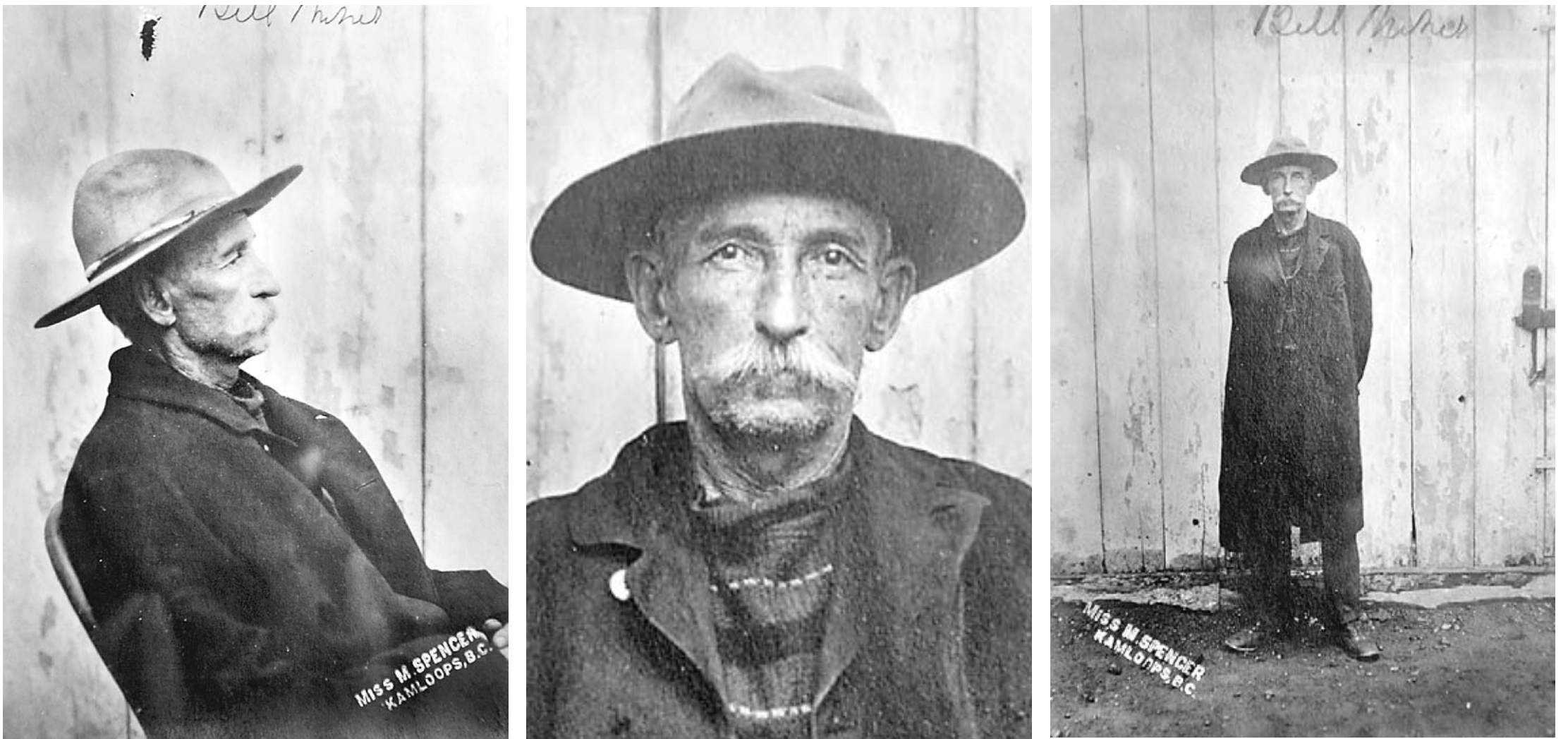


## COVER

## 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 Hedley. 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 unhooked 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, rifle 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 \$15.

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

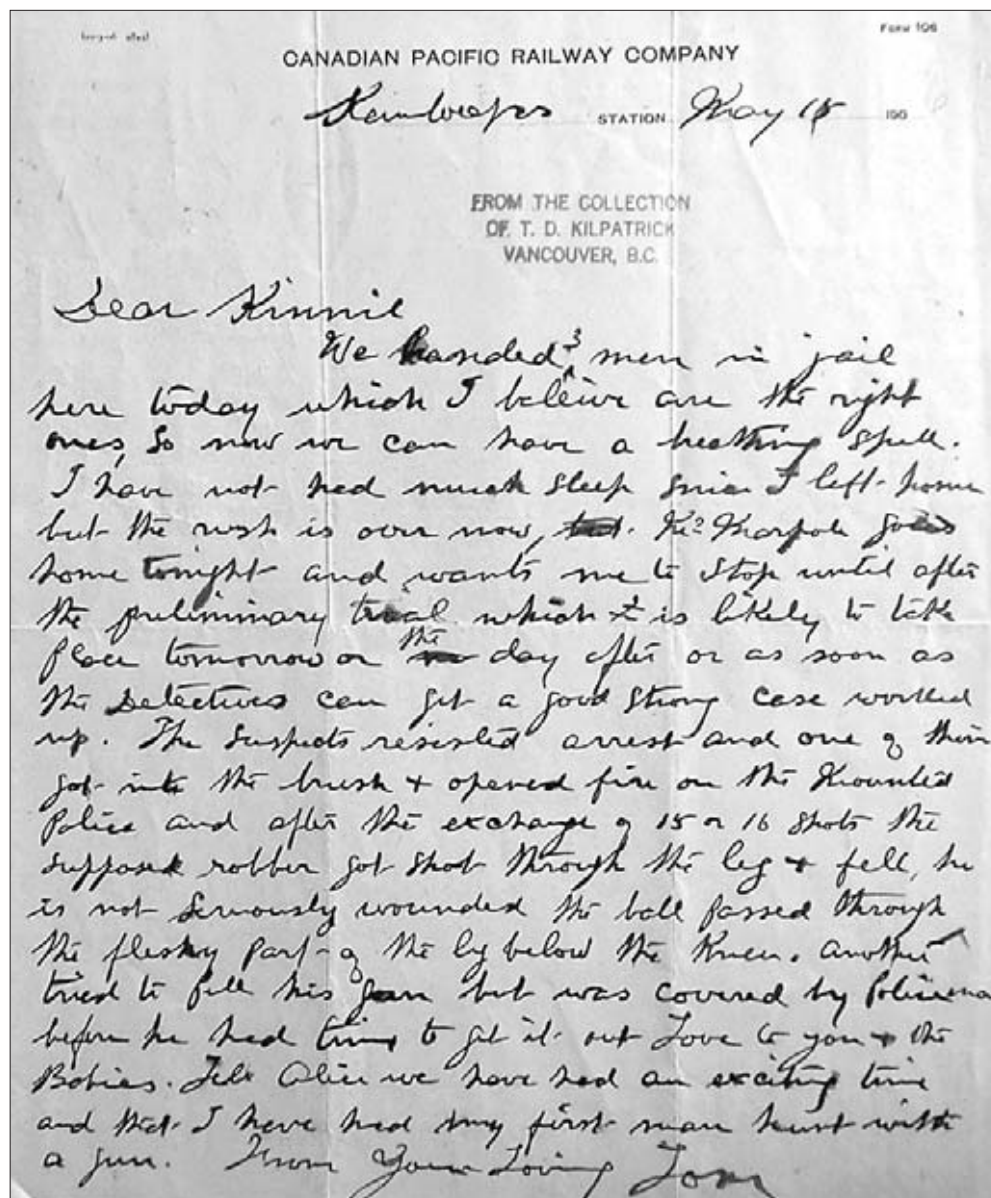
"One of them got into the bush and opened fire on the mounted police," he wrote.

"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.

"Tell 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 Daily 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 on the front of the prints: Miss M. Spencer, Kamloops, B.C. Mary Spencer was one of the



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.

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 Billy the Kid-like in his bowler hat and beard, pant-leg 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 insisted 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 as important a 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 outside 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."

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Peter Grauer's book, *Interred With Their Bones: Bill Miner in Canada*, can be purchased from his website, [www.billminer.ca](http://www.billminer.ca)