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## Study Questions on Borland's "That's Not What I Said"

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- This week's reading on oral history was written by a feminist. Is that coincidental? What is it about oral history that has made the method of particular interest to feminist theorists? How is feminist interest in oral history related to what your professor described in class as "the phenomenon of 'selective deposit'"?
- The issue of "Who's voice?" has permeated feminist debate regarding how to conduct and write oral history. At one extreme are those who say the oral historian should be no more than a kind of human tape recorder. At the other extreme are those who have no problem doing what academics do, i.e., treating oral history information as "data" and interpreting it in whatever manner the researcher believes is meaningful. Explain the positions underlying these views. Where do you see Katherine Borland fitting into this debate?
- Your professor has made the distinction between "intrinsic," "instrumental" and "collective" case studies. Which would describe Borland's case study?
- Borland describes her research as a study in "scholarly practice," where interactions such as an oral history and its write-up become "meaning-constructive" activities. What exactly does that mean? Give two examples of how/when that "meaning-construction" occurs
- The researcher/oral historian helps people place their lives or aspects of them into the compendium of historical fact that can be analyzed. One would think Borland's decision to do an oral history of her grandmother would be a thrill for the grandmother – the archival record of her interview by her granddaughter now a part of documentary history. But instead of being thrilled about it, Borland's grandmother was perturbed because she didn't like the roles she and her family were being assigned. A "feminist"? No way. Her father a patriarchal jerk? No way. What do you believe are our responsibilities to those who are the subjects of our oral history interviews? Are we obliged to seek their approval of what we write?
- Is there a moral to Borland's story for those of us who engage in qualitative research? If so, what is it? Expressed another way ... What lessons might qualitative researchers take away from Borland's interaction with her grandmother? How can it help you do better research?
- Who does Borland believe should get the final word when it comes to writing up an article based on an oral history? Would you agree?