saw him disappear down the hole and followed him. They were A. F. McCluskey and W. J. Woods, who were never caught, and J. W. Clark, an ex-Nanaimo policeman serving a five-year term for theft, who was arrested in Washington a few years later and brought back to finish his sentence. According to him, the four men separated shortly after escaping.

First reporter to be admitted

THERE is some question as to what time the convicts got away, but the New Westminster city police got to know of it about a o'clock, and everybody else knew of it inside half an hour. I was the first reporter to be admitted inside the penitentiary grounds, largely through the good offices of the New Westminster chief of police, to whose sides I



"SHORTY" DUNN
... he got life



LEWIS COLQUHOUN
... first-time offender

to be safely locked up and routine precautions taken, a considerable time elapsed before any attempt was made to chase after the fugitives.

By the time the search was launched, all traces had disappeared.

Stayed in Haney for two days

LONG afterwards, Bill Miner said he had rode his way alone to his old cabin near Haney, stayed there two days, and then headed for the American border. He had breakfast at the home of George des Roches on Nicomen Island two days after he escaped, and that was the last heard of him for some years.

When he was over 70 he held up a train in Georgia, single handed, and the lock and been broken. He got very little booty, and was caught when asleep in a box car, cold, hungry and worn out.

When given a life sentence the picturesque old bandit asked if he couldn't be sent to British Columbia, to finish his term there. "I never was so well treated in my life, and I've been in a lot of prisons," he told the judge. Three years later, in 1912, Bill Miner died in the penitentiary hospital. Nobody knows how many thousands he had stolen or how many hold-ups he had staged, but more than half of his long life was spent in jail. He craved excitement and he certainly got lots of it. The official investigation into the Bill Miner escape from the penitentiary was a very hush-hush affair, and did nothing to quiet the rumors that influential persons had a hand in it. No reward was offered for his recapture, though a year earlier there had been a price of \$11,500 on his head. Anyway, it was a whale of a story.

FAMOUS FABLES



Promises:

British Prime Minister David Lloyd George was above all a practical politician. Shortly after the armistice of World War I, he called an election. During the campaign, he made a number of extravagant promises to the voters. He was returned to office by a narrow margin.

When the returns were in, one of his colleagues remarked: "It's lucky for you the election was held at this time. Had you waited a few months more the result might have been different." "I don't think so," said Lloyd George, "but I would have had to promise more."

Typed:

Alfred Hitchcock, director of movie thrillers, was asked why he made only mystery pictures. "It's what the public has come to expect of me," replied Hitchcock ruefully. "I once considered directing a series of fairy tales, but I gave up the idea. If I were to do 'Cinderella,' the audience would be looking for a body in the coach."



Alfred Hitchcock

Reminder:

Shortly after he arrived in the United States as a young man, British author P. G. Wodehouse got an appointment to see a well-known theatrical producer. The latter was a powerful and dictatorial figure, who was feared the length and breadth of Broadway. The night before, a friend took Wodehouse aside. "Remember, when you see him tomorrow," warned the friend, "treat him with kid gloves; He not only looks like Napoleon and acts like Napoleon, he thinks he IS Napoleon." "Do you suppose," mused Wodehouse, "he would take offence if I chided him about Moscow?"



P. G. Wodehouse

MAMA USUALLY FORECASTS

PRISON ESCAPEES SEEN ON LULU ISLAND

FAMOUS ROBBER MAY BE ON FISHING BOAT NEARBY

August 14, 1907

Bill Miner, sentenced to life imprisonment for the robbery of the CPR westbound express on May 8th, 1906, has escaped with three companions.

Two of these were seen on Lulu Island and Bill Miner may be in the vicinity.

A mad man-hunt, in which the huntsmen are more than 35 penitentiary guards armed with sharp shooting rifles or revolvers, and the prey a grizzled train robber whose attempt to lead a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde existence led him to the penitentiary, is the unusual situation existing in this section, and in which every man, woman and child is interested.

It is the hunt for Bill Miner, the notorious desperado and convicted train robber who, after having acknowledged that he had resigned himself to life in prison with its attendant good treatment for good conduct, cheated the confidants by planning and carrying out successfully one of the boldest coups ever attempted in the west.

THE ESCAPE

Miner and three fellow convicts escaped from the New Westminster penitentiary brick yard at four o'clock Friday afternoon.

Bill Miner, together with three convicts, J. W. Clarke, W. J. Woods and A. F. McClosky, was working in the penitentiary brick yard.

They excavated a hole under the wall near the brick smoke-stack and escaped into another field of the prison grounds.

Although the yard is surrounded by high fencing, the fugitives managed to scale this by means of a ladder, and got clear away into the surrounding brush.

Miner had a hatchet with him and this was utilized to break the bolts imprisoning a ladder outside the first wall.

By means of this ladder it was an easy matter to scale the second wall.

After doing this they crouched and wended their way as best they could, but not at slow stages by any means, and were noticed by a boy named Sclater, who was swimming in the brook.

They were seen a short time later on Blen Bridge back of the reserve at Sixth Avenue by Mrs. Cooksey.

A thorough investigation was made early Saturday morning and revealed the fact that one man -- it may have been one of the convicts, but it was more probably an outsider -- worked like a Trojan outside the prison to complete the excavation that would permit the men to get under the wall.

Pick marks were noticed on the heavy beams and these were undoubtedly caused by the worker being too desirous to keep close to the wall.

That Bill Miner used the three men who got away with him merely as catspaws is attested to by the fact that he left them after travelling less than a mile from the penitentiary wall from which they made their getaway.

After going towards Gunn's milk ranch on the Throne Road, the men separated, and the tracks plainly indicate that Miner wended his way on alone.

CHASE BY BLOOD HOUND

Saturday night was spent with penitentiary guards and the blood hound from Vancouver, trailing through thick brush along the track in the ravine, and down steep hills in which a false step would have meant a plunge to death.

The hound had been primed for the ordeal. He was cared for and caressed as tenderly yesterday afternoon as a newborn babe, and feasted on only the choicest of raw meat.

Everything was done to get him in right shape and he was feeling fine according to those who had him in charge.

He led the party a merry chase until away late into the night the guards and newspapermen alike were of the opinion after the whole thing was over that Miner and his companions, if they followed the trail and pace set by the bloodhound, were going some.

Some of the officers who had been on the hunt were well-nigh exhausted.

The atmosphere was extremely damp and it was dark as a pitchfork, so that many temporary creeks about the route were invaded.

It was a sorry-looking bunch that wended its way to the penitentiary headquarters shortly after 4 that morning and several, it was learned later, will be laid up with temporary colds.

CONVICTS SEEN ON LULU ISLAND MONDAY

A report was received at the penitentiary Monday in connection with the escaped convicts that two men wearing prison shoes and trousers but with no coats, stopped at the home of Mr. J. McKenzie at Woodward's Slough on Lulu Island last night about six o'clock and asked for something to eat.

The inmates of the house were afraid of them and gave them a hearty meal, after which the supposed convicts hastily departed.

From the descriptions given the men who had the meal are supposed to be Clarke and Woods.

BILL MINER SEEN AT MISSION

Bill Miner was seen at noon Monday. He had dinner at the house of a well known rancher, George Deroche, who lives near the main line of the CPR between Mission Junction and Harrison River station.

Mr. Deroche is certain, by pictures of the train robber in a Vancouver daily newspaper, that on Monday afternoon he entertained Bill Miner.

The old man, tired and foot-sore, applied at his house for food.

He said he worked for a logging camp and was looking for a stray horse. He ate ravenously and disposed of the following at one sitting: one loaf of bread, three pounds of meat, five cups of coffee, one quart of strawberry preserves.

If this man was Bill Miner he has probably escaped to the mountains south of Chilliwack.

PUBLIC SYMPATHY GREAT

Not the least remarkable feature of the escape is the sympathy being extended to the aged robber leader by the general public.

Not only is this true in Van-

couver and New Westminster, but it is particularly the fact in the Similkameen and Nicola districts, where Miner bought land and horse traded back and forth for years between the occasions of his bold ups of the finest trains of unfriendly railway companies.

"Not only would nine-tenths of the Nicola and Similkameen not betray Miner were he there," said a Vancouver man who arrived from Spences Bridge this morning, "but they are proud of the fact that there is a wide open welcome for good at any time and under all circumstances, with what amounts to practical protection from the police."

"The people up there rejoice that he got away and hope that he will succeed in eluding the police. And this is true of the businessmen of the district as well as well-to-do ranchers and farmers."

WHERE IS BILL MINER?

In the meantime, the "man-hunt" for Miner and his recent companions is being regarded as pretty much of a farce.

Parties of twos and threes have searched more or less carefully the woods between Westminster and Vancouver, but a dozen Bill Miners might have been in hiding there all the time.

And while a patrol of the banks of the Fraser has been made nightly by the penitentiary guards, assisted by the provincial police, it would be the easiest matter in the world for Miner or the others to get across in one of the scores of fishing boats working on the river.

Even now it is quite possible that Bill, in the disguise of a Japanese fisherman, may be fishing for the festive and very scarce sockeye out in the gulf.

This is possible, but not probable, for up to date, Bill has never shown any particular inclination to hard labor. It is hoped that this remark will not offend any of his numerous friends in the upper country.

Aside from this proposition, there is the likelihood that Bill Miner has already got away across the international boundary line into his old stamping ground amongst the mountains northeast of Bellingham.

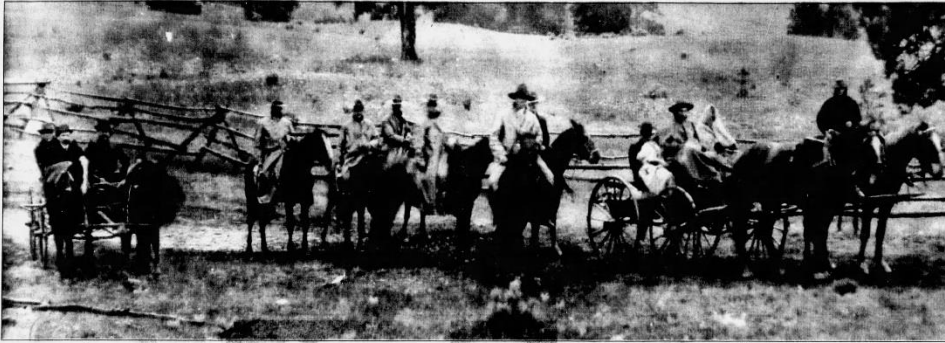
There he knows every foot of the ground like the good hunter he is and with plenty of assistance and lots of money would be practically secure.

The Seattle papers yesterday had him located in that city for a striped coat, which looked something like a prison garment, and, therefore, might have been a cast-off by Miner had been found in a railroad yard.

But the theory that Bill is being protected by friends in the vicinity of Vancouver or New Westminster is the favored inclination of the wise ones.

He is credited with having had \$15,000 or \$20,000 cached away for just such an emergency as overtook him when he was given a clean shave and told to stay in one place for the rest of his life.

One guess is just as good as another when it comes to figuring out how the details of assistance for him are being carried out at the present time.



A train robber thought to be Bill Miner and his accomplices in custody after their arrest near Kamloops one hundred years ago. The bandit insisted he was George Edwards of Princeton.

WEEKEND
EXTRA



JOHN MACKIE
VANCOUVER SEN

His real name was Ezra Allen Miner. He was born in 1846 in Vevay Township, Ingham County, Michigan (near Lansing). By the age of 10 or 11 his father had died and his mother took him to California. That's where he was raised and got his lawless ways.

AUTHOR
PETER GRAUER
On the early life of Bill Miner



TRACKING THE NOTORIOUS MINER

HISTORY | The infamous Bill Miner, who pulled off Canada's biggest train robbery, was a charming sociopath who remains highly elusive, even in death

One hundred years ago, a 60-year-old remnant of the American Wild West pulled off Canada's most infamous train robbery near Kamloops.

Bill Miner was quickly apprehended, convicted and sentenced to life in prison, all within three weeks of the robbery. But a century later, the legend remains strong, having inspired several books and the movie *The Grey Fox*.

Now a private Bill Miner archive has surfaced, with a Canadian Pacific Railway official's diary documenting Miner's robbery, chase and arrest — and 11 original photographs shot when the outlaw and his cohorts were taken back to Kamloops for trial.

One of the photos is the iconic image of the mustachioed Miner in his broad-brimmed cowboy hat, staring into the camera. But there is another virtually unknown shot of Miner with his hat off, hair tousled, his pale forehead in sharp contrast to his tanned face.

Looking at the photo, it's hard to believe Miner was a notorious outlaw who spent most of his adult life in prison. Frankly, he looks like an amiable old farmer. But that was part of Miner's allure.

Bill Miner has gone down in history as a "gentleman bandit" who may have robbed trains, but never resorted to violence. Many people even sympathized with him because they hated the Canadian Pacific Railway.

"He was a charming rogue," states Peter Grauer, who has just self-published a new book, *Interred With Their Bones, Bill Miner In Canada, 1903 to 1907*.

"But underneath it all is something a little more sinister." Grauer labels Miner a "sociopath" who used his charm to sway people to do his bidding.

"He had a courtly manner," said Grauer.

"That's a symptom of a sociopath. People are attracted to them because they are charming. They



Legendary train robber Bill Miner in custody after being caught in the bush near Kamloops 100 years ago. This is one of four photos of Miner taken by professional photographer Mary Spencer of Kamloops.

can lie easily, and the fruits of their labour, which are obtained illegally, they're very generous with. They're hail-fellows-well-met."

Before we go any further, we should note that the man arrested for the May 8, 1906 train robbery at Ducks (now Monte Creek, east of Kamloops) never admitted he was Bill Miner, the noted American stagecoach robber. He always insisted he was George Edwards of Princeton, even though the warden

says he was born in Bowling Green, Ky., in 1847 and that his real surname was McDonald. One book even claims he was gay.

Grauer spent six years trying to find the truth.

"His real name was Ezra Allen Miner," says Grauer. "He was born in 1846 in Vevay Township, Ingham County, Michigan (near Lansing). By the age of 10 or 11 his father had died and his mother took him to California. That's where he was raised and got his lawless ways. He got a taste of the good life in the fandango parlours in San Francisco. A fandango is a Mexican siesta-type celebration that was used as a euphemism for a bordello."

Miner got involved in criminal activities as a teenager, starting out rustling horses, before graduating to robbing stagecoaches.

But he kept getting caught, and wound up serving 33 years in U.S. prisons in the late 1800s. When he emerged from San Quentin in 1901 he was 55, and hopelessly out of step with a changed world.

Stagecoaches were passé, so he started robbing trains.

"He attempted to rob his first one in the States but it didn't go off well," said Grauer.

"The one he botched in 1903 was in Corbett, Oregon. Some of [the robbers] were wounded and captured, but he managed to get away."

Miner vamoosed to Canada, where he masterminded a train robbery at Silverdale, near Mission, on Sept. 10, 1904. (It is widely reported to be Canada's first train robbery, but Grauer says there was actually an earlier one in Ontario.)

"He got close to \$7,000 in cash and gold," said Grauer.

"Then he pulled off another one in the States north of Seattle [in 1905]. It is rumoured that he got about \$35,000 there."



WEEKEND EXTRA
CONTINUES ON PAGE C11

COVER

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

READER FEEDBACK | We hope you enjoyed the sixth instalment of Weekend Review. As you have seen we have made a few tweaks to the package in response to your input. We encourage you to e-mail us with your thoughts at weekendreview@png.canwest.com.



These three photos taken by Mary Spencer show Bill Miner in custody after being caught in the bush near Kamloops 100 years ago. The photos were part of the private archive of Canadian Pacific Railway superintendent Thomas Kilpatrick that is now owned by Macleod's Books proprietor Don Stewart.

OUTLAW FREE ONLY 10 YEARS

WEEKEND EXTRA FROM C1

That was a lot of money at a time when a policeman's annual salary was \$850. Miner lived the high life for awhile, throwing extravagant parties in Princeton and Kelley. But by May of 1906, he was ready to strike again.

The Ducks robbery occurred at 11:30 p.m., May 8. Miner and two accomplices, Shorty Dunn and Lewis Colquhoun, were heavily armed and accosted the engineer and brakeman. After taking control of the CPR Imperial Limited, they unhitched the engine and first car from the back of the train and set to work rifling through the registered mail, where they hoped to find cash and bonds.

Unfortunately, they uncoupled the wrong car. "When they cut the train off they didn't realize that the next car was a full express car," said Grauer.

"It probably had two gold bars from the Nickel Plate Mine in Hedley aboard, probably worth about \$80,000 in those days. So they pull away with the engine and the combination mail and express car rife through it, and can't find anything — not realizing that in the pigeonholes of the registered mail compartment is about \$35,000 in cash and individual envelopes."

Miner and company only managed to escape with \$5.

They then set off on foot through the bush, having abandoned their horses in an attempt to throw any pones off their trail.

Diary details interviews

This is where the new archive comes in. It was assembled by Canadian Pacific Railway superintendent Thomas Kilpatrick, who was part of the search for the bandits.

One of the key pieces of the archive is a small diary with a CPR logo where Kilpatrick has written information in pencil on the robbery.

"In the back of his diary on the memorandum pages you have all this information from the people he's questioning," says Don Stewart of Macleod's Books, who purchased Kilpatrick's archive.

"You get descriptions of which direction they went, the builds of the people, their accents, hair colour, horse colour, where they were spotted."

With the help of native trackers, the police caught up to the bandits on May 14. Shorty Dunn had a German Luger pistol on him, and got in a brief but furious gunfight with the police. The gunfight ended when Dunn was shot in the leg and surrendered.

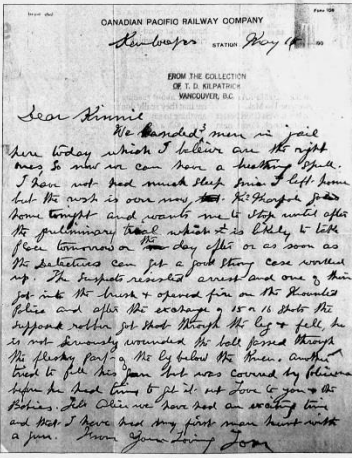
Kilpatrick recorded his version of events in a handwritten letter to his wife.

"One of them got into the bush and opened fire on the mounted police," he wrote. "After 15 or so shots the robber got shot through the leg and fell. He is not very seriously injured, the ball passed through the fleshy part of the leg below the knee. Another tried to pull his gun but was covered by a policeman before he had time to get it out."

"Bill Alice we have had an exciting time, and that I have had my first manhunt with a gun. Your loving husband, Tom."

Word quickly spread that the robbers had been caught, and the Vancouver *July Province* newspaper hired the only professional photographer in Kamloops to record their arrival from the bush. (The Vancouver Sun didn't exist until 1912.)

The photographer's name is clearly stamped



A 1906 letter (top) by Canadian Pacific Railway superintendent Thomas Kilpatrick details the great train robbery at Ducks near Kamloops on May 8, 1906 by Bill Miner, Shorty Dunn (above left) and Lewis Colquhoun (right). The letter is from Kilpatrick to his wife. It is part of a collection that is now owned by Macleod's Books proprietor Don Stewart.

on the front of the prints: Miss M Spencer, Kamloops, B.C. Mary Spencer was one of the few professional female photographers in Canada; in fact, she's identified as a "he" in newspaper stories, presumably because the editors back in Vancouver couldn't believe a woman would have a job like that.

Spencer took 12 photos, of which Stewart has 11. There are two group shots, four pictures of Miner, three of Colquhoun, and two of Dunn. Someone has written the names of the accused in pencil at the top of the photos.

The Miner photos make him look quite old, particularly a side view when he's leaning back in a chair.

By contrast Colquhoun looks quite youthful; he was only 28. But he looks somewhat hilly the Kid-like in his bowler hat and beard, gangling ripped from his days trying to outrun the law in the bush.

Shorty Dunn is a swarthy fellow, which is why some people think he was part native. He was photographed sitting on a chair, because he was wounded. Like Miner, one shot features him with his hat, one without.

Kilpatrick's diary shows he paid \$24 for prints. Stewart speculates he bought about a dozen sets of photos to be distributed around the CPR, although it is hard to say how many survive.

Second trial lasted a day

The first trial lasted three days, but ended in a hung jury because the foreman wouldn't convict Miner and his friends. A second trial lasted a day. On June 1, 1906 Miner and Dunn were sentenced to life, and Colquhoun got 25 years.

Colquhoun died in prison in 1911 from tuberculosis. Dunn was pardoned in 1915, and drowned in Ootsa Lake, west of Prince George, in 1927.

Miner didn't last long at the B.C. Pen: He broke out in broad daylight on Aug. 8, 1907, by digging a hole under a fence.

"That's the last we hear of Bill Miner in Canada," says Grauer.

"He had quite a checkered career after he left Canada. There's legend he was in Europe, legend that he was in Turkey in a sultan's harem, there's legends that he did a robbery in Colorado."

The one thing that seems almost certain is that Miner pulled off another train robbery on Feb. 11, 1911, at White Sulphur Springs, Georgia. He was quickly arrested and on March 11, 1911, he was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Though Miner was now past retirement age, he managed to escape from the prison in Milledgeville, Ga., on Oct. 18, 1911, and June 29, 1912. But old age finally caught up to him, and he died at Milledgeville on Sept. 2, 1913.

The man who died at Milledgeville never admitted he was Bill Miner — he testified his name was Bill Anderson. But a large crowd showed up to bury the legendary outlaw.

An obituary at the time said: "After his seventy years of adventure (Miner) lies sleeping quietly in one of the most picturesque cities of the dead in the state, surrounded by the graves of men who have played an important role in advancing humanity's cause as he did to bring terror to scores in the days when he ranged in the west."

Grauer says Miner only spent about 10 years of his adult life in Canadian prison. He was the last of his breed, a Wild West outlaw who outlived his time.

"He was alive when the first airplane flew," says Grauer. "It must have been quite a shock for him to go from the western frontier to the start of our modern age."

jackie@png.canwest.com

The Saga of Bill Miner

By Morton L. Bennet

Was there official collusion in Miner's escape from the New Westminster Penitentiary? Nearing seventy, the old man committs his last holdup and dies in jail.

CONCLUSION

THE PLANK WALL surrounding the prison was said to have been shattered by blows of a hatchet. Where would a notorious prisoner be able to secure such a dangerously efficient weapon? How would he find time to hack a hole through a plank wall while under the eyes of watchful guards? How did it happen that a ladder was placed in a convenient position? Is it reasonable to assume that Miner, smart, though a noted bungler, would take a chance on chopping his way through one wall without making some preparations to scale the outer wall, which he knew existed?

Rumors flew thick and fast. But the cold fact remained that Bill Miner was free again.

It was said that Bill Haney had gotten word in to him to be ready for a break. Haney could have thrown the hatchet over the wall and placed a ladder where it was found by the men as they dashed through the broken fence. But, could Miner and his gang have battered away at the fence without being heard or seen by the guards?

An employee of the Mental Hospital had an interesting yarn. He said that on the morning of August 8th, he had taken a walk out into the hospital grounds. It was about nine o'clock and he was reflecting upon the beauty of the day when he chanced to look across towards the prison. For a moment he doubted his sight. He looked again. Sure enough, dirt was flying from beneath the wall of the prison. Somebody was digging their way out!

The man rushed to his superior, a doctor, and told him what he had seen. The doctor, alarmed, ran to a telephone and called the prison officials. Then both went outside to see what they fondly hoped, was the scene of a lifetime; the capture of escaping convicts; shouting guards, blazing guns and everything.

The Calm Was Undisturbed

Instead, the calm serenity of the New Westminster morn was undisturbed by anything so sordid as that. No wild alarms were being sounded; in fact the place was quieter than ever. The puzzled doctor and his assistant went out to look the situation over. They saw the dirt flying faster than ever.

In a little while a man's head appeared above the ground.

"They'll get him now," the doctor said complacently. "They're been waiting for him to come out."

They, whoever they were, must have been on a long term wait. According to the observers, the man appeared, took a swift look around, then ran up the ravine towards Glen Street bridge.

Reports came in later that a small boy had seen Bill Miner running along Glen Street. A woman also said she had seen him on Sixth Street. He was seen in Seattle, Shanghai and Amarillo, all at the same time. Rumors followed rumors. None of them were right. Miner had simply vanished without a trace.

By now there were hints that his escape had been arranged. Just what was there to back this up?

The first, and most potent fact was, that Miner had gotten away from a supposedly escape-proof

prison under the eyes of three guards allegedly in possession of all their faculties. That truth couldn't be hinted, explained or even talked away.

And now we drag out that old chestnut, but fairly new at the time, stolen bonds; thousands of dollars worth of them. No bandit worthy of the name would think of going to prison without at least half a million dollars worth of bonds hidden away. Oh, yeah! Police records are filled with such cases. This was no exception. Miner was said to have had an extraordinary amount of non-negotiable bonds safely hidden. Since he was in jail they were no good to him, and since he knew where they were hidden they were no good to their owners. Just let him get out and he'd turn them over.

Some prominent looking men had called at the penitentiary. The non-garrulous Warden Bourke said no such callers had been there and if they had he didn't know who they talked to. But the prison grapevine supplied the deficiencies in the Warden's naive explanation. It was reported that the callers were United States secret service men who had trailed Miner's sister all over the United States. She was said to have the bonds. But she gave them a fast one in Kansas City and their only hope now lay with Bill Miner or Shorty Dunn.

But Mr. Dunn said he knew nothing about the bonds. He also said that he didn't recall any visitors. Miner too denied that he had talked with anybody. But, and there is no reason to doubt it, Shorty Dunn is said to have stood by and watched Bill Miner go over the wall to freedom. This would indicate that a deal had been made which didn't include Dunn.

The Time Of Escape

It is generally accepted that Miner made his escape at nine o'clock in the morning. Therefore, promptly at four o'clock in the afternoon, about thirty guards, armed with riot guns, rifles, and perhaps a field piece, charged around the wall, stopped at the alleged hole, and did their best to look surprised when they failed to see Bill Miner sitting there waiting for them. That



"He overpowered a guard."

much is official. They waited an hour or two longer to see if he would turn up and then went for bloodhounds. By nightfall the pursuit was well under way.

This swift action resulted in the officials discovering that Miner's trail was lost less than a mile from the prison. The next day, newspapers carried the full report of the escape, also Miner's picture.

Police Get Many Tips

Tips and reports poured in to the Provincial Police who were now charged with his capture. Handicapped by at least a 24-hour start, they could find no trace of their quarry. The nearest they were able to come to him was when a rancher who lived near the main line of the C.P.R. said he had fed a man who was undoubtedly the fugitive. He recognized a picture of Miner.

"He ate a loaf of bread, three pounds of meat, a quart of preserves and he drank five cups of coffee. He was powerful hungry," the rancher said.

That had taken place four days after the escape.

But wise heads said that Bill Miner was now well south of the international border. A most intensive search failed to produce the slightest clue to his whereabouts. So far as the Canadian officials were concerned he had vanished.

Though Miner was 65 years old at the time of his escape, and should have known better, he had no wish to give up his ill-starred life of crime. The next

news Canadians had of him came from Georgia.

It was February 18th, 1911, when the engineer of the Southern Railway's fast mail, brought his train to a stop near White Sulphur Springs. He was about to get down and see what the trouble was when five masked men, their faces covered with red bandana handkerchiefs, and waving huge six-guns, ordered him to stay where he was and keep quiet. The other members of the band robbed the express and mail cars.

The news of this robbery brought Pinkerton men on the run. Poses were formed and a swift pursuit was organized. Every available avenue of escape was closed and the posses began to close in.

The ring of armed men narrowed. The little village of Gainesville, Georgia, was in the centre of the ring. When the posses met, the bandits were trapped. The first man taken was none other than, A. E. (Bill) Miner.

This time, American justice was swift. Bill Miner was sentenced to serve twenty years in Milledgeville Prison. Once again the old timer's plans had backfired. As usual, the loot taken from the Southern train was small.

Miner Again Breaks Out

Miner, did not intend to spend the rest of his days in jail. Less than eight months after entering Milledgeville Prison, he overpowered a guard and made his escape.

The news of Miner's escape caused Canadian officials to smile. The public were openly

applauding this graceless old reprobate who had played ducks and drakes with his life. He was, if not successful as a bandit, at least colorful. With him on the loose there was never a dull moment. Even the Pinkerton men were inclined to like him despite the fact that he brought them nothing but long days and nights of trouble.

Bloodhounds were used to track Miner after his escape from the Milledgeville Prison. He made good his escape, however, and was not seen in that vicinity again.

But the sands of time were running low for this old timer. His hand had lost its snap and his eye its gleam. His legs were not so sound and he was suffering from various ailments, all due to age.

The Bandits Meet Death

Perhaps the realization of a mis-spent life had its effect upon him too. Butch Cassidy had been shot to death in a drunken brawl at Steamboat Springs, Colorado. Dave Haney, brother of Bill, had been smothered by a police bullet. . . . The entire Cassidy gang had been eliminated by bullets. Louis Colquhoun was not long for this world. He, ravaged by a wasting disease, was dying a slow death in a penitentiary cell. Of them all, he alone was free, but the police of two nations were hunting him. And he was old, so old. At a time when he should have had his grandchildren clambering on his knee he was fleeing from the law, a hunted thing.

He had been a hero; the public had applauded his exploits. They had, in the final analysis, been extremely foolhardy. He had spent seven decades, almost a half century in crime and he did not have a single cent to bless himself with. Here, surely was ample proof that crime did not pay. If he checked it off in dollars and cents he had not averaged one hundred dollars a year on his exploits. Lurid newspaper reports had credited him with stealing vast fortunes. The cold truth is that he had stolen less than thirty thousand dollars in cash. This had to be divided between his gang. No, Bill Miner's career had been anything but profitable.

Once More Miner Wrong

But he knew nothing else. And, he was beginning to realise, he didn't know much about crime either. In every instance when he had committed a major crime, including the first C.P.R. train robbery, he had been caught and sent to jail. However, he had to put what experience he did have to work in order to get some money. This time he would not be caught.

But once more Miner was wrong. He robbed once too often. The familiar gates of San Quentin loomed before him. He heard them clang shut behind. If they ever opened again for him it would only be to admit a Canadian official who would take him back to Canada to finish his life term there. It was a gloomy outlook.

At last there came a day when Bill Miner, hero of a hundred hard rides, was unable to keep

Please Turn to Page Fifteen



"Old Bill" Miner Dead. *The Manning Times*. Manning, South Carolina. 10 September 1913. p. 9. Retrieved 3 February 2016 – via [Newspapers.com](#).

"Story of Bill Miner". *Royal Canadian Mounted Police*. 2008-10-03. Retrieved 2009-04-01. ^[not in citation given]

"TRAIN ROBBERY IN CANADA". *Sacramento Daily Union* (Volume 48, Number 7379). 27 November 1874 – via [California Digital Newspaper Collection](#).

Grauer, Peter (2006). *Interred with their bones : Bill Miner in Canada, 1903-1907*. Kamloops, B.C.: *Partners in Pub*. ISBN 0973998016.

"Train Robbers Captured After Sharp Encounter With Police". *Vancouver Daily World*. 15 May 1906. pp. 1-2. Retrieved 5 February 2016 – via [Newspapers.com](#).

"Bill Miner Crosses The Great Divide". *The Atlanta Constitution*. 4 September 1913. p. 5. Retrieved 5 February 2016– via [Newspapers.com](#).

Kamloops Central Business Improvement Association. "Alley Art Gallery". *Downtown Kamloops Website*.

"Attractions - Museum and Surrounding Areas". *City of Maple Ridge*. Retrieved 24 January 2018.

"Maple Ridge Community Heritage Commission Inventory, Bank of Montreal Entry, page 19". *City of Maple Ridge Website*. Retrieved 24 January 2018.

"Canadian Historic Place Register, Entry for Bank of Montreal/Billy Miner Pub". *Historic Places*. Retrieved 24 January 2018.

Trainer, Antonson, and Antonson. "Whistle Posts West: Railway Tales from British Columbia, Alberta, and Yukon". *Google Books*. Retrieved 24 January 2018.

Similkameen, Rev. Goodfellow (Coalmont History site republication)