

Discussion and Activity Guide

Bonnie and Clyde: The Making of a Legend

by Karen Blumenthal, 2018, Viking Books for Young Readers

BOOK SYNOPSIS

"Karen Blumenthal's breathtaking true tale of love, crime, and murder traces Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow's wild path from dirt-poor Dallas teens to their astonishingly violent end and the complicated legacy that survives them both. This is an impeccably researched, captivating portrait of an infamous couple, the unforgivable choices they made, and their complicated legacy."
(publisher's description from the book jacket)

ABOUT KAREN BLUMENTHAL

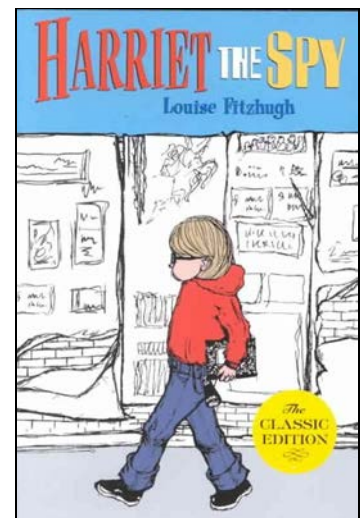
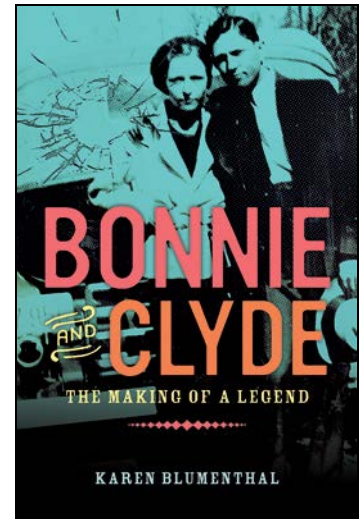
"Ole Golly told me if I was going to be a writer I better write down everything ... so I'm a spy that writes down everything." —*Harriet the Spy*, Louise Fitzhugh

Like Harriet M. Welsch, the title character in *Harriet the Spy*, award-winning author Karen Blumenthal is an observer of the world around her. In fact, she credits the reading of *Harriet the Spy* as a child with providing her the impetus to capture what was happening in the world around her and become a writer herself. Like most authors, Blumenthal was first a reader and an observer. She frequented the public library as a child and devoured books by Louise Fitzhugh and Beverly Cleary. She says as a child she was a "nerdy obnoxious kid with glasses" who became a "nerdy obnoxious kid with contacts" as a teen. She also loved sports and her hometown Dallas sports teams as a kid and, consequently, read books by sports writer, Matt Christopher, who inspired her to want to be a sports writer when she grew up.

In college, thinking she might major in accounting, Blumenthal spent time at the campus newspaper office, which renewed her interest in writing and journalism. Eventually, she majored in economics at Duke University, and went on to earn an MBA from Southern Methodist University. She combined her interests in business and writing working for the *Wall Street Journal*, and has been a journalist for over twenty-five years. Blumenthal has shared her expertise through appearances on *TODAY*, *ABC World News Tonight*, and the *Nightly Business Report*.

For her outstanding work, Blumenthal has been the recipient of many prestigious awards, including the Jane Addams Children's Book Award, a YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction Finalist, a Robert F. Sibert Award Honor Book, and Publisher's Weekly Best Book of the Year.

Blumenthal is passionate about the importance of nonfiction reading and writing for young people. She says, "...I believe in its ability to help us understand the bigger picture things and all of the information that swirls around us every day." She has written several nonfiction books for teens and adults. In an address to middle schoolers as part of the 2012-13 Spirit of Texas Middle School Reading



Program she said, “I’m quite fascinated by true stories. I always think they’re so interesting, sometimes more interesting than what you can make up.” Blumenthal demonstrates this enthusiasm in her writing of nonfiction for young people.

She and her husband have two daughters and live in the Dallas area where they are great fans of their hometown sports teams. An ardent supporter of public libraries, Blumenthal serves on the Dallas Municipal Library Board.

ADDITIONAL BOOKS BY KAREN BLUMENTHAL

Six Days in October: The Stock Market Crash of 1929 (2002)

Let Me Play: The Story of Title IX: The Law That Changed the Future of Girls in America (2005)

Grande Expectations: A Year in the Life of Starbucks’ Stock (2007)

The Wall Street Journal Guide to Starting Your Financial Life (2009)

Bootleg: Murder, Moonshine, and the Lawless Years of Prohibition (2011)

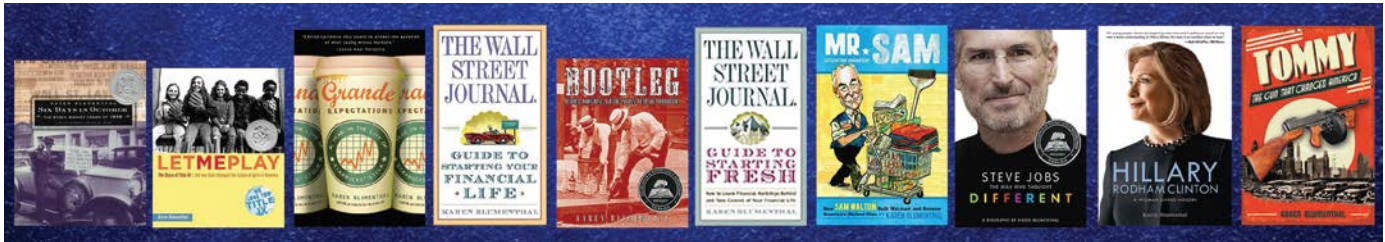
The Wall Street Journal Guide to Starting Fresh (2011)

Mr. Sam: How Sam Walton Built Wal-Mart and Became America’s Richest Man (2011)

Steve Jobs: The Man Who Thought Different (2012)

Tommy: The Gun That Changed America (2015)

Hillary Rodham Clinton: A Woman Living History (coming in 2016)



Explore Karen Blumenthal’s website: <https://www.karenblumenthal.com/> for more about this book, her other books, and Blumenthal herself.

A NOTE TO TEACHERS: The following questions and activities support the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.

BEFORE YOU READ

1. *Bonnie and Clyde: The Making of a Legend* is considered a **nonfiction** text, specifically a **biography**. Define “nonfiction” and “biography.”
2. Examine the cover of *Bonnie and Clyde: The Making of a Legend*, both inside and out. Based on what you see and read on the cover, what are your expectations before you begin reading?

Consider the image on the front of the book. This is an iconic, vintage photo of Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow. What does the photo and the rest of the cover suggest in terms of the time period, the individuals pictured there, etc.?

3. Respond to the title of the book. Have you ever heard of “Bonnie and Clyde”? Share what you think you know about them with the rest of the group. “**Legend**” is defined at www.google.com as, “a traditional story sometimes popularly regarded as historical but unauthenticated.” A person who is a “legend” is, “an extremely famous or notorious person, especially in a particular field.” Think about this term as you read the book and be prepared to discuss whether or not Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow and their story have earned the title of “legend.”
4. Look up and view one of the following:
- the iconic 1967 film, *Bonnie and Clyde*
 - “’03 Bonnie and Clyde” by Beyoncé Knowles and Jay-Z, lyrics and video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xm0Xba8eFTg>)
 - “The Legend of Bonnie and Clyde” by Merle Haggard, lyrics and video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnkOb2kMBfU>)
 - “Bonnie and Clyde” by Kellie Pickler, lyrics and video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Edjh_N_2fr8)
 - *The American Experience: Bonnie and Clyde* produced by PBS
 - another classic film about Bonnie and Clyde



Think about the particular piece you’ve chosen as you read *Bonnie and Clyde: The Making of a Legend*. In what ways has this song or series or movie “...romanticized, celebrated, and remembered...” Bonnie and Clyde “...as the stuff of **legend**...”? (p. 1) Discuss.

5. Author Karen Blumenthal is known for her exceptional, thorough, and unbiased **research**. Browse the “Source Notes” and “Bibliography” at the end of *Bonnie and Clyde: The Making of a Legend*. You will see that Blumenthal used books, newspapers, magazines and journals, recordings, author interviews, internet resources, films, and photos in her research for this book.

Also, read Blumenthal’s “A Note about Facts and Sources” at the back of the book. She begins this section by saying, “**TRUTH IS** slippery, especially in stories like this one. As soon as you think you have a grip on it, certainty slides right out of your grasp. With multiple stories of Bonnie and Clyde’s crimes, trying to resolve the contradictions and understand how the legends grew was challenging and, in a few cases, impossible.” (p. 224) Define “truth” as you see it. Think about Blumenthal’s statement about truth and **facts** as you read the book.

What is the difference between a **primary resource** and a **secondary resource**? Look for examples of each as you read the book.

6. Blumenthal has long lived in Dallas, Texas. She says in her “Acknowledgments” at the back of the book that, “As a Dallas native, I had long heard about Bonnie and Clyde and wanted to explore some **hometown celebrities**. Beyond learning their story, I also wanted to understand why, given their crimes, they were so famous and even celebrated. Would it provide any insight into our culture today?” (p. 221)

Blumenthal was interested in the idea of **celebrity** and what creates celebrity. As she worked on this book, she thought a lot about individuals like Kim Kardashian and her family members and pondered what the Kardashians had done to earn “celebrity” status. How do you feel about this? What makes an individual a celebrity? Do the Kardashians deserve this status? What role did the media – television, newspapers, magazines, social media, etc. – play in creating their celebrity? Can you think of other personalities whose celebrity status seems odd or unearned? What does this say about our current culture?

Can you think of any other “hometown celebrities” from the Dallas area, President George W. Bush, for example? Come up with a list of “hometown celebrities” from the area in which you live. For instance, if you are from the Minneapolis area, you might include Prince. You might include Martin Luther King, Jr. if you are a resident of Atlanta. Residents of San Francisco might include Steve Jobs on their list of hometown celebrities. Do some research and find out more about these individuals. Do you know of any **biographies** written about these individuals? If not, see if you can find any. What did these hometown celebrities do to achieve celebrity status? Is it deserved? Can these individuals be considered **legends**? Why or why not?

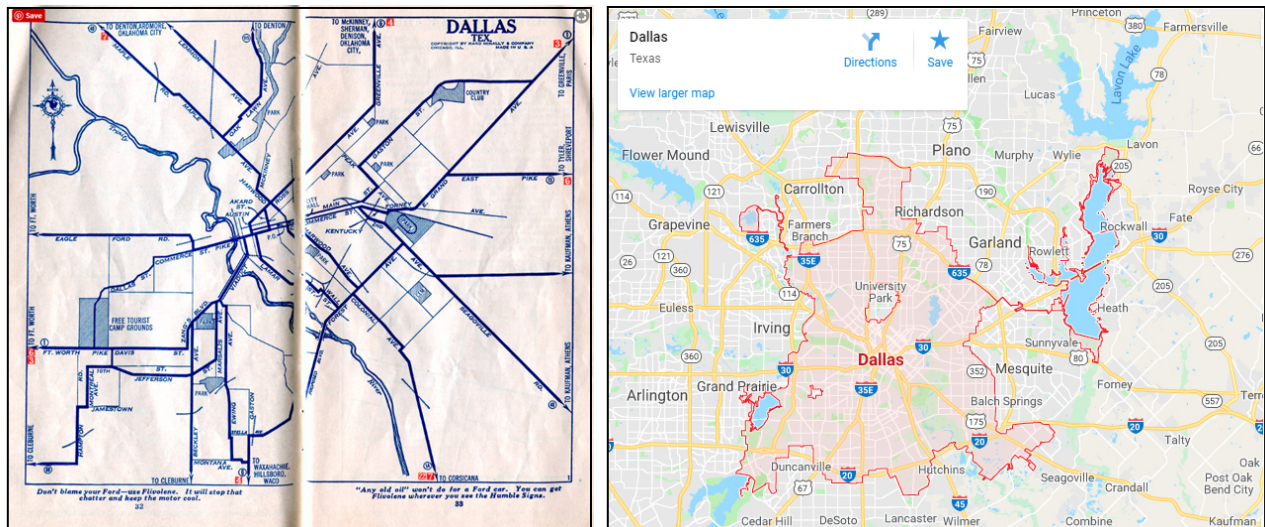
Check out these vintage maps of the **Dallas, Texas** area in 1927 and 1936. Note, in particular, the **West Dallas** area, which is significant to Bonnie and Clyde’s story.

1927 - <http://dallasfreeways.com/dfwfreeways/old-highway-maps/1927-humble-dallas.jpg>

1936 - <http://dallasfreeways.com/dfwfreeways/old-highway-maps/1936-conoco-dallas-medium.jpg>

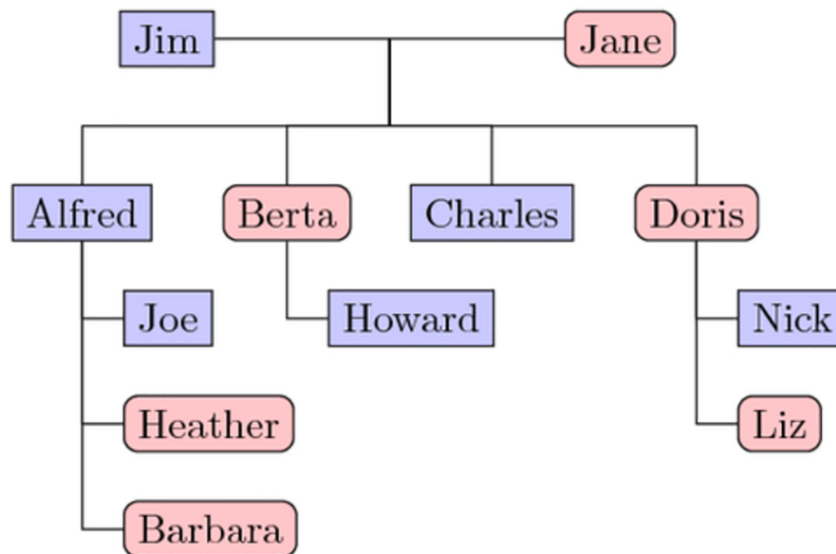
Compare and contrast the vintage maps above to the contemporary map of Dallas below:

2018 - <https://www.tourtexas.com/texas-maps/interactive-map-dallas-fort-worth>



AS YOU READ

1. Use the following template/example, to create a **family tree** for both Clyde Barrow's and Bonnie Parker's families. Begin with the parents of Clyde and Bonnie. This will assist you in keeping track of the many individuals involved in this story.



(from: <http://www.texample.net/tikz/examples/family-tree/>)

How would you characterize each of these families and their members? Can you find any patterns in terms of character traits, life choices, etc.?

2. Use the vintage 1926 **road map** of the United States below to track Bonnie and Clyde's escapades through Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Louisiana, Minnesota, Arkansas, Iowa, Missouri, and so on. Consider the time period and the availability of maps, the road conditions, the ruggedness of transportation, etc. What are your reactions to, and impressions of, their journey?



(from: <http://wchsutah.org/maps/1926us.jpg>)

3. In several sidebars, author Karen Blumenthal gives **additional information** about subjects significant to the Bonnie and Clyde story. Choose one of the following subjects to explore further. Report your findings to the group, via an oral presentation and/or a written composition:

- ☐ the “Roaring Twenties”
- ☐ the Stock Market Crash of 1929
- ☐ the Great Depression
- ☐ law enforcement of the early 1930’s
- ☐ West Dallas, Texas, then and now
- ☐ Hoovervilles (defined at www.google.com as, “a shantytown built by unemployed and destitute people during the Depression of the early 1930s”) – such as Trinity River Bottoms in West Dallas, Texas
- ☐ Prohibition
- ☐ gentrification
- ☐ the prison system of the early 1930’s, particularly Eastham Farm and the Texas Prison System
- ☐ Lee Simmons, the administrator of the Texas prison system in the early 1930’s
- ☐ public education of the late 1920’s and early 1930’s
- ☐ photography, and photographers, of the time period (Dorothea Lange, for example)
- ☐ magazines like *True Detective*, *True Crime*, and *Master Detective*
- ☐ the Federal Bureau of Investigation and J. Edgar Hoover
- ☐ President Herbert Hoover
- ☐ President Franklin Delano Roosevelt
- ☐ John Dillinger
- ☐ Baby Face Nelson
- ☐ Charles “Pretty Boy” Floyd
- ☐ fashion of the early 1930’s (items like fedoras, berets, bolero jackets, etc. are mentioned)
- ☐ cars of the early 1930’s, particularly the Ford V-8
- ☐ the Bonus Expeditionary Force
- ☐ military weaponry of the early 1930’s (like the Browning Automatic Rifle) used to commit crimes versus police weaponry



4. On page 6, Blumenthal tells us, “At a time when many Americans could barely afford food and shelter, the couple’s **clothes** left the impression that crime paid very well.” Examine the photos of Bonnie and Clyde found in the book. Think about all of the details given in regard to the couple’s clothing. On page 18, for instance, Blumenthal tells us that as a teen Clyde became, “...increasingly focused on his clothes and appearance, favoring much dressier clothes than he would have worn on the farm.” Explore the fashion of the 1930’s. Why do you think Bonnie and Clyde chose to dress in the manner that they did? What did it communicate to others?
5. A “**moll**” is defined at www.google.com as “a gangster’s female companion” or a “prostitute.” Consider this statement found on page 7: “...Bonnie was no longer merely a criminal’s girlfriend – or to use the derogatory term, *moll* – along for the ride. She was a partner, a gang member, a rare female fugitive with a known name and a *really* bad reputation. It was almost too scandalous to believe.” Apply your **gender lens** to this statement. Why might Bonnie’s reputation be considered an example of **sexism**? How did her reputation differ from that of Clyde’s? Do you feel she would be seen in the same way today?
6. Think about Clyde’s **growing up years**, described in Chapter 2. How did his living conditions, his education, his family, his religion, his work experience, and his seemingly unimportant petty crimes contribute to the man whom he eventually became?
7. Now think about Bonnie’s **growing up years**, also described in Chapter 2, in terms of her living conditions, her education, her family, her religion, her relationships, and her work experience. How did these things impact the woman whom she eventually became?
8. As you read, look for examples of, and discussion of, how Clyde was treated by **authority figures** in the police and prison systems. How did this contribute to, rather than deter him from, a life of crime? For example, his mother said, “‘After he was picked up so many times he just came to have a hatred for the law, and figured it didn’t do much, if any, good to try to do right.’” (p. 20) Can you find parallels today between how individuals are treated by the police and authority figures, and how it might impact the behavior of those individuals? Explain and give examples.
9. In January of 1930, Bonnie and Clyde met for the first time. Blumenthal tells us, “The two were immediately attracted to one another.” (p. 25) What qualities do you feel that the two saw in each other that inspired such fierce attraction and loyalty? Have you ever been immediately attracted to another individual, either platonically or romantically? What attracted you to this individual? Is “**love at first sight**” actually possible? Discuss.
10. Think about the **correctional system** then and now. (Refer to Chapter 5.) Blumenthal says on page 37, “...prisons were for **punishment**, not **rehabilitation**.” What do you think? Is the purpose of the prison system to punish or to rehabilitate – or to **deter** or to **incapacitate**? Discuss. Think again about Clyde’s experiences in prison. What influence did how he was treated by authority figures within the system, and the prisoners he met there (like Ralph Fults), have on the man he became and the life he led? For instance, “Ralph Fults would later say that prison changed Clyde from a schoolboy to a rattlesnake.” (p.37) Do these experiences excuse the choices that Clyde Barrows later makes? Did prison (or the threat of prison) punish, rehabilitate, deter, and/or incapacitate Bonnie and Clyde from their life of crime?
11. Blumenthal **humanizes** Bonnie and Clyde’s **victims** in sidebar obituaries throughout the book. As you read, keep a list of the names of the individuals who lost their lives at the hands of Bonnie and Clyde and their accomplices, as well as the dates on which they were murdered, beginning with John N. Bucher on April 30, 1932. Why do you think Blumenthal thought it important to give the reader information, not just about Bonnie and Clyde, but about the individuals who lost their lives at the hands of these criminals? Can

you think of contemporary instances in which the faces and stories of the victims of crime have been brought to light? Why is this important?



Harry L. McGinnis



John W. Harryman



H.D. Murphy



E.B. Wheeler



John Bucher

12. In addition, several of Bonnie and Clyde's **partners in crime** also suffered as a result of their relationship with Bonnie and Clyde. For instance, Clyde's own brother, Buck Barrow, loses his life when he partners up with his brother. Discuss additional examples. Do you have any empathy for these individuals, or did they "get what they deserved"?
13. What does the phrase "**honor among thieves**" mean? How does the phrase "honor among thieves" relate to this story? Clyde often used the money he stole to buy himself, "...much-needed loyalty and protection," for example. (p. 49) Do you believe there really is honor among thieves? Give examples from *Bonnie and Clyde: The Making of a Legend* that challenge this theory. For instance, reread page 141 where Blumenthal recounts W.D. Jones pouring "...out details about his time with Clyde and Bonnie to an assistant district attorney – albeit with some plot twists." What does this tell us?
14. Though Bonnie and Clyde had the reputation of being ruthless killers, they did seem to have **empathy** and **compassion** for those who became innocently involved in their operations. Consider and discuss the following:
- ☐ In April of 1932, they kidnapped mailman, W.N. Owens. They treated him well, fed him, and eventually left him on the side of the road with his mail. (p. 50)
 - ☐ Blumenthal tells us on page 50, "Later, people looking for folk heroes in the depths of the Depression would see Clyde's willingness to let these hostages and others go unharmed as a sign that he had a soft-hearted side and wasn't the evil, cold-blooded murderer the law-enforcement described." (p. 51 - 2)
 - ☐ Some even considered them to be a Robin Hood type of individual. (p.93) (Check out <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Robin-Hood> if you are unsure who Robin Hood is.)
 - ☐ William Daniel Jones (W.D.) later said, "Clyde 'never wanted to kill. He'd kidnap the police instead of killing them, if he could. But he killed without hesitation when he had to...Clyde just wanted to stay alive and free, and Bonnie just wanted to be with Clyde.'" (p. 138)
 - ☐ Blanche, Clyde's sister-in-law, said, "'Fear. They weren't naturally mean. But they were afraid...both Bonnie and Clyde were likeable. It was a terrible kind of life they lived. Bonnie wouldn't have done it if she hadn't loved Clyde so.'" (p. 138 - 9)

Discuss additional examples that show the more compassionate and “soft-hearted” sides of both Bonnie and Clyde. Did they have **humanity**? If you think they had humanity, does it soften your opinion of them and the choices they made?

15. Consider the impact Bonnie and Clyde’s escapades had on their **families**. Give specific examples of their family members being affected by their behavior. Bonnie’s mother, Emma Parker, said at one point, “‘All in all, it was enough to break a mother’s heart...but I was to learn later that the human heart can stand many, many breakings and still keep right on beating.’” (p. 54) Discuss this statement. In what ways did the members of Bonnie and Clyde’s families contribute to, suffer from, and perhaps benefit from, Bonnie and Clyde’s life of crime?
16. Compare and contrast the local and county **police departments** of the early 1930’s to the local and county police departments of today in terms of staffing, the issues they dealt with, communications, technology, weapons, training, crime investigation tools, etc. Discuss. Based on your comparisons, would Bonnie and Clyde have been able to accomplish what they did then today? Explain.
17. Discuss this quote from *Bonnie and Clyde: The Making of a Legend*:

“STORIES CHANGE. Sometimes they change in the retelling. Sometimes they change because the world around us changes. And sometimes they change because other storytellers use them for their own purposes.” (p. 198)

Think about the differing accounts that individuals gave of Bonnie and Clyde’s activities. Discuss the nature of **eyewitness accounts**. On page 62, Blumenthal states, “...most crime cases relied on eyewitness accounts, which are rarely precise.” We learn on page 185 that the six men involved in finally taking Bonnie and Clyde down gave differing accounts of what actually happened shortly after the event occurred.

Now watch one of the following TED Talks:

- ☐ “How Reliable Is Your Memory?”: https://www.ted.com/talks/elizabeth_loftus_the_fiction_of_memory
- ☐ “Why Eyewitnesses Get It Wrong”:
https://www.ted.com/talks/scott_fraser_the_problem_with_eyewitness_testimony

Should we rely on eyewitness accounts when trying to solve a crime? Why or why not?

Have you ever had an experience where you and another individual remember the same event in entirely different ways? If you could go back and relive the actual event, do you think it would happen as you remember it? Discuss. How does this influence your definition of the word “**truth**”? Is there such a thing as truth? How does this impact the notion of writing **nonfiction**, **biography**, and **autobiography**?

18. What role did the development and production of **automobiles** at the time, such as the Ford V-8, play in Bonnie and Clyde’s escapades and the lives of Americans in general? How might contemporary automobiles—their capabilities, their availability, etc. - change the dynamics of Bonnie and Clyde’s activities if they were living today?
19. “**Sensationalism**” is defined at <https://www.google.com> as, “(especially in journalism) the use of exciting or shocking stories or language at the expense of accuracy, in order to provoke public interest or excitement.” Consider the manner in which Bonnie and Clyde were portrayed in the media at the time in which they lived, and since their deaths—in books, in newspaper articles, by eyewitnesses, in detective or “true crime” magazines, etc. For instance, Blumenthal states on page 192 that some of the stories about Bonnie and Clyde, “...took advantage of their fame, embellishing and distorting their crimes to sell more

issues,” and that, “...they appear to be nothing more than an embroidered and exaggerated version...” of the facts. Do you agree? Was their story sensationalized at the time? How so? Is it still today? Should we consider the stories about their crimes “news” or “entertainment”?

This issue continues to be debated today. How do we as consumers of the media know when the material presented in a book, magazine article, newspaper article, television news program, Facebook and social media, blogs, etc. is the credible truth, or sensationalized “fake” news? What is the responsibility of a journalist when it comes to the truth? How do you think this impacts and shapes our world?

Based on your reading, what are Blumenthal’s strengths as a journalist? What makes *Bonnie and Clyde: The Making of a Legend* perhaps more credible than other resources on Bonnie and Clyde?

20. List and discuss some of the secret means of **communication** used by Bonnie and Clyde to communicate with their families and friends (notes in Coke bottles, for example). Why did they need to come up with secretive means of communication? Were there methods effective? Would they be as effective today as they were then? Why or why not? What secret means of communication might individuals like Bonnie and Clyde employ today?
21. Many individuals tried, unsuccessfully, to either capture or kill Bonnie and Clyde. Why were their attempts unsuccessful? Give some specific examples of their mistakes. Discuss former Ranger, **Frank Hamer**, who is hired after the death of Major Joseph Crowson to track down Bonnie and Clyde. What made him successful when others were not?
22. “**Legacy**” is defined at www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/legacy, as, “a gift by will especially of money or other personal property: bequest...something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past.” Eventually, after several close calls and serious injuries, Bonnie and Clyde realize that their demise is near. What preparations do they make? For instance, one preparation is that they consider what their legacies will be and make several requests. What are they? Are their requests eventually honored? What other preparations do they make? What kind of legacy did they actually leave behind? Has that legacy changed over the years?

What would you like your own legacy to the world to be?

23. Reread the “Legend Has It: **Dead or Alive**” inset on page 151. Was it the intent of Frank Hamer, and the team he had gathered, to capture or kill Bonnie and Clyde? Discuss. Reread pages 180-1 and the description of what actually happened. (Note that there are varying accounts from those involved – refer to question #17.) Was what actually happened the original intent of the team? Explain.
24. In what ways was the gruesome “**crime scene**” of Bonnie and Clyde’s deaths compromised? For instance, on page 183, Blumenthal tells us that, “...locals who had heard the gunshots or the fast-flying rumors were converging on the scene. Once there, they tried to grab any kind of souvenir that would connect them to the legend of the notorious killers.” (p. 183) Discuss how this might make the job of a journalist such as Karen Blumenthal difficult? As a consumer of the media, how might this make your job difficult?

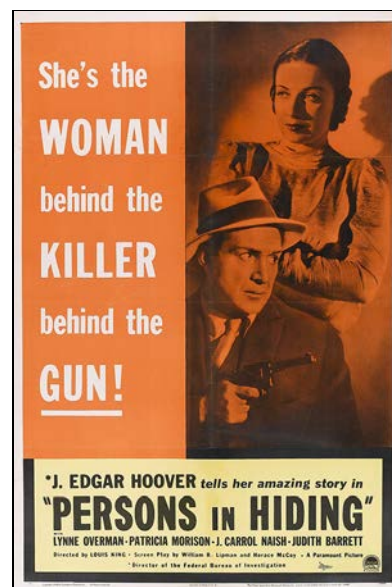
Check out this article detailing **crime scene** procedures: <http://www.crime-scene-investigator.net/crime-scene-procedures.html>. How have procedures changed to preserve the integrity of a crime scenes today?

25. A “myth” is defined at www.google.com as: “a widely held but false belief or idea.” There are many myths about Bonnie and Clyde. For example, did Bonnie really smoke cigars? Share additional examples from *Bonnie and Clyde: The Making of a Legend*. Why do you think we continue to perpetuate these myths?

26. *Persons in Hiding*, a film that came out in 1939, suggests that the **moral** or **lesson** found in Bonnie and Clyde's story is that, "...crime doesn't pay." (p. 199) In what ways does their story teach this lesson? What are additional lessons that we can learn from the story of Bonnie and Clyde?

AFTER YOU READ

1. Re-examine the **cover** of *Bonnie and Clyde: The Making of a Legend*. Based on your reading, do you feel that the cover will draw potential readers to the book and adequately prepare them for what is to come?
2. Reconsider the **title** of the book: *Bonnie and Clyde: The Making of a Legend*. On page 208 Blumenthal states, "Romanticized or vilified, criticized or admired, Bonnie and Clyde remain legendary – no longer for who they were, but for who we want them to be." Do you feel that Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow can accurately be defined as "**legendary**" individuals? Why or why not?
3. Think about the way in which the book is packaged. Vintage **photos** are used throughout the book to support the text. Are these photos a positive addition to the book? Why or why not? Do some more exploration online and find additional photos of Bonnie and Clyde. Share interesting photos with your group. Vintage photos exist of the final shoot-out in which Bonnie and Clyde die, as well as the aftermath of these events. Why do you think these photos were not included in the book?
4. Think again about that song or movie that you listened to or viewed before reading this book, and the way in which Bonnie and Clyde have been portrayed in the **media**. On page 12, Karen Blumenthal tells us, "Movies transformed them [Bonnie and Clyde] into rebellious, romanticized larger-than-life characters. Their stories were endlessly engrossing, combining fear, fascination, gore, and glamour in a way that riveted viewers and turned the bad guys into cultural legends." Why do you think the general public at the time was so fascinated by them? Were they seen as heroes or villains at the time? Do you think that individuals like Bonnie and Clyde would be viewed similarly today? Why or why not?
5. Think again about the responsibility of an author/journalist in terms of getting at the **truth**? Based on your reading, study, and discussion of *Bonnie and Clyde: The Making of a Legend*, what is your opinion about the quality of Blumenthal's **research** in terms of whether or not she gets at the **truth**?
6. Share examples of **primary resources** and **secondary resources** used by Blumenthal. For at least one of each type of resource, analyze the quality and reliability of that resource. For instance, for a website, you could consult the "About Us" section to determine who put the website together and any biases they may have. Take a look at this short article about evaluating a website:
<http://www.educatorstechnology.com/2014/04/the-5-elements-students-should-look-for.html>. For at least one of the statistics that Blumenthal presents, check the related note in the "Source Notes" section beginning on page 227. Go to the original source and **fact check** the information.
7. Many of the chapters in *Bonnie and Clyde: The Making of a Legend* begin with a verse from "The Story of Bonnie and Clyde," a **poem** written by Bonnie Parker. Reread the poem in full on pages 209-212. Do you feel, based on what you now know about Bonnie and Clyde, that the poem adequately and accurately reflects the reality of their lives? Explain.



Choose a poetic form (<http://www.writersdigest.com>), identify the form, and write your own poem about some aspect of the book (the notion of family, being on the run and hiding out, poverty, how you become a legend, the idea that crime doesn't pay, etc.).

8. When a book is published, professional journals provide editorial **reviews** to help readers determine if they may wish to read and/or to purchase that particular book. Find a professional, editorial review of *Bonnie and Clyde: The Making of a Legend* (published in a credible journal such as *Booklist*, *School Library Journal*, *Kirkus*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *VOYA*, etc.). Booksellers like Barnes and Noble, and Amazon Books, often include editorial reviews (be sure that you aren't using "customer reviews") in their posting for a book. Note that these reviews generally include:

- ☐ a brief summary of the book (without giving too much away)
- ☐ who the book might be appropriate for
- ☐ how the book is packaged and how the material is presented
- ☐ comments about the quality of the writing of the book
- ☐ an overall thumbs up or thumbs down for the book (books given "starred" reviews are seen as exceptional)

Discuss with your group whether you agree or disagree with the professional assessment of this book you have chosen. Then write your own review of *Bonnie and Clyde: The Making of a Legend*. Be sure to include the elements listed above.

EXPLORE FURTHER

Check out the extensive "Source Notes" and "Bibliography" found at the back of the book for additional resources to consult for more information about topics covered in *Bonnie and Clyde: The Making of a Legend*.