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we JORDAN H WELLINGTON and Kenyatta Lee  
(Interviewee, print) (Interviewer, print)

do hereby give and grant to Jacksonville State University, all literary and property rights, title, and interest which we may possess to the audio or video recording(s) and transcript(s) of the interview(s) conducted at the home of the Wellingtons on the date(s) of March 25-26 1996 for the oral history collection being compiled by the Jacksonville State University Library.

Jordan H Wellington  
(Interviewee's signature)

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Phone (205) 437-3959

Date March 25-26 1996

Kenyatta T. Lee  
(Interviewer's signature)

Address P.O. Box 7683 (J.S.U.)  
Jacksonville, AL 36265  
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Date Mar 25-26 1996

**Interviewee Background Information**

Name: Jordan Wellington

Address: P.O. Box 173

Phone Number(s): (265)-437-2959

Approximate age or date of birth: May 9, 1915

Mother's name: Sallie Jackson Wellington

Father's name: Henry Wellington

Places lived and when: Hollywood, Stevenson, Pedukah, Chattanooga, Chicago Il, Gary Ind, L.A Cali

Education: 10th grade Rosenwald / Night School in Military

Religion: Protestant, Baptist

Business, political and social memberships (past and present):

Workman (Paul Road L&N Company) TVA orderly

Present occupation: retired

Former occupation(s): TVA (Cement Mason) Military Service

Special skills: Gardner, Farmer, Mechanic, Carpenter

Major Accomplishments: Being Married for 57 years

Local events in which you have participated: -

State and/or regional events in which you have participated: -

National events in which you have participated: -

International events in which you have participated: -

Natural born U.S. citizen?  Yes /  No

Naturalized Citizen: Yes/No Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Country from which you emigrated: \_\_\_\_\_

Documents, photographs, and artifacts which are in your possession:

Individuals you recommend who might be candidates for an oral history interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional information: Owned Ann's Playhouse

Family 2 mrs. 4 bro.

Family 2 mrs 4 bro

## Historical Chronology

- 1920- Warren G. Harding President
- 1921- Einstein wins noble prize in physics
- 1924- Hitler writes Mein Kampf
  - Lenin dies
- 1928- Hoover becomes President
- 1929- Wall Street crashes beginning of Great Depression
- 1930- Planet Pluto identified
- 1931- Spain becomes a republic
  - Japanese invade Manchuria
  - Scottsboro Boys Case (Mar. 25)
- 1932- F.D.R. pledges a "New Deal"
- 1933- Hitler comes to power
  - F.D.R. President 1933-45
- 1935- Huey Long assassinated
- 1938- World War II begins
- 1940-Winston Churchill becomes British Prime Minister
  - Italy enters WWII
- 1941- Penicillin's use on human beings 1st reported

- Japan invades Pearl Harbor (Dec. 7)
  - U.S. declares war on Japan
- 1942- 1st jet plane tested in the U.S.
- 1945- Roosevelt dies
- Truman becomes President
  - A-bombs dropped on Hiroshima & Nagasaki
  - Japan surrenders (Aug. 14)
- 1947- Truman Doctrine
- Jackie Robinson 1st negro baseball player
- 1948- Dixiecrats bolt the Democrats in election campaign
- Truman re-elected
- 1950- development of the H-bomb
- 1952- Eisenhower President
- 1953- Stalin dies
- 1956- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is a national prominence after Montgomery Bus Boycott
- 1957- Racial riots in Little Rock
- 1958- Khrushchev comes to power
- 1959- Alaska and Hawaii admitted to statehood
- 1960- J.F.K elected President
- 1961- Peace Corp est.

1962- James H. Meredith 1st black to attend Univ. of  
Miss.

1963- Racial violence in Alabama

- J.F.K assassinated

- Lyndon B. Johnson President

1964- Civil Rights Act signed

1965- Malcolm X assassinated

- 1st combat troops in South Vietnam

- Federal troops sent to Ala. to protect  
Civil Rights Marchers

1968- M.L.K Jr. assassinated

- Robert F. Kennedy assassinated

- Nixon elected President

1970- 4 students killed at Kent State Univ.

1972- Nixon re-elected President

1974- Nixon resigns

- Gerald Ford becomes President

- Ford pardons Nixon

1976- Jimmy Carter elected President

- Viking 1 & 2 land on Mars

- U.S wins all Noble prizes

## Interviewee Chronology

- 1915- Jordan Wellington born (May 9)
- 1919- Lucille Martin born (Jan. 12)
- 1924- Wellington family moves to Stevenson
- 1928- Jordan's father dies
- 1938- Jordan and Lucille marry (June 12)
- 1939- Jordan joins the Army (drafted)
  - Lucille moves back home
- 1944- Lucille's mother dies of cancer
- 1946- Started building new house
- 1947- house finished
- 1949- Annie Ruthie May Wellington born (Aug 6)
- 1965- Ann and 3 other girls integrate Stevenson High School
- 1967- Ann graduates from high school
- 1968- attends T.S.U
- 1972- Ann marries Maurice Holland
- 1973- 1st child Marquies born (June 16)
- 1975- 2nd child Enja born (may 23)
- 1982- Holland's devorice
  - Ann moves back home

1985- Annie Ruthie May Wellington changes her name to

Ann Wellington Holland

1995- Ann moves to Nashville

1996- Jordan and Lucille Wellington's 58th

Anniversary

## Questions

1. When and where were you born.
2. What did your parents do for a living.
3. How many siblings do you have.
4. Tell me about you childhood.
5. Why did you stop school in the sixth grade.
6. What did you do when you stopped school.
7. Were you sad/depressed that you stopped school.
8. Did your friends stopped school too.
9. What year did you stop going to school.
10. At what age and year did you meet your husband.
11. How did you know he was the right one for you.
12. When were you married.
13. What did your parents think about you husband.
14. Did the two of you work while you were married.
15. Why did you only have one child.
16. Why did you move back home when your husband went  
off to fight in WWII.
17. Did you work when you moved back home.
18. How long were you living at home.
19. When your husband returned when did you move back  
in with him.
20. How were black and white relations in Stevenson.



21. Was the KKK active in Stevenson.
22. Where blacks treated fairly in Stevenson in the 1950's and 60's.
23. Were there Civil Rights marches in Stevenson.
24. How did the town feel when Martin Luther King Jr. died.
25. Did your daughter have black and white friends.
26. Did she go to an all black school.
27. When did her school integrate.

The Wellington Family  
Kenyatta Lee  
(HY444) History of Alabama

Lucille Wellington was born and raised in Stevenson, Alabama. She has lived there all her life. She was born on January 12, 1919, to Mose and Fannie Martin. Mrs Wellington has two sisters and three brothers. The brothers are all deceased. Her sisters are still alive and she goes to visit them regularly. She and her husband have lived a simple life in Stevenson, with no troubles in the world.

Lucille's parents were hard working people. Her father was a "sawyer", he worked in mills and could cut any kind of wood you wanted. He built many things for many people. He once built a casket for a family. Mr. Martin has owned a gristmill, that he worked in on Saturdays. People would bring corn to him and he would grind it up and make feed out of it. Lucille's father was not a sharecropper. He rented land and planted cotton on it. He owned four mules, two big ones and two small ones. He also owned two wagons and a buggy. Mrs. Wellington and her mother would stay back at the house and cook, while her father and siblings tended

the farm. Lucille's mother was a housewife. Who would save the family earnings. She believed if you make a dollar, save twenty-five cents of that dollar but don't spend all of your money. If you spent all you had you would end up broke and poor. Fannie (Lucille's mom) was also a housekeeper for white families.

Mrs. Wellington helped her family out a lot, by learning how to sew. She started sewing at the age of seven in 1926. She would take her mothers' slips, cut them up and sew them back together. Her mother would always spank her for messing up her slips. So she started sewing flour bags together to learn more about sewing. She said, "it's a gift from god that I learned how to sew at such a young age<sup>1</sup>."

Mrs. Wellington went to school as long as she could, before she had to stop. When she was growing up school was in session for only three months. She and her friends would walk six to seven miles to school everyday. The white kids rode the bus to school. She was educated up to the sixth grade. The seventh grade was considered high school and there was no black high

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<sup>1</sup> As Quoted by Lucille Wellington's interview. March 25-26 1996

school in Stevenson. The nearest black high school was in Scottsboro and there was no bus system for blacks. She would have loved, to have gone to, high school but there was no transportation to Scottsboro. Mrs Wellington says, " I can read and write and that's all I need".<sup>2</sup>

On March 25, 1931, when Lucille was just twelve, nine boys hopped on a train (4 or 5 boys from Stevenson) and got into a fight with about five white boys. The names of this nine black boys were: Clarence Norris, Olen Montgomery, Andy and Roy Wright, Willie Roberson, Ozie Powell, Eugene Williams, and Haywood Patterson.<sup>3</sup> These boys were known as the Scottsboro Boys. They were all arrested and charged with rape and attempted murder. Charges would be later dropped for: Eugene Williams, Olen Montgomery, Willie Roberson and Roy Wright in July 1937. The other boys would be in and out of jail for years to come. In September 1946 Clarence Norris was paroled a second time and given a pardon in 1976. Andy Wright would be given parole in

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<sup>2</sup> As quoted by Lucille Wellington in a taped Interview

<sup>3</sup> Goodman, James. Stories of Scottsboro. New York:Vintage Books, 1990

1950, and in 1946 Ozie Powell was given parole too. Haywood Patterson escaped form Kilby Prison in 1948 and died of cancer in 1952 and Charlie Weems was given parole in 1943.<sup>4</sup>

The Wellingtons didn't talk much about the Boys but I believe they know something. Because some of those boys were from Stevenson. And the Wellingtons have lived there all their lives.

Jordan Wellington was born in Hollywood, Alabama on May 9, 1915. His parents were Henry Wellington and Sallie Jackson Wellington. His family moved to Stevenson in 1924, because his father heard there was work in Stevenson. Jordans' father died in 1928 four years after moving to Stevenson. When times got rough, Jordan would leave and come back when he thought it was safe to come home. He visited many cities when he left home. He's been to: Chicago, Detroit, and stayed a few days in California. He lived and worked in Indian for two or three years, while living there he worked in a gas station. One day he took the owners car, and drove it to Chicago just to see what a big city looked like.

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<sup>4</sup>Scottsboro Boys

His mother never really minded that her son would just get up and leave because she had to worry about the other kids. Jordan was wild and free and nobody could tame him. (Nobody but Lucille Martin)

When Lucille Martin was nineteen, she meet a nice young man by the name of Jordan Wellington who was twenty-three. Lucille had known Jordan from back in school. She remembers "I used to be afraid of him because he always got into trouble and he loved to fight.<sup>5</sup> Lucilles' parents hated Jordan too. They courted for three months before they got married. Jordan and Lucille were married on June 12 1938. Jordan was twenty-three and Lucille was nineteen. They've been married for fifty-seven years. They have one daughter and two grandchildren. The Wellingtons wanted more children but the lord didn't bless them with anymore. Lucille took certain kinds of medicines and shots to try and have kids. The doctor told her if she wanted to have kids she would have to take certain kinds of shots. Her husband suggested taking his arthritis medicine to see if that would help. Mrs.

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<sup>5</sup> Lucille's interview

Wellington was thirty years old when she had her first and only child. They tried for more but she never would conceive.

After the Wellingtons were married, Jordan begin getting greeting cards from the Army in the mail. "So one day I got all liquid up and went down to the draft office and told those people to sign me up. I was prepared to go into the Army that day."<sup>6</sup> While in the Army Mr. Wellington would find himself traveling again. This time he would travel to England, France, and the Philippines. While in the Philippines Mr. Wellington can recall being on guard late on night. His commanding officer told him to shoot at anything that moves. He remembers seeing someone sneaking out of a tent. He shouted HALT! The person kept going. He fired his gun three times, missing the person all three times.<sup>7</sup> Mr. Wellington was lucky because the person he was trying to shoot was his commanding officer. "My commanding officer didn't punish me because I was doing

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<sup>6</sup> As Quoted by Jordan Wellington on March 25-26 1996  
taped Interview

<sup>7</sup> Jordan's Interview



what I was order to do.<sup>8</sup>

Jordan was part of an all black regiment. Blacks and whites didn't integrate until 1948 in the Army. "When black and white soldiers got together their were always fighting. So I went out and bought me a knife so no body would mess with me"<sup>9</sup>

While her husband was off fighting in the war Mrs. Wellington moved back home with her mother. She didn't want to be alone while her husband was gone. Lucille's mother told her "if you're going to move back home you have to abide by my rules."<sup>10</sup> She was twenty when she moved back home. While living at home Mrs Wellington's mother died of cancer (1944). Lucille moved back home during the war but most women in big cities worked in mens' jobs. In 1944, at the pick of war production, almost one in three women defense worker was a former full-time homemaker.<sup>11</sup> Their addition to the work force

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<sup>8</sup> Jordan's Interview

<sup>9</sup> Jordan's Interview

<sup>10</sup> Lucille's Interview

<sup>11</sup> Gluck, Sherna Berger. Rosie the Riveter Revisited. Boston:Twayne Publisher, 1987

meant that married women outnumbered single women workers for the first time in U.S history. In an unusual twist, the work that women performed in the home was seen as having provided them with skills that were transferable to defense work: if they could operate a sewing machine they could easily work a drill or a punch press or a rivet gun. This change for women didn't happen overnight. In 1940 almost a fourth of all white women and nearly 38% of black women were wage earners but most worked in either the lower paid "feminized" clerical or service jobs or in manufacturing.<sup>12</sup> But Blacks and Latino women were just beginning to find manufacturing jobs. If Lucille had lived in a big city she to might have gone and worked in the manufacturing business.

After the war Mrs. Wellington returned home with her husband. Mr. Wellington was out of the Army and working for the T.V.A. He had worked for the T.V.A off and on before joining the Army. They decided to build another house. It would be right down the hill from the old one. They had a man come out and build the

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<sup>12</sup> Roise the Riveter

frame of the house, but they would do the rest. Before they could start they had to tare the old house down. The old house had good wood that they would need to build the new house with. Mrs. Wellington built more of the house than her husband. He was always business at work and he was tired when he came home. When he wasn't working he helped out but that was rare. They lived in a smokehouse until their new house was finished. A smokehouse is a building where meat or fish is cured by means of dense smoke.<sup>13</sup> They lived in the smokehouse for a year. They still live in this house today and have added on in recent years. Jordan gives all the credit to his wife. He says, "she did all the work."<sup>14</sup> The house was finished in 1947.

After ten years of marriage the Wellingtons had their first and only child. Annie Ruthie May Wellington was born on August 6, 1949, in Stevenson, Ala. Her mother was working for a white when Annie was born. She told Lucille to bring her daughter to work and she would take care of her. The white lady told

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<sup>13</sup> Webster's Collegiate Dictionary 9th ed. 1991  
s.v. "smokehouse".

<sup>14</sup> Jordan's Interview

Lucille that she was trying to get a pension from the railroad, and when she did she would use that money for a college fund for Annie. But the lady never got the pension. Annie was an only child, she was tomboy and considered to be the richest kid on the block because, she was an only child. While Annie was growing up in the 1950's and 60's, black and white relations were clam. Mrs. Wellington said, "I didn't want to participate in the Civil Rights Movement because I was afraid for my life."<sup>15</sup> Many people left from Stevenson to support Martin Luther King Jr. in Birmingham and Montgomery. When King died in April 1968 black people in Stevenson were sad. "I hate to see people doing good and get cut off like he (M.L.K Jr.) did. People should have been trying to help him instead of kill him."<sup>16</sup> Annie Ruthie, VeEtta Cole, Besfanet Stewart, and Tiajuana Stewart were the first four girls to integrate Stevenson High School in 1965.<sup>17</sup> They would be the only black kids at the school until the next

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<sup>15</sup> Lucille's Interview

<sup>16</sup> Lucille's Interview

<sup>17</sup> Lucille's Interview

year. Annie graduated in 1967. After graduation she attended Tennessee State University. She stayed at T.S.U for three and a half years. She quit because she got married on June 17, 1972, to Maurice Holland Jr. whom she meet while in school. They lived in Nashville and had two kids. Marquies (boy) who was born on June 16 1973 and Enja (girl) born on may 23 1975. The Hollands would later deviorce in 1982 and Annie Ruthie would move back to Stevenson. She moved in right across the street from her parents. In 1985, she changed her name to Ann Wellington Holland. In 1995 she moved back to Nashville to live and work.

The 1960's came and went along with the 1970's and the Wellingtons were doing just fine. The 80's flew by and know we are in the 90's and things couldn't be better for Jordan and Lucille Wellington. Life in Stevenson has been peaceful throughout the years. Mrs. Wellington can remember a little saying she made up. "If you stay in your place then everything will be just fine."<sup>18</sup> There were hardly any race problems Stevenson because people abided by Lucille's rule. If you

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<sup>18</sup> Interview

stepped out of line then you were destined for trouble. The Wellingtons never stepped out of line. Their lives couldn't be any better. They've been married for fifty-seven years soon to be fifty-eight (June 12 1996). And they thank god that they are still alive today.

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