

# WANTED— DEAD OR ALIVE

Billy Miner's story is one full of stagecoach and train robberies, thirty-five years of prison and various prison breaks.

William A Miner was born in 1847 in the town of Bowling Green, Kentucky, USA. In 1863, aged 16, he had a short career as a pony express rider. He quickly decided it was more profitable to rob stagecoaches than to ride on them. At 17, in 1864, he and his gang held up the Wells Fargo Express Stagecoach. They got away with \$75 000 and Miner's life of crime began in earnest.

He was not always elusive. He was caught many times and in 1902 was released once more from prison. By that time trains had replaced stagecoaches.

Just a year later, Miner had done his first train hold-up in Oregon. It was not very successful. He moved to his brother's ranch in BC (British Columbia), Canada, where he met 'Shorty' Dunn, a local prospector. In September 1904, they made history—the first train hold-up in Canada, at Silverdale, BC. They stole \$6000 in gold dust, \$1000 cash and valuable US bonds.

In May 1906, Miner, Dunn and a new recruit committed another robbery. At Ducks Station, 22 kilometres east of Kamloops, they boarded a Vancouver train. Unfortunately, because of a timetable

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**BILLY MINER**

**\$11 500 REWARD  
DEAD OR ALIVE**

change, the train they had hoped to rob had been delayed. They ended up with \$15 and a handful of liver pills!

An \$11 500 reward was posted for their capture—dead or alive.

They were caught; however, they managed to escape. Later it was learned that on the first night of their escape, their horses had wandered from camp. Forced to continue on foot, they were soon found at their campsite. They pretended to be prospectors and nearly got away with the deception but Dunn panicked and opened fire. He was overpowered by the Mounted Police and the trio were jailed in Kamloops.

In June 1906, Miner was sentenced to life imprisonment but escaped soon after.

Miner died in 1913, in jail in Georgia (USA), having served two years of a twenty-five-year sentence. A local paper reported the event with little sympathy: '(Miner's) third escape from the Georgia Jail, this time in company with the "angel of death".'

Source: *The Rocky Mountaineer*, Vol. 2,  
Issue 007, p.19.