

‘I am Charley Ross’:

Gustave Blair, Nelson Miller, and the Crime that Changed a Nation

Rodney Miller, *Minneapolis, MN*

Larry D. Miller, *Grimes, IA*



The Charley Ross Kidnapping

The kidnapping of Charley Ross in 1874 was the first kidnapping for ransom in America. The story has been told many times in books, newspapers, and magazines, and in scholarly historical and crime journals¹. There was extensive newspaper coverage both across the United States and abroad. In sum, Charley and his brother, Walter Ross, were kidnapped on July 1, 1874, by two men in front of the Ross home in Germantown, Philadelphia, despite the warning of their father “Don’t take candy from strangers!” which has since become immortalized. The kidnappers released Walter, but not Charley. After twenty-three ransom notes and several attempts to retrieve the child, Charley was never returned to the family.

The most legitimate lead in attempting to find Charley’s kidnappers involved two burglars, William Mosher and Joseph Douglass. In 1875, while attempting to rob the home of a local judge in New York, both men were shot. Mosher was killed instantly. While dying, Douglass confessed they had kidnapped Charley Ross. Both of them had been under investigation for the kidnapping. The brother-in-law of Mosher, William Westervelt, was later convicted of complicity in the kidnapping.² The police pursued numerous leads and suspects over the years but the child was never found. Christian Ross spent the rest of his life looking for his son until he died in 1897.



‘I am Charley Ross’

On February 4, 1939 Gustave Blair, a man known as a gardener, painter, and carpenter, legally asserted he was the kidnapped child, hidden all this time by the Miller Family in Lee County, IL. As early as 1932, Gustave Blair, his son, Ralph Blair and his Miller brother, Lincoln (known as L.C. Miller) began making statements about Gustave’s claim to be Charley Ross.³ Notably, these assertions began shortly after national news coverage of the now famous Charles Lindberg kidnapping.⁴ In an effort to bolster their argument, they obtained a copy

of the book written by Charley's father, Christian Ross⁵, about his son's kidnapping. It provided them with details of the kidnapping they would use to prove their case in a court of law.

In 1935, Gustave Blair told reporters he had twelve affidavits he would use to prove he was Charley Ross.⁶ His brother, Harrison (Hiram), also possessed nine sworn and notarized affidavits allegedly written in 1934 supporting Gustave's claim.⁷ Harrison presented himself as a lawyer in St. Paul, MN. None of the affidavits were made public or used in the trial. It is reasonable to assume there was a falling out between the Miller brothers and that Harrison later withheld the affidavits.⁸ The affidavits and what appears to be typewritten testimony Lincoln Miller would give at the trial in 1939 (see below) are among documents now in the possession of the Miller family. Among the documents is an affidavit labeled "Confession" sworn by Lincoln Miller on December 29, 1932, in which he states an attending physician had determined he was dying. He confessed to concealing the Millers' involvement in the Charley Ross kidnapping and concealing Charley's identity as a Miller.

With his contention, on February 4, 1939, Blair sued the Ross family in Phoenix, AZ, to be recognized as their brother.⁹ The Ross family ignored the suit and did not attend the trial. Walter Ross, Charley's brother, reported it was just another example of thousands of false claims that had been made over the decades. He said, "We have heard of this man before and have determined to our own satisfaction there is nothing to his story."¹⁰

Gustave Blair's civil suit was heard before a jury on May 9, 1939. His testimony, and that of his only witness, Lincoln (L.C.) Miller, is recorded by the transcript of the trial.¹¹ In addition to his deathbed "Confession", Lincoln Miller also allegedly signed a statement in 1934 outlining his testimony for the trial.¹² In that statement, he swore, in sum and substance, to the following which is consistent with the testimony he gave at the civil trial¹³:

One of the kidnappers, John Hawk, was a farm laborer in Lee County and stayed at times in the Miller home. In the summer and fall of 1874, he made several trips to Philadelphia to care for his ailing sister. When the sister died, Hawk convinced Lincoln's father to let Lincoln accompany him to Pennsylvania to retrieve his sister's child and provide company during the return trip. When they arrived at a cave outside of Philadelphia where the child was being kept, the child said his name was Charley Ross. Hawk told Lincoln to ignore him. His name was Charley Hawk. They brought Charley to the home of Rinear Miller by horse and buggy dressed as a girl. He was raised as Nelson Miller, named after the Millers' recently deceased child. When Hawk later returned to take the child, the Millers objected. They had become attached to him as their own child. They argued until John Hawk blasted out "This boy is a stolen boy and you'd better get rid of him, for if the law would find him here it would go bad with all of us, especially Link [Lincoln] as he helped me bring the stolen boy . . . he is Charlie Ross . . ."

According to court transcripts, Gustave, Lincoln, and Rinear Miller gave various timelines and circumstances regarding the reported murder. Rinear allegedly signed a confession of the killing on March 8, 1904¹⁴. Nelson later stated that he was told at the time he could not reveal the truth about the murder until after his father's death. Rinear Miller died February 6, 1920, but Nelson waited fourteen years to begin his campaign to prove he was Charley Ross. Gustave claimed that although he learned his true identity in 1908, he concealed it fearing if he told the truth about Hawk's murder, the Millers would seek to silence him.

On May 9, 1939, the jury deliberated only eight minutes¹⁵ and found in favor of Gustave Blair. A judgement was entered: "Gustave Blair, one time known as Nelson Miller, is Charles Brewster Ross, son of Christian K Ross and the same person who was kidnapped from the home of Christian K. Ross July 1, 1874."¹⁶ Ten days later, the newly declared Charley Ross said he would go Philadelphia and sue his brother and two sisters to claim one-fourth of the purported \$460,000 family trust fund.¹⁷ When asked about it, Walter Ross responded there wasn't any such fund. Repeatedly during his campaign to be recognized as Charley Ross and immediately after the trial, Blair affirmed he had no interest in the Ross family's money.¹⁸ As Charley Ross, he later wrote a short story and tried to sell it as a screen play entitled "My Return from the Dead. The Thrilling True Life Story of Charley Ross the 'Kidnapped Boy.'"¹⁹

DNA Reveals the Truth

"A man's patrilineal ancestry, or male-line ancestry, can be traced using the DNA on his Y chromosome (Y-DNA) through Y-STR testing. This is useful because the Y chromosome passes down almost unchanged from father to son, ie, the non recombining and sex determining regions of the Y chromosome do not change. A man's test results are compared to another man's results to determine the time frame in which the two individuals shared a most recent common ancestor or MRCA. If their test results are a perfect, or nearly perfect match, they are related within genealogy's time frame."²⁰

DNA Findings, a division of Genealogy by Genetics, LTD, AABB Accredited conducted DNA analysis for a DNA study commissioned by Miller descendants (see Endnote 63). They reported "Kinship Test Results," on March 22, 2011.²¹ The authors of this document identified descendants of two children of Rinear and Ann Miller who were willing to participate in a DNA study. Using chain of custody procedures, DNA was collected from a male descendant of each of the suspected brothers, Harrison (Hiram) Miller, and Nelson Miller (aka Gustave Blair). DNA analysis determined that Harrison (Hiram) Miller had a "99.99903% probability of kinship" with Nelson Miller, meaning that they were, in fact brothers - they shared the same paternal lineage, a perfect 37/37 7-STR marker match. Gustave Blair was a Miller, Nelson Miller. He could not have been Charley Ross.

Nelson Miller's victory in a Maricopa County courtroom as Gustave Blair was, and still is, reported to have solved the disappearance of Charley Ross, but it was met with considerable skepticism.²² DNA evidence clearly supports the sad declaration made by the Ross family 146 years ago - that Charles Brewster Ross, the kidnapped child, is still lost.

Who Really was Gustave Blair?

Gustave Blair was born as Nelson Miller in Lee County, IL, in 1874. Nelson was the seventh of eleven boys born to Rinear and Ann Miller.²³ His father was a bee keeper and well known in the area²⁴. Little is known of Gustave's childhood except for an incident in which he was shot in the eye and suffered vision loss.²⁵

Nelson described his childhood and young adulthood during testimony in a criminal trial in Fresno, CA, in 1910.²⁶ (see Criminal History) From this testimony we learn that in 1910 he was arrested using the alias of C.R. Brooks and Chas Bradley but identified himself as Nelson Miller, 36 years old, born in Lee County, IL with a “not very good” education and he did not finish “common school.” He attended school until age twelve or thirteen. His father was a nurseryman and “book-keeper [bee keeper].” He said he left home when he was 13 or 14 to be a farm worker, hired by the month until he turned twenty-one. He then built wire fences for about 3 years until he started “ditching,” laying drain tiles as a laborer and then a contractor. He followed this line of work for ten years until his conviction. He never did office or clerical work. He reports he had never been convicted of a felony. In his testimony, he makes no mention of being married or having any children, though other reports reveal that, at the time of his arrest, he was married and had six children.

Name Change to Gustave Blair

Nelson gave many explanations as to when and why he changed his name to Gustave Blair. Once he said it was as early as age thirteen, though no documentation exists to substantiate this claim. Using public records and available documents, it appears Nelson changed his name some time after he was paroled from Folsom State Prison, CA, in 1915 (see Criminal History). He was arrested as Nelson Miller in 1916 in Blue Earth, MN (See Criminal History). He registered for the draft as Nelson Miller in Algona, IA, on September 12, 1918, at which time his wife Ida Miller is listed as his nearest relative.²⁷ The first public record of the name change appeared two years later in June, 1920, when Nelson - going by Gustave Blair - was arrested in Aberdeen, SD, and sent to State Prison, Sioux Falls, SD (see Criminal History). It is possible Nelson changed his name arguably in an effort to conceal two felony convictions and imprisonment in California in 1910 and his arrest for sodomizing a fifteen-year-old boy in Blue Earth, MN, in September, 1916. He was paroled from the South Dakota State Prison on January 19, 1922, after serving fifteen months of his three-year sentence. He reappeared in 1924 as Nelson Miller when he and his wife transacted several property transfers in Rockford, IL.²⁸ One of the transfers was to their son, Ralph Miller (not Ralph Blair).

The names Nelson Miller, Gustave Blair, and Charley Ross appeared together for the first time in public records in 1932. Nelson’s thirty-five year old son, Ralph (Miller) Blair, announced they were the same person while attempting to re-enter the United States from Canada. After overstaying his visa, Ralph and his family were stopped at the border unable to prove his citizenship.²⁹ He insisted he was the son of the real Charley Ross and his father, whom he referred to as Gustave Blair, could prove it. The *Chicago Tribune* reported “Another claimant to the name of Charlie Ross . . . appeared yesterday . . . Gustave Blair.”³⁰ Gustave’s attorney in Chicago said “. . . the claim was advanced as part of a campaign to have the immigration authorities permit the gardener’s son to cross the American border from Canada at Seattle.”³¹ He could give no definitive evidence other than Blair having a physical characteristic common in the Ross family, one ear thicker and set lower on the head than the other. (In another interview Gustave Blair asserted he was examined by a Chicago psychiatrist and a police identification expert who said his facial characteristics “checked perfectly with those of the Charlie Ross pictures.”³²). The lawyer convinced U.S. immigration services Gustave Blair was Ralph’s father and was in fact the stolen child, Charles Brewster Ross. Ralph was allowed entry into the United States.³³

Gustave Blair declared he was Charley Ross in the media three years later on May 11, 1935.³⁴ He asserted he was raised by the Miller family but “In 1908 [Rinear] Miller in order to prevent me from testifying in a lawsuit in which he was involved in . . .” told him the truth.

Four years later in 1939 during his civil suit against the Ross family to be legally recognized as Charley Ross,³⁵ he swore his Miller father told him in 1908 he was not a Miller. Instead, Rinear Miller told him he was Charley Ross, a four year old child brought to the Miller home by one of the kidnappers, John Hawk, under the guise he was Hawk’s deceased sister’s son. Rinear told him he took the place of a child they named Nelson who had recently died. Everyone accepted him as Nelson Miller. He changed his name later because it was distasteful to live with the name of a dead child. He also asserted he changed his name to hide from the Millers who threatened him if he told anyone of what had happened.

Additional evidence of Nelson’s name change appeared in Maricopa County, Arizona, in 1940. As the newly adjudicated Charles Brewster Ross, Gustave filed an affidavit verifying the birth records of his son, Ralph Blair.³⁶ The affidavit swears Ralph Miller changed his name to Ralph Blair in 1910 or 1911. He would have been thirteen or fourteen years old. However, the 1910 Census Record shows he was living with his mother as Ralph Miller. In the affidavit, Gustave identifies his birthdate as the date on record for Charley Ross and again states in 1908 he learned “. . . what his right name was and changed his name from Nelson Miller to Gustave Blair.” Ralph said he changed his name to Blair when he joined up with his father around 1917. It is possible Ralph changed his name much later to conceal his criminal past as Ralph Miller. It is also possible that Ralph changed his name to identify with Gustave Blair / Charley Ross because, if Gustave Blair was in fact the son of Charley Ross, Ralph could be a legitimate heir to the Ross family fortune.

Marriage and Family

At age 21, Nelson Miller married Ida Johnson on February 15, 1896, in Viola Township, Lee County, IL.³⁷ They had six children between 1897 and 1906 while living in Garner, Iowa, Westford Township, MN, Amboy, MN, and Rochelle, IL.³⁸ Various records report Nelson abandoned his family as early as 1904 but certainly by 1910 when he was imprisoned in California. (see Criminal History)

Alleged to “. . . be a pauper” his wife applied for county relief in April, 1909, for supplies, medical care, and rent in Ogle County, IL.³⁹ His son Ralph later reported he left the family in 1908.⁴⁰ Unable to care for the children, his mother hired the older children out to neighbors and placed two in orphanages. Ralph described his father as “. . . the worst kind of family man . . . a very poor provider.” Census records show Ida and her children were reunited and living in the same household in 1910 but that Nelson was not with them.

Nelson and Ida Miller are listed as husband and wife in the Rockford (Illinois) 1924 City Directory.⁴¹ A number of public notices in Illinois newspapers reported property transfers involving Nelson and Ida Miller between 1924 and 1926, including one transfer to their eldest son, Ralph Miller, at age 27. (see Endnote 28) A foreclosure notice was published in 1937 against “. . . Ida E. Miller and Nelson Miller, her husband . . .” for a mortgage they executed on September 29, 1924, in the city of Rockford, IL.⁴²

In 1939, the newly adjudicated Charles Brewster Ross told a reporter in Dixon, IL, about his three marriages and his children.⁴³ He said he married Ida Johnson on February 15, 1885, (It was actually 1896.) and they had five children. (They had six.) He later married Cora Eversole of Chicago, IL, on August 13, 1930. A license for this marriage was published in Omaha, NE, on August 15, 1929, a year earlier than he reported.⁴⁴ The 1930 Federal Census taken on April 10 and 11, 1930, reports Gustave and Cora Blair were living in Riverdale Village, Cook County, IL, as husband and wife. He re-married Cora in 1939 so she would have his Ross name.⁴⁵ During the interview he said nothing about divorcing Ida and no record of divorce has been found.

Criminal History



September 24, 1910 - California: At age thirty-six, Nelson Miller was convicted in Fresno, CA, on two counts of embezzlement and sentenced to a total of 9 years at Folsom Prison, Prisoner #7687.⁴⁶ His brother L.C. Miller, also jailed in connection with the charges, alleged to be a victim of his brother's "avarice and criminality."⁴⁷ He implicated Nelson "... in the abandonment of his wife and five children, the elopement with another man's wife, a series of shady transactions that cover from the Mississippi River to the Pacific coast and robbery of his brother of negotiable securities valued at about \$21,000."

During his arrest in 1910 under the alias of C.R. Books and Chas Bradley, Nelson admitted perpetrating "swindles" in Oregon and Idaho. While awaiting trial, the Fresno County Sheriff received information that convinced him Nelson Miller was likely a man known at Homer Kern wanted in Texas for attempted swindle of ranch property. Harrison Miller (Nelson's brother) is mentioned as an accomplice. He was also wanted in Rochelle, IL, for forgery.⁴⁸

November 3, 1915 - Minnesota : After serving 5 years in California, Nelson was paroled to his brother, Harrison (Hiram) Miller in Owatonna, MN. Harrison Miller, a convicted felon, had been released from the Iowa State Penitentiary two years earlier after serving four years for Cheating by False Pretenses (swindle).

September 18, 1916 - Minnesota: Nelson was arrested in Blue Earth, MN, and charged with sodomy of a fifteen-year-old boy.⁴⁹ He was held in the county jail for fifty-five days pending trial. He was released November 12, 1916, when a Grand Jury could not indict him on the charge. It is not unusual for the victim in such cases, especially juveniles, to refuse to testify. The day before his release, his son, going by the name Ralph Blair, was arrested for Grand Larceny and placed in the same Blue Earth County Jail. Ralph was later found guilty and served three years at the MN State Reformatory.

July - October, 1920 - South Dakota: Using the name Gustave Blair, Nelson, his son Ralph, and his brother Andrew Miller attempted to swindle farmers and land owners of sixty thousand dollars in Aberdeen, South Dakota. Gustave Blair was arrested at the Northwestern Depot attempting to leave the city.⁵⁰ His son, Ralph, escaped a week earlier in a car he purchased with a bogus check, and Andrew is thought to have escaped on the train departing the depot. Gustave was convicted of obtaining property under false pretenses and sentenced to three years in State

Prison in Sioux Falls, SD.⁵¹ He served 15 months of his three year sentence and was paroled January 19, 1922. He later applied for immunity after his imprisonment,⁵² but no announcement that it was granted has been found.

August 15, 1929 - Omaha, NE: Seven years after his release from State Prison in SD, Nelson, as Gustave Blair, and Cora Eversole of Chicago, IL, were issued a marriage license.⁵³ Since there is no record he and Ida Miller divorced, it is likely this constituted bigamy.

Based on available records, Nelson Miller as Gustave Blair appears to have committed other crimes in his pursuit to prove he was Charley Ross, including perjury, subornation of perjury, and forgery.

The Aftermath

The first kidnapping for ransom in America made headlines and involved police departments and detectives across several states, including the famed Pinkerton Detective Agency. Among thousands of claims to be the lost child, only one man took his claim to a court of law and was declared by a jury to be the kidnapped child, Charles Brewster Ross. Modern day references to the Charley Ross kidnapping include Gustave Blair's claim. We now know he was Nelson Miller, despite the 1939 court ruling that said otherwise.

As the newly adjudicated Charles Brewster Ross, he returned to Compton, IL, his childhood home in Lee County, on September 6, 1939, to reveal details of his life and the people he cared about.⁵⁴ With a reporter and photographer, he identified the "Murder House," the "Grim Sentinel" tree where bodies were buried and the "Scene of the Crime" where John Hawk, one of the kidnappers, was killed by his Miller father. He identified Mrs. Emma Holdren, the Millers' housekeeper, as the only true "Mother" he had. Under the Millers' employ, she reportedly cared for Nelson as a sick child when he arrived at the Miller home in 1874.

In 1943 Nelson Miller was buried alone as "Charles B Ross" four years later after succumbing to pneumonia and evidently either fully convinced he was the kidnapped child or unable to admit he had deceived the world. His son tried for years to advance his father's claim, to be recognized by the Ross family and to obtain his rightful inheritance. No record has been found that Nelson, or his son, attempted to access any of what remained of the Ross family fortune (though according to media reports, there was no real fortune to be had, as Christian Ross depleted all of his assets searching for his son).

Summary

Nelson Miller, alias C.R. Brooks⁵⁵, Chas Bradley⁵⁶, Gustave Blair⁵⁷, Charley Ross⁵⁸ (7/13/1874 - 12/13/1943) was one of eleven boys born to Rinear and Ann Miller⁵⁹ in the small village of Melugin Grove near the Lee County city of Dixon, Illinois, in 1874. Sometime between 1918 and 1920 he changed his name to Gustave Blair and in 1939 he convinced a jury⁶⁰ in Maricopa County, Arizona, he was Charley Ross, the child taken in the first kidnapping for ransom in America.⁶¹ The kidnapping in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, happened in 1874, the year Nelson Miller was born. Charley Ross was never found. The brother who was kidnapped with him, Walter Ross, dismissed Gustave Blair's claim as another attempt to extort money from the family and did not attend the trial or challenge the claim. When he died in 1943, Nelson was buried in Phoenix, Arizona under the headstone "Charles B Ross."⁶² In 2011, descendants⁶³ of Rinear and Ann Miller commissioned a Y-DNA study⁶⁴ and determined a 99.99903% probability Nelson Miller was in fact a Miller.⁶⁵ He could not have been Charley Ross.



The final resting place of
Nelson Miller
1874 - 1943.

(Greenwood Memory Lawn Cemetery
Phoenix, Maricopa County, AZ
Section 41 Block3 Lot 3 Space 8)

Endnotes

¹ Carrie Hagen, *we is got him: The Kidnapping that Changed America* (The Overlook Press, 2011)
Thomas Everly, "Searching for Charley Ross." *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, vol. 67, no. 3, Penn State University Press, 2000, pp. 376–96
Norman Zierold, *Little Charley Ross* (Little, Brown & Company, 1967)
Christian Ross, *The Father's Story of Charley Ross, the Kidnapped Child* (John E. Potter, 1876)
Ernest Kahlar Alix, *Ransom Kidnapping in America, 1874–1974: The Creation of a Capital Crime* Southern Illinois University Press, 1978
Louis Solomon, *Great Unsolved Crimes* (Scholastic Book Services, 1976)

²Westervelt, William H, defendant: *Life, Trial and Conviction of William H. Westervelt for the Abduction of Charley Ross*, Philadelphia: Barclay & Co, 1875

³Reports of Gustave Blair's claim appeared in newspapers around the country, similar to this: *Sunday Times-Advertiser*, Trenton, N.J., May 12, 1935; "Chicago Painter Insists That He is Charlie Ross and Stands Ready to Prove His Claims" Page 3.

Ralph's public announcement was reprinted around the country as well, similar to this: *The Philadelphia Record*, April 17, 1932 "Son Insists Charlie Ross Is Living in Chicago; Says Farmer Killed Kidnapper and Reared Boy."

Gustave claimed to have a statement sworn by his Miller brother, L.C. Miller, in December, 1934: *Rockford Register-Republic*, May 21, 1935. This confession by LC Miller is part of *The Hiram Papers* (see Endnote #7)

⁴ "Lindberg Kidnapping," History: "Famous Cases and Criminals" Official Website of the FBI. <https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/lindbergh-kidnapping>

⁵Christian Ross, *The Father's Story of Charley Ross, the Kidnapped Child* (John E. Potter, 1876)

⁶ *Sunday Times-Advertiser*, Trenton, N.J., May 12, 1935 "Chicago Painter Insist That He Is Charlie Ross and Stands Ready to Prove His Claims" Page 3

⁷"The Hiram Papers." An unpublished collection of family documents were kept in a barrel in the home of Harrison Miller, nephew of Nelson Miller, in Mason City, Iowa. They were given to him by his father, also named Harrison (Hiram) Miller who was Nelson's brother. In 1934, Hiram seemed to be involved in preparing the Gustave Blair trial against the Ross family. He advertised a law practice in St. Paul, MN. The collection of documents, referred to as "The Black Satchel" (charleyross.com) contained affidavits that could have proven Gustave Blair's case. They were never used at the trial. The satchel also contained the first half of a book being written by Hiram, "Hunting for Charley Ross." The second half was reportedly stolen. The satchel was passed to Harrison's son, Rodney Miller in 1977 and to his nephew, Larry Miller in 2005.

⁸"The Bukowski Papers." A collection of unpublished documents, many belonging to Nelson Miller. They were passed to his son, Ralph Miller (Blair), then to his daughter, Twyla Cottrell, who made them available to Ruth Bukowski. Ruth is a great granddaughter of Nelson Miller and collaborated with the Miller descendants' investigation into Nelson Miller.

Evidence of the breakdown in the relationship was documented in 1960 by Nelson's son, going by Ralph Blair, in a letter. He reflects on the relationship between his father and brothers after they reportedly learned he was Charley Ross "...traitors and wanted to work their greed towards the twenty thousand dollar reward...greed tactics...wrecked more lives... rebels; traitor to their father...."

⁹ Gustave Blair vs Walker L Ross, et al, “In the Superior Court of Maricopa County, State of Arizona - Complaint No. 47068”, Subscribed and Sworn 2/4/1939.

¹⁰*Republican-Northwestern*, Belvedere, IL, May 14, 1935, Page 7. “Kin of Ross Deny Tale of Marengo Man.”

¹¹ Gustave Blair vs Walter L Ross, et al, “In the Superior Court of Maricopa County, State of Arizona - Reporter’s Transcript, May, 1939

¹² L.C. Miller allegedly swore an affidavit regarding the Miller family involvement in the kidnapping of Charley Ross that appears to rehearse his testimony for trial. See Endnote #7.

¹³ L.C. Miller’s sworn testimony at the Blair vs Ross trial is consistent with his 1934 statement: Gustave Blair vs Walter L Ross, et al, “In the Superior Court of Maricopa County, State of Arizona - Reporter’s Transcript, May, 1939, Page 48.

¹⁴The alleged signed confession of Rinear Miller to the murder of John Hawk is part of an unpublished collection of family documents known as “The Hiram Papers.” See Endnote #7. Note: There is evidence the confession was typewritten at least 25 years later based on a comparison of the font and specific key impressions with a database of historic typewriters (see <https://typewriterdatabase.com>)

¹⁵ *Dallas Morning News*, (Dallas, Texas), “Charley Ross Found at Last, Court Decides,” May 9, 1939, Page 1.

Seattle Daily Times, (Seattle, Washington), “I’m the Kidnapped Charley Ross . . . A Judge and a Jury Agree.” June 18, 1939.

¹⁶ Gustave Blair vs Walker L Ross, et al, “In the Superior Court of Maricopa County, State of Arizona - Judgement, May 9, 1939

¹⁷*The Modesto Bee And News-Herald* (Modesto, California), June 20, 1939, Page 1

¹⁸*The Rock Island Argus* (Rock Island, IL), June 20, 1939, Page 5

¹⁹ The typewritten manuscript is part of “The Bukowski Papers” See Endnote 37

²⁰Wikipedia, “Genealogical DNA Test - Y-chromosome (Y-DNA) testing.” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genealogical_DNA_test

²¹ DNA Findings, “Kinship Test Results Case CFR10014” Signed by Concetta A. Bormans, PhD, Director, March 22, 2011.

²²Many have questioned Gustave Blair's credibility including the authors of this document.

Everly, Thomas, "Searching for Charley Ross." *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, vol 67, no. 3 Penn State University Press, 2000 pp. 376-96. (Note: Everly presents a thoroughly documented examination of the kidnapping of Charley Ross and of Gustave Blair's claim, In collaboration with descendants of Nelson Miller in 1999, Everly approached members of the Ross family to participate in a DNA study. They never responded.)

"Was this man Charley Ross? Did an Arizona Jury's Verdict Really Solve America's Most Famous Kidnapping Case – Cloaked for 65 Years? *Headline Detective Magazine*, New Jersey, June, 1944, Page 30.

In 2015, the *Blair Society for Genealogical Research* published its assessment of Gustave Blair's claim in an effort to determine if he was in Blair family lineage. They concluded he was not. He was a Miller. Without DNA evidence, they found he was 'probably not' Charley Ross. (See <https://blairsociety.org>)

"Feature Article, The Strange Story of Gustave Blair – or Was He Gustave Blair? Charlotte Blair Stewart, et al." *The Blair Family Magazine*, Summer 2015

²³ Unpublished manuscript: Jean Miller, "The Miller Family 1776-1988 Daniel C. Miler, A Record of His Ancestors, Family and Descendants," Lee County Historical and Genealogy Society, Dixon, IL, "Family Histories." Page 43+

²⁴"Portraits and Biographical Lee County, IL" Pg 464, Lee County Historical and Genealogy Society, Dixon, IL

²⁵ *The Amboy Journal*, Amboy, IL. February 26, 1891 references him as "Ned Miller."

²⁶Transcript at Sentencing Hearing 9/30/1910, Superior Court of the State of California in and For the County of Fresno, Honorable George E. Church, Page 4;

²⁷ Draft registration: Registration Card Serial Number 1193, Local [draft] Board for the County of Kenseth, State of Iowa in Algona, IA, September 12, 1918.

²⁸*The Rockford Register-Gazette*, May 1, 1924, Page 8. (Note: this was the first of a series of transactions occurring between 1924 and 1926).

²⁹ *The Seattle Daily Times*, Seattle, WA. April 3, 1932 "Ross Kidnap Claim Scanned by U.S. in Immigration Probe: Man's Contention That Father Was Stolen in Celebrated Mystery of 1874 May Balk Deportation."

³⁰ *Chicago Tribune*, Chicago, IL. April 3, 1932, Page 15; "New Chas. Ross Appears to Aid His Alien Son"

³¹ *The Seattle Daily Times*, Seattle, WA. April 3, 1932 "Ross Kidnap Claim Scanned by U.S. in Immigration Probe: Man's Contention That Father Was Stolen in Celebrated Mystery of 1874 May Balk Deportation."

³² *The Philadelphia Record*, Philadelphia, PA. April 17, 1932 "'Son Insists Charlie Ross Is Living in Chicago; Says Farmer Killed Kidnapper and Reared Boy.'"

³³ *The Seattle Daily Times*, Seattle, WA. April 3, 1932, Page 9.

³⁴ *The Sheboygan Press*, Sheboygan, WI. May 11, 1935 "Painter Tells World He is Charlie Ross" Note: The story with this headline was published in numerous newspapers around the country.

³⁵ Gustave Blair vs Walker L Ross, et al, “In the Superior Court of Maricopa County, State of Arizona - Complaint No. 47068”, Subscribed and Sworn 2/4/1939.

³⁶ “The Bukowski Papers.” See Endnote 8. The Affidavit and a copy of Ralph’s birth certificate were sworn in the State of Arizona, County of Maricopa, September 9, 1940; Notary signature is unrecognizable.

³⁷ “The Bukowski Papers.” See Endnote 8. A copy of the marriage license was among the papers.

³⁸ Unpublished manuscript: Jean Miller, “The Miller Family 1776-1988 Daniel C. Miler, A Record of His Ancestors, Family and Descendants,” Lee County Historical and Genealogy Society, Dixon, IL, “Family Histories.” Page 47

³⁹ Public record of the county board’s discussion of a claim submitted by Ida Miller for financial assistance. *Dixon Evening Telegraph*, Dixon, IL. April 10, 1909, Page 3.

⁴⁰ “The Bukowski Papers.” See Endnote 8, Section 11. Ralph Miller describes his father’s parenting and what happened to his brothers and sisters after he abandoned them in 1908 in a letter he wrote to Mrs. Mailes in 1960. Mrs. Mailes is a descendant of the Holdren family who lived near the Millers in Lee County, IL. Emma Holdren was their housekeeper. In a 1938 affidavit, she swears she witnessed and cared for a sick Charley Ross when he was brought to the Miller home by John Hawk.

⁴¹ Rockford, Illinois, City Directory, 1924, Page 489 (found in the U.S. City Directories, ancestry.com)

⁴² *Rockford Register-Republic*,” Rockford, IL, August 25, 1937, Page 18.

⁴³ *Dixon Evening Telegraph*, (Dixon, IL), September 11, 1939, “Famous Kidnap Victim Retraces Early Life in Lee County.” Page 5

(Note: Nelson reported he and Ida had 5 children. They had 6 children. One son, Mark Miller, was shot by police while being captured after his escape from Joliet Prison, IL. He died January 28, 1929, seven months before Nelson married Cora Eversole.)

⁴⁴ *Omaha World-Herald* (Omaha, NE), August 15, 1929, “Marriage Licenses”, Page 8.

⁴⁵ Charles Brewster Ross and Cora Eversole Marriage Certificate, Judge of the Superior Court, Los Angeles, California, September 26, 1939. (Note: Cora was previously married.)

⁴⁶ Nelson Miller’s arrest, conviction and imprisonment in Fresno, CA, in 1910 using the alias C.R. Brooks and Chas Bradley on two counts of embezzlement:

“Register and Descriptive List of Convicts under Sentence of Imprisonment in the State Prison at Folsom,” State of California, Page 279

In the Justice’s Court of the City of Fresno, County of Fresno, State of California, “Complaint - Criminal,” Case No. 2611 and No. 2612, July 11, 1910; and “Judgement - September 24, 1910” (Note: Nelson unsuccessfully appealed both verdicts and sentences.)

⁴⁷ The local newspaper reported Nelson and his older brother engaged in criminal activity. Nelson blamed his brother for his false arrest. *Oakland Tribune*, Oakland, CA. June 23, 1910, Page 10 “L.C. Miller Declares He is Victim of Avarice and Expects Release.”

⁴⁸ *Rockford Register-Republic*,” Rockford, IL. August 30, 1910, Page 5; “Nelson Miller Held - Former Rochelle Man Faces Long Prison Term.”

⁴⁹ “Criminal Complaint” in the Municipal Court County of Blue Earth, State of Minnesota, September 18, 1916

⁵⁰ *Aberdeen Weekly News*, Aberdeen, SD. July 15, 1920, "Swindler Held in City" Page 7.

⁵¹ The United Justice Service, State of South Dakota, reported records of the arrest, trial and conviction of Gustave Blair and two other men who escaped were destroyed by water damage. The only remaining record is the "Register of Criminal Actions" Case No. 1561, October 13, 1920 which recorded Blair's conviction and sentence.

⁵² *The Aberdeen Journal*, Aberdeen, SD. May 24, 1921, Notice of Application for Pardon.

⁵³ See Endnote 44.

⁵⁴ *Dixon Evening Telegraph*, (Dixon, IL), September 11, 1939, "Famous Kidnap Victim Retraces Early Life in Lee County." Page 5

⁵⁵ Nelson Miller was arrested, convicted and imprisoned in Fresno, CA, in 1920 using the name C.R. Brooks and Chas Bradley: "Register and Descriptive List of Convicts under Sentence of Imprisonment in the State Prison at Folsom," State of California, Page 279

In the Justice's Court of the City of Fresno, County of Fresno, State of California, "Complaint - Criminal," Case No 2611, July 11, 1920.

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ The earliest discovered public reference to Gustave Blair appeared in a series of newspaper articles dating July 10 - 15, 1920 in Aberdeen, SD, reporting his arrest which led to his conviction and imprisonment:

"Trio of Swindlers Burn Aberdonians: One Caught. Swindlers Are Nabbed By Sheriff. Gustave Blair Now in Jail and Two Accomplices Are Sought." *Aberdeen American*. Aberdeen, SD. July 10, 1920.

"Swindlers are Nabbed by Sheriff Passed Worthless Checks Arrested," *Daily North-West Square Deal*, Aberdeen, SD. July 10, 1920.

"Swindler Held in City," *Aberdeen Weekly News*, Aberdeen, SD. July 15, 1920

⁵⁸ The first discovered public document in which Nelson Miller asserts he is Charles Brewster Ross appeared when he sued the Ross family: Gustave Blair vs Walker L Ross, et al, "In the Superior Court of Maricopa County, State of Arizona - Complaint No. 47063", Subscribed and Sworn February 4, 1939.

⁵⁹ Two pages thought to be from the Rinear and Ann Miller family Bible were among family documents and list family births and deaths (see Endnote #9). In his pursuit to be recognized as Charley Ross, he claimed a child named Nelson died shortly before he was brought to the Miller home. He was given the dead child's name. The death of Nelson Miller is not among the Miller deaths and is not documented in Lee County records.

Also, the death of Nelson Miller is not listed in an unpublished manuscript: Jean Miller, "The Miller Family 1776-1988 Daniel C. Miler, A Record of His Ancestors, Family and Descendants," Lee County Historical and Genealogy Society, Dixon, IL, "Family Histories." Page 43. Note: The author did not find the death of Nelson Miller in Lee County records.

⁶⁰ Gustave Blair vs Walter L Ross, et al, "In the Superior Court of Maricopa County, State of Arizona - Reporter's Transcript, May, 1939

Gustave Blair vs Walker L Ross, et al, "In the Superior Court of Maricopa County, State of Arizona - Judgement, May 9, 1939

⁶¹The Charley Ross kidnapping is well documented in the media, historical journals, news papers, magazine and books. A summary is reported here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charley_Ross (See also Endnote 1)

⁶² Find a Grave, Greenwood Memory Lawn Cemetery, Phoenix, Maricopa County, AZ; Section 41 Block3 Lot 3 Space 8 <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/67555743/charles-b-ross>

⁶³ Rodney (Rod) Miller, Minneapolis, MN is a great nephew of Nelson Miller. Larry Miller (Rod's nephew), Baxter, IA, is a great-great nephew of Nelson Miller. (charleyross.com)

⁶⁴"A man's patrilineal ancestry, or male-line ancestry, can be traced using the DNA on his Y chromosome (Y-DNA) through Y-STR testing. This is useful because the Y chromosome passes down almost unchanged from father to son, ie, the non recombining and sex determining regions of the Y chromosome do not change. A man's test results are compared to another man's results to determine the time frame in which the two individuals shared a most recent common ancestor or MRCA. If their test results are a perfect, or nearly perfect match, they are related within genealogy's time frame." Wikipedia, "Genealogical DNA Test - Y-chromosome (Y-DNA) testing." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genealogical_DNA_test

⁶⁵DNA Findings, Genealogy by Genetics, Ltd; "Kinship Test Results: Case CRF10014", Concetta A. Bowmans, Director, March 33, 2011.