In reflecting on Bill Miner’s legend, Peter Grauer, author of Interred With Their Bones: Bill Miner in Canada (Kamloops. BC: Tillicum, 2006), suggested that the full-face portrait of the bandit, as shown below, was a big part of Miner’s enduring legacy. He comments: “I sometimes wonder if the Bill Miner story would have been with us so strongly if it had not been for that iconic photograph taken by the spinster Kamloops photographer Mary Spencer. The character in the face, the grizzled cavalry moustache, the penetrating eyes reflecting 33 years spent in San Quentin, the flat-brimmed Stetson with the four-cornered ‘Montana Pinch,’ there is so much in that photo that it is the most instantly recognized portrait of any individual in BC’s history. It is more recognized than any politician, celebrity or other esteemed personage in our so interesting past. As you know, this year BC is celebrating the 150th anniversary of when it was recognized as a colony. On all of the promotional literature sent out by the government and associated organizations, that familiar portrait of this rather obscure American bandit is front and centre.” It would appear that a multimedia onslaught, iconic pictures, poems, songs, films, musical productions, plays and more, as we see with Miner, are the modern day indicators of attaining the vaunted status of “folk hero.”

More Bill Miner music has been found since I wrote the original article:

1. Alex Forbes, a Kamloops, BC, poet, has just released a CD entitled The Bill Miner Roadshow, which is a set of narrative poems set to music telling Miner’s story (Forbes, Alex (2008). The Bill Miner Roadshow. Kamloops, BC: Small World Studios, SWSAF 0001; CD available at www.gracespringscollective.ca).

2. Ron Weihs kindly sent a script of the 1977 Bill Miner musical “Hands Up.” In addition to “Somebody Robbed the CPR” and “The Bill Miner Song” mentioned in the original article, the following songs were also part of this production: “Gold Song,” “The Things I Wanna Know,” “Bill Miner Was
a Boy,” “Only a Jailer’s Daughter,” “Quick and to the Point,”
“Take a Chance,” “CP Transcontinental,” “Comparatively
Speaking,” “This is Not Right,” “Talking Bill Miner,” “One
More Chance,” “The Coyote,” “Jenny’s Song,” “New
Westminster Pen” and “Run Billy Run.”

3. Carolyn Anele, a Vernon, BC, singer-songwriter
has just recorded a song entitled “Billy Miner’s
Breath.”

4. “Ol’ Bill Miner” has been recorded by Katy Moffat
on her album Cowboy Girl, Bear Family, CD Dual
1180. This CD is available at www.bear-
family.de/neuerscheinungen/?lang=1.

5. “Blow—The Ballad of Bill Miner” is recorded on
Rachel Harrington’s album The bootlegger’s
daughter, Bear Family, CD210599. This CD is
available at www.bear-family.de/
neuerscheinungen/?lang=1.

6. Darcy Whiteside of the Edmonton bluegrass group
The Big Mix Boys has recorded his “Ballad of Bill
Miner.” You can hear this song at

I’d appreciate hearing about any other Bill Miner
music that I have missed in this survey. Below you
will find an extended discography of the music
mentioned in the original Bill Miner article, which
includes where you can order recordings of the songs
that are currently available. Again, if I’ve missed
anything, please let me know.

Tim Rogers thbrogers@ucalgary.ca

Discography of Bill Miner music

“Back When Billy Robbed Trains” Fjellgaard, Gary and Valdy. Contenders Two. This CD is available at
www.fjellgaard.ba.ca and the track can be purchased through iTunes.

RPM disc).

“Bill Miner” Bossin, Bob (1994). Gabriola V0R 1X0. Gabriola Island, BC: Bob Bossin. This CD is available
at www3.telus.net/oldfolk/ofscat.htm.

on Stu Phillips’s CD A Journey Through the Provinces. Bear Family BEAO15721, available at
www.bear-family.de/neuerscheinungen/?lang=1.


Bill Miner on Trial, Kamloops, 1906
(photo courtesy of Kamloops Museum & Archive)

The tunes of the songs about Bill Miner found on the next seven pages were transcribed by Maureen Chafe and Rosaleen Gregory.