Oral History Center
The Bancroft Library
University of California, Berkeley

Suffragists Oral History Project

Jeannette Rankin: Activist for World Peace, Women's Rights, and Democratic Government

Jeannette Rankin

With an Afterword by
John Kirkley

Interviews Conducted by
Malca Chall and Hannah Josephson

Jeannette Rankin, 1972

Introductory Materials

Legal Information

Preface to Suffragists Oral History Project

The Suffragists Oral History Project was designed to tape record interviews with the leaders of the woman's suffrage movement in order to document their activities in behalf of passage of the Nineteenth Amendment and their continuing careers as leaders of movements for welfare and labor reform, world peace, and the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. Because the existing documentation of the suffrage struggle indicates a need for additional material on the campaign of the National Woman's Party, the contribution of this small but highly active group has been the major focus of the series.

The project, underwritten by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, enabled the Regional Oral History Office to record first-hand accounts of this early period in the development of women's rights with twelve women representing both the leadership and the rank and file of the movement. Five held important positions in the National Woman's Party. They are Sara Bard Field, Burnita Shelton Matthews, Alice Paul, Rebecca Hourwich Reyher, and Mabel Vernon. Seven interviews are with women who campaigned for suffrage at state and local levels, working with other suffrage organizations. Among this group is Jeannette Rankin, who capped a successful campaign for suffrage in Montana with election to the House of Representatives, the first woman to achieve this distinction. Others are Valeska Bary, Jessie Haver Butler, Miriam Allen de Ford, Ernestine Kettler, Laura Ellsworth Seiler, and Sylvie Thygeson.

Planning for the Suffragists Project and some preliminary interviews had been undertaken prior to receipt of the grant. The age of the women—74 to 104—was a compelling motivation. A number of these interviews were conducted by Sherna Gluck, Director of the Feminist History Research Project in Los Angeles, who has been recording interviews with women active in the suffrage campaigns and the early labor movement. Jacqueline Parker, who was doing post-doctoral research on the history of the social welfare movement, taped interviews with Valeska Bary. A small grant from a local donor permitted Malca Chall to record four sessions with Jeannette Rankin. Both Valeska Bary and Jeannette Rankin died within a few months of their last interviewing session.

The grant request submitted to the Rockefeller Foundation covered funding both to complete these already-recorded interviews and to broaden the scope and enrich the value of the project by the inclusion of several women not part of the leadership. The grant, made in April, 1973, also provided for the deposit of all the completed interviews in five major manuscript repositories which collect women's history materials.

In the process of research, a conference with Anita Politzer (who served more than three decades in the highest offices of the National Woman's Party, but was not well enough to tape record that story) produced the entire series of *Equal Rights* and those volumes of the *Suffragist* missing from Alice Paul's collection; negotiations are currently underway so that these in-party organs can be available to scholars everywhere.

The Suffragists Project as conceived by the Regional Oral History Office is to be the first unit in a series on women in politics. Unit two will focus on interviews with politically active and successful women who are incumbents in elective office today.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons prominent in the history of the West and the nation. The Office is under the administrative supervision of James D. Hart, Director of The Bancroft Library.

Malca Chall, Director, Suffragists Oral History Project Amelia Fry, Interviewer-Editor Willa Baum, Department Head, Regional Oral History Office 2 January 1974
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Suffragists Oral History Project

BARY, Helen Valeska. *Labor Administration and Social Security: A Woman's Life*. 1974

MATTHEWS, Burnita Shelton. *Pathfinder in the Legal Aspects of Women*. 1975

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RANKIN, Jeannette. *Activist for World Peace, Women's Rights, and Democratic Government*. 1974

REYHER, Rebecca Hourwich. *Search and Struggle for Equality and Independence*. 1977

The Suffragists: From Tea-Parties to Prison. 1975 Thygeson, Sylvie, *"In the Parlor"* Butler, Jessie Haver, *"On the Platform"* deFord, Miriam Allen, *"In the Streets"* Seiler, Laura Ellsworth, *"On the Soapbox"* Kettler, Ernestine, *"Behind Bars"*

VERNON, Mabel. *The Suffrage Campaign, Peace and International Relations*. 1975

FIELD, Sara Bard. *Poet and Suffragist*. 1979

Interview History

It was on June 7, 1972 that I first met Jeannette Rankin, the day before we tape recorded the first of our interview sessions. She died peacefully in her sleep an May 18, 1973 just two weeks before her ninety-third birthday. Because of her overriding interest in the present and the futures her failing health, and our lack of financial resources no more than four interviews could be planned. These four interviews consequently represent her ideas and activities during the last year of her life more than they do a record of the past. Fortunately, others had done research on her past and were in the process of preparing biographies for publication; some of their work is already available for research and it is hoped the biographies will be published one day.

In May, 1972, the Regional Oral History Office submitted to the National Endowment for the Humanities a proposal for funds to interview eight to ten leaders of the suffrage movements all of whom were then between the ages of seventy-five and ninety-two. The Office expected to be notified of approval or rejection of the

grant application in November, 1972

Jeannette Rankin was one of the prospective interviewees although Miss Rankin's home base was Watkinsville Georgia, she traveled a considerable portion of each year in behalf the reform she advocated, and she also spent a few months of the year at a retirement center in Carmel Valley. California (Carmel Valley Manor) in order to be near her sister Edna McKinnon. We learned that she we due to arrive at the Manor in June. The opportunity to begin working immediately with Miss Rankin, even before notification from NEA, came in the form of a $500 earmarked gift from Henry Dakin, a member of the Council of the Friends of the Bancroft Library.

When I phoned Miss Rankin she agreed to see me but warned that she did not want to talk about the past. I arrived at the Manor early in the afternoon of June 7 and went to her ground floor apartment. She came to the door and invited me in with a broad smile and a strong handshake. Soon we were involved in active conversation about the past, present, and future.

Miss Rankin belied in almost every way her ninety-two years. She had a small trim figure and always wore handsome tailored dresses in becoming colors of blue, yellow, or gray, and low-heeled dress shoes. A soft brown wig framed her expressive, not deeply lined face. Her eyes, behind glasses, were bright and alert, and twinkled when she was amused. Her throaty laugh was a joy to hear. The only outward sign of age was her halting walk, for support of which she used as a cane.

The comfortable, attractive studio apartment in which we held all our meetings was complete with pullman kitchen and baths and furnished simply with what we know an Danish Modern. Twin beds one on each end of the rooms were covered to look like couches. A round table used for meals and work, a bookcase, several chairs, a couple of end tables, and a TV set completed the furnishings. A few pictures, and one or two African violets provided other decoration. Sliding glass doors opened onto a small, paved patio that overlooked the Manor's well kept grounds.

That afternoon she told me that she didn't feel well. She just returned from a speaking tour during which she had been on the go from morning until night with press and TV interviews, dinners, and speeches, and was quite fatigued. Talking was a problems and she was trying to rest her voice.

Although she requested that I not tape that day, I noticed(and so did she) that as our conference went along she seemed to feel better. Among other things we talked a bit about Carrie Chapman Catt, the League of Women Voters and the American Association of University Women. She wanted to know what the organizations had ever done for peace. Sometimes she was angry, sometimes caustic, sometimes humorous. She later refused to put any of this on tapes even though much of it related to her early associations, claiming that she didn't want any "catty things" on record.

We talked about the returns of the California election primaries held on the preceding day. She was pleased about McGovern's victory, and the success of other peace candidates, upset to learn that her friend, Vincent Hallinan had not won a seat on the San Francisco municipal court. Finally, after nearly two hours of talk, she gave me a couple of articles which had been written about her, and told me to call her the next morning to find out if she felt well enough for a taped interview.

During that first meeting I had gained certain impressions about Miss Rankin which never altered. She was immediately friendly, open, and direct; she made me feel truly welcome. She was very intelligent, had a good memory, a keen wit and enjoyed a certain amount of sharp banter. In the course of time I also came to see that she was strong-willed and deeply committed to democratic principles.

I returned to my motel to prepare for a possible interview the next day. Because the article by John Board (Appendix) thoroughly covered the time she cast her vote against our involvement in World War I. I felt we needn't discuss it, but I still did not know which of her many activities I should try to cover in the interview, since it could be the only one I might have. I decided that if Miss Rankin agreed to the taping, we should talk a little about many topics.

The next morning, with a slight chuckle, Miss Rankin told me that she wasn't feeling much better, but that I could tape the interview. After I began (there were mechanical problems with the tape recorder through which she patiently sat; after which she commented on my patience!) it became apparent that she really did not want to talk about the past, that she was wholeheartedly present and future directed. Her early life on a Montana ranch her activities as a campaigner a lobbyist, a member of Congress, a dedicated pacifist, and an advocate of equal rights, had given her certain insights about the need for reforms in our democratic institutions. Thus any discussion about her work in the past, she inevitably brought around to her immediate concerns—work for peace and government reform.

As I prepared to leave she suggested that I bring the transcript back rather than mail it to her. I took this an a subtle invitation to return, and perhaps to tape again.

During July, she was trying to make an appointment to see Ralph Nader in Washington and talk to him in depth about his questionnaire on Congress, which she had received as a former member of the House. She could not make an appointment with me lest she be called to Washington.

My third appointment was in the afternoon of August 2 and at that time I met John Kirkley, Miss Rankin's assistant and collaborator in her last few years, who had just returned from summer session at the University of Texas Law School in Austin (Afterword) *. He gave me pictures of Miss Rankin and copies of articles they had written, for inclusion in the manuscript. We discussed where other material on Miss Rankin existed. As little time remained that afternoon for an interview, it was suggested that next time I plan to stay overnight and see Miss Rankin twice.

This I did on August 16 and 17. When I arrived at one-thirty, Miss Rankin, in response to my usual query about her health, admitted that she wasn't feeling well. Nevertheless she gamely went through with the interview, although she deftly switched the subject from lobbying for peace, to campaigning and government reform, leaving me feeling stranded because my notes on that latter subject were in the motel prepared for the interview on the next day.

The following day at about ten-thirty, we met again. She seemed to be feeling better. It was a sunny morning and she opened the doors onto the patio. People strolling by stopped to greet her. Despite the interruptions, we completed the interview before lunch and then visited awhile. Because of her continuing throat difficulty, she usually ate her meals alone in her room, but she asked me to have lunch with John in the Manor dining room where he sometimes took his meals although he had rented a room elsewhere in the Carmel area.

Before lunch, John and I walked around the beautiful Manor grounds. He told me then that he and Miss Rankin planned to give more time to writing articles, and less time to interviews, especially those related to her past. She claimed that she was bored with the subject.

After August 17, communication was by letter and phone. I never saw Miss Rankin again. We transcribed the tapes and sent the edited transcriptions to Miss Rankin in November so that she and John could review them during his Thanksgiving holiday. During their review, John wrote certain comments about the interview which we thought perceptive enough to be included in the manuscript. Later he accepted my request to write the introduction, although he asked that it be put at the end of the interview as an Afterword. Miss Rankin, in late January, read the carbon of the final draft and made same corrections.

In November the Office was notified that NEH had rejected the grant for the suffrage project, and it was not until March that the Rockefeller Foundation provided the funds which enabled us to complete the manuscript. Miss Rankin was then too ill to tape any additional interviews.

In early January Hannah Josephson (Mrs. Matthew), a longtime friend of Miss Rankin came to California to visit Miss Rankin and to fill in some of the blank spots she had encountered while finishing the first draft of her biography. Before going to Carmel, she spent two days in the Office reading the transcript and doing other research. She allowed us to copy the six taped interviews she had made with Miss Rankin in April, 1972, and subsequently both she and Miss Rankin gave us permission to include the edited transcriptions of these tapes in the suffrage project (see Hannah Josephson Interviews Jeannette Rankin) *. These two sets of interviews, approached from differing backgrounds and for different purposes, provide an understanding of Miss Hankins points of view, as well as some detail on her activities during her ninety-three years.

As she read this manuscript, Mrs. Josephson noted that Miss Rankin may have confused my question about the America First Committee with the Keep America Out of War Committee *, and that when she said that there had always been a woman's suffrage committee in the House *, she may have meant to say that suffrage matters, until her times had been sent to the Judiciary Committee.

As in all research, scholars should check the transcript against other available records. For Jeannette Rankin there is the *Congressional Records* suffrage material in the Library of Congress, the Swarthmore College Peace Collections the Montana Historical Society, and scattered material in other archives relating to the suffragists and their campaigns.

It is hoped that the biographies now being prepared on the life of Jeannette Rankin will soon be available. Many people should have an opportunity to became well acquainted with this exceptional woman whom it was my privilege to know, albeit briefly, during the last year of her life.

We wish to give special thanks to Henry Dankin whose fortuitous and unsolicited gift provided the sole means for the Regional Oral History Office to record anything of this remarkable woman.

Malca Chall, Interviewer 12 September 1973
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Chronology—Jeannette Rankin

1880

Born in Missoula, Montana

1902

A.B. University of Montana

1909

New York School of Philanthropy

1910

Suffrage Campaign, State of Washington

1911-12
Suffrage Campaign New York State
Meeting with Katharine Anthony, Elisabeth Irwin, Harriet Laidlaw and others

1911
Suffrage Campaign, California

1911-14
Suffrage Campaign, Montana

1916
First Campaign for Congress

1917-19
In Congress

1919
Women's Peace Meeting in Zurich

1920-24
National Consumers League

1923
Move to Georgia

1925
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

1925-36
Georgia Peace Movement

1929
Women's Peace Union

1929-38
National Connell for the Prevention of War

1939-40
Second Campaign for Congress

1941-43
In Congress

1946-47
First Trip to Turkey and India

1952
Trip to South Africa

1962
Trip to Russia

1968
Jeannette Rankin Brigade March on Washington

1973
Died

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I Getting Acquainted with Jeannette Rankin and her Ideas on Peace, Woman's Suffrage, and Congress

Chall: Let's start with your work for peace.

Yesterday you told me, and from what I've read it seems to be so, that when you voted, No against going into World War I, that upset the women's suffrage movement—the leaders.

Rankin: Just a few of the leaders. Not the rest. Because, for instance, New York had a campaign for the vote and New York City never asked me to speak. Buffalo did, and I think there was quite a little discussion as to whether it was right to ask me, and Buffalo carried with a larger majority than New York.

I didn't hurt the movement, and there was a change in the attitude of the people in the suffrage movement. You see, they had a campaign on for woman's suffrage, and they carried, and Buffalo carried with a larger percentage than New York City. And they did have me at a very big meeting in Buffalo.

Chall: And this was after you had cast your No vote?

Rankin: The first thing I did.

Chall: That's right, so it would have to have been after.

Rankin: The first vote. Did you get it that there were fifty-five man voting with me?

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The Woman's Role in the Quest for Peace: The Emotion of an Idea

Chall: Yes. Some of the authors of magazine articles written at that time seemed to feel that this might be an example of what women would do if they got into power—if they got the vote—as if they really weren't sure what your vote meant. You always felt, however, and still do, I guess, that women are the ones who are going to bring a stop to war if it's going to be done—

Rankin: I tell, whenever I have enough time to tell, that after I cast my vote against war, I read Benjamin Kidd's book on social evolution. Did you ever hear of Benjamin Kidd?

Chall: No.

Rankin: He was a philosopher at Cambridge, England, and he wrote this book at the turn of the century, which was an answer to what some people thought was the Darwin theory. And then in 1918 he wrote a book called *The Science of Power*, and at the first meeting of the women afterwards national or international, in America, there were five different people who spoke of that book

and what it meant to them, and then we never heard of it again, and he died shortly after.

He brought off in this book that there was a difference between force and power. That force is

something you use in the present—you cut down a tree, you build a bridge, you do something. That's force. But power—it's something you can use in the future, and that the greatest power in the world was the emotion of an idea. And he said that women, from their racial and physical and so forth, had a greater capacity to work for an ideal in the future. That it was the women who persuaded the men to stop the chase and wait for the crops to mature; and that seems to me to be recognized everywhere, with the beginning of agriculture and the beginning of the home. And he said that the woman waits nine months for the child, and then there's never—any one day that's more important than another in the future. They're always working for something in the future. They take care of the child, and when he goes to school, when he goes to college, when he marries, the grandchildren—women are always working for the future.

And I don't remember whether Kidd brought this up or not, but I've always thought that it's the same thing in men that changed civilization. The great leaders in thought and in change have been those who have been working for the future, and not the present—self-aggrandizement or anything of that kind. Martin Luther King and Gandhi in the present, and Jesus, and all the great religious leaders, make their appeal on the future

Chall: So you think that it is not necessarily a man or a woman difference—

Women Can't be Free Until Men are Free

Rankin: There is a difference, and I say in my speeches, we have two hands, and they're not the same. And no one would think because they're not the same, you'd tie one behind our beak. They work separately and they work together, and we need both men and women and they do work together. But modern civilization is tying women one hand behind her back and not allowing her expression And as a result, they have to keep the other hand from progressing.

Men haven't got the freedom today that they had when the Constitution was written. The men in the West had a great deal of freedoms more than the men in the East who copied the traditions of Europe. You have to have the women **because** they're different, and because all of humanity needs freedom. Freedom isn't a sex thing; it's a human thing. And therefore both men and women have to have it. Men today haven't the freedom they had when I started working for women's suffrage.

In that time, men could go into their own business. They could follow farming and they could do this and that. Today, young men in college are not planning on individual development, as much as getting a job. They have someone else raise the money, and then they do the work. And men haven't the freedom because big business doesn't give it to them. And so men's jobs are dependent on having a nice mousy wife who doesn't do anything. And one of the greatest difficulties that the women's lib has to contend with is the fact that the women can't go any faster than the men. And this isn't because men want to hold them down. My most conspicuous illustration was that in birth control the experience of my sister, Edna Rankin McKinnon, who was a leader in the birth control movement. For instance, there was one woman they wanted to make president of a birth control organization. She was a perfect candidate for the job—she had

intelligence, judgments and educations and her children were in college. Her husband worked in a big organization. They told him if she took that job, he'd lose his.

Chall: About when was this—in the 1920s?

Rankin: Oh, I don't know, I think later than that. That's just one illustration. When it was very definite. In campaigning in Montana, you found right along that the wife had to be still when her husband had a job. And they controlled workers in the same way. There was one candidate who was very near a dam. A big company—the Anaconda company had their people. And they told the people in that place that if there was one vote for that candidates that all of them would lose their jobs.

[At this point there was difficulty with the tape recorder. This caused a break in the conversation]

Rankin: I've got a taping in color. Would that help any?

Chall: Oh, video tape. We're just beginning to experiment with video tape. Who did the taping of your speech?

Rankin: They did it in Georgia a year or more ago, and they ran it at the University of Georgia, either the very day Wallace was shot, or the day before or the day after—I've forgotten. And in that speech I had said that we couldn't expect to hold off violence at home so long as we were preparing for violence in other countries. The woman who sent the tape to me said that my statement came up at just the right time.

Beginning of the Lifelong Campaign for Peace

Chall: I'd like to find out how it is possible for you to work for peace in Georgia?

Rankin: Oh, Georgia is much more peaceful than lots of other places.

Chall: When you work for peace, what's your standard method? met

Rankin: I have a program always; I lobbied for peace, and they gave different workers different states. This was before I went to Congress, before we got the vote in Montana.

Chall: Oh, you were doing it then?

Rankin: Yes.

Chall: I didn't know that

Rankin: I had to go to seven senators, and some of the representatives, I think. I found so much peace sentiment, that when I was hunting for a place near Washington to have a recreation center for myself, I chose Georgia. The vote against war told how the people feel. There was no vote against it in the New England states and in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland or Virginia. But the leader of the Democrats in the House, Claude Kitchin, was among the strongest speakers in the House against the war, and he stood with tears running down his cheeks and

openly wiped his eyes, and he said, "It takes neither moral nor physical courage to declare a war for others to fight."

That was North Carolina; South Carolina had a vote against it. Georgia would have had a vote against its but Wilson pled personally with a man and persuaded him to vote for it. Alabama had three votes against it. Mississippi had one, Texas two or three, and Missouri had the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and he voted against it. Then Illinois had several [votes against], and Wisconsin had the largest number; Michigan and Indiana and Ohio each had one. Then Minnesota had three, I think; South Dakota, North Dakota, and Montana, and Idaho, and Washington each had one against it. They were small states. Fifty percent of the vote in Montana were against it [laughs]. And California and Nevada— those were the states that voted against the First World War. So the South had a big proportion of the vote. No one voted against it anywhere—except the West. The nicest editorials that were printed about my vote against the First World War came from the *Atlanta Constitution*.

I campaigned in Georgia and I had a Georgia Peace Society that went beautifully until Roosevelt came in and got strength and then he turned it over, when he started preparations for the Second World war.

Chall: Under whose auspices, between the wars, were you lobbying for peace?

Rankin: For the National Council for Prevention of War— Frederick J. Libby was the head.

Chall: Is that a pacifist organization?

Rankin: It's a council of organizations for the prevention of war. They were mostly Quakers.

Chall: Were you a paid lobbyist for them?

Rankin: I was a paid lobbyist in Washington, and when the Congress wasn't in session, they continued my salary to work in Georgia.

Chall: I see.

Rankin: I didn't do it all there; I did it other places too.

Chall: And you organized little group—?

Rankin: The Georgia Peace Society, which was a very strong organization. A man got his master's degree writing about—

Chall: About the Georgia Peace Society?

Rankin: Well, about my work in Georgia.

Chall: What's his name?

Rankin: He's a minister in my neighborhood. It's Ted C. Harris, Watkinsville, Georgia

Chall: In the period between the wars, particularly in the late 1930s, groups became involved in anti-war activities, like the America First Committee, some organizations that seemed committed to what others thought was a doctrine of facism—the Communists were opposed to the war at one time. How did you work with all of these different groups?

Rankin: Oh all that fascism and that communism and all that was just the newspapers. They were devoted to peace—the people I worked with.

Chall: You didn't have any difficulty in working with Burton K. Wheeler.

Rankin: Oh he was a great pacifist.

Chall: He was basically a pacifist?

Rankin: Yes. We're still friends; I talked to him the other day.

Chall: And Lindbergh—?

Rankin: He was well known, and his father was a pacifist.

Chall: So you feel that the America First Committee was a—

Rankin: Loyal, brilliant organizations destroyed by Roosevelt.

Chall: What about Father Coughlin?

Rankin: He was good. [pause] But he wasn't an important man.

Chall: The important people prior to and during the Second World War were whom, in your judgment?

Rankin: That were pacifists?—Well, I didn't know anyone.

Chall: You worked on your own—you stayed with the National Council for—

Rankin: Oh no, I left the Council when the people were getting converted to Roosevelt's idea of war. The National Council wasn't as aggressive as it was before and I left them—

The Second Vote Against War, 1941

Chall: And then where did you go?

Rankin: I ran for Congress.

Chall: Now, the casting of your vote the second time against the war—was that as traumatic an experience for you as casting it the first time?

Rankin: No. Because I learned from the first one, and I didn't let anybody approach me. You see, I knew it was coming. I knew Roosevelt was trying, but I said on Saturday night (some people came to see me), I said I didn't think it was coming soon, because Roosevelt knows we're not prepared to go to war. And then it came right away. But I knew he was trying to get us in. And I wrote an article a year later, not an article—I wrote a speech, which I had in the *Congressional Record*, December 8, 1942, in which I said I was entitled to some questions about Pearl Harbor, and I brought out all the facts that I could gather at that time, which indicated that Roosevelt was deliberately trying to get us in the war, that it was a provoked attack.

Chall: There are people who think that, of course.

Rankin: Oh, there are a great many now.

Chall: You were a well-known pacifist by 1940, so that your vote, while it created a great deal of furor, needn't have surprised anybody, except that I suppose people felt that we were attacked, and therefore all of our energies should go into fighting the war. But that wasn't where you stood.

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Rankin: It was not. On Sunday Pearl Harbor was attacked; I had an engagement to speak in Detroit on Monday afternoon. I couldn't get hold of anyone at the Capitol, to find out what the program was going to be. I felt the only thing I could do was to start going to Detroit because it wasn't possible then to get there in such a short time.

So I took the train Sunday night, and I took a radio with me, and from the conversation on the radios after the train got started, I knew that the vote was coming the next day. So I got off at Pittsburgh and went back. So I was traveling all night, and when I got there and they said it was coming at 12 o'clock, I got into my car and left the office and left everything, and no one knew where I was. And no one could get after me; no one could bring any pressure on me, because I knew what I was going to do. And so it was very simple, at last.

The thing hasn't ever been brought up since—at the time it was mentioned—at the First World War vote, James Mann came to me afterwards and said, "If I had known you were going to vote against it, I might have had the courage." So, I decided then, that **never** would I wait to prepare a speech, that I'd speak out any time, and so when they read the resolution, I asked to have it referred to committee.

And I asked, and they wouldn't let me talk. They proved that we haven't free speech. The only

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free speech we have is the filibuster in the Senate, and that's about to be taken away. So, we have no free speech. You **can't** speak out with an audience in this country. That was the most important vote that we've ever taken. I think the First World War was at that time the most important. But to repeat the same mistake was a **terrible** mistake.

Chall: Well we haven't repeated the same mistake in this Vietnam war; we haven't asked the Congress, we've just gone in and continued it. Now how do you feel about the peace movement with respect to the Vietnam war, and the actions of the Congress—men and women in Congress now—?

Rankin: Well, there were twice as many voting against Vietnam as the Second [World War] vote.

Chall: When?

Rankin: Senator Gruening and Senator Wayne Morse.

Chall: Yes, you had two men speaking out against it at the very start. And where are they now?

Rankin: Of course, they were the first ones speaking out—

Chall: Do you feel impatient or discouraged with the movement in this country toward peace over the last half-century?

Rankin: Yes; now the women are just waking up. They've been sound asleep. And you see, I was attacked viciously after the First World War. But I wasn't attacked after the Second. And Raymond Clapper said in his column, before I left Washington that "Miss Rankin has written her footnote in history, and that's the last we'll hear of her." And never was I mentioned. When

I introduced some questions on Pearl Harbor, there was one man (I've forgotten his name), who had been hired by Ford as a commentator, and he'd been a commentator in Washington. I always listened to him. Not that I agreed with him, but he was a good commentator. I mean, he was on the other side. He attacked me. And a man in California attacked me. And those are the only two that did. And I never can get the words

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of the man in California—he was an Englishman. But this man that had been hired by Ford—Ford received so many letters that he never rehired him. And I wrote to him and sent him a dime and asked for a copy.

Chall: And he sent ot to you.

Rankin: [laughs] I've forgotten how he put it— But he lost his jobs because I had received a thousand letters saying they listened to the Ford commentators and they condemned him—

Chall: For his talking about you.

Rankin: I lost all those letters. I sent them to a man, and he never returned them, and I couldn't get them.

Chall: That's why it's better to put such material into a library, and say, "If you want them, come and read them."

Rankin: But no library would take them

Chall: I guess that may have been true at one time, but it surely is not anymore.

Rankin: And I never was mentioned—which is a great relief.

Chall: Yes, you disappeared from the news, as it were.

Rankin: Absolutely.

Chall: So what did you do?

Rankin: Oh, I wasn't idle. I traveled around the world and stayed long enough to know how the Americans were dominating undeveloped countries.

Chall: But during the war, of courses you couldn't travel around. You stayed in the United States?

Rankin: Oh well, I stayed at home.

Chall: You didn't go around and organize peace groups— things like that—?

Rankin: Oh, well you couldn't!

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Chall: You had to be silent during the war.

Rankin: Peace people didn't—no I didn't.

Chall: What about such peace groups as A. J. Muste's and groups like that?

Rankin: The Liberation—they were very good to me. The First World War, the Quakers were fine—afterwards. They took care of me. I mean they recognized me. But after the Second World War, I only got one letter from a Quaker, and I think that was Emily Balch, who got a peace prize.

We were intimate friends and had been for years. And she said, she admired my courage and was very glad I stuck to what I thought. But she had changed, and then she got a peace prize.

Chall: Who gave it to her?

Rankin: The Nobel people [1946]. They give it to those who are for war.

Chall: Well now in the period from, '30-'47, Mabel Vernon was the director of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom—and then of the People's Mandate to End the War from '35-'47.

Rankin: They wouldn't have anything to do with me.

Chall: Why?

Rankin: They were for the Second World War.

Chall: So, what was their platform then, in term of the People's Mandate to End the war.

Rankin: They wanted peace and good will; they loved their mother. [laughs]

Chall: Do you think the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom was not a truly bona fide peace organization?

Rankin: No, they were silent plenty of times.

Chall: What about the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom as it was organized immediately

following the Nineteenth Amendment—

Rankin: It was before—

Chall: I had understood that it was a split-off from the Woman's Party.

Rankin: No. Miss Addams [Jane]—I've got some material here I can give you—Miss Addams worked in 1915. At that time, I was lobbying for peace in Washington. She called a meetings and then in 1919, the Women's International League was formed. And I was with Miss Addams and traveled with her and roomed with her part of the time on that trip. WILPF organized in Zurich, Switzerland. I was one of a delegation of about fifteen (I don't know how many exactly) from the United States. All the great women of that period were in the groups and I was very much a junior member, if age was a criterion. I tried to draw parallels between the county-by-county methods of organization I had used in Montana to win suffrage and my own election to Congress, and I suggested that these same methods be applied to the peace movement. But—they never would take my advice on how to campaign and what to do.

Chall: Is this for suffrage or for the peace movement—?

Rankin: Suffrage. And then the peace people were the same women, and they wouldn't take my advice. So I couldn't work with them, and I went to Mr. Libby, and I had a hard time working with him.

Chall: Why is that—

Rankin: They wanted me to make a speech! If I'd said I'd go from town to town and make speeches—which is of no good. It doesn't help at all. And I knew it wouldn't helps and I kept

protesting and said you had to organize and you had to go back and see that the organization worked, and you had to take a certain amount of territory and **make it solid**. And they wanted me to work all the time and then rest on my own. So, we had arguments about it—not so much arguments, as I'd state my opinion and they'd pay no attention.

Chall: So you wanted to organize the peace movement the way Carrie Chapman Catt had organized the suffrage movement—

Rankin: Not she didn't do that for suffrage.

Chall: Oh, it always sounded as if she had really organized—

Rankin: She organized New York and she organized the South, but she never organized the people. She did international organization.

Chall: Who organized the people during the last crucial months before the amendment was ratified?

Rankin: The local people

Chall: I see. She had a sort of hierarchy of sending people into the states—

Rankin: Yes. Well they didn't send many.

Chall: They had to find their own leaders—

Rankin: The movement did go in the South. They came to Montana and helped me, but Mrs. Catt didn't send them. They came because I asked them to. I didn't pay them; they came on their own.

Working for Woman's Suffrage in the House of Representatives

Jeannette Rankin, 1917

Chall: When you were in Congress, the House of Representatives passed the voting rights amendment. Did you play a part in this?

Rankin: Well certainly! Why ask me such a stupid question!

Chall: What did you do? According to an article I read, they were afraid you were going to pester the members of the House about women's suffrage, and according to the writer you didn't pester them.

Rankin: I worked, where it was worthwhile working.

Chall: You did go from man to man—

Rankin: Not of course not, you don't do that in Congress.

Chall: What did you do?

Rankin: Well, they had a women's suffrage committee—oh **I hate to tell this! It makes me just burn! You'd think People would have more sense. How could I have gotten it through if I hadn't worked? And I didn't do the stupid things that they do.**

Chall: I see, you had a different method. Were you working with Alice Paul?

Rankin: No. I was working with Congress! And I was working with myself. I commanded myself. When I made speeches and so on, I said what **I** wanted to say.

Chall: In the meantime, the other ladies were out doing their thing in Washington, holding vigils and marches and processions. Did you participate in this at all?

Rankin: No, I said it was a good thing. I always said some people work that way; I don't. And everything helps, but they helped by making those who were for it stronger for it, and not by converting people. I had lots of fun with them when they were there, because I didn't say anything against them. And someone wanted me to go to the prison to see them.

And one day, I had a little extra time, and I tried to find the prison, and I couldn't. And so, I called a very important woman—her brother—I've forgotten their names—her brother was a very noted doctor—and at that time appendectomies were very now and very important, and he was known everywhere for his skill at that—so I called her up (I think her name was Lewis, but I am not sure) and I said "I couldn't find the prison." And she said, " I don't know where it is. I've always gone in a Black Maria." [police car] [laughter] I finally found it and went up. Now I don't want this on there.

Chall: Why?

Rankin: Because it's of no importance! It has no significance, it's just a funny story

Chall: Funny stories are sometimes interesting to have—

Rankin: But they have to have a point.

Chall: And this doesn't have a point—about your going to visit the ladies in jail.

Rankin: What they said and what they did is of no consequence. I was very much amused by it, and I tell it quite often, when I get a chance.

[Story is told with tape recorder turned off.]

Chall: In terms of your work in Congress, can you tell me, unless it's already been put down someplace, what you did for the suffrage movement while you were there?

Rankin: I clubbed them over the head with a good club, and then they were insensitive, and then they were **for** it. [wryly]

Chall: Yes, of course. All right, now what did you really do? How did you really operate?

Audio Clip #1

Rankin: I operated as a Congressman. I was polite and sensitive, and I didn't do the wrong thing, and all the men had to do was to watch me. I didn't have to say anything.

James R. Mann was the leader of the Republicans. And the Republicans were almost equal to the Democrats. Every vote counted when the Democrats organized against women voting. So we were just as strong as the Democrats, if there was any difference. And then, the Democrats organized the House, and everyone—every chairmanship went to the Democrats. And there was a man as head of the women's suffrage committee; there'd always been a woman's suffrage committee. I heard the rumor going around that the men, the Republicans, were thinking of asking the Democrats to give me the chairmanship of the women's suffrage committee, and this was to be held on Monday.

On the Friday before, a man from Massachusetts, Joe Walsh, that I had been warned against before I went in—that he was violently opposed to woman's suffrage—so I always avoided him; I always sat in back of him in the Houses and I never made myself conspicuous. He came over to see so, and said I was going to speak in his district. I said I didn't know, that I had a managers and I didn't know where I was to speak. So, I was leaving for New York and the manager said he had this speaking engagement. So I went.

I began my speech by saying that they had a very able man from their districts and I told all the good things he did, because he did do lots of good things, and praised him as much as I possibly could. But I said, "He has one faults and that's **your** fault. It's because you haven't converted him. He's against woman's suffrage!" And I said, "That's your fault." And went on and made my speech.

When I got back on Monday, this committee was meeting, and I went to it. And **I** didn't want to be chairman. I said it may cost us a vote or two from the Democrats. I said, "I don't want to be chairman." And this fellow, Joe Walsh, didn't want me to be chairman, and so he couldn't make a speech, because he couldn't says, "I don't believe in woman's suffrage." And he couldn't talk against what I was saying. And so he was all mixed up. [laughs] If I had said, "I want to be chairman." he would have talked against it, but then I said I didn't—So, when we got through, I wasn't to be chairman. He and I had agreed.

Well, the next day he came around to me, and it was the funniest thing I ever heard. He's trying to apologize for being nasty, when I hadn't accused him. And he'd gotten word from his district, and they said that I had said only nice things about him. So, after that, we smiled and talked, but never about woman's suffrage. Then when woman's suffrage was going to come out, I went to his office, and I said I wanted to ask a favor. I said, "I don't want you to do anything against your conscience. If you are against woman's suffrage I'm not going to ask you to vote for it. But I **am** going to ask

you **not** to make a speech against it." I said, "Your speeches will convert them, and you're such a good speaker—" [laughs]. I've forgotten it all. "I don't want you to make a speech against it." He said, "Well what may he say?" I said, "You don't have to answer. Just leave the room." And he was helpful. He said, "I'm having difficulty voting against it." He didn't say what it was, and I didn't want to ask him.

When the vote came, we won by one vote, and they had a recapitulation, and when anyone came up that he thought might change his vote and be against it, he said

"If you change your vote, I'll change mine."

Chall: Oh my, he certainly did come around.

Rankin: That was real work!

Chall: You felt he was a key man in this—

Rankin: Oh he was. He didn't let anybody change their vote to go against it—

Chall: So he was honest. He was opposed to it, but be was honest about the vote.

Rankin: Well he thought his people weren't, I think.

Chall: He thought his people would vote against it?

Rankin: Yes, and they would have. He would have lost votes if he'd voted for it—in his district. But nobody knew but me what he had done. Some or the men that saw him and heard him told me. He didn't tell me. But they said he sat right there and when he thought they were going to change, he said, "If you change yours, I'll change mine."

Chall: He must have been sympathetic toward it eventually.

Rankin: He wasn't opposed. He hadn't talked with me, and I hadn't beat him over the head every time he came in the office.

But before the vote came, James R. Mann had said to me, "We'll put this over," and he ask

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about the suffragists and what they were doing, and I told him and he said, "Well you and I will put this over." Then he was ill, and he was in the hospital— very ill. And when the vote came out, two men, one on each side of him, guided him in, looking like death— he was so pale and so sick. And then when the vote came, his vote was needed. And the whole hall rose and applauded and cheered. They knew how hard it was for him to do it.

Chall: So you're saying in effect that you helped put over woman's suffrage by being a good female leader in Congress.

Rankin: No. I didn't do any female things—

Chall: No, but you were a good worker, you were a good Congressman, and that allowed them to realize that women could function with the votes and in Congress

Rankin: Yes, I was a good Congressman. But I never worked any female stuff.

Chall: No, I realize that.

Rankin: I think men are tired of being flirted with, and they knew I never flirted with them. Did you ever read what Mrs. Slayden said?"

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Chall: Yes, that was quoted in both of the articles I read last night. That was the first time I've seen that quote—that's very good, that's very interesting.

The Jeannette Rankin Brigade

Chall: You were going to tell me how the Jeannette Rankin Brigade was formed. What was the sponsoring organization behind it?

Rankin: It was a coalition. In 1967, I think it was May—I was asked to speak in Atlanta at a friend's home. Mrs. Nan Pendergrast was a good friend of mine, and she asked me to speak to a group called Atlantans for Peace. And I spoke to, I think there were one hundred people there, maybe more. It was the day that the newspapers announced there'd been 10,000 men killed in Vietnam. I said if we had 10,000 women who were willing to make the sacrifices that these boys had given their lives for—that we could stop the war. And I went on to tell what they could do. And there was an *AP* [Associated Press] newsman present.

Before the meeting a very good friend of mine, whose wife had worked for birth control in Chicago, and I'd known them there before they moved to Atlanta, got this reporter to come to see me. I gave him my talk on war, emphasizing the standard things that I talked about, and he sent out a story. I have the story here. It went **all over the country!** This was in '67. It went everywhere. I got hundreds of letters on it, saying they felt the same way. And I answered them. I had to get help to get it done, but I answered them. And I was coming out here [Carmel Valley Manor] for the summer, and so I wrote to the ones around here that had written to me and said that I was coming and I'd like to see them and talk with them. There was a woman in, I think—is there a town, Ross?

Chall: Yes, near San Francisco.

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Rankin: Mrs. Meredith had a private school and she wrote to Mrs. Vivian Hallinan and said, "I think we ought to follow this up." I'd written to her, not to Mrs. Hallinan. And so Mrs. Hallinan got a small group and came down here and interviewed me. They had lunch, and then she went home, and these women got together and decided that we ought to have a parade in Washington, and could they use my name? And they said they'd call it the Jeannette Rankin Brigade. I didn't like "Brigades" but that was insignificant. I said I can't organize, because I've been out so long. I don't know the women or how to do it. Mrs. Hallinan said, "Oh, we'll manage the organization."

So they started in. This was in August I think. And then they got the women in the East interested, and when I got back to Georgia, I went up to New York and Washington and places where we talked it over, and they raised money and began organizing this coalition. And of course, we got an enormous amount of publicity, up until the parade. We wanted the parade in December, but there was a new Congress coming in in January—no not a new one—

Chall: But at least they get started again in Januarys after the break at Christmas.

Rankin: Yes. And then so they decided to have it in January, and the date kept being advanced, so that it was hard to have people know in time just when.

Chall: But there were 5,000.

Rankin: We asked for 10,000. And they wouldn't let us speak on the steps of the Capitol but —they couldn't keep **me** out. And so the House said sixteen, and the Senate said four, something like that. Mike Mansfield was my senators and so he couldn't refuse to see me, and so we had a

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delegation there. And then the papers quit—they never mentioned us again.

Chall: And you've been ongoing?

Rankin: Oh yes. Huntley is from Montana, and Brinkley, and they had an hour, and I didn't get [to see] it. He had an hour after the parade telling how nasty the newspapers had been about it. He said they just quit talking about it.

And there was snow on the ground, and they wouldn't let us march on the pavement, corner, where the cars had made dents in the snow; we had to march on the sidewalk. And there were police **everywhere, every corner, everywhere!** All the way to the Capitol, there was one man, a policeman, who held my arm and talked like a friend. And someone said to him, "She can walk. You don't need to help." He said, "Don't deprive me of that pleasure," or something idiotic

like that. Then the papers never mentioned it.

Chall: You think there's a—

Rankin: —conspiracy of silence

Chall: Silence against any criticism of the Vietman war, unless it happens to be kids breaking windows?

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Rankin: That happens. So you can't find it in the newspapers.

Chall: Well I didn't find much.

Rankin: But, I had a wide curtain in my bedroom in Georgia, and when these people would send me these clippings, I started pinning them on. The only difference was in the headlines which were very interesting and very amusing.

Chall: Depending on where they came from—

Rankin: Yes. But they were **all** sympathetic!—showing how much sympathy was around. I never could account for the change in the attitudes but someone said it was because they never got anything; they never printed anything on the peace side. And here came something that was spectacular, and they printed it.

There was a very good article against war, and against the war in Vietnam. I have the book, and it's that thick, with piles and piles of clippings. Even the clipping bureaus got in touch with me; they wanted me to hire them.

Chall: Yes, but people were doing it for you.

Rankin: The people did it all the way. It's been a word of mouth thing. They got them from everywhere. Then when it came time for the parade, you see, we had all those people to write to and to work with. And then, two years ago, some friends of mine in Washington had a birthday party for me, and I got **terrific** publicity. The *St. Louis Post Dispatch* — had a quarter-page, four to six photographs.

Chall: On your birthday party?

Rankin: Yes. That got terrific publicity!

Chall: Did they give publicity to your activities for peace?

Rankin: Yes, it was all peace.

Chall: Well, do you think peace is an idea whose time has come?

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Rankin: No I think we're miles from it. The movement is such a drag. [laughs] If they stood up and did somethings instead of letting us come out and do it, and they not bother

Chall: What do you think of this "new consciousness" among women, however they're organized, in so many little groups—and in the big ones like NOW and the Women's Political Caucus—?

Rankin: They're the only hope we hope

Chall: These are women who are politically conscious and, understand the issues as you see them?

Rankin: I've got a buttons "Governments Make War"; did I show you?

Chall: That's your slogan isn't it?

Well, while you're looking for your buttons let me ask you about the slogan, "Governments Make War," because the governments according to our system, represents the people.

Rankin: Does it?

The People Must Have a Choice on the Ballot

Chall: I decline to answer that question; I'm the interviewer. That's the theory isn't government represents the people, and therefore they express the will of the people. Now, we do seem to have some difficulty with reality and that concept.

Rankin: We have no choice. We have the votes and never in the forty or fifty years, have I had a chance to vote my convictions. No one has asked me to. Now, for a long time it was an industrial complex— bankers and so on. We have single-member districts. We have in every congressional district about forty percent who are reactionary, and about forty percent who think they're liberal. Then there's twenty percent in between. And they are the bankers, the

militarists, and the politicians that want to keep their job—they swing to one side or the other. So that those who are against him never have a representatives, and those who are for him don't have a representative; they're representing the twenty percent in between.

When I ran for Congress the first time, I knew I could be elected, because we had two congressman- at-large. And every voter could vote for both a man and a woman. And in the primary, there were seven man and myself asking for two places. And I, as anyone would do, urged them to vote for their local man and for me. And they did, and I came out way ahead. Then they gerrymandered the district. You know what that is?

Chall: I certainly do.

Rankin: And they put me in the district that was controlled by the Anaconda Company, and I couldn't have been elected no matter what I did at that time

Chall: So at first you were a Congressman-at-large and the second time they made a district for you.

Rankin: No, they made a district before I left the state. I was elected in November and in January they made this district, and I didn't go into office until April.

Chall: I see. Regardless of your vote, they weren't going to have this happen again, a second time.

Rankin: No, they used a slogan in the legislature, "Do you want to **keep** a woman in Congress?". And they said, "No" and that was in '17. And the women in Montana had just gotten the vote. They knew I could stay, that the people would vote for me, because I had a better organization than any man, and better than any woman had since.

Chall: Do you think, generally speaking, that women work harder at their organizing, when they're elected to public office, than men do? Is there a difference?

Rankin: No! I **believe** in it; I believe in the people and representative government. And one person can't represent them.

Multiple-Member Congressional Districts

Chall: Well, if you had two then, is your idea you have a man and a woman?

Rankin: **No!** Two people.

Chall: Would that double the size of the Congress?

Rankin: Why certainly not! You would have a larger district—and you'd have the same number, but they'd be elected in a different way.

Chall: That's in your paper, so I can refer to that.

Rankin: Then, I went to Georgia, because I had a background in knew the political situation—and asked them to divide the state into two large districts and have five from each district. I'm going back and still work on it. But they kept the single-member districts, and gerrymandered it, so that the colored people could have no representative, and it went to the courts, and the courts said they couldn't do it. So they went back and gerrymandered it a little more. The court said, "No", and now nobody knows how it's going to turn out.

Chall: Is that right—it's still in the courts?

Rankin: No, the courts have finished. What the Supreme Court can do with it is a question. It has a chance. I got an answer to the last letter I wrote, that I gave you a copy of. I lobbied by telephone before the legislature met. I called them on long distance and talked to them. It was cheaper than

going to where they were, but it impressed them much more. And the first answer I got—I haven't a copy of it here—but the man said, "When I first talked to you on the telephones I thought you were an eccentric. I apologize. As I thought of it, I realized that you really had something. And if it had come up, and I could have voted for it, I would have."

I was in Atlanta on October fourth, fifth, and sixth of 1971 and did some lobbying in both the House and Senate on this idea of multiple-member congressional districts, and this was followed up by the letter you have.

But, we **haven't** representative government, when we have this complex society. They have in Georgia ten districts, and everyone is selected by the twenty percent in between. And they're all ten alike, and they could have one district with one man and be cheaper; it wouldn't make any difference. But if we had two districts, you could have five ideas from each district.

Chall: Yes, I suppose it would give others an opportunity.

Rankin: —Minorities and ideas a chance. You could have an internationalist, a banker, a militarist, and perhaps a black, and perhaps a woman—something like that.

Chall: Or you could get them all exactly the same.

Rankin: And it wouldn't make any difference in the size of Congress, and it wouldn't make any difference in the number of congressmen from the people.

Chall: Do you have any feelings about some of the present representatives in Congress and those who are running for President? Do you think that Senator McGovern or Senator Hatfield or any of these people who have presumably been trying to stop the war in Vietnam are on the right track?

Rankin: Certainly they're on the right track! But we're governed by military dictators, and no one can be elected President, unless the people will rise up

in arms, because the militarists are going to select the one they want.

Preferential Vote for President

Chall: Your answer to this problem is getting down and organizing peace groups?

Rankin: And I want a preferential vote for President, and it's in that platform.

Chall: That's one of your answers to it—allowing people the opportunity to vote for leaders—

Rankin: Well, you can't have progress unless you have a choice. You can't follow someone else; you have to use your own mind. We have such a low sense of spirituality, and a low sense of our responsibility as a sovereign power. No king or kaiser or anybody was as negligent in representing the people, as the women and the people who don't know what they're doing.

Chall: How are they going to know? How are we going to tell the people?

Rankin: I'm doing the best I can.

Chall: You're doing the best you can—you generally feel that groups like—

Rankin: Not groups—people.

Chall: But the people get their information from the organizations they belong to.

Rankin: They don't think for themselves. We have such a poor educational system. They're not taught to think. And they have to have a chance to choose.

Now we have the young people having debates that the women faced twenty years ago and ignored. Now there's no way of telling how they voted or why they voted or if they did vote in enough numbers to make McGovern come through with a few votes. He didn't come through as people thought he would.

Chall: You mean the major polls—the big polls?

Rankin: Yes, the polls. The people are divided, they still want war.

You see, because you had just two to measure with, all the people that didn't want war aren't counted, or they just sat home and did nothing, or made speeches.

The Effect of Parades and Boycotts

Chall: Your ideas about the present situation—even though you participated in the March to Washington—do you still feel that these kinds of efforts have minimal effect on the total—?

Rankin: No, they have big effect, but the opposition gets stronger, and shows its head. For instance, when they suggested the parade, and we got the publicity, when the parade came, it was so good—so much better than anyone really expected—they had to put on a silence, and they've done nothing to help that since. But the women are still working. There are big crowds in Ohio, and in Detroit, and New York. Now they didn't tell the truth about that parade and protests and the bombing that was held the twenty-second, I think it was, of April [1972]. I saw that. I spoke there. There were at least fifty thousand. And they kept playing it down. And it was pouring rain from morning till night.

Chall: Which parade was this?

Rankin: The one in New York.

Chall: When they were all holding their umbrellas. Yes, I did see that. But you say the press didn't report the numbers accurately.

Rankin: Yes. But, after our 1968 parade, we scared the military enough to make them tell Johnson not to run again.

Chall: So that it isn't all in vain.

Rankin: They don't tell you there were victories They just tell you nothing but lies. But that did scare the military, but they were trying to revive it. They've done everything they could think of. They are so stupid. They didn't know what to do with Jackson—he was their candidate. Now they've come over to Humphrey.

But the only thing that counts is for every individual woman to learn how to write to their congressman and to learn how to express their opposition to war. Now I think the thing that should get the greatest publicity is if the women would decide not to shop on Tuesday. It's nonviolent—they don't hurt the shopper or their store, but they say in an anonymous way, "We're against War." If the stores knew that there'd be no women shopping on Tuesdays, they'd see the tremendous sentiment. And it isn't one woman, it's every woman. It's very awkward, but it's non-violent. It isn't like a boycott, which is violent. The unions are violent. The unions form in opposition to the company store; it isn't a question of whether it's right or wrong but of opposing interests. Violence. But not shopping on Tuesday is **non-violent**.

It's very hard. I **always think** it's much more convenient to go on Tuesdays. [laugher].

Chall: So that's why you picked Tuesdays. It would be harder on me if it were Saturday. Has this been tried anywhere?

Rankin: It's been talked about, but nothing's been tried.

Chall: It would be worthwhile trying it in one community even.

Rankin: Everyone!

Chall: You could organize one community to see how it operates.

Rankin: You don't have to see how it operates.

Chall: Just organize it and do it.

Rankin: And do it—and keep organizing. You can come out on Monday and hand out a slip, "Don't do it on Tuesday." Tuesday's a good day because it's a low day. They shop on Monday, then they remember what they forgot on Tuesday.

Chall: It's an interesting idea, and you say they've only talked about it.

Rankin: That's all, but I mentioned it once. You've got to keep at it. When I was working on multiple-member districts, my friends in Georgia said anytime there was a pause in conversation, I came up with it. So anytime there was a pause, they'd do it. [laughs]

Chall: Talk about the "Don't show up on Tuesday" idea? You don't flag in your energies, do you? You just keep going—

Rankin: Well, of course not. I don't believe in war. I think it's stupid and cruel.

Chall: Have you taken your ideas from any others besides the beginning—Benjamin Kidd? Have you been influenced at all by Mahatma Gandhi or Martin Luther King—?

Rankin: Oh certainly. I've been seven times to India.

Chall: Where do you stay when you're in India?

Rankin: In different places—

Chall: And it's because of the pacifism—?

Rankin: The second time I went over, I took my car and I drove from Madras to Lahore, which is diagonally across the country. And I met the people, and got ideas from them, and hunted for them, and hunted out what our country's doing **to** people— not for them.

Chall: This was during the days when we were beginning to send our Point-Four and other aid over to the developing countries?

Rankin: No, they were exploiting the other countries. They sent a man over to teach physical fitness in India. But we don't know what's going on. If we knew what was going on, Ralph Nader would have nothing to say. And he's in every magazine; everybody knows him, everybody's getting suspicious about it. But it took one man to sacrifice everything—to make the women understand that they can't believe what they hear.

Chall: Or what they taste and touch.

Rankin: Yes.

Women Must Take Some Initiative or We are Ruined

Chall: So women have to be really brought along. We're a long way from victory with women and their understanding—?

Rankin: "Well, when you give them something, they won't **think** about it. They'll think about "what it'll do to my husband's job; what'll it do to my dress. Will I have to wear the same dress two or three times" They won't give, and they won't think.

Chall: But they're capable or doing it.

Rankin: Oh, of course Why these women—I talked in Atlanta. And then I got a chance in Tennessee. And then I was in New York—upstate New York, and

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in Boston, and then I got an invitation to come to Arkansas. I couldn't figure how Arkansas would send for me. And the people in Tennessee had heard me, and so they asked me to come to Arkansas. And I was in upstate New York with a woman who'd been in New York City, and she asked me, and so on. The women want to, but they're all busy, and they haven't the initiative.

Chall: But you think it'll come?

Rankin: Of course it'll come. But if it doesn't come, we're ruined. The military, if they win this election—we're in a very dangerous situation. Because they'll go on till they destroy our civilization. They're so stupid. They're talking like Humphrey, talking seriously about the difference in the ability to kill of the United States and Russia. Why we don't shoot those men, I don't know.

Chall: But it's violent—that's why we don't. [laughs] You don't believe in that.

Rankin: No, But all they need to do is to think. They get enough action in any paper anywhere. But they're so scared, they're so scared they won't be accepted.

Chall: It's rather lonely, isn't it, to be unaccepted?

Rankin: No, it isn't lonely.

Chall: You have been unaccepted much of your life, and yet you still have a lot of vitality. It must be comforting to find a certain amount of acceptance at this stage in life on the same subject, peace. But do you think it's a growing acceptance? Are there more people accepting your ideas than ever before?

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Rankin: Oh of course. Now, like John Lindsay came out in the paper for preferential voting for mayor. He didn't go any farther than saying he agreed with me. But if they try it any place then it will go.

Chall: There was an attempt to revise the electoral college system after the last election and they got absolutely nowhere.

Rankin: Well they had no idea what they were doing! I won't **mention** the electoral college because it is such a stupid thing. I mention preferential voting, and it bypasses the whole thing. If people don't know how stupid the electoral college is, I'm not going to teach them.

[Shows copy of an ACLU newsletter announcing an award to be given to her by the ACLU in Newark, New Jersey, November 18, 1972.]

Chall: Oh, you're going to be given an award by the American Civil Liberties Union.

Rankin: When Roger Baldwin organized the Civil Liberties Union in 1920, he asked me to be his second vice president, and I've been with them ever since. It's fifty-two years.

Chall: Have you been one of the national officers?

Rankin: No, I've been a worker.

Chall: What have you been doing as a worker?

Rankin: Expressing my opinions. [laughter]

Chall: Did you take much of a stand in the fifties against Joseph McCarthy?

Rankin: I was out of commission at that time. Nobody would listen to me. I went traveling in other countries.

Chall: I see; so there was a period when you were more, or less exiled—self-exiled.

Rankin: Oh I wouldn't call it that—but they didn't have enough courage to stand by me.

II Jeannette Rankin Talks more about her Campaigns for Suffrage and for Congress, and her Insights Regarding Political Action for Democratic Government

Re-election—A Congressman's First Concern

Chall: I was going to ask you first if you could tell me what you wanted to talk to Ralph Nader about, in terms of your own background and experience—what you felt he should know.

Rankin: Well, I'm glad to talk to you about it and get some experience.

The first thing—when I was elected the first time—the men came up to speak to me, because their constituents would says "Have you met the first lady?", and they said to me, each one: "Do you know what is the first thing you do in Congress?"—and I never knew. And they all said the same thing: "Begin your campaign for the next election." And I knew then and ever since, every comment about Congress has something to do with the elections and between the elections it's such a short time that they have to be very careful what they do, because if they make a mistake, they don't have time to explain it to their constituents.

And also, I was aware, when I was campaigning for suffrage, that single-member districts were very difficult to campaign in, because—and this was true in the suffrage campaign—there would be about forty percent of the people against it, and about

forty percent of the people who were for it. Well there was twenty percent in between who didn't know anything about it. And you had to convert that small group in order to win. And every congressional district is about like that.

I ran because I felt that if the men and the women had a choice, of both a man and a woman and could vote for both, that I could be elected. And so, while I knew I wouldn't be the choice of the suffragists in the East to be the first woman in Congress—I didn't feel that I had any

special recommendations to be the first—but that I **could** be the first because we had two at-large [in Montana]. And so, in the primary there were seven Republicans and myself asking for two places—seven candidates, men; and there was a candidate in each area of the state, and so I urgd them to vote for the local canditate and for **me**, and they did, and I got an overwhelming majority.

Then in the election [general], there were two Democrats and this man that had been elected with me as the second candidate, and again, they could vote for both a man and a woman. And it was a Democratic landslide, with a second term, and I was the only Republican elected, because they could vote for both a man and a woman. They had three to choose from, of the men, and only me to choose from for the woman. [laughs]

Chall: Well, of course, they didn't let that happen again.

Rankin: But, it proved that a multiple-member district was more favorable to minorities—you could have two ideas represented, instead of one. And so I had read, before I came to Congress, Lynn Haines' book on Congress (I think the title was *Your Congress*), in which he explained the rules of Congress, and why there were so many.

Just before I ran, Uncle Joe Cannon had been the Speaker of the House for a long time, and they called it "the Cannon rule." That meant that no legislation came up that Mr. Cannon didn't approve of. And he could stay in office because there were about four hundred men in Congress who had to

campaign every two years. That is, their constituents were interested in it. About thirty-five never had to campaign—they had no opposition.

Well, these four hundred men, whether they were Democrats or Republicans, were willing to do anything to help each other. They were all in the same boat, regardless of party, and so they made rules and did things to help each other get elected, because in every district it was like in suffrage: about forty percent were against them and forty percent for them, and there were twenty percent that they had to campaign for, and they didn't dare offend anyone in the twenty percent because they'd lose the election.

So, all the rules of Congress were made to keep their constituents from knowing what they did.

Chall: What kind of rules do you have in mind?

Rankin: Well they had different kinds of votes. They had the teller vote and the recorded vote and unanimous consent. And they also was no line between the Democrats and Republicans when it came to helping each other. And so, they would go to Cannon and say "Don't let the bill come up." Then the man would get on the phone and condemn the Cannon rule when it was brought up. When the constituents who were against it said they'd make a speech for the bills then the constituents would come to him and say, "I thought you were going to defeat it." He'd say, "Well, it didn't pass did it?" You see, they wouldn't let it out. The constituents would be mad, because Cannon held up the bill. And Cannon could take it.

Well this worked for so longs that they decided to get rid of the Cannon rule, and they formed a committee on rules, and these men do just exactly what Cannon did, and every little while the people get excited about the Bales Committees and I think Kennedy, when he was President, suggested increasing the Rules Committee. Well, that didn't have any effect on it. Then, later they went back to the other, so that today, the purpose of Congress is to get re-elected. That's

what Ron Dellums said

in an article, that they weren't interested in legislation—they were interested in reelecting themselves. All the rules of Congress are made with that in mind, and there are ways of doing things that are not written down, because you have unanimous consent.

Multiple-Member Districts

Chall: How do you think this can be changed?

Rankin: By having multiple-member district.

Chall: Assuming that you had multiple-member districts and people got into Congress who represented the other twenty percent, one way or the they get there, then what? How much more effective will they be able to be than the other congressmen have been through the years?

Rankin: Because, a minority can be reelected. He doesn't have to have a majority of the vote. I never knew until months later, that I came in first. Nobody ever told me and I didn't look it up. I thought of course I came in second, but later I found out that I was ahead. But a minority can be elected if you have five from a district; it would only take twenty percent of the vote to get elected, because there would be a first one and a second one and a third one and a fourth one, and if there were a fifth they could be elected. And they could be reelected. It's very difficult for a first-term congressman to get acquainted with the members and acquainted with the rules, and get legislation through. But if he makes a stand, so that they could recognize that he is a dedicated person, he can stay one term. Then they either gerrymander the district or smear the candidate or something, so he can't get elected.

And every time a congressman engages in legislation, he loses votes; he loses some of the twenty percent. He may gain more votes, but he always loses. So they all work it so that the constituents do not know what they're doing.

Chall: If that's true enough, it's very hard to know.

Rankin: Well that is true!

Chall: Well, the press doesn't help in letting you know what your legislators are doing either.

Rankin: Well they can't find out. There was one woman in Congress—[breaks off] The thing is, after they're there two or four years, they get acquainted, and the one thing that Congress should be complimented on is the fact that they demand honesty on the floor. If they know a man is honest, they'll forgive him and help him and do everything they can for him. But if he cheats in Congress, they do nothing for him. And he can't get bills out of committees, he can't do anything. But if he says to the others, "I'm in a tight place. I've got this that's blocking my reelection," they'll do anything to help him. Now you can't put that on paper, but that always happens; and the legislation goes through, not because of the merits of the legislation, but because it has an effect on the election of the congressman

Chall: Do you think that the multiple-member district would be one of the things that would change this?

Rankin: Well, with a multiple-member district you can get a variety of opinion elected.

Chall: Well you could; you might not, but at least you could.

Rankin: Well, you always could. I think most of the women that were any good came in on the multiple-member. And the men—there's no way of getting the record of a congressman, because you don't know what he whispered as he passed another congressman. When I was talking on the floor the first time, they were going to give the wife of a man overseas [a military man] twenty dollars a month to support her, and five dollars for each child. And so, when this came up, I made an amendment to increase it a few dollars. And I was talking to Rayburn—Rayburn was the chairman of the committee—and I got up and said to him, "What can a woman buy with twenty-five

dollars a month?" And I don't know what he said, but we were standing about as far apart as from here to John and a man walked past me while I was talking, and he said there was a provision in the Constitution on cruel and unusual punishment, and then I looked up and here was Rayburn as red as a beat. He was so embarrassed at my asking him this question. But no one in the gallery knew that, and most of the man on the floor didn't know.

Chall: Was this the second war?

Rankin: No, it was the first. And there are all sorts of things that can happen. And I didn't win because they were increasing the cost of the war. But, there is no way, there is no rule, there is nothing that can be done, and of course I couldn't come back, because before I left the state, after I was elected, they gerrymandered my district so I couldn't have come back, no matter how I put me in a single-member district.

Chall: In addition to the multiple-member district, are there other ideas you have for the reform of Congress that you want to talk to Nader about?

Rankin: No. I want him to see that the method of electing them is crucial. Now, when the Senate—the Constitution provided—when the Senate was first organized, it was the idea of having an aristocratic body that would keep the other one from doing anything and it was a rich man's club, and they didn't pay any attention to legislation; they just had a nice club.

And in Montana one man, a rich man, wanted to go to the Senate, and he put $35,000 over the transom to a man, who reported it to the government and he gave the government the $35,000. And in Congress that was too bad. They didn't seat him. Then he ran again, but he put it under the door, instead of over, and he increased the amount, we

assume, and he got his seat. And they were all bought like that. They did it a little more openly in Montana. But when we came to making the legislature, regrouping the legislature, and letting the people vote, we changed it then. Then the change in the method of election changed the quality of the Senate.

Now they're just as rich, but they pay more attention to what the people want.

Chall: Do you think it would help if the members of Congress didn't have to be elected every two years?

Rankin: No. I like the two-year—where our progress and our different problems change every two years. And it's all right to have them go back, but the **great good** of the multiple-member

district is that you can be a minority and get reelected. We don't know what our Congress would be if we had a free Congress, instead of a male Congress. This last convention [1972 Democratic] changed the whole atmosphere of the convention, because the women were sitting there. And they broadened the base—they didn't include everyone, but they've broadened the base as a democracy and they changed the atmosphere of the convention.

Chall: It was a different convention. They changed the rules, too. That was all part of it.

Rankin: The rules were proposed and the women accepted them. But when they keep the old rules and use them—and this is the worst thing they do in Congress: they have a meeting before the Congress meets, and all the young people, the new congressmen, are there, and they propose that they accept the rules of Congress, and they dog and then they have a time changing them. And they do that purposely to get them in the herd and willing to be herded.

Chall: Well, it has been very difficult. I think maybe Shirley Chisholm fought the rules harder than anybody else in Congress—in her first term. It isn't easy to buck it, or the seniority system—now what do you think about that?

Rankin: You can't change the seniority system unless they—all the members want the seniority rule, because here's a man they know. They can work for him, and there he is.

Chall: So, the thing is—you're not going to get any changes in Congress until you change the constituency in Congress. Is that your idea?

Rankin: Change the method of electing them—

Chall: And that would, in a a sense, change the people who are elected—

Rankin: No. They can work with them. If you know you can be reelected—

Chall: Miss Rakin, some members of Congress know very well they can be reelected, like all the members from the South. Is any southern congressman afraid he won't be reelected?

Rankin: Yes. And some of them have to campaign. But the way they're reelected is they separate themselves from their constituents and never let them know what they're doing, and they work with the northerners. There's no difference between the South and the North

Chall: But I was just thinking about how easy it in for an incumbent, almost always, to be reelected.

Rankin: No! They don't change. Once in a while they get a new one. We don't have any idea what would defeat a man that might have made a wonderful senator or congressman, because he never had the chance. He gets defeated, and they get someone else, and they ask him if he knows what the first thing is. If he knows what the first thing is, he can get reelected. But that doesn't make a good congressman. If the people had a choice, minorities would be elected, and we'd have a changed Congress, and then the Congress would accept the responsibility of doing what their constituents want.

Now, if there had been a hundred congressmen against the war, it might have made a difference. But there isn't any free, male congress. It's so

inhibited by the method of election that they hide everything they do, whether it's good or bad. And you get the same kind of congressman from every district. The congressman from Georgia, in the district I live in, he gets everything for the university and for the military; he never makes a speech, he never does anything. I can't talk to him. He knows me; his office tells me he's not in when I telephone I never hear from him. And I told this all over Georgia, and then he sent me a cookbook. That's the only communication I've had in years. I did talk to him once.

Chall: But he has no trouble being reelected—

Rankin: Oh no, people don't run against him. He gets a certain fellow that tries to defeat him. Those who are forced to run against him. Those who are against him know they haven't any chance.

Chall: You'd have to mount a tremendously difficult campaign to do it.

Rankin: Well, not only that, but you'd have to find out what he's done, and you can't find out. And I wouldn't vote for a congressman when I don't know anything about him. Why should I get excited—nobody else does. And he never loses.

Until you change the **method** of election, there's **nothing** you can do. Now, they talk about seniority— I knew a congressman, a very fine congressman, and he knew the banking industry, and he knew what to do. And the chairman, the seniority man, was just wrong in the head, and this man took charge. He ran the committee and did everything, and he covered up for the seniority. Well, I only know of one committee, but I don't know how many of the others are ran the same way. But I do know that the majority of the members of Congress are not going to let the people know what's happening.

Congress Allows the President to Usurp Power

Rankin: So they let the President do their job. The President tells what legislation is needed not the Congress. We don't have a fifth—a third— a tenth of them in Congress who are free to do what they want and get elected. We shouldn't wait five or six years or seven for legislation that should come right now. And Congress should legislate for their district, and let the President carry it out. He can say what he wants to do, and how he wants to carry it out. But until we have a free election of Congress, we can't force the President to give up this power that he has usurped to run the war. They go together. But the House is much more important than the President. If the House assumed its own duties and carried them out, you wouldn't have to worry about the President. They could stop the war tomorrow, by suffrage, refusing to give him the money.

Chall: Oh certainly, if they felt that was what their constituents wanted.

Rankin: Oh a group of them. And you see, you can never get a minority in Congress. I think this Democratic convention is the best proof of how an institution can changes depending on the base of their democracy. If they only represent the military-industrial complex, people can get left out, or if they only represent the monied people. The idea of our money system and the way we take care of children and the old and other things, we have no representation. They have no representation of women. We have a **male** Congress.

When I first started in Congress, I made a speech in Ohio, where there were lots of women who worked for suffrage, and someone said, "You never mention the word 'female'." We'd always

been called "females" until then. And I think now we should call this Congress a **male** Congress

Chall: [laughs] Some of the women in Congress and the state legislatures say that if they take up what are called today the "women's issues" like equal

rights, and some other matters of equality that the men are very upset with them as female legislators. They don't want them talking about "women's issues," but at the time that you were in Congress, that was what was expected of you. if you had taken up anything like money, they would have said, "That's a man's place."

Rankin: I knew that. I did take up money. But they weren't surprised. And they haven't done anything since.

Chall: Do you have any opinions about the length of a term for a legislator? Whether after X number of years, or at a certain age, that a person automatically should not be in Congress any more?

Rankin: If any congressman is fading, the ones who are smart will beat them out.

Chall: So that all of these so-called ills that many of us feel so strongly about in Congress you think would take care of themselves if we had what you call a free Congress, and this would come about by the multiple-member election?

Rankin: Yes. We have to broaden the base. Now I have been saying for a long time that no one man can represent all my ideas. I don't know about a woman, but perhaps a woman could. [laughs]

Chall: But you're sure it can't be a man. [laughter]

Rankin: No one man can do it. Now, we have in Georgia ten districts, and we have one from a district, and there's practically no difference between the ten. We might just as well elect one and give him ten votes—it's much cheaper. [laugher]

Chall: So that's the primary matter that you want to talk to Ralph Nader about.

Rankin: Yes.

Chall: Well that will be interesting. It's basic.

Rankin: Because all of your questions—what did the lobbyist do? if a man is free he knows he can be reelected—he says to the lobbyist, "Go to hell." But if he has to satisfy his district, he has to do what the lobbyist says. As it is, the women have no representation, and the young people have no representation. It isn't just one—you have to have a group.

The Campaign for Women's Suffrage

Chall: Let's go back now and pick up some threads on the suffrage campaigns and some more information about your two terms in Congress.

Rankin: Well, I do recall that the only place we could talk was on the street! Nobody would come to a hall, and we couldn't even get a hall. And we used to take a box or a car and stand on the street. Many times, we'd sit up on this box and saw some nice-looking people come along, and we'd say to them, "Will you please stand for a few minutes," so that we'd have an audience. And

these few would attract others. We never introduced a speaker when they got up, because there was no one to introduce them. [laughs] And then when they got through talking, we told who they were, because we would then often have a very good crowd.

Chall: I see; you didn't tell them what you were going to talk about either—[laughs]

Rankin: Maybe we had signs, "Votes for Women," and so on. They knew what we were talking about.

But, my brother was very fearful of my being criticized, and he thought I should be very careful, and one time we advertised that Margaret Hinchey would speak at a certain place. She was a laundry worker from New York. So, my brother came—there were quite a good many, but there was enough to notice. So, I don't know whether I introduced her or not, but everybody knew that I'd gotten her there. And when it was over, I said to Wellington,

"Well how was she?" He said, "She was eloquent." He was just so pleased with it, when she got through.

Chall: This was during the period when you were campaigning for women's suffrage in Montana?

Rankin: Yes. You see, I was just a little suffrage worker. I worked in Washington in 1910—

Chall: In Washington state—

Rankin: Yes. And we won there. And Minnie Reynolds was a newspaper woman, and she had worked in the campaign in Colorado in 1893, when Colorado got the vote [for women], and she worked with me in Washington. Then when Washington won in 1910, I went to Montana and made my first speech to a real audience in January, 1911—in Helena. Did I talk about this before?

Chall: Not as completely I think, as you're doing now.

Rankin: And we carried in the House, but not by the necessary two-thirds, but we got a majority. And I think that was in the eastern papers, but I'm not sure.

Anyway, Minnie J. Reynolds knew me and so did the suffragists, that I was a good worker and they wrote and ask me to be their field worker; they asked me to stop in North Dakota where Mrs. Darrow was going to lobby in the legislature. And so I stopped there to lobby, and then went on to New York. Then they sent me to different places—I can't remember very well.

Ann Howard Shaw

Chall: You were a field worker for—

Rankin: The National American Woman's Suffrage. There was a National and an American, and they joined. And so we won Oregon; and Mrs. Catt—I'm not quite sure that Mrs. Catt was there—but right after that, she went around the world organizing woman's suffrage.

And Doctor Anna Howard Shaw was president when I did most of my work with them. But Mrs. Catt was elevated to the world organization, and Anna Howard Shaw was the president of the National Woman's Suffrage. She has a book called—I don't remember the exact title— but it has the word in it, pioneer. [*The Story of a Pioneer*]

Doctor Shaw was raised in Michigan on a pioneer farm and went to college (I don't know where) but she finally graduated from a theological seminary in Boston, and she worked awhile

as a minister, and then she decided that to work with the people, she ought to be a doctor, and so then she graduated as a doctor. So she was Dr. Anna Howard Shaw—an M.D. And she was—Mrs. Catt was an organizer, and a beautiful, rich woman—and Dr. Anna Howard Shaw was, I think, the greatest speaker we have ever had. She was a real orator—she could take the audience from tears to laughter and back again. She just moved a muscle, and her funny stories were very funny. She used to say that when she was in the seminary she was the only woman, and when the man was lecturing to the men, he told them how to gesture— gesture with the whole arm. And then she moved her arm, and he said, "Of course you're a woman. Just gesture from the elbow." [laughter] She told this story. Everyone recognized her as a great orator.

Chall: She must have been on your speaking circuit—

Rankin: Oh yes, she went all over. When we came to Montana, and she came to help us, we had a parade. I was so busy getting the parade set up and all ready to start before I thought of her. And she was the leader. Then we went to the hotel and she wasn't there; she was at the head of the parade. She'd come on her own, and got there and knew what we were doing. She used to talk about everything. You mentioned women's suffrage and the women's liberation movement, and she would talk about factory workers and farm workers—

Chall: When did she have time to practice medicine?

Rankin: Well, she didn't practice. But when she'd see sick people she would know what to do with them and she'd

get them in touch with other doctors. And she thought that health was necessary for human beings. Oh, she was a great woman. And she had been raised in pioneer days, so she knew people. I have forgotten what her father was—whether he was a preacher or what. But, her mother would be left on the farm with these children, and he would go out speaking—he was a well-educated man. And they had to do the work—

Chall: So she knew—

Rankin: She knew. And then when she started preaching, they would ask her why she couldn't preach to sick people without helping them.

Chall: Now, did she stay with the movement until suffrage was gained?

Rankin: Yes, and then she died a few years after, early in the twenties.

The Constitutional Amendment

Chall: What happened with the National American Woman's Suffrage Association? Did the Congressional Union or the Woman's Party—?

Rankin: No, they were separate.

Chall: Did the National American Woman's Suffrage Association want to work on gaining suffrage state by state?

Rankin: No, we wanted always to pass a constitutional amendment, but the method of getting it—those who believed in democracy, believed we could get it quicker state by state, and those who believed in aristocratic democracy and believed in party responsibility wanted to get it by

changing the party. And we in the West insisted that the people had to give it to us.

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Chall: Well, of courses over the years, the women in the West did get suffrage, but what about the women in the East and the Midwest where apparently it was almost impossible to get an election?

Rankin: Well, we—they could have gotten it if they worked. We worked in the West. Do you know anything about the history of women's suffrage?

Chall: Just a little. Not too much.

Rankin: Well, in '69, they got it in Wyoming, and in '93 in Colorado, and in '96 Utah and Idaho came into the Union with woman's suffrage, and then we couldn't get it any farther, from 1896 until 1910—fourteen years, and then Washington state came and then California, Oregon, Utah, and Montana.

Chall: But those were still western states?

Rankin: They were all west

Chall: Now, did you feel that the only way the eastern states could get it would be through the constitutional amendment?

Rankin: Not in the eastern states. At that time Illinois had never been able to amend their constitution, and when Arizona and New Mexico came in—I've forgotten what years they were—one of the states had it written in their constitution that it couldn't be amended, if one county voted against it.

Chall: Oh really, had to be a unanimous vote?

Rankin: Yes. And so it was utterly impossible to amend it. And that was my feeling that you would eventually have to have a constitutional amendment. And every year this was introduced, and we never got a vote on it until I was there in 1918.

Chall: That was the first time it had come to a vote in the House?

Rankin: Yes. And it carried in the House.

Chall: It did carry. It carried by one vote, didn't it?

Rankin: Yes. It lost in the Senate, though.

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Party Responsibility

Chall: A couple of years later it had to be carried once again in the House and in the Senate, didn't it? You weren't in Congress then—Did you help lobby at that time?

Rankin: Didn't need to. You see, New York state gave the women the votes so it was a political thing, both ways.

Now, we've never had party responsibility in this government; Jefferson and Adams were very much opposed to party responsibility. And we haven't got it yet, but we talk about it.

Chall: I think that at one time, it was attempted to try a little party responsibility by—was it Miss Paul who urged her women not to vote for any Democrats until the Democrats were willing to vote for women's suffrage? This was an attempt to force its wasn't it?

Rankin: Yes. Well, you see, the English—when the English had to give the people more, they divided the people into two parties, and then they controlled, and the other side had nothing. They could do it with half the people. But Jefferson, especially, was very much opposed to that, and they tried to eliminate parties as much as they could in the Constitution. So this was a new idea brought over from England. Not a new idea, really, it was a method that America had never taken seriously.

Chall: And has it yet?

Rankin: No, and it shouldn't. It's not democracy when you rule out half the people.

Chall: Do you think that your presidential preferential poll would strengthen or weaken party responsibility?

Rankin: It will weaken it. Because we've never had it.

Chall: It would weaken even what there is now?

Rankin: We want, and the Constitution says that the sovereign power rest with the people.

Chall: Generally, the attempt is to have the people express their sovereign power through the political party.

Rankin: That's what they do at the top. They don't in government. There is hardly ever a cabinet chosen that doesn't have both.

Chall: In this country.

Rankin: I can't remember a cabinet that didn't have both parties. Nixon has Connally. The war cabinet had both parties. It's just a device to confuse the people.

Chall: Maybe the parties don't stand for a great deal—

Rankin: They don't stand for anything.

Chall: So that the attempt to transfer party responsibility—the tactics used in England, where there is party responsibility—to this country was not an easy transfer, was it?

Rankin: It hasn't transferred.

Chall: Miss Paul I thought had tried to transfer it in her Woman's Party action.

Rankin: Oh, absolutely. And that was the reason for the division. It wasn't against Alice Paul, or against what she wanted. But I would. After I knew Alice Paul, I got the vote in Montana. And I think

Montana helped; more than the party.

Chall: You think still—

Rankin: There is no such thing as party responsibility.

The Woman's Party and the National American Woman Suffrage Association

Chall: What was your general feeling about the tactics of the Woman's Party in—1916 to '20, in attempting to get the constitutional amendment?

Rankin: Well we were the ones; we got the vote.

Chall: In the Congress.

Rankin: But they were the ones who wouldn't come in with us—

Chall: The Woman's Party wouldn't come in with the NAWSA—

Rankin: The National Alliance. They formed their own. And they always worked from the top down. And I and all the suffragists that I worked with worked from the bottom up.

Chall: Does that mean you organized in precincts and were closer to the people?

Rankin: Yes. in Montana, we tried to work with precincts, and where we were organized by precincts, we got the largest votes.

Chall: That's generally the most effective way to work politically.

Rankin: It's the only democratic way.

Chall: Now in distinction to your way, what was Miss Paul's way, and the Women's Party? How would they work from the top?

Rankin: Now, for instance, they wanted me to represent Montana. But I wasn't working there. They didn't

give up getting me to work. I worked for them in a general way. Then they got a woman that they made a great fuss about, and she wrote to me—she was the wife of some rich or famous man—but she couldn't have controlled two votes in Montana.

Chall: If you needed to have the constitutional amendment—you had to go through Congress to get it. Now how would you have wanted to get it through Congress?

Rankin: Well, that's the way we did it. You get it by states.

Chall: Continue to get it by state.

Rankin: We did do that.

Chall: First, by state. But then you wouldn't have needed the Congress—the constitutional amendment.

Rankin: If we'd gotten every state, we could have, but we got it [the constitutional amendment in Congress] as soon as we got the West and New York.

Chall: I see. And that really pushed the rest of it.

Rankin: Pushed it over. And I have been—after living in the South—I've at times thought that the constituional amendment was the wrong thing.

Chall: Oh.

Rankin: Because the states that had women's suffrage were so much more advanced in their thinking than the states that had never had a state convention. Now a friend of mine in South Carolina always introduces me by saying, "No man in South Carolina helped us to get the vote." I had, because they never had a campaign. And they were always doing things in the wrong way in the League of Women Voters, because they didn't know anything about political procedures.

Now in Montana we could register to vote any time. And then people were paid twenty-five cents a name if they got someone registered. And they were in South Carolina—the League of Women Voters was discussing registration, and they wanted it,

instead of thirty days, thirty-five days, instead of 365 days. You know, I said to them, "Write to the different states, and find out what the laws are." They never got back to this stupid thing they were doing. But if they had had a campaign for women's suffrage, they'd have found out these things.

Chall: Just in doing the work. I see.

Rankin: Yes. Now, you see Mr. Nader is considering why Congress does the wrong thing. And he doesn't know enough about them to start. They gave me twenty-nine pages to fill out with the silliest questions you ever heard.

Chall: You really don't think his questions are pertinent or going to get close to the problem?

Rankin: It doesn't get down to know **why** they do these things. And unless you know the why of something—you can't take care of it. I haven't been able to talk to Mr. Nader about it yet. We answered the twenty-nine legal pages of questions, and it took someone fifteen hours.

Chall: Yes, I know. Many congressmen are complaining bitterly about the time involved.

Rankin: You know, I want to tell him **why** these are wrong.

Now, in 1916 and 1910—more in '10—we had the Progressive Movement, and Roosevelt ran on the Progressive ticket. And people were interested in how government ran, and why it did such-and-such And the war came and stopped everything.

Chall: That was the First War.

Rankin: I wish somebody would write a book and tell what the First World War did to America.

The Ideas of the Progressive Movement

Chall: What did it do to America, in your estimation? Let's assume you were going to help somebody write the book. You were there. What did it do to this country?

Rankin: Well, they talked about the preferential vote for President, and they talked about multiple-member districts.

Chall: Way back then. And the war just brought all this to a halt?

Rankin: Yes. And they divided human beings—those who were for war and those who were against. Well that split is everything, because it was a false issue, and it divided people terribly. And they've never gotten back. Now, in 1917, in February, I spoke in Carnegie Hall, and the *New York Times* printed some of the things I said. And one was the direct election of the President, and my slogan was, "Let the people know." Now, no one has that slogan today.

Chall: Not in those words.

Rankin: Well, they haven't the idea. I mean, they don't see the necessity of going back to the people for their inspiration, for their idealism, and for their activities.

Santa Claus and Political Parties

Chall: They take it from the top with the parties.

Rankin: And the parties aren't different. I used in Tennessee, the illustration of Santa Claus—it was around Christmas time. You see a Santa Claus in front of a store. And we lie to the children, but the children don't believe in him, and we don't believe in him, but it wouldn't be Christmas without Santa Claus. And we do things in our parties that are just as vacant as the Santa Claus myth. And yet we count on it.

Chall: [laughs] You mean at every election time we have our parties, and our speeches and our campaigns? Nobody believes it at all.

Rankin: And the big people think, "There's more on this side," so they change parties, like the Mayor of New York, and who else? Oh, Wayne Morse.

Chall: Wayne Morse has changed parties.

Rankin: And there's no difference between the parties: like Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum! In the South, the aristocrats were Democrats, and in the North, the Irish and newcomers were Democrats, so we were Republicans, because it was the aristocratic thing to be.

Chall: Is that how your family chose its party?

Rankin: Well, they just fell into it. There's no difference. I was elected both times in a Democratic landslide. The only Republican elected was me. But they paid no attention to party. They knew what I stood for.

Chall: How was your campaign for Congress the second time, compared to the first time? You were campaigning both times on an anti-war platform, I presume.

Rankin: Yes and no. That wasn't a thing we talked about.

Chall: What did you talk about.

Rankin: The first time I talked about women's suffrage, and was elected. But I knew I could be elected. Nobody ever gives me credit for having sense enough to run, because we had two congressmen. And I knew that they would vote for both a man and a women. And before I left the state—I was elected in November—and in January the legislature met, and they gerrymandered my

district. (I've told you that before.) And they said, "Do you want to keep a woman in Congress?" And they said, "No." So they divided Montana in such a way that my district was predominately Democrat had less than one half the population, and about one third the land area. When the Supreme Court said "One man one vote," they should never have used that phrase—

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Chall: Oh. Why not?

Rankin: Because we'd never had anything but one man one vote. In England, in the suffrage campaign, if a man owned property in three counties, he had three votes, and that's what the trouble is in Ireland, and nobody ever talks about it.

Chall: I haven't thought of it in those terms.

Rankin: You see, the poor people had no chance to get those that had multiple votes.

Chall: I see. But in this country we don't have multiple votes.

Rankin: And never have!

Chall: But we really didn't have what they considered "one man, one vote."

Rankin: The value of the vote was different.

Chall: Yes.

Rankin: But one man had never had anything but one vote.

Chall: I see what you mean.

Rankin: But the value—now here in Montana they vote for two senators. California votes for two. So Montana has a terrific advantage.

Chall: That's right.

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Rankin: And there are a good many states that have only one congressman and two Senators, and that's simply not democratic. I was just as interested in the multiple-member congressional district then as I am now.

Chall: I see.

Rankin: As a result of the Progressive movement.

Chall: You were always a Republican, but you were interested in the position—

Rankin: No. I never was a Republican. Never say it that way. I ran on the Republican ticket.

Chall: [laughs] And you voted however you wanted too.

Rankin: Yes.

Relationships Among the Leading Suffragists

Chall: I have a few more questions to ask you stemming from the suffrage campaign. I've been looking into *A Century of Struggle* by Eleanor Flexner, which seems to be an excellent account of the long struggle for the vote.

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Rankin: She came to see me in Amherst, Massachusetts, I think it was, and we were on the way to catch a bus or something and I talked to her. But, I am prejudiced against it because she's not a pacifist and she couldn't reconcile my vote against the Second World War.

Chall: Oh, does she have anything about the Second World War here?

Rankin: No.

Chall: You mean her attittude?

Rankin: I don't remember. I don't think I read it well. I looked up certain things in it. But, in talking with her, I could feel the horror that she felt that I voted against that war.

Chall: I wanted to read you, before I quit this topic one little piece from Mrs. Flexner's book and have you respond to it. It goes back to our discussion about the suffragists.

She talks about the time you were elected to Congress:

> "Miss Rankin led an uneasy Congressional life between the two suffrage factions, who celebrated her formal admission to the House by a Joint luncheon in her honor—probably the last instance of cooperation between them—at which Miss Rankin sat as a guest of honor with Mrs. Catt on her right side and Miss Paul on her left. Whatever her tribulations—the merciless criticism she was subjected to by suffrage adherents for not doing enough for the cause and from its opponents for representing women more than the full electorate which had sent her to Congress—she was a visible embodiment on the House floor, among 421 men..."

A Century of Struggle by Eleanor Flexner, p. 283.

Rankin: Four hundred thirty-five—tell her she's wrong—

Chall: "... of the growing pressure on that body for political legitimacy for her sex".

A Century of Struggle by Eleanor Flexner, p. 283.

Well, there are several things in there—what about the hostility between those two women and their groups.

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Rankin: The women reelected me.

Chall: Well what about the difference between Miss Paul and Mrs. Catt? Did you really have to walk a tightrope between those two?

Rankin: No. Miss Paul hadn't any organization. She had an organization, but it wasn't a people's organization, and the labor union fought her all the way.

Chall: Did you say the labor unions?

Rankin: Yes.

Chall: Were you walking a tightrope between the two?

Rankin: **No!**

Chall: They were your friends; they did support you.

Rankin: Alice Paul has always supported my votes against war, and she never faltered for a moment. But her followers didn't. And the same way with the suffrage: I lost some of my good friends in the suffrage movement, but I may have gained many more.

Chall: And Miss Paul and Miss Mabel Vernon have remained your friends throughout these years?

Rankin: They are now. Did I tell you about going to Miss Paul's with John?

Chall: She wanted to know if John had a brother?

Rankin: [laughs]

The Equal Rights Amendment

Chall: Have you been interested in their long, half-century battle for the Equal Rights Amendment?

Rankin: Sure. We were for that before Alice Paul ever came out for it. But we knew that you can't get real equality until we have a just government. And then I always used as my best argument for the Women's Rights bill that we can release these women for doing a real job. It doesn't mean a thing as long as we have a money system—the kind that we have. And nobody in the women's rights movement talks about the Federal Reserve laws.

Chall: Well, what's your idea about the Federal Reserve law and the money system? What changes would you bring about?

Rankin: I'd have an honest money system for the people, instead of letting the bankers say how much money we can have and have inflation or not have inflation. I'm for an honest money system.

Chall: How do you bring that about?

Rankin: You have to know what you have! And I'm working to stop war, and I'm **not** going to get into the money question. Because I know that until we follow the Constitution and have an honest money system, we can't do anything about equal pay, about taxes, about tariffs and all that stuff. Because you don't know what morning you're going to wake up and the money system is worse. It's never better. [laughs]

Chall: You see this as a problem, but you're not going to get involved in it.

Rankin: In India, they always asked Gandhi what he was going to do on these problems. He said, "We haven't independence yet. We haven't independence." And we haven't the vote yet. Why work about something that we couldn't get? It's like working on the other side of the river without building a bridge.

Jeannette Rankin's Second Campaign for Congress

Chall: The second time you ran for Congress you had to run in your one district.

Rankin: Yes.

Chall: What was your platform then, and how did you win?

Rankin: The thing was: I figured what the opposition would say, and I figured how to answer it. I didn't sit down in Georgia and talk about segration, you know. But I knew the papers never mentioned me in Montana unless they said I lived in Georgia.

Chall: Is that right.

Rankin: They constantly said I lived in Georgia. And I was in Montana every summer for six or seven months And when I was running, my sister, Grace, went into the Republican headquarters to get some literature—and she asked how different ones were doing. And they told her how they were all getting along. And she said, "Well, what about Jeannette Rankin?" And they said, "Oh, she'll never get anywhere,"—and this was Republican headquarters—"She won't get anywhere. She lives in Georgia." And my sister told them otherwise. But their sentiment had to be answered. So what I did was to go to Montana for a year. In the spring—[then] I was there for the summer. And then that fall, I wrote to the high schools. There were fifty-six high schools in the district. And said, "I'll be in Troy at 9 o'clock on such-and-such a date, and will leave at one. And I'm available to speak to your high school." And I didn't give them a return address.

Chall: [laughs] So you would just show up.

Rankin: I'd show up. [laughs] And I went to the high schools, and they couldn't overlook my historicity. They couldn't say to the children, "You can't see the first woman who ever went to Congress."

I got up Monday morning and stayed where I was until one or two Monday afternoon. And I planned

the next town for Tuesday, and I did that until Friday night. And I did that for two months.

Chall: And your main circuit was the high schools.

Rankin: I only talked to the high schools.

Chall: And what did you have in mind?

Rankin: That I was there. That I wasn't in Georgia.

Chall: I see. But the children didn't vote.

Rankin: They didn't know where I lived, and they didn't know anything. I said to the children, "I'm here, not to entertain you, but to tell you what the serious situation is we're in in the world. And you can help. And I want to tell you what you can do." And of course high school children loved that, and I had a good beginning—do you want to hear all this?

Chall: I want to hear everything you told those children.

Rankin: I said, "You know there was a time when they didn't let women go to school. And some man wanted to educate his daughter, and they found that women could learn. And so now we have

the schools with boys and girls, and so on, but women have been going on. We got the vote in Montana, and they sent me to Congress. And we should have more women," and so on. And then I said, "When I was in high school and a member of Congress came and talked to us, they talked to the boys and told them what they could do. They could do all these things, and someday one of these boys may be President. And then they'd see the girls, and they'd smile at the girls and say, 'And perhaps one of these young ladies will be the wife of a President.'" And I'd put it all together logically, but now I've forgotten just how. I'd say "Now we know the girls can do many things. And someday we will have a woman President." And they roared with laughter. Then I said, "There aren't jobs just for women. Someday, one of these young men may be the husband of a President." And that just put the boys back and they never were

rambunctious. One boy—[Miss Rankin slouched forward in her chair to describe how the boy would sit while he laughed heartily.]

Chall: You made him nearly fall out of his chair, huh. [laughter]

Rankin: Then I would tell them about the war, and that war disrupted things, and that war was a habit. And a habit is something you do without thinking, and to change a habit you have to practice. But the first step—you never can change a habit unless you make up your mind. You have to make up your mind, and then practice the habit. And I had very little time. But I'd tell them: I drive a car and something happened to the brakes, and I knew that if I forgot and put on the brake, it would stop the car and kill the engine, and I was in traffic. But, I said to them, you have to make up your mind before you are in an emergency. And war is something they use when there's emergencies. And most people don't think, they just go on and fight. So we have to begin when we're very young to break the habit of war

And then I'd tell them about Norway and Sweden doing without war, and the Canadian border unarmed. It's been an example to the world, and was an example in India. That was what Nehru said. Between the United States and Canada, for about two hundred years, the border has been unarmed. But one time the military wanted to arm the Canadian border. It didn't come out in the papers very strong. But they found that every single American said "no." Public opinion was unanimous; it was crystallized, and public opinion wouldn't let them arm.

And then I'd tell them to write to the President, and I'd tell them how to write. But when I told them to write to the President, I'd say, "Don't do this until you talk it over with your mother and father. Be sure to talk it over with them." And then I'd tell them some more about writing. I didn't want them to tell the President that they were high school students. And I didn't want them to lie. One day it just came to me while I was talking, and I said, "You don't need to tell them how old you are. I never

do." [laughter] And they always laughed about it.

Then I'd tell them Indian stories. I said, "When I was in high school, we had a boy in our class, who had had a very unusual experience when he was a tiny baby. His mother and father had crossed the plains in a covered wagon. And one time, when they were camped, they made a circle with their wagons. And they heard the Indians coming. The men all ran to the wagons to get their guns. But this little boy's mother took him in her arms and went out in the direction the Indians were coming, and when she met them, she handed them this tiny baby. She couldn't say to these men, "We're not afraid of you, and you mustn't be afraid of us; because they couldn't

understand each other. But they knew that that tiny baby was the most precious thing that she had, and if she handed him to them, it showed that she wasn't afraid of them. And the Indians took this baby and passed it around from one to the other— the first white baby they'd ever seen. And they laughed and talked. and she couldn't understand what they said. Then they handed it back to her, and went away." Isn't that a nice story?

Chall: And that's a true story?

Rankin: It's a true story. I'd say, "Now you can't hand the President a baby," and they just roared. But they'd get so tense that I had to turn and break it. And I had some other stories which I would tell them. That was my stock story.

Chall: That was your campaign—to use the high schools as your platform.

Rankin: Yes. I went to fifty-two of the fifty-six high schools. I wanted them to know—the parents to know— that I was interested in their children, and that I was in their district. Then if someone said, "She lives in Georgia," the parents would say, "Well, she talked to Harry's high school last year."

Jeannette Rankin, 1940

Chall: And that was the main campaign technique you used?

Rankin: Yes.

Chall: And you won?

Rankin: Well, I did win.

Chall: Incredible.

Rankin: But I did more than that.

Chall: What else?

Rankin: When I did that, they couldn't say that I lived in Georgia. Who else would come to their district and talk to their children? The parents were pleased that somebody would come and be interested enough to talk to their children. Well, everyone in that district knew I'd been there. They may have forgotten it the next day, but the next year, when they said something wrong, someone would say, "Oh yes. She was in our district." Of course, I saw the newspaperman and talked around a little, but some of the towns I was only in a couple of hours. And one high school I went to they were working on a radio in the school—they had a radio. And when I started to the lecture hall, they said, "We heard you on the radio an hour ago." I didn't know that they'd taken my speech on the radio.

Chall: You must have run a rather cheap campaign, then, in terms of raising money and having all kinds of people—

Rankin: You don't need that money. And then they misappropriate it and saying they're going to regulate the money. Now a smart man like Governor Rockefeller who doesn't know how much money he has—if he started in two years ahead, nothing could defeat him, and he wouldn't have to dish out a cent. A man in Florida walked, and he didn't spend much money. Of course, I spent more than that, but that was my principal campaign.

Then the next year I started out in the car alone, and drove the car and hunted up people, all by myself. And once more when some were going to mention my age (I was sixty), those who had seen me said, "Well, she came here driving her own car." And I didn't tell them I was running. I wasn't

running. I came there after advice about my running. I'd say, "Do you think I ought to?"

Chall: Who were you asking?

Rankin: The precinct people.

Chall: In the Republican party?

Rankin: Any precinct people—men or women. I was in their precinct, and I wasn't a candidate; I asked them their advice, and told them I was qualified, that I'd been there, that I'm lobbying, that I knew something, and that I could do more for them than anyone else. "Do you think I can get elected?"

Well then, when the men started off, they had the slogans "You aren't going to send an old woman to Congress, are you?" And the first time they'd say something about me—"Oh she's been here. And you don't see an old woman driving her own car and going out in the country and talking to people who can't run the government."

So. I know my district and knew the opposition. The first one was that I was living in Georgia; the second that I was an old woman. And I couldn't say to them, "I'm not an old woman. I'm sixty years young." [laughter] Or anything like that. I had to do it indirectly. So then when the time came to announce my candidacy, my campaign was practically over. We used a lot of

bumpers [stickers] and buttons.

Chall: Yes, I have a sample. And did you have leaflets that you put out?

Rankin: Yes. The leaflets were quotations from prominent men and women saying what they thought of me.

Chall: I see. Do you have any copies around?

Rankin: No, I don't think so.

Chall: That's too bad.

Rankin: But it had that pictures and my brother had dozens and dozens of them.

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Chall: Yes—sending them all over.

Rankin: And there were so many. It did cost, but I think he spent twice as much as he needed to.

Chall: You think you could have done it with less. He wanted to be sure?

Rankin: Yes.

Chall: He was your campaign manager.

Rankin: Yes. That was after I'd announced. He wasn't my manager in all the other—

Chall: He was your manager for your campagin—last campaign.

Rankin: Yes.

Chall: How much of an opposition did you have? You were running on a Republican ticket were you—or can you cross-file in Montana?

Rankin: We have a secret ballot in Montana.

Chall: And everybody gets the same ballot, regardless of party?

Rankin: They get all the ballots—the Democrats, the Republicans, the Socialists, the Communists, the Prohibition—all the ballots. Then they select the ballot they want to vote, and then they fold up all these ballots, and they have to put their five ballots—they put one in the ballot box, and four in the wastebasket. So no one ever knows how they voted.

Chall: How can you make sure that only one goes into the ballot box?

Rankin: They watch

Chall: I see. And the ballots are all the same color and all the rest? You can't tell.

Rankin: Do you know the history of the ballot? They used— in the beginning they got in a room and they shouted—what one. Then they gave them a piece of

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paper and they wrote it down. And then they gave them one color for the Democrats and one for the Republicans, so someone could watch and see how they voted. And we didn't have the Australian ballot until after the Civil War, or about that time.

Chall: So any number of people could be running for your position in Congress from your district. Were there others running from your district?

Rankin: Oh, I think there were four or five men.

Chall: Is that right? And you won the primary then?

Rankin: And the incumbent. There was a man in Congress and a Republican. And they'd say, "Well what's the matter with Thorkelson?" I'd say, "He's a good man, and he's a good congressman, but I'd be better, because I know Congress better than he does, from lobbying." And I did too. And I never said a word against him; I always said he was a good congressman.

Chall: Well tell me what you think of Jacob Thorkelson. I knew he was in there only from '38 to '40, and I didn't realize he was in your district. What kind of a person was he?

Rankin: He hadn't much personality. He couldn't meet people, and talk to them. But he was a peace man.

Chall: He was a peace person—I realized that, but I was not really sure just in what respect he was for peace. There was some feeling that he was—that there were other aspects to his peace activities that weren't quite pacifistic.

Rankin: They didn't like him. Well, I never mentioned anything against him. I only said he was a good congressman.

Chall: And did you think he was?

Rankin: Yes. But I didn't think he was as good as I was. [laughs]

Chall: So that's why he lost his seat in Congress.

There were some people who felt that he was rather close to the Silver Shirts in this country, who were also against the war, but who had other axes to grind—close to people like William Dudley Pelley and General Mosely. They were considered to be incipient American fascists. Did you think that about Thorkelson?

Rankin: No. I just knew that—I didn't run against him. I just ran on my own.

Chall: But you didn't have any feeling that he was sympathetic to the Nazis?

Rankin: No. I didn't pay any attention to him.

Chall: I see. [laughs] In other words, you ran for Congress because you wanted to get in there and do a better job than the others—whoever they were, and to vote for peace.

Rankin: I wanted to represent women and peace. And I said to them, "I'm the same person who was elected before." They knew what I was.

Chall: I see. So that's the way it came about.

Rankin: And then the election. Many people thought, not everyone, but many people thought my brother was the best lawyer in the Northwest. And he was a very kind, idealistic person. He wanted me to vote for the First World War because— It's almost impossible for people today to understand what I was in 1917, because I was the best known woman in many places.

One day I was looking at something and I found a *New York Times*, and Consuela Vanderbilt—did you ever hear of her?

Chall: I have, yes.

Rankin: She was on one side of the front page, with a colored sheet of the *Times* and (I don't know how I happened to turn it over) I was facing me on the other side of it. But I got letters from all over Europe and from—when I voted against the First World War. We had lots of soldiers in France—

Chall: Already.

Rankin: And one of the military men told me that when the war vote was taken, they said, "Americans voted for war, and the woman voted against it." They mentioned that; and they told the soldiers. Of course there were fifty-five men who voted with me.

Chall: You weren't alone that time.

Rankin: No. But, it's hard to realize what I gave up; but I didn't give up anything. I would have been condemned for voting for it.

Chall: You would have been condemned by whom?

Rankin: All the women in their hearts.

Chall: In their hearts. And what about your colleagues in the woman's peace movement, like Jane Addams and the others. Were they sympathetic to your vote against the first war?

Rankin: Oh very. And the Quakers made a great fuss over me.

Chall: I see. And that enabled you to get your lobbying job later.

Rankin: Yes.

There's something else about my second campaign that I think ought to be mentioned: my brother had an office in Helena, and Democrats and Republicans, Communists, and everyone went up and talked to him, because they not only learned so much, but he was a lawyer and he could get it out of them—what they thought. He knew the questions to ask in such a way that the other person wasn't sure—wasn't conscious that he was being questioned. And he'd ask about this one and that one, and how they re getting along.

And the most interesting part about a campaign is the way everyone uses what brains he has to figure out who's going to win. You know, that's a pasttime that lasts for two months. And Wellington would ask them how they were, and then he'd say, "How about my sister?" And if it was a labor man, he'd

say, "Oh, well she'll get a good many, but she can't win." "And what about the American Legion?" "Oh, they're against her." "And what about business?" And they'd tell. And then he'd say, "And what about the women?" And everyone said, "Oh, they'll vote for her." And it was the women who elected me—without saying anything, without doing very much. They talked to each others or they knew how others felt. And you wouldn't have known, except that each person that was in contact would be able to say. And I won, so well. My opponent wasn't

a hippie—they didn't have hippies then. But he was a way-out radical, Jerry O'Connell or O'Connor, I've forgotten.

Chall: This was the Democratic opponent in the final?

Rankin: Yes. We had an initiative and a referendum in Montana, and he'd gotten an initiative, signed by the people, to give the old people $200 a month. This was about the time of the Townsend Movement. And when the Anaconda Company found that this was going to be voted on, they knew they'd lose, and they would be taxed the heaviest for it. So, all through my second campaign, I came across women and men who had been paid to go into certain areas and take the names of those that had signed and blackmail them. "You will lose your job unless you take your name off." And they took their names off. I haven't any proof of this—the different organizations—but I know they all chipped in.

And my brother felt sure that when they got in the silent booth they'd vote for Jerry, that he'd be my opponent on the Democratic ticket.

Chall: And he was.

Rankin: And he was. It humiliated so many people by making them take their name off or lose their job.

Chall: What a terrible thing to do. How did you win against him then?

Rankin: Very easily.

Chall: Well how—[laughs]—why did you think you'd beat him?

Rankin: Because they had a choice, you know. Either him or me. And the company had no one to vote for, and the company people had no one to vote for. That's the way we are in the normal congressional election; the company owns both. And this time, they only had two enemies.

Chall: I see. So they had to keep their power out of it in this case.

Rankin: Yes. If they worked for Jerry, I'd get elected; if they worked against me, Jerry would get it.

Campaign for a Seat in the Senate

Chall: So that's how you got back into Congress. I have read someplace that you ran twice for the Senate between these two periods when you were in the House. Is that so?

Rankin: Well, when they gerrymandered my district, the women said, the suffragists—all of them—"If you gerrymander her out of the House, she'll run for the Senate." And no one took it seriously—I didn't take it seriously. And then when the time came, I didn't want to. I didn't think I could be elected. But, I don't know how it happened that I did.

Chall: You actually did run a campaign? When was this— 1918?

Rankin: Yes. And we lost the primary because there was a snowstorm, and the voters—my friends—couldn't get to the polls—we didn't have the votes. I only lost by 1500 votes

Chall: It was close.

Rankin: It was a great compliment.

And then, I don't know how it got started, that I'd run Independent in the general election. And when it got started, the opposition offered me such bribes afterwards, that I had to run to prove I didn't take the bribes.

Chall: What kind of bribes did they—?

Rankin: They'd make it possible for me to do what I intended to do.

Chall: Like lobbying—

Rankin: Going to Europe and things like that.

Chall: Well at least they didn't threaten you.

Rankin: It wasn't in style then!

Chall: That must have been quite a shock to you also.

Rankin: We didn't make any campaign, but I ran. The thing was, they wanted a Senator Walsh, and they thought I'd take votes from him—I think it was him. I don't know who it was.

Chall: One of your two senators that was up for election.

Rankin: I think it was Walsh.

Chall: And they wanted him—the incumbent—to win again.

Rankin: Yes.

Chall: Did you lose by many votes the second time.

Rankin: I don't know what I got. But there was enough of a vote that I never felt defeated, you know.

Chall: I see. You could have run again if you'd wanted to. You didn't feel you were out.

The Rankin family home in Missoula, Montana, Jumbo Mountain in the background. Designed and built by Jeannette Rankin's father John in

1885, it had the first indoor water in Missoula. It was torn down to build a highway. Jeannette Rankin in standing on the balcony at left.

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Rankin: Yes. But I didn't want to. I didn't want to be in the Senate.

Chall: Oh, really?

Rankin: No.

Chall: Why not?

Rankin: Well, I was pretty young and inexperienced. There were only ten in the House younger than I when I served.

I want to tell you a funny story about my first campaign which I think I've forgotten to mention. During the campaign, Belle Fleigelman [now Weinstein] was in charge of publicity. After my election she went to Washington with me as my first and most important secretary. And she was from the University of Wisconsin, and was a very tiny and very smart person— she still has these lovely eyes; they sparkle and so on. So, she wrote a letter to the press and said in this letter that I was going to run for Congress, and they would want to know something about me, and she began to send it—and it was the cutest letter I've ever read. No newspaperman could read it without a smile on his face. And she sent it to the *New York Times* and some other paper, I think, and said that I was going to be elected and she knew they would be glad to have some information.

Chall: [laughs] Oh really.

Rankin: This lovely letter. And they sent it back.

Chall: They did?

Rankin: They didn't keep it. And then just about the time the material came back, I was elected, and they went crazy for information. [laughter] We were very busy. She still lives—she was ten years younger than I am. So we've had a wonderful friendship all these years. Her sister, Frieda Fleigelman, is also a good friend.

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[Please answer the following questions:

Chall: What were the names of your secretaries during your second term?

Rankin: Sigrid Scannell and Rosanell Waitland [now Spriggs].

Chall: How did your brother react to your vote against the war the second time?

Rankin: Wellington said, "I take better care of my cows than Roosevelt does of his army."

Chall: Were you able to work on any special kind of legislation in which you had an interest? What was it?

Rankin: It was mostly war, but I was working on a special bill to change our money system. But the financial interest groups working through their men in Congress kept having the lawyers in the

legislative drafting service write bills totally different from what I was suggesting. I wanted to take the profits out of war by freezing all bank accounts when war began and issuing war money to be used only during the term of the war; it would be worthless afterwards. No profits, no war!]

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III Jeannette Rankin Talks More about her Lifelong Work for World Peace

Jane Addams and the Women's League for Peace and Freedom

Chall: I thought today we would talk some more about your role in the peace movement. Now you told me that you had started your work for peace many years ago, even before women's suffrage, and I wonder if you had been with Jane Addams, when she formed the Women's Peace Party in 1915

Rankin: Yes.

Chall: And where was that formed?

Rankin: In Washington.

Chall: What was the reason behind this?

Rankin: Well, you see, war had started in Europe, and it was a tremendous shock to American people that there was a war in Europe. A man from Missouri, a professor, had been in Europe, and he came home and wrote a book—I can't remember the name of the book—and told that there was going to be a war—I mean before, in 1914—but I'd never heard of it. In 1914 I was campaigning for woman's suffrage, and I was in a little town in Montana and news came. A lovely woman was my hostess, and we sat

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there and we couldn't believe it. And I was so disturbed that a thing like that could happen, and I'd have no warning of it. I thought I was the only one that didn't know that it was coming, but gradually found out that they didn't. And this book of this man was talked about a great deal.

Chall: I see. It was an important book that had been ignored by most Americans you think.

Rankin: Scorned. There wouldn't be such a thing as a war.

So, then I realized that I wasn't the only one that didn't know about it. I'll never forget the shock it was. And then in my speeches in Montana, I mentioned this war a good many times and said that was one reason women should have the vote. I didn't say we'd stop war, but we ought to know about it, and so on.

Chall: If you were shocked at the beginning of the war, does that mean that you found common cause with other suffragists, primarily, about that time to promote the cause of peace?

Rankin: Oh, no, it wasn't anything organized or talked about.

Chall: How did Jane Addams—you and Jane Addams and the others—then get involved in forming the Women's Peace Party?

Rankin: I don't know. Miss Addams called it, and she did everything. And this was in 1915. And then in 1919, they went to Switzerland—

Chall: Yes, Zurich.

Rankin: And I was definitely a part of that.

Chall: What was that like—organizing in Zurich in 1919?

Rankin: I think there were fifteen-twenty women from the United States that went. And Miss Addams—I borrowed the money to go—but Miss Addams always put me forward and used me, and she liked me.

Chall: She was much older than you?

Rankin: Twenty years. And she knew I was more than a suffragist. For instance, we had a colored woman in our party, Mary Church Terrell—a very able, beautiful woman—and when we got to Paris, she put me in the room with Mary Church Terrell, and she was quite disappointed at some of the women who didn't want her.

Chall: Is that so?

Rankin: And do you remember that Jew in Sears & Roebuck— Rosenwald [Julius]—that had schools in the South for colored people? Miss Addams was telling him that I rode on the train with Mary Church Terrell. And she said he said, "Well she's one who really believes in doing what you believe." These other ones made speeches against racial discrimination; but that was fifty years ago.

Chall: I didn't realize that they were involved with the race problem at that time.

Rankin: There wasn't **anything on earth** that they weren't involved in!

Chall: So you were involved, when you set that up, with race problems and peace, and all kinds of other issues then.

Rankin: Well, there wasn't very much about race. Nobody knew about it. Did you ever read her *Twenty Years at Hull House?*

Chall: No, but I think I'm going to. That probably explains a lot about her.

Rankin: Oh yes. Once I met a man on an airplane from South Carolina and something came up about a woman President. I said that Miss Addams could have made a great President because of her knowledge of American problems, and he said that she also understood European problems very thoroughly.

World War II—The First Stages

Chall: You have had a very long life of activity against war. Still people do, as you have pointed out, seriously question your vote against the war with Japan.

Rankin: I can't understand how thinking people can question the Second World War. It isn't what the issues are, but the methods of settling disputes—that war has nothing to do with the problem.

Chall: It's beginning to look that way more and more, isn't it.

Rankin: Well, that was one of the first things I learned about it.

Chall: Well you apparently had that attitude in the First War, but you were more convinced of it at the time of the second?

Rankin: Yes, because I followed Roosevelt's war activities. I spent one summer in Geneva studying the League of Nations, and you could feel every minute that they were putting down democracy in Germany, and building Hitler.

Chall: Did you think the League was responsible for Hitler.

Rankin: No, no one thing. But the whole atmosphere of England and the United States. So that was in the early twenties. When did Roosevelt come in the first time?

Chall: He was first elected in Novembers 1932.

Rankin: And Hitler came in about the same time.

Chall: Yes, Hitler came in at just about the same time—he was appointed Chancellor I think at about that period [1933].

Rankin: But that wasn't that whole thing.

Chall: Prior to that he was active with his brown shirts in building up his power.

Rankin: And the whole attitude was to help him and put down Stresemann [Gustav]. What was the name of the man before him?

Chall: In Germany. I don't remember. [Hitler replaced Franz von Papen as chancellor.]

Rankin: It isn't important. But the minute Roosevelt came in, I was lobbying. And his first act was a war act. He suggested a huge sum of money (What seemed a huge sum at that time. It's not anything now.), two hundred million dollars to help the Depression, and that two hundred million was to go to the War Department—to help it.

Chall: Oh really.

Rankin: I'm not sure whether the whole thing was to the War Department. But in that was either forty or sixty million to buy gas masks that had been found effective in the First World War.

Chall: Is that so. And that was early in Roosevelt's term?

Rankin: The first thing he did.

Chall: I didn't realize that.

Rankin: And from then on, everything he did was a step towards war. And so I've felt that we had helped Hitler, thinking he would fight Communists, you know, and he started that way.

Chall: There were many people in this country who did think that if we allowed Hitler to be built up that he would fight the Communists for us. It was Anti-American-involvement but it wasn't a pacifist position.

Rankin: No.

Lobbyist with the National Council for the Prevention of War

Chall: When you were working lobbying for the National Council for the Prevention of War, what groups were with you?

[Tape off]

[Interviewer's comment: At this point Miss Rankin asked that the tape recorder be turned off. She was reluctant to discuss her decade of work with the National Council for the Prevention of War because of the difficulties she had had with its director Frederick J. Libby. They disagreed basically about the tactics to use in promoting peace. In addition she felt that, although she had been for many years, a professional social worker, had actively and successfully campaigned for suffrage and for political office, neither she nor any woman on the staff was ever accorded equality with the men on the staff. Mr. Libby wouldn't consider her opinions, preferring those of the men, even though they had had less governmental experience; he expected to pay her less than the men for doing the same work, and wanted her to read testimony before congressional committees which had been prepared by someone else, but which she felt would make her look ignorant and foolish. From her experience as a congresswoman she believed that the Council's various approaches to Congress were incorrect.

Thus, these crucial years for American foreign policy were unhappy years for Miss Rankin as she worked as a lobbyist for peace. In terms of this interview, only her realization that what she had to say about the period had historical significance, and that the interviewer did not intend to probe the

politics and personalities of the National Council for the Prevention of War, prompted Miss Rankin to continue to talk for the record.]

[Tape on]

Well, let's just say that during the years from 1928-1938, when you worked for the National Council for the Prevention of War, you did it because you felt this was very important, even though you weren't too happy about the position. Could you tell me—

Rankin: This is the thing—all of the people were so vague, and in 1929, when Hoover was in, they signed the Kellogg Pact, and I thought, as long as we'd signed it, then the thing to do was to work hard for that. And Mr. Libby had a preacher named Watkins, and he got high schools to write essays on the Kellogg Pact and gave prizes and so on. It was a very dull program. While the children did it, there was nothing to reach the parents, and we needed people to endorse the Kellogg Pact, and that's what made me go to Libby and ask for a job. He had this nice, ladylike organization, and he said afterwards, if he'd known what I thought, he never would have hired

me.

Chall: What would you have done? What did you want to do?

Rankin: I wanted to publicize the Kellogg Pact and to work on that. And he would say to me when I urged it, "Well you can do it," but I had to do all these other things; and the advantage, I thought—I don't know whether he ever thought it was that I could go to the congressmen and senators and ask them to do things that I had done, you know. Every new congressman and senator would talk to me, because I had been in Congress, and they'd heard about me. And I'd go to see, and I thought it was an advantage—to meet them and to say, "Do this," and "It doesn't matter if you do this or not."

For instance, when Truman was elected senator, I called him up, and he came and I said that I was against war. And he said, "Well I've always liked war. I felt we made all our advances in civilization from war."

Chall: Oh. Well he was plain about it.

Rankin: Yes. And they treated me as a colleague more than as a lobbyist, all the way through. And I could go for different things. And we did work on some good things.

The Arms Embargo

Chall: What were they?

Rankin: We got a bill through, at the last, against selling arms to other countries—an embargo on arms. And I had a lot to do with it.

Chall: How did you do that?

Rankin: I kept in touch with a young fellow (I can't remember his name) from Ohio, who introduced a resolution for an embargo on arms as a part of the Kellogg Pact— following that. He didn't mention it. But, I kept pushing him to do more and to do more. The chairman of the committee in the House was a Sam McReynolds from Chattanooga. And I thought I wanted to go into his district. When the bill came up—when this young fellow introduced it—Sam McReynolds fought it very hard. He did just what the President wanted him to do (which was Roosevelt). So I said to Mr. Libby that I wanted to go in his district and work. (I'm not getting it in sequence.) When it came up in the House, Congress was going to adjourn, and they wanted to kill the bill before they adjourned, but there was so much sentiment for it, they didn't know what to do.

And I was following this in the Senate. The committee was going to meet to pass it. And there was going to be a hard fight on the thing. And I slipped into the committee room and passed this young fellow and said on the way, "Pass it for six months." And then when they come back, they can change it. And so, in a few minutes the committee met, and they adjourned almost immediately, and they

came out with all smiles, and they'd passed it for six months. And I never told Mr. Libby, because I would spend more time convincing him that in six months they could do it over—that I was helping them pass it. I couldn't explain, and I've never told it. This is the first time I've gone on record.

Lobbying in Sam McReynolds' District

Chall: Now I realize why it was taken up again in February of the next year.

Rankin: Yes. But the thing was that from then on, I went to Georgia when I was not lobbying in Congress. And while I was lobbying in Congress, I decided that I wanted to go into McReynolds' district and campaign. But I couldn't get an answer any time from Mr. Libby. And then we always had our annual meeting in the midst of the campaign. Instead of making people work, we talked about it, you see. And I had to go to Washington for this annual meeting.

But, I kept pressing it with Mr. Libby, and finally he said when I went back that I could do it. All it meant was carfare.

Chall: Were they concerned about mixing the pacifist educational tradition with what would be known as "dirty polities?" Was that one of their—problem?

Rankin: Yes. But they had—I used to have the hardest time with them. They had a paper in which they would call down the senators and congressmen, with nothing to back it, instead of working in their district. You never know when a man does a wrong thing, when he's going to turn over. And there's no need of talking about the man.

I said this to a Christian Scientist the other day. She was talking against Nixon. I said, "Why spend all this energy hating Nixon and talking about Tricky Dick, when you should be loving someone

and building him up? Instead of going against Nixon." Well, she was a Christian Scientists and she could see it. I've never heard her say "Tricky Dick" since.

Chall: Not to you.

Rankin: No, and I don't think she thinks it. But, that's the kind of campaign that **I can't stand**. I'm not a Christian Scientist, but I know their philosophy.

Chall: Your campaign for peace is organizing the precincts so that people will, in turn, influence their congressman?

Rankin: Well this is what happened: I had a contact in Chattanooga, which was the biggest town in Sam McReynolds' district. She was a suffragist. Her name was Abbie Crawford Milton. And she was the one that got Tennessee to endorse woman's suffrage. The National Organization never mentioned it, because they came in and throw her out.

Her husband was George Fort Milton and he owned papers in Knoxville and Chattanooga and Nashville. She had me speak, and they gave me a big check when I was first elected. And she was such a wonderful person! And such a strong pacifists that we were friends until she died a few years ago.

So I talked with her—I think I went up and talked to her, about two hundred miles from where I was. I planned to go into his [McReynolds'] district. I'd speak in Chattanooga. And there were twelve counties there, two of them were high in the mountains and hard to get at. So I took ten counties, and I wrote ahead to the newspapers, the schools, and to anything I could think of there, and said that I'd be in whatever was the principal town at 2:30 in the afternoon, I think it was. And I'd leave the next morning and go to the next town. And I gave them my itinerary and so on, which meant that I'd arrive in each of those counties, and the newspaper could expect me, and any contact that I had.

So. I told Abbie I'd be there the night before. And the next day she set me up—she had a lovely home. George Fort Milton was a great newspaperman. His son, who was very little younger than (Abbie was his second wife), was in Roosevelt's cabinet—George Fort Milton, Jr.

When I got there—in the morning, Abbie sent up my breakfast, and on the tray was a beautiful little steak and a huge grapefruit, and I ate it. And she said, "I knew you wouldn't have anything more to eat today." [laughter]

Chall: Did you attract people that way?

Rankin: And I talked to two or three high schools—that day, and went to a luncheon and talked to the luncheon, and did something else. And at 9 o'clock at night, I talked on the radio, which is a tense feat at best. I just went from one to another, and she'd arranged it.

The next morning I got up and went to this other town. And would go any place they'd let me. I went to the town where they had the "Monkey Trial" in Tennessee—whats the name of it?

Chall: I don't remember the name, but I remember the Monkey Trial?

Rankin: And they were holding a revival service and I talked there, and I talked at colleges and I talked at little teas that the people were having. [laughs] I talked everywhere, and when I got through in ten days, I went to Washington for Christmas. I didn't send one card; I didn't do one thing for Christmas, but I worked in that district.

And when I went, I told them, "I'm from Montana. I'm here, because you have such an important state, and you can affect the whole country and the world." And they had the speaker of the House, Byrnes; they had Cordell Hull, and Mr. McReynolds. And I said, "You can decide these questions."

And then I told them that they should be very proud of the men they had, they were such good men.

I talked against war and selling arms, and didn't mention how McReynolds stood on this. I just said he was a great man and a good man. I'm sure that one of McReynolds' men came to every meeting. One town in the South, we'd hired the hall and nobody came but a few men, and I was sure they had done it. And I told them how to write to him and suggested that they write—not telling how he stood on this. I knew that the people were against selling arms. And I knew that I didn't have to convert them to that. I praised their man the best I could. He was a good man, but he was under the influence of Roosevelt.

Well, Mr. Libby, after he heard I was going and had begun to work there, sent a young man in our organization, an Englishman, in, and he went to Chattanooga to talk to the unions. He called Mr. McReynolds, Sam, which no labor man would call him, and they were insulted, and they didn't like him. But they wouldn't consult with me as to what he should say or how he should do it. But they all knew so much better than I did.

Chall: How did it turn out?

Rankin: I got back to Washington—Congress met in January. I didn't go near Mr. McReynolds. [laughs] I was scared to, because I'd heard how mad they were. And finally, Mr. McReynolds introduced the bill, and we read it and read it to find out the joker, because it was just exactly what we

wanted.

Chall: Is that right!

Rankin: And one day I met one of the women from McReynolds' office in the hall, and she said, "Oh, we've been wanting to see you to thank you for what you did in our district." And she was so pleased.

Well **no man** that followed me could say I didn't just praise McReynolds. And that's why I knew what I was doing. One place, they hired a hall—did I say—and there was no one there. But everybody waited on me and put me up.

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Mr. Libby doesn't mention that in his book.

Chall: Did he even talk about the Tennessee campaign?

Rankin: No!

Chall: Nor why Mr. McReynolds may have changed his point of view.

Rankin: No, not a word. Just mentioned that I worked on it.

But I thought it was a wonderful demonstration of what could be done.

Once I was talking to Senator Nye, telling him what I'd been doing. I told him something about McReynolds. He said that he and McReynolds came over from the Philippines to this country on the same boat, and that McReynolds was of the same opinion when he came over that he'd been when he started; then he introduced this bill. I told Nye what I'd done. He said, "Well that's what did it." He knew it was the right bill.

So, that's why I was so unhappy. And then they'd get me to do such trivial things. Then Congress passed that bill, and Roosevelt never paid any attention to it. They went right on selling arms.

Chall: They found ways of revising the embargo from time to time, shifting the emphasis. Of course, the embargo was based only on arms—armaments. It was possible, I guess, to sell things like oil and scrap.

Rankin: They didn't sell oil; they gave it to them.

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Gerald Nye, Bennett Clark, and Other Anti-War Leaders

Chall: Can you tell me a little bit about Gerald Nye, since I'm sure you knew him? Were you active at all at the time he was making his investigation of the munitions makers?

Rankin: Yes. I campaigned for him the last time. [laughs] I was driving through North Dakota, and he came up in back of me. And here was a car with a Georgia license plate—he couldn't think who it was. [laughs]

But I went to picnics and to a lot of things. (I only remember the nice things.) I talked for him. He was a good pacifist, in the work. He was a very limited man I thought. But he was very good.

Bennett Clark, who was the Senator (who was the son of Champ Clark, speaker of the House), was the brains on that committee.

Chall: I see. He was on the munitions committee.

Rankin: Yes. Of course, we learned a great deal by that investigation. The one thing was that every time they'd come to a crucial place and they wanted the papers from the Archives, they had promised England they wouldn't give them.

Chall: Is that right? You couldn't get these papers—

Rankin: You couldn't get the facts. And that's why the thing sort of petered out, because they couldn't get the facts.

Chall: However it did make quite an appeal to people, whatever came out of it.

Rankin: Oh yes.

Chall: Do you think it was a result of the Nye committee that C. Hartley Grattan wrote his book?

Rankin: No.

Chall: Did you know him, the author of *The Deadly Parallel* ? That was used a great deal between the wars to prevent another war from coming into existence, and I thought perhaps you had been aware of the use to which that book was put.

Rankin: I may have—at the moment I don't recall.

Chall: You knew the Beards [Charles and Mary].

Rankin: Very well, and he stood by me always—

Chall: Now they were strongly opposed to getting into the war too.

Rankin: Oh yes. And he wrote about it after—I've forgotten the name.

Chall: Let me just pull a few names out, because I want to go back to some of the others. Did you know Stuart Chase or his writing?

Rankin: Yes.

Chall: Now he felt that we could stand behind our own isolated borders here, that we really didn't need to trade or have any contact with other countries.

Rankin: Yes.

The Roots of Miss Rankin's Pacifism

Chall: Did you feel that we were that impregnable—?

Rankin: Yes. And then I felt always that it was just a stupid, poor way of trying to settle a dispute. Because I was always conscious—The people in Montana; when they first came there, had no laws and no courts and no enforcement officers, practically. And when two men had a dispute, the man that was fastest on the trigger was right.

And more people came in; they established laws and the courts, and the same men who had been there when they had to pull the triggers were the ones who made the laws. It wasn't a change in human nature, but a change in their teachings. [Benjamin Kidd, *The Science of Powers*, 1918]

Chall: In the method.

Rankin: In the method. We never had a gun. Father was in one battle, when they had a fort in Missoula, and they told the men to get their guns and go, and that the Nez Perce Indians were coming and going to heat it up.

Father wasn't married; he was a young man, and he took his gun. And they went about ten miles, up the river, and there was a branch came down, a couple of miles up there, where the road was just a trail between two rooks, a mountain on one side 9000 feet high and a hill on the other. The captain said that they'd wait there until the Indians came. The Indians came down and he went over through this pass and talked to them, and then he came back. He said the Indians could come through if they would give up their guns. And they said they were going hunting—they needed their guns. And so he came back and told the men that at four o'clock they'd attack.

And so they went to sleep knowing this. And at four o'clock when they got up and went through there were no Indians. The men were so disgusted. Most of them didn't want to go and didn't think the Indians were a bother. They always called it, "Camp Fizzle." [laughter] Father used to tell about this.

Then they went up where there was a mission and a few people—the Indians did. And some white man gave an Indian boy some whisky and he ran around, you know. But they went on up and they called that "Camp Scallawag." And they went on up to Rosses' Hole; the Indians were camped, and the soldiers with a few of the natives stood on the hill. And in the morning, when the medicine man came out of the camp, they shot him.

Chall: Is that so.

Rankin: And every one that came out, they shot. It was the most **disgraceful** thing you can imagine.

We were raised with that. And we were raised with Indians all around. And when they got drunk, they swore and cavorted around. But they never bothered us. And there were three or five Indians hung for something. And I remember we were playing. I don't remember the year. We went up on the hill. I can remember we were trying to frighten ourselves saying they'd come and get us. We knew they wouldn't but we pretended they would. And it was just a game. I'm sure we all knew it was a game, that the Indians would never attack us. We'd see the Indians passing day after day. They were friendly but we were so dumb.

Chall: When did you arrive at your position of pacifism?

Rankin: Well, I didn't have anything else.

Chall: Were you consciously a pacifist at one time, and not consciously so at another time? Was there a sudden—

Rankin: No.

Chall: Was it the First World War that made you a conscious pacifist?

Rankin: Oh no! **I grew up knowing that the military was a crooked thing**.

Chall: Because of what you'd seen in the Territory?

Rankin: My father sold them lumber for the—

Chall: The barracks?

Rankin: They had log barracks. Then he sold them lumber after he was married and had a saw mill. He said they were the stupidest men he'd ever worked for. I mean, he'd had this experience, and he felt they were too stupid for words.

Chall: So, it was just a part of your growing up that the military shouldn't gain too much power, and that it wasn't the way to solve problems—by shooting?

Rankin: Yes. And they talk about these cowboys having guns. My brother had ranches, and he wouldn't **allow** a gun on his ranch. Sometimes they'd let a man use a gun to shoot coyotes or something.

Chall: Otherwise no guns.

Penal Reform

Rankin: No guns. And I never could believe that punishing people was any good.

Chall: You didn't believe in the prison system either, I take it?

Rankin: No. The funny thing that I did when I was in the School of Philanthropy—was to come home when they told us to visit the jail. So I went down to the jail. The sheriff lived about two blocks this way, and the jail was about five blocks this way. And he always passed our house. And everybody knew him, and father knew him, and I know him and I had worked for him. But, we were all one big family. So, I went down to the jail and wanted to see him. And it was just after the Fourth [of July], and he had a lot of people in jail. And they had to put the women in with the men in that part of the jail. And he offered to let me know when I could go in. [laughs] And so I did. And the reason they were crowded in the jail, was because the deputy sheriff's family lived at the jail and took up so much space. They were crowded for the prisoners.

And I wanted to make the family move out. So I talked to the women and talked loud. Then I went to the courtroom. Of course the judge was a family friend, and his children played with my sisters and brother and the prosecuting attorney was the same. And when this came up, the judge said, "What

about these jail conditions?" And he said, "Oh that's just Jeannette Rankin." [laughter] And the judge said, "Well then why are all the good women in town telephoning me about this?"

Chall: Oh really.

Rankin: And they put the family out.

Chall: Oh they did. So you won that one. You had a way of gathering your women around you.

Rankin: Going at it from the bottom up.

Chall: Yes, that's the technique.

The League of Nations and the World Court

Chall: I want to ask you some more questions about some of your anti-war work. Can you tell me what you did during the controversy over the League of Nations? Where were you, and what were you doing, and what did you think about the League of Nations?

Rankin: Well, you see, I was for the outlawing of war. Salmon Levinson and all the big people in the peace movement were for it.

Chall: For the outlawing of war.

Rankin: Yes. And the Kellogg-Briand Pact. And when that was up, I was very close to Senator Borah. And Kellogg was a good lawyer, but he wasn't much of a writer. And he told Borah that he would introduce the Kellogg-Briand Pact if Borah would do the writing. And so all the letters and so on went through. Well, in the articles of war, there was—Levinson—I knew him very well. He took his idea for the articles of war from our Supreme Court. You know, when they were writing the Constitution, they all knew that these thirteen warring, separated states were going to have disputes.

And they didn't want war, so they said they had to have some way to settle these disputes. So, he [Levinson] looked up the history of the Court. And the Court was formed to pass decisions on disputes between the states and to make decisions about the Constitution. And Madison said that any force used against a state or a nation was tantamount to war, so they couldn't give the Court any means to enforce its decisions. That was the first great peace organization and the greatest peace gesture that we've ever made. It was the first time in modern history that a sovereign state would resign the right to settle its disputes, by law.

Chall: Now, the reason—one of the reasons, I suppose, that the Supreme Court of the United States works is because we have a Constitution and presumably, we have to function within its framework. Although we can interpret it and change our interpretation of the Constitution, that's the framework. In international law, what's the framework of the World Court?

Rankin: Well that was an excuse when they haven't got a League of Nations. They wanted the Court with power to enforce its decisions.

Chall: I see. World police power.

Rankin: And the opposition in the United States was not in Massachusetts. It was all over. They said that we didn't want the power to enforce the decision. And Borah put into the Articles of War, and in opposition to the League of Nations, that as long as they had a court to decide these things, and power to enforce it, that we shouldn't do it. And they put all the emphasis on Lodge, when he had **nothing** to do with the masses of people in this country. The people of the country and the nation were opposed to this war. And the English never could understand the outlawing. Lord Robert Cecil, or whatever his name was, said they were for the outlawing of war, and we should have a big army and everything.

Chall: Well, of course in Europe they're concerned about wars because they had them frequently to settle disputes, and they don't feel as safe as we do.

Rankin: But they never settled them.

Chall: Yes, it would seem that way.

You were opposed then, I take it, to Elihu Root and his proposal for the World Court?

Rankin: Yes.

Chall: Because that was based upon a decision about police power and what you call aggression.

What about Mr. Shotwell.

Rankin: He was a professor at Columbia. Briand said to him, "How would you word it if you were outlawing war?" And Shotwell wrote those two paragraphs. And Briand accepted it and Kellogg accepted it.

Chall: And so Shotwell was the one who is responsible for writing what we know as the—

Rankin: The wording. He wasn't interested in what it meant.

Chall: You don't think Shotwell cared?

Rankin: No.

Chall: Why is that?

Rankin: He didn't have any decision powers but he knew how, if you were going to outlaw war, that these words would do it.

Other Pacifist Leaders

Chall: What about Charles Clayton Morrison, who was also an anti-war leader?

Rankin: He had been a great pacifist with the *Christian Century*.

Florence Allen later became a federal judge. She was a lawyer and advocated the outlawry of war. Charles Clayton Morrison also advocated outlawry of war, as did John Haynes Holmes.

Chall: John Haynes Holmes was part of the FOR organization wasn't he? [Fellowship of Reconciliation]

Rankin: Well, he had his church. He was a person in himself. I wish I had his letters that he wrote me.

Chall: Didn't you once tell me that he and Nevin Sayre both wrote you letters after your second vote against the war? And commended you for your vote?

Rankin: Yes. I remember what he said—that if he'd ever been told that such a thing should happen that I'd be in there the second time and voting [against] he'd have said it couldn't be!

Chall: Yes, it was incredible. [laughs]

I was interested of course that the FOR monthly bulletin never mentioned your stand against the war, even though they were pacifists and opposed to the war. They didn't publicly commend

you for your courage, if nothing else. It was silence; It was all silence.

Rankin: They don't know what I'm going to do next. They were just a total waste!

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Chall: What's the approach of FOR people and others? How do they expect to bring about pacifism?

Rankin: Praying.

Chall: By praying. You believe in the power of prayer, but that it will not end wars. Is that right?

Rankin: Yes. Governments make war. I should say that in every other sentence—governments make war. And you can't get rid of war without—

Chall: Now speaking of government, you once told me that you really never had a chance to vote for a President who had your point of view. What did you think of—?

Rankin: I voted for Norman Thomas.

Chall: I was going to ask you about Norman Thomas. You believed in Norman Thomas.

Rankin: Well, I believed in him better than anyone else. I never worked as a socialist. I always felt that we can change certain fallacies in our government, and that would get us there—

Chall: Did you say change "fallacies" or "policies"—?

Rankin: Fallacies. Isn't that right?

Chall: Yes.

Rankin: That word.

Chall: That word is right, but I wanted to make sure I heard it right. [laughs]

And Norman Thomas was also a pacifist—

Rankin: And then he fell down at the Second World War.

Chall: Where was he during the Second World War?

Rankin: In New York—sick.

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Chall: Now, did you vote for him when he ran from time to time after the war?

Rankin: Oh, I don't remember whether—

Chall: How about people like Eugene McCarthy in the last election?

Rankin: Oh I worked for him. And then I contributed to his campaign; the only one I ever contributed to.

Chall: So there have been a few men, from time to time, who spoke—on a peace platform.

Rankin: When—Emily Balch was a suffragist, she lost her job in Wellesley College because she was so radical.

Chall: Because she was so radical?

Rankin: Yes. The College women didn't approve of her.

Chall: What was her radical approach. I mean, what was so radical about Emily Balch?

Rankin: She was a good suffragist, a straight thinker, and a pacifist. They didn't admit she was fired because she thought sanely and spoke her mind, but they never do.

Well—and then when I voted against the Second World War, she wrote me and praised my courage and said she'd changed: she was for the war. And they gave her a Nobel Prize. After she'd changed, not before.

Chall: Did you keep in touch with the women in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom for years after you had helped and were present at the beginning?

Rankin: I did a little more for them, but I wouldn't go on because they just wanted me to go and speak, and then go and speak and—and no organization, no purpose, no definite thing. And they were hard [up] for money and they wanted me to work—part-time, and get a part-time job, and do the rest on my own time.

Chall: So that—did you work with them prior to joining Libby's group?

Rankin: Yes, for a short time.

Chall: And where did you work—in this country?

Rankin: Oh, I didn't work. They had me speak here and there. And they've **never** had a docent program! I wrote to them the other day. They're going to have a meeting in Los Angeles to discuss the Russians. In November, when they should all be working for **peace** right now. And they want to discuss the Russians! They don't know a thing about the Russians. And someone has written a book—

Chall: Did you know Dorothy Detzer and Mercedes Randall, and these women who worked for WILPF for many years?

Rankin: Oh yes.

Chall: Were they capable ladies with a different point of view from yours on how to organize for peace, is that it?

Rankin: Yes. I wanted to work for peace, they wanted to play "Lady Bountiful" and give away food. Hungry people need to be fed, but "not by bread alone." I wanted to do grassroots organization and education for peace: social change is only effective if supported by the bulk of the people. Dorothy Detzer I think lives in Carmel.

Chall: Let's see, I have the names of some women who were very active in FOR—I can't find them now.

Rankin: Nevin and Kathleen Sayre—he was the head [of FOR] and we were very great friends. I think I had a letter from Kathleen not very long ago.

Chall: And what about—I think it was Muriel Lester, who was a very active woman?

Rankin: She was good.

Chall: She went all around the world and reported back to FOR on what was taking place, according to their bulletins.

Rankin: I met her and knew her slightly, when I was in Geneva one summer, and studying the League of Nations. And when I suggested that they change the Treaty of Versailles to keep Hitler out, they treated me as if I'd said, "Let's take off our clothes and roll in the street." [laughter]

Chall: How did you feel that we could have stopped Hitler?

Rankin: By not encouraging him, and encouraging the people of Germany to have their own government. England and the United States just pushed Hitler.

Chall: Until it was too late. Until he was ready to turn on England and the United States.

Rankin: No, until the military told them to, and they're both controlled by the military.

Chall: I see.

Rankin: The military have to keep their jobs. They can't keep them unless they have a war.

Indira Gandhi and Golda Meir

Chall: You know, your approach is one in which you say that there should be more women in Congress. "If half of the Congress were women, we wouldn't have war" is one of the statements that you make. There are many people who, in response to that idea, say, "Look at Mrs. Gandhi and look at Golda Meir,"—

Rankin: They don't know a thing about Mrs. Gandhi!

Chall: And then they feel that that indicates that women are just as strong for war as men.

Rankin: She settled that war. She didn't spend ten years working on it, like we have in Vietnam. She went

in to settle it. And they don't know anything about her! I know very little, and I spent five winters in India; I know Mrs. Gandhi and I'm proud of it, and I knew Nehru very well. Nobody reads about India. I get the *India News* every week. From my sister—I have such a way of moving around.

Chall: So that the fact that these two women happen to be heads of state of nations in conflict doesn't mean that women—

Rankin: We'd be at war in Israel if it wasn't for Mrs. Meir.

Ending Warfare

Chall: How do you think we're going to settle disputes between nations?

Rankin: By controlling our governments, and electing a president that is not a puppet of the military. Now, Nixon doesn't do a thing that the military doesn't pull the strings that he does. He's responsible to the military. They elect him, and he's responsible to them. I want the people to elect the president. And have him responsible to the people. and the people responsible for him. And I want multiple-member districts, so that Congress can represent more than the military or the industrial establishment.

Now that book [*O Congress*, by Donald Riegel], as superficial as it is, recognizes that there's something **wrong** with the Congress. Now, in Georgia—I can talk about it because I know it doesn't matter—in Georgia we have ten congressmen. They only represent one idea, and that is to get elected. We could just as well have one congressman and give him ten votes. The people **aren't**, represented.

The only safe thing in the country and the world are the people themselves. We have a male Congress. I hope that every time we get a chance we lose a male congressman [laughter].

Jeannette Rankin and John Kirkley at Shady Grove Cottage. Watkinsville, Georgia. Christmas 1971.

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Chall: What was your stand during the tense racial conflicts in the South, especially in Georgia, where Martin Luther King started—?

Rankin: Well I always supported him. And I've always been—in 1919, I told you about it—.

Chall: About rooming with Mrs. Terrell.

Rankin: Yes.

Chall: Does that make you *persona non grata* in the South, because you supported him for years?

Rankin: No! I'm [not a militant?]— They're still fighting me. But there are many people against war in Georgia, as there are in California. And I just stay with my kind.

Chall: Well, I think we've come around to the end of the tape.

Rankin: There was something else. Salmon Levinson was the smartest man that we had in the movement. You see, he was a brilliant lawyer, and he'd raised these wonderful sons and they took them to war. And he said there was something wrong with the rest of us, that we hadn't thought out a way to settle our disputes without killing young men. And then he started to study the Constitution. And he realized that we had worked out, in this country, a peace pattern that we paid no attention to, like the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court is such an emotional thing in the South, that I haven't talked much about it.

Chall: That's not an approach you can make in the South?

Rankin: You can use it if you had time, but no one lets you finish your sentence.

Chall: You are writing, and in your writing you bring up the Supreme Court as a model.

Rankin: No, we haven't yet.

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Chall: I probably just assume it then, from something that I read, that you and John had written.

Rankin: Maybe they take it as an assumption.

Chall: Please answer the last questions, the tape ran out: Is the assumption correct?

Rankin: Well, the Supreme Court makes decisions which affect lives—so people do get emotional about what they do. But we should also try to understand why the Supreme Court can function as it does—non-violently and without an instrument of coercion. Its decisions are followed because of respect for the idea of law and the common good. The Supreme Court is a human institution. It can change its mind. But the reason it is obeyed is because it settles disputes, such as those between the sovereign states, non-violently: people understand that a settlement through law and courts may be against the short-term interests of one party, but both parties maintain life and often liberty and the opportunity to pursue happiness—but the settlement brought by violence is the settlement of death, and all the issues are mooted. War and bloodshed settle

nothing happily. J.R.]

Afterword—A Chapter in a Life

There in a destiny that shapes our ends
Rough how them how we will

Shakespeare

A phase of my life was ending during the summer of 1970, I completed a masters degree in philosophy in June of 1969, finished my first year of law school at the University of Texas in Austin in June of 1970, taught for six weeks with Project Upward Bound at Huston-Tillotson College in Austin, and returned from a month in Europe (Germany and England) on my birthday—Saturday 29 August 1970.

I was 28 years old: and it seems to happen at about this age that persons crack into a different stage of consciousness and understanding. So it happened with Jeannette Rankin, who, at age 28, packed up from her childhood home in Missoula, Montana, and traveled to New York City to enter the New York School of Philanthropy. But by the time I reached my 28th birthday, I had never heard of Jeannette Rankin: women's history, like black history, had been omitted from my 22 years of education, which is one reason why Project Upward Bound was so good for me: it gave me a chance to be with persons of different skin color in a group program dedicated to learning and common work and aspiration.

So there I was in Austin, Texas, facing a second year of law school and wondering, "Can I go to school AND be myself?" I decided to try it and entered my third semester of law school. But by the end of the semester, I had realized clearly that there had been many times in my life when I had felt myself at a jumping off point—and had not jumped. Something was hanging me up. So I traveled during December, returned to Texas, packed up, and departed for my native Georgia on 1 January 1971.

I enrolled in the University of Georgia School of law. Ostensibly, I was a law student, and much of my mental life was involved with the study of law: it was fascinating to see how the idea for a juvenile court system had become a reality in 1899 in, of all places, Cook County, Illinois; to see how the idea of rehabilitation

grew to contest the idea of punishment; to see how ideas are eventually embodied in law; and to study the growth of international law and catch the dream of world peace through world law.

But the major work was internal in a different sense—emotionally and psychologically, I was collapsing into the dependencies and uncertainties of childhood and adolescence, consciously ripping out the structures and foundations of my life, and re-fashioning my nervous system in accord with a different ideal of personal integrity—an ideal to be embodied in a living reality.

I enjoy words and the articulation of ideas. It came to me to write an article for *The Georgia Advocate,* a law school publication. I had been friends with Mr. and Mrs. John B. Pendergrast and their family for 15 years, because their oldest son, John, had been a high school classmate of mine at The Westminster Schools in Atlanta. I was visiting them one day, and Mrs. Pendergrast suggested I write an article about Jeannette Rankin.

Aware that she knew something I did not, but realizing that an honest question in not a stupid question, I asked, "Who is Jeannette Rankin?"

She began to answer my question and now, some two years later, I can answer the question on a certain level by my own light: Jeannette Rankin is undoubtedly the greatest woman in American political history.

Mrs. Pendergrast (Nan) had worked with Jeannette and Coretta King and Vivian Hallinan and many others on the Jeannette Rankin Brigade to Washington in January of 1968. Briefy, Jeannette had said publically (after it was announced that 10,000 American soldiers had died in Viet Nan) that if 10,000 women were willing to put their lives on the line, the war would end. Mrs. Pendergrast took up her suggestion and worked with Jeannette in fashioning the Brigade—a military term which, by the way, was not of Jeannette's own choosing.

An events fell out, there were only about 5000 women in the march, so the war did not end—but President Johnson soon announced he would not again seek the Presidency, which fact Jeannette relates, in part at least, to the Brigade. A federal lawsuit involving the Capitol Police and the right to peaceably assemble arose from the march and reached the Supreme Court, where the case

was properly decided: after all, where could our people assemble to make known their convictions if not at the very seat of our government?

So one sunny spring day, I rode on my motorcycle (since sold—it's just one of those things young men do at one time or another) from Athens, Georgia, where resides the University of Georgia, to Watkinsville, Georgia, where Jeannette Rankin was living at the time—at Shady Grove Cottage. "It took me five days to drive from Washington to Montana and only one day to drive to Georgia," she says, in response to the inevitable question. The house and 49 acres cost $500 in 1924.

Jeannette talked for three hours, I took notes for three hours, and from that first encounter arose the first article, *An Afternoon With Jeannette Rankin,* which was published by *The Georgia Advocate* in August of 1971. If one reads carefully, I was convicted by my words and the article was prophetic for the development and fulfilling of our relationship during the next two years: until today.

I visited and took friends and housemates out several times that spring of 1971, but once when I went out, the Robinson children told me, "Miss Rankin's gone for the summer—gone to California." So I mailed a copy of the article and we corresponded once or twice during May, June, July, and August.

Many things happened in my life—my grandfather died in May, I was busted under a lame duck felony law in June, and my father died in July. I had decided to leave Athens and return to Austin to finish law school early in June and felt I should go say good-bye to a housemate camping out on the Oconee River. I only stayed a few minutes, but, as I was leaving, I encountered men with shotguns. They looked like hunters. They pointed the shotguns at me. Eventually, they found what they suspected was marijuana in the backpack of one of the campers and we were all placed in jail. The Georgia Legislature, in its wisdom, had already made possession of less-than-an-ounce a misdemeanor, but the law didn't go into effect until July. I stayed in Georgia that summer and took a few more courses at the Georgia Law School.

Back in March, about the time I met Jeannette, Peter Max had spoken at the University of Georgia and told us about his guru, Swami Satchidananda, founder of the Integral Toga Institute in New York City. I had also met the Rare Krishna people and heard of their Spiritual Master, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami.

A friend invited me to New York towards the end of July, and there I met both Swami Satchidananda and Bhaktivedanta Swami. I returned on Sunday 25 July 1971 and was told at the airport that my father had died of a heart attack very suddenly and only a few hours before.

During August, I helped mother relocate and finished some course work at the law school and began doing Hatha Yoga with the help of Satchidananda's book. One day in August I turned to a housemate and said, "Can

a woman be a guru?"

As September came on, I was not in a mood to continue law school, nor did I feel it was the right time to return to Texas. On Labor Day weekend, as luck would have it, the War Resisters League held its national meeting in Athens, Georgia. I was there and Jeannette flew out from California to attend as guest of honor, since she had been a founding member.

We got to talking and she was interested in doing "some lobbying in the Georgia Legislature." We went to Atlanta on Monday 4 October 1971 and stayed three days. From that trip came the letter to the Georgia Legislature on her idea of multiple-member Congressional districts — an idea which would work well if combined with proportional representation.

If one is caught on the horns of a dilemma, one can be sure that little will come of the struggle except more confusion—until one abandons the dichotomy and opens to receiving the right direction. Earlier stages of my life were phasing out rapidly during these early weeks of October, and on Sunday 17 October, I was returning from a brief excursion and torn between returning to Atlanta, where I could stay at mother's place, or returning to Athens, where I could stay at a place I was sharing with friends. I did a triple somersault in the other, took the bull by the horns, and resolved the dilemma by pitching my tent between the two huge oaks in Jeannette's front yard at Shady Grove Cottage.

Two days later I officially moved in: and realized with utter certainty during the seven months from mid-Ootober until mid-May that whenever one gives up or loses all that one has known or loved or been attached to in the past, and does so with some courage, ready to embrace what comes next, what is given up or lost is as nothing compared with what now is and is to be. It was like living in a temple. I began with my room and cleaned it and took out everything except a single bed on the floor, a small deck, a small chest (rather like an altar), two lamps, my

yoga mat, and a brass incense burner crafted with the sign of "ON" which Jeannette had found in India. I generally got up about 5 or 6 AM and spent several hours cleaning before Jeannette got up after which we had breakfast and answered the mail and pursued our daily course. After setting my own room in order, I began in the kitchen and cleaned all the glasses and plates (including a set from Mexico) and polished the brass from India: and I felt I was performing devotional service.

We began making speaking trips to Atlanta and the "Letter to the Editor" * grew from one such visit. Mayor Sam Massell presented Jeannette with a Key to the City. We were speaking at churches, schools, peace meetings, women's groups.

Rev. (and perhaps now Dr.) Ted Harris had spent several years doing a masters thesis on Jeannette's Georgia activities and was at this time teaching at the University of Georgia and doing his doctoral dissertation on Jeannette: a work which should culminate in a biography. (Mr. Harris has the tapes and much personal experience with Jeannette and her relatives. I made a decision not to gather biographical material because I did not want to encroach on the domain of another. Jeannette's importance for my life, and my role in her life, was to be of a different nature.) Ted brought his class out and we had many other visitors—long-time friends of Jeannette from the neighborhood and from all over the country, those who had met her more recently or heard of her for years but never met her, students and professors from the University, reporters, and photographers. I did the cooking (mostly vegetarian at that time) and occasionally made hot spiced apple cider.

Jeannette's house is worth a separate articles there was one water faucet—a cold water tap in the bath tub in the kitchen; there was a double-burner hot-plate and an electric skillet in the "cook rooms" but I had to go up to the corner store to bake our bread; I was in the upper rooms which had Ivy growing in the windows; we entertained in "the fireplace living room" (which opened into Jeannette's bedroom) or in "the downstairs living

room" (which was underneath my room and opened towards the morning sun and Jeannette's flowers); there were no doors inside the house, only tapestries from Mexico and India to separate the rooms; and Jeannette had a pedal-flush toilet in her room which emptied into a septic tank and which one had to refill with water by dipping from a five gallon Mexican urn!

About Thanksgiving I said, "Jeannette, I owe $3300 for those first two years in law school." She said, "I'd rather you work for me than work for money," and proceeded to write out checks to the proper parties—one for $1800 for Texas and one for $1500

for Georgia. I said, "Are you sure you want to do this?" And she replied, "I'm 91 and I do what I please with my money."

I had no wages or salary: but did not want. She bought the food, I cooked and washed the dishes. I owned and drove the car, she paid for the gas. She owned the house and did not ask me to pay rent. (We enjoyed our exercises in role reversal.) We each had a few clothes.

Jeannette has never been a consumer. She didn't have a stove or dishwasher (except me!) and only a "a half" refrigerator. She loves paper and did most of the wall papering herself. (She saved all sorts of things, and I found passports and letters going back years and answered some unopened mail dating back to 1968—it had probably arrived while Jeannette was travelling and got stuck in a drawer before proper handling.) Her brother, Wellington, had insisted she dress well and "sensibly," and bonnets were almost a trademark, to judge by pictures, but she never appeared concerned with what she wore: during the time we were together, she used a pair of slippers at night, a pair of everyday shoes, a pair of dress shoes, and she had only a few dresses, maybe a dozen, which served for all seasons and events. Often, her friends bought clothes for her or took her shopping. While we were in Washington in the spring, one good friend brought her four dresses—she put on one and kept it and wouldn't even look at the rest.

Jeannette's greatness is matched only by her simplicity. Her idea of a shopping spree was buying a package of rubber bands at Woolworth's—always her favorite store. Drug stores, dime stores, and grocery stores were all we ever entered.

She in a simple person in other ways, too: emotionally, she is immediate, direct, and unabashed as a child. But many times I have seen her simply be silent while others were uttering something almost incredible. One lady had come up with a good idea in a letter she had written to someone and been told she should do something about it; she looked helplessly at Jeannette and said, "But what can I do? I'm 78 years old." Jeannette, at that time, was 91—so we just looked at each other, smiled in disbelief, and continued our meal.

After Christmas, the tempo of our activities changed. We had met in March of 1971, the relationship had lain dormant during May-June-July-August while other events occurred in my life, but September-October-November-December showed the budding of our time together. The next four months — January-February-March-April of 1972—were a blossoming beginning with a call

from Gloria Steinem asking Jeannette to appear on the *David Frost Show*, which she was going to host on 20 January.

We travelled about 2-1/2 weeks each of these four months, appearing at women's meetings, at colleges and universitites, on many TV shows, and at Montana's Constitutional Convention. "When Montana first wrote a Constitution in 1889, I was only nine years old and they didn't ask me to speak, but this time, when I was ninety-one, they did." The record of these adventures is sketched in our writings, which catch the essence of Jeannette's speeches, but her personal style of delivery, always gentle and humorous, was captured on the tapes made during her speeches.

Jeannette had a way of saying the most devastating things in a most disarming manner. The hosts of the *Today* show were absolutely floored when they announced the time was up and Jeannette said, "They're always cutting me off. They never let me say all I have to say." This may seem funny, and everybody chuckled: but it's also poignant, for after President Roosevelt issued his call to Congress for a declaration of war against Japan after Pearl Harbor, a few fiery speeches were allowed in favor of the declaration, but Jeannette, who later cast the sole dissenting vote, was not even recognized and so was not allowed to speak against the passion of the moment.

There are many other things. I shall never forget the 1500 women who rose to their feet and applauded when Jeannette walked in to receive the Susan B. Anthony Award on Saturday 12 February 1972 at the Eastern Regional Meeting of the National Organization for Women. Reporters would never be satisfied with facts and information and our printed materials, but always wanted to meet Jeannette face-to-face, even if it was before breakfasts almost midnight, or on the way to the airport. A dozen women joined us for dinner at a Chinese restaurant in Nashville, and another dozen at an Indian restaurant in New York, after which we marched with many others to Times Square, where a papier mâché statue of Susan B. Anthony was erected atop the shoulders of a metal gentleman inside a fence.

It would be difficult to live day-by-day with the consciousness that one was living in the presence of true greatness—greatness of minds of accomplishments of continuing commitment. So, like Arjuna, I would forget most of the time, and Jeannette and I would skip about the country speaking and meeting others. But when I looked clearly, I saw it as my role to provide the way for Jeannette to do what she loved most: to speak whenever possible and to contact as many persons as possible.

No one can know which of the some 7000 women we contacted directly will be the leaders for equal rights and opportunities, justice, a livable environment, and world peace in the coming years: but Jeannette is like a catalyst, and I wanted to expose her to as many others as possible so they, too, could catch the flame.

The wisdom of the ages has been written by philosophers and in the scriptures of many cultures and has been embodied in the great works of art in human civilization but this is often not sufficient—often one person must most another person who not only speaks but has lived true greatness in order to understand deeply that the spoken and written words are not empty phrases, not just a set of ideas or ideals, but a projection or emanation from a person of integrity.

When Jeannette speaks, she speaks with authority: the authority of her own being and her own long years of constant effort and her accomplishment.

But what she did politically is not the crux: I saw many persons so overcome by her historicity they could not meet her as a living person —still here and still having new ideas and still radiating a presence of what persons can become. The meticulous county-by-county and precinct-by-precinct organization in Montana to bring suffrage to that state is indeed an historical accomplishment of note: but it is something done as an expression from and by a living person who neither began her life with great public accomplishment nor stopped after it. Her emotion for the ideal has been constant, and her political stature and acts are as much an integral part of her total personality as are her personal relationships and the structure of her mind and spirit.

Jeannette says, "I worked ten years for suffrage and got it. I have worked fifty-six years for peace and have hardly begun." A lady in Little Rock, Arkansas, who had seen Jeannette when she first walked in to the House of Representatives, took us to lunch and remarked to Jeannette, "You are the only person I know in public life who has taken a firm stand for your ideals and not budged once in half a century." It was Good Friday of 1917 that Jeannette cast her vote against American entry into World War I. Today is Easter Sunday 1973.

May of 1972 was different and began a four month period of transition. Jeannette was invited to speak on Saturday 13 May at the opening meeting of the Arkansas Women's Political Caucus and was invited to be the guest of honor at a fund-raising banquet for her long-time friend, California attorney Vincent

Hallinan, who was running for judge in the San Francisco City Courts. His wife, Vivian Hallinan, had worked with Coretta King and Mrs. Pendergrast during the Jeannette Rankin Brigade, Coretta was to be the main speaker at the banquet.

Jeannette had campaigned by car and loved to drive cross-country from Montana to Washington, D.C., to Georgia, and then again to Montana. And so we decided to travel by car.

We had 16 persons to dinner on Tuesday 9 May and left for Little Rock on Wednesday 10 May. Thursday and Friday, Jeannette made four television appearances, two of which were half-hour interviews. Saturday morning she gave the main speech at the opening of the Arkansas Women's Political Caucus and at noon we left and began the cross-country drives stopping in Eric, Oklahoma; Kingman, Arizona; Los Angeles; Carmel; and San Francisco.

After the dinner in San Francisco on Wednesday 17 May, Jeannette flew to San Merino to spend a few days resting with a niece, and I visited friends in San Rafael and Los Angeles and later rejoined Jeannette in Carmel.

Her brother, Wellington, was a lawyer, and she was somewhat concerned about my finishing law school, and so I returned to Texas in June of 1972 and spent six weeks in the University of Texas Law School, re-establishing my presence there and taking two courses (the full summer load) and also teaching for a third summer with the Upward Bound program at Huston-Tillotson College.

It is interesting how these matters fall out: I had wanted to return to Austin in June of 1971, but had been prevented by the marijuana arrest. Because of this and my father's death in July, I remained in Georgia: and then it happened that Jeannette and I found our time to work together. I ended up returning to Austin in June of 1972 and doing exactly what I had intended to do a year earlier.

Immediately following the close of Upward Bound and my last exam in mid-July, I returned to Carmel and spent six weeks here through August, during which time we wrote three pieces: (1) *How To Write Your Congressman* (a light places excerpted and re-written from Jeannette's traditional hour-long discourse and requested by Bill Cirone, then head of Common Cause in Atlanta, Georgia); (2) *The Direct Preferential Vote For President* (a serious idea for making the machinery of democracy more conducive to the theory and for bringing the theory into

practice, first espoused by Jeannette during a speech in Carnegie Hall in 1917); and (3) the final places which we regard as our best *Jeannette Rankin: Why I Voted Against War* * (in which I tried to summarize in as few words as possible the essence of who Jeannette is and why she has been with us for a time and to try to place her ideas and her accomplishment in the context of her life in hopes that others would realize that greatness arises organically from human livings and, once upon a time, from a little girl growing up like everybody else and skinning her knees going to school or running around a ranch in frontier Montana).

But this time was ending, the four months from May through August of 1972 were drawing to a close, and I found myself driving once again to Texas—this time to enter my third and final year of law school, but clearly faced with virtually nine months separation from Jeannette, and registering, paying tuitions and buying books on my 30th birthday—29 August 1972.

The last article, *Jeannette Rankin: Why I Voted against War* * led to a check from a magazine for $500. This Jeannette gave to me, and it was sufficient, when combined with my earnings from Upward Bounds to pay my

fall expenses at the law school, with Jeannette sending checks so I could visit in Carmel during Thanksgiving and Christmas.

At the change of the years, with my own resources depleted, Jeannette announced that she was going to pay for my final semester in law school and proceeded to do as she had said. My last exam is one month exactly from today and the Texas Bar Exam ends a month thereafter.

I realize I am at a transition point in my own life and sit now typing in Jeannette's room at Carmel Valley Manor on this Easter Sunday morning with the fragrance of the lilies filling the air, the gentle mountains rising lush with wildflowers above the valleys and Jeannette sitting or sleeping for a time or reading as I type.

I had not planned to come out this semester and was going to wait until the Bar Exam ended so there would be a kind of wrapping up of a certain phase of my life and so I could present Jeannette with the law degree I had studied for and she had financed. But I heard in a round-about way that she was down to 80 pounds—down from about 100 at Christmastime. And last Saturday, her sisters Edna Rankin McKinnon, phoned me so Jeannette could talk to me through her—and this was the only time Jeannette had not called by herself. Monday morning I got the

intuition to come to Carmel for Easter, and within an hour the mail arrived with a check from Jeannette labeled "for emergency only." I made reservations and called Edna to tell her I was coming and learned that Jeannette had been transferred from her room to the hospital unit here at the Manor.

I arrived Tuesday night in time to spend an hour with Jeannette before her bedtime. There was a letter from Malca Chall with the contracts for the tape transcripts, and these I have had Jeannette sign and they are now in the mail. But I had written that I would do as Malca asked and write something by way of introduction, though I would prefer it to go at the end. I wondered what I could write that had not already been written or said.

Jeannette's greatness to not my own. But let it now be said that the fame, the honor, the prestige is like the radiation of the sun—it is an emanation, not an entity. Her true greatness lies not in what she has done, but in who she is.

Value comes into this world by human acts: we believe, we speak, we act. If our belief, our speech, and our action is unitary and in accord, we have personal integrity. Otherwise, we are hypocrites. There are perhaps few new ideas under the sun: for the old verities are found in many philosophies and many scriptures through all ages and civilizations of humankind. But an idea or value is original with each person who lives that idea or value; the individual becomes a source and origin of the truth that resides within.

So I have been, for a time, like a moon or mirrors: attempting to reflect a light greater than my own for others to see. And Jeannette has been for me a living proof that integrity is possible: that a person may live according to his or her highest convictions. But the student repays the teacher poorly by remaining nothing but a student.

At one time or another I left every other relationship and attachment in my life to be with Jeannette and work with her. The time of transition is approaching.

But right now, Jeannette says it's time for lunch!

John Kirkley
Easter Sunday
22 April 1973

Hannah Josephson Interviews Jeannette Rankin

Interview History

Some time in 1970 I begain gathering material for a biography of Miss Rankin, whose acquaintance I had made through our mutual dear friend Katharine Anthony some ten years earlier. She invited me to visit her in her home at Watkinsville, Georgia in the spring of 1972, and these interviews were recorded on April 2, 3, and 4. The weather was lovely, the daffodils were out in profusion, but inside the cottage there was enough chill to require a fire or the use of electric heaters. Our talk was very informal, as between friends, hence the rambling effect of some of her comments. I believe this conveys a more vivid picture of an old person's recollections than a more structured interview.

[Tapes of these interviews were transcribed in the Regional Oral History Office. Mrs. Josephson edited the transcripts, provided the subheadings, and then returned the manuscript to the office where it was typed, indexed, and prepared for inclusion in this volume. Malca Chall]

How World War I Affected the Progressive Movement

Rankin: Before World War I, people were thinking of the future and of changing things that were wrong. The women were asking for the vote and the man were asking for workman's compensation and initiative and referendum and recall and all these things. The whole country was interested in it, but the West particularly because of Senator La Follette in Wisconsin and Lincoln Steffens in California. Then there were others in Washington Oregon, and Idaho with Senator Borah.

All the people were thinking of a world at peace, and the things that could be done to give the people a greater expression in their government. They were talking about the direct election of the President. In a speech in Carnegie Hall in 1917—February, 1917—I advocated the right of election [of the President by popular vote]. The whole country had a background or was interested in all these things, and war came and destroyed everything.

It divided people. It divided the women—those who wanted the war and those who didn't want it. Women who wanted to get rid of war were so attacked by the papers and by people that they didn't want to have anything to do with people who wanted peace. Women wanted to go to college before the war, but after the war the number of women in college decreased.

Unless you know something about that, you can't realize what we're going through today. Today they say we have free speech. There in no free speech in this country. The tiny little microscopic experience I've had on the radio and television and so on—I've never

gone on without being censored. I don't know what other people have had, but I certainly haven't had any experience in having really free speech.

A week ago Saturday, I talked on "The Sound of Youth" [a local broadcast program]. It was arranged by a high school girl who was a very, very able person, but limited in experience of course. I thought It was a radio program. I went over, thinking I was going to talk on the radio, and when I got there I found it was a color TV program!

We hadn't any time to rehearse or do anything; they say it's an unrehearsed program. There are almost no unrehearsed programs. But we were unrehearsed. They said it would be on the next Sunday; that would be yesterday. Those programs are usually at 12:30 p.m., I think, but for April they are all scheduled for one o'clock. On Sunday at 10:30 a.m. I wanted to get something

at eleven o'clock, and I didn't want to forget it, so I turned on the television set and heard myself. This was at 10:30 in the morning. The program in which I appeared came on ahead, when people weren't expecting to hear it.

Josephson: What did the young people want you to talk about?

Rankin: Anything I wanted. I can't remember what I talked about, I make up these speeches beforehand in my mind; then it's hard for me to distinguish what I thought I'd said and what I actually did say. I talked about how we were controlled by a military-industrial complex. That was nothing new to me because when I ran for office the first time, we knew that we were controlled by a big, industrial Institution [the Anaconda Copper Company], and the chairman of that Institution was made head of the military [the American Red Cross] when the war came.

Josephson: Whom are you referring to?

Rankin: John D. Ryan. And then they had airplanes in the war. They were called "flaming [flying] coffins" because the men were all killed. The planes were killed at the same time.

When I started working for woman suffrage, to give the women a chance to vote, the situation

in the world was very different. At that time, United States Senators were chosen by the legislatures.

In 1910, when the constitutional amendment for the popular election of Senators had passed the Congress [but before it was ratified by the states], the people in Montana were anxious for a direct vote for Senators because they had experienced the buying of Senators, and they put it on the ballot that they could let the people choose whom they wanted for Senator. And the people chose Thomas J. Walsh. It wasn't a legal vote: It was simply an opportunity for the people to express their opinion. It resulted in a long, tedious fight in the legislature. But they eventually chose Senator Walsh because they didn't dare go against the will of the people. Have you heard that before?

Josephson: Not in that way, no.

Rankin: So we had that experience before I went to Congress. Then we had talked about having more than one [representative] from a district and having larger districts because we realized that only one idea could be represented by one person. and that it wasn't possible for the minorities to have any expression [with single-member districting].

Although we had two congressmen at large in Montana, the Company [Anaconda copper Company] could always get both of them; they didn't worry about following the practice of single member districts. I ran because I realized that I could be elected where other women couldn't be elected. You have that?

Josephson: Yes, I do. But I'm interested in your theory that—if I understand you correctly—the war [World War I] broke up the womens movement.

Rankin: Yes, I know it did.

Josephson: I also had the notion—correct me if I'm wrong—that the National Women's Suffrage Party also abdicated when the constitutional amendment was passed. I had the feeling that having got the vote for women, they thought that that was all they need do. You don't think so?

Rankin: No.

Josephson: Okay.

Rankin: Miss Addams worked to get President Taft to have a Children's Bureau. But she worked from the top down. Well, the Children's Bureau was really something until—

Josephson: You were very effective in that, weren't you, in getting the Children's Bureau?

Rankin: No. You see, that was before we got woman suffrage—before the suffrage campaign came on. The Children's Bureau did some splendid things and was a great help. But they soon put it into the Labor Department, and you never hear of the Children's Bureau now, because the women didn't have control; they got someone at the top to do it for them. And the only thing that is permanent is when you get it from the people. When the people are educated to a certain thing, it works. But when only a few are educated—

Now, for instance [at one time] they had multiple member aldermanic representation—I don't know whether they call them "alderman" then or not—in New York City, and they got control away from Tammany. But they got it from the top. When the Tammany people realized that multiple-member representation was detrimental to them, they said it was a failure and did away with it, Not that the ones who worked for it had failed, but they didn't educate the masses to go along with the thing that they wanted. Progress can only come from the masses.

Josephson: What are the sources of that kind of education? I thought Al Smith did a good job of educating the masses of New Yorkers in certain areas while he was governor. He was one of the great teachers, I think.

Rankin: Oh yes. There've been great teachers and so on. Miss Addams was a great teacher, and she got the Children's Bureau. But the Children's Bureau was shifted into another department and lost its influence. Miss Addams didn't work from the bottom up. She had a following at the bottom, but it was more personal, and educational than getting the masses to work for something.

A man the other day on the television said that

the people have to work in reality; they have to work on things that they know about. You can't teach by telling.

Josephson: Then you would say your relationship to the woman's liberation movement was — well, would it be something that would please the young people today?

Rankin: Yes. We were for the things that they are for today. But we felt: you see, in the suffrage movement, that if we got suffrage that we could go on from that. But we didn't get suffrage until after the war.

Josephson: Then you think it was too late, in a way?

Rankin: Yes. The timing was wrong.

Josephson: They never arrange wars to suit you and me.

Rankin: No, they never do.

Josephson: Well, for example, would you have supported abortion.

Rankin: Yes, we did. Now the Lucy Stoners were very prominent before the war; women didn't take their husband's names. You never hear anything about that today. They don't believe in names of any kind.

Josephson: Professional women do, I think.

Rankin: But I mean, it isn't part of women's lib. I don't know enough about what they're asking for. But that was very prominent. And the woman who followed me four years later in Congress was a Mrs. Robertson from Oklahoma. She, on the floor of the House, condemned me for being for woman's suffrage—no, for being for birth control.

Josephson: [Laughter] I must look that one up. What were your views on marriage, divorce and so on?

Rankin: There was a certain group that wanted a universal

divorce law, and we used to say, "What would you base a divorce on?" In South Carolina they weren't allowed a divorce of any kind, and in Nevada it was based on residence and they had a low residence requirement. You have to get it by a consensus. (I hate to use that word "consensus" after President Johnson.)

Josephson: So many perfectly good words have come into disrepute, like "relevant." Well, I thought that those were your attitudes.

Years in New York—Working for Suffrage and Peace

Josephson: By the way, this goes on to another question I have to ask you. I know you came to the New York School of Philanthropy in 1909, is that right?

Rankin: No, I think it was '07 and '08—I mean the winter of '07 and '08, but I'm not sure.

Josephson: Then you didn't know Frances Perkins there?

Rankin: Oh yes, I knew her.

Josephson: She was there in 1909.

Rankin: No, I didn't know her there. I was there before she came. But I did know her through Katharine Anthony and Elisabeth Irwin. They knew her very well. I knew her later, though not so well, through Florence Kelley.

Josephson: Yes. All those things interest me. When did you make friends with Katharine and Elisabeth?

Rankin: In the suffrage movement. In 1910, I worked for the state of Washington. There was a Mrs. Reynolds from New Jersey who was sent out there. She told them in the East that I was a good worker. I spoke before the legislature in Montana.

Then I went to New York and worked under Mrs. Laidlaw, and Cornelia Swinnerton—do you remember her?

Josephson: I've heard the name: I don't know her.

Rankin: She was working too. She took me to Patchin Place, where Elisabeth had the Dinner Club: I met Katharine there and I met Elisabeth. Then that was in 1910, '11 or '12—somewhere along in there.

This was an amusing thing that happened. All the peace people got together—all the suffrage people—and wanted to select someone for a lobbyist in the New York legislature. Mrs. Belmont didn't want the one that Mrs. Laidlaw wanted, and I was a perfectly unknown person.

Josephson: You were a compromise.

Rankin: I was a compromise because they couldn't decide on anyone else. And I lobbied in the legislature in 1912. I met Franklin Roosevelt and I saw Al Smith. I loved what you wrote about him because I could see and I could remember gestures and things that he did on the floor. I don't know why I never had the nerve to talk to him. But I talked to Roosevelt, who was in the Senate.

I have a lovely story that I told all through the

suffrage campaign about him. I said I talked to a Senator; I didn't use the name "Roosevelt" because, in Montana and the West, they thought of Roosevelt as the "Rough Rider"—Teddy, don't you know. And I couldn't say he was the second cousin [laughter] to the other Roosevelt. You know, I never used the name.

But I told him that we were working for suffrage in Montana, and that the western states had it and we ought to have it in New York. He said, "Well, it's all right for these western states to try out these things; I think it's a good idea. But things that would work in the West probably wouldn't work in the East."

He said that he spent his summers in Maine, and that in that community the ships would come in with fish. They'd blow a horn and it was the signal for the women and children to go down and take care of the fish. If they had an eight-hour day or any restrictions, the fish might spoil.

I used that and said, "But if women were looking at that problem, they might think that perhaps the children might spoil."

Josephson: Oh, that's a lovely story.

Rankin: And I used this story for a funny story. But I told someone about it being my funny story, and she said, "Well, I cried."

Josephson: Well then, did you only get to know Florence Kelley after you went to work for the Consumers League?

Rankin: No. I came to know Mrs. Kelley earlier, after my vote against war. When World War I was over, Miss Addams had an International meeting in Switzerland; it was the first international meeting held after the war. The mathematicians couldn't meet for two years after, but the women met before the Treaty of Versailles was completed.

In that group were all the prominent women: Emily Balch and Miss Addams and Dr. Alice Hamilton and Mrs. Kelley.

Josephson: And Rosika Schwimmer —was she there?

Rankin: No. she wasn't there; she came later. And Mrs. Lloyd Maverick wasn't there. But most of the prominent women—Mrs. Kelley was there. There was Lucia Ames Mead—did you ever hear of her?

Josephson: Yes.

Rankin: You have? Her husband was a professor at Harvard, and she was very well educated. She came down and helped me in Georgia one time afterward. But on that trip, I was by far the youngest. There were women like Miss Ash and Miss Griffith from San Francisco and other prominent women from different parts of the country; the wife of the Secretary of Labor was there—Mrs. Post [Mrs. Louis F. Post].

I didn't talk much, but when things got too bad I would come out with expressions. For instance, when Lucy Ames Mead was talking about what we could do in these countries [the former enemy nations]. I spoke up and I said, it isn't what we can tell them to do; what we need to do is to open the channels of communication and let them do as they please." Mrs. Kelley was tremendously impressed with me because none of the others had dared to say anything.

Josephson: I thought that conference made some of the most

intelligent statements about the world situation that came out of any institution. That was really an extraordinary conference.

Rankin: It was. And the women who came were not butterflies. They weren't anxious for power for themselves, but they were anxious to see the whole world situation. There was one woman there that we had such fun with. She was from Italy, and she persuaded her government that she was going to Switzerland to study millinery—that she wanted to get the right hats for the women. But she was interested in what was under the hats. [Laughter]

Josephson: You must have known Mary Beard?

Rankin: Oh yes. Mary Beard worked with Cornelia Swinnerton and I with Mrs. Laidlaw in the suffrage party in New York. Yes, I knew Mary Beard very well, and I knew Charles. Charles was about the only prominent young man at the time [sympathetic to my views]. He always supported me and always complimented me and did everything [he could to help me]. At that time when I voted against the First World War, he said he wasn't a pacifist, that he wasn't against the war; he was against the loss of freedom of the American people. And he left Columbia on that account.

Mary and I worked together; I learned so much in that campaign, by coming from the West and meeting these people. I'd already graduated from the School of Philanthropy, but this was another kind of contact with the world.

There was a woman I think was Mrs. Dodge; do you remember Mrs. Dodge in Arizona that married an Indian later?

Josephson: Mabel Dodge Luhan! Yes indeed! She wrote about D.H. Lawrence; she was married many times. She'd married an Indian; before that she'd been married to Maurice Stern, the painter. She was quite a

character. Did you know her?

Rankin: I'm sure she was the one because she was a friend of Mrs. Laidlaw's and she worked with her. I learned a lesson that I've always wished other people could learn, and that was there's no such thing as security and wealth and so on. At that time, she was trying to sell some diamonds she was so broke. I think it must have been Mrs. Dodge—I could be mistaken but I think she was the one. There's nothing you can invest in that you can be sure of in the future—I mean almost nothing.

Josephson: She had spent an awful lot of money in Italy setting up sort of a palace in Florence and decorating it at vast expense. Then she had these lovers, and I think lovers are sort of expensive. [laughter] She was quite a woman.

Rankin: Is she still living?

Josephson: No. no. I think she was a little nutty too.

Childhood in Montana—Family Attitudes and Influences

Josephson: Tell me about your life when you were a little girl. You were born on the ranch, weren't you?

Rankin: Yes. My father had a sawmill. Then he bought land around, had cattle, and he had sort of a system. In the spring he planted and in the winter he logged and in the summer he sawed wood. Anyway, he worked in with the ranch.

Josephson: Was it a cattle ranch?

Rankin: It wasn't a cattle ranch like the one my brother had later. He had cattle and he had hay crops and we had apples and we had hay and grain. We sold milk and butter sometimes. I don't know what ranches did at that time.

Josephson: I've got a picture of that. But I think it's John Board who tells about how you shared your father's

life; you did a great many things on the ranch.

Rankin: Well, we used to play with the sawmill, which was very dangerous; we shouldn't have done it. I don't know where our father was, but we did it. [Laughter] We shared everything except Father wouldn't let us learn to milk. He said if we knew how, there'd come times when we'd have to [Laughter] He was very proud of me—always flattered me.

I remember once, they had some new machinery for getting hay into the barn. He had a wild team to pull the machinery, and it got stuck. He couldn't leave the team, but I went and was just standing around and I saw what could be done. I told Father and he told the men to do it. Then he went after the men: "You haven't sense enough to do it yourself; you have to let a little girl tell you what to do." [laughter] We always discussed everything.

Josephson: He was a very enterprising man, wasn't he?

Rankin: Yes, and he was a very hard worker.

Josephson: I don't know whether you're familiar with the doctoral dissertation that Ronald Schaffer did at Princeton. Are you familiar with that? He tells stories of your childhood. There are some things I felt I'd like to know more about. Yours was Indian country, wasn't it? Did you have much contact with Indians?

Rankin: We saw them all the time.

Josephson: Did they work for you?

Rankin: I don't think they ever worked for Father. But my father had an experience with the military; Edna thinks it had something to do with my life—I don't

think it did, This was in the seventies. They had a Fort Missoula that had some log cabins. They wanted lumber and Father furnished the lumber to build frame houses. But about that time I think it was, the people at the fort knew that Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce Indians in Idaho that had been driven out of Montana earlier, were coming through Montana to go hunting.

So the [officers at the] fort had to do something about it. They told everyone who had a gun to come and made out that we were going to be attacked by the Indians. Father got his gun and went along with the rest; he had one gun.

They got to this place where the Continental Divide is, in the Bitter Mountains, called Logo. They were coming from the Clear Water, which was on the west side of the Divide, over to the east side. There was a place in this road where the mountains came together and there were two big rocks, the road went between them. The officer got his men down on one side and they heard the Indians coming.

So he went over to talk to the Indians. The officer told them that if they'd give up their guns they could go through. The Indians said they were going hunting; if they gave up their guns, there was no point in going. The officer came back and told the men that the Indians wouldn't give up their guns and that at four o'clock in the morning they would go over and take the guns away from them and shoot them up.

They were all ready to go through at four o'clock but they got there and there were no Indians. [Laughter] They had gone around. [laughter] So the men who had given up their work and everything to go along were disgusted, and most of them went home. They called it "Camp Fizzle."

The Indians went on to a little settlement where the first church in Montana was built. Someone in the town gave an Indian whiskey. This drunken Indian went wild, and they called that place Camp Scalawag, because only a scalawag would give an Indian whiskey. The Indiana went on, and camped at Ross's Hole, the Big Hole I think it's called. The officers stood on the hill where they could watch them. As the Indians came out of their tents, the American soldiers shot them—shot the Medicine Man and anyone who came out. It was a most disgraceful act, the most outrageous thing that could happen. What Calley did at My Lai was nothing to what they did, the American army.

Josephson: What they did all over.

Rankin: Yes. There's a book called One Montanan or something like that. It's by John Hutchins. He was a book reviewer.

Josephson: Yes, John Hutchins—a book on the Indians?

Rankin: No, it's on Montana. It's One Montanan or something of that kind—One Man's View of Montana. His father was in Montana; then he went East and was an editor in Chicago. Then he

came back to Montana when John was a little boy. Then John went East and was on *The World* when it broke up. Now I think he's one of the editors of—

Josephson: Could it be *The Saturday Review* ?

Rankin: No, no. That organization that sells books?

Josephson: Book-of-the-Month Club. I know him by name; he's a well-known book reviewer. But you yourself did not witness any Indian massacres.

Rankin: Oh no. But one time, when we were children, the people in the community were very scared. The city government or the county government had hanged five Indians, and it was rumored that the Indians were going to do something. And we children said that it was outrageous to hang those Indians, and we were conscious that it was the wrong thing.

Josephson: Where did you get such notions? Where did you get such notions of what was right and wrong? So many American children, I think, who were in your position thought that it was fine to hang Indians. Your mother and father must have been people of considerable integrity, weren't they?

Rankin: Yes. But Father always made fun of the army. He always had some funny remark about them, showing his disgust with the military. And they were quite prominent in Montana.

When I went to Congress the first time, everything I did that wasn't just what the army wanted— after I voted against the war, they didn't know what I was going to do—they would go to the most prominent man in Missoula—Mr. McCloud—who had the biggest store and was the biggest financier there, and tell him how wrong I was. He just laughed about it; he told me it didn't make any difference to him. He knew me and he knew Mother and Father. I don't know whether he was there before Father and Mother were married or not, but he was shortly after.

Josephson: But I'm sure those notions, those attitudes, don't spring to a child's mind; there must have been some reflection of your father's ideas.

Rankin: We don't know what's in children's minds. They just copy what we say, and we don't know what they really think. But here we were, so many Rankins and the ones that came to our house, our intimate friends and so on—we had a little clique of our own when we were in town. And when we were on the ranch we were entirely on our own.

Josephson: So if there was a spirit of acceptance or sadism among the children in your town you weren't exposed it?

Rankin: Well, nobody knew what they thought; they might have thought as I did, but no one ever found out.

Josephson: You must admit that the young people of today are making themselves heard more, aren't they?

Rankin: Well, we were younger than the young people you're referring to, and we don't know what they thought

when they were young. Now, for instance, when these hippies that wear wigs because the girls don't like them without the wigs, and they have to cut their hair for some other reason, so then they wear a wig—now that would have been just outrageous to us as children but might not

have been to them as children; we don't know.

My sister had children and she was a wonderful mother. She used to sit with her children and they'd play and they'd talk and she'd listen. They didn't know she was listening; she'd never repeat what they said in front of them. She'd hear all sorts of things and then she'd tell us the ones that were funny.

Once her children ran across the street, when they weren't supposed to go outside the yard. There was no fence, but they weren't supposed to go across the streets they were scolded for doing it. One day the children were talking to each other and she heard her little boy say that they were following a butterfly, that this butterfly ran and they went with it. They had remarks to make about the butterfly and their not being able to follow.

But now, what mother sits and listens inconspicuously to what her children say? Another time she heard this little boy say to another boy something about "my Aunt Jeannette." The little boy didn't know about me. He said, "You don't know my Aunt Jeannette? She was the first woman in Congress. It was in all the papers." [Laughter] He was about four or five at the time; he couldn't read but he knew what was going on.

Another time, he and his sister and I were sitting at the table, and he was six or seven, I guess, but he wasn't more than that—maybe younger. He said, "Aunt Jeannette's an extrovert, and Janet is an introvert and I'm just a plain vert." [Laughter]

Josephson: Who was Janet—his sister?

Rankin: Yes. [Laughter]

Josephson: Oh, that's a lovely story.

Rankin: Now who would hear him? If we were talking we wouldn't hear him.

Josephson: I think I do get your point that children have their own interior life. But I do believe that children get, at any rate, some moral values, I think, from their parents. I like to think so. [Laughter]

Rankin: But there are so many times when parents could learn values from their children, if they would listen. But we didn't hear the opposite. I never heard my mother say she was scared of an Indian, and I never heard my father say anything against the Indians. I mean, I have no memory of it. He wasn't scared.

Josephson: The business of being scared of Indians, I think, was cooked up by people who wanted their land, very simply, and it was economic as well as physical aggression.

Rankin: Absolutely. We drove them out.

Josephson: Now we're only belatedly coming to realize that the Indian culture has so much to give us.

Rankin: I've always been terribly self-conscious and guilty that I didn't take up the cause of the Indians instead of women. [Laughter]

Josephson: I think the women deserved your help too, Jeannette. I want to go back to one more incident of your childhood, and I think this story was told to me by your niece. I wondered if your recollection coincides with hers. She says that as a little girl you were always looking for things to do. Evidently you never had enough to do.

One day some visitors came by your house in Missoula and said to your mother, "I see you have a seamstress in the house." Your mother said, "What does this mean?" They took her outside and showed her a little sign that you had put up in the window saying, "Sewing Done Here." [Laughter] Do you have any recollection of that?

Rankin: No, I don't have any recollection of that.

Josephson: I'm sure it's right. One of the most charming things— and I'm going to use this as a chapter heading, maybe title, perhaps not even where it belongs but later on—is that in your girlhood diary, at one point you wrote "Go, go, go!" I don't know whether you remember that. [Laughter]

Rankin: I don't remember writing that.

Josephson: I think that "Go, go, go!" is wonderful; don't you think so? You haven't stopped since. [Laughter]

Rankin: I did all the sewing in the family; I made all the clothes for the children from the time I was thirteen on.

Josephson: Oh really? Did you make your own clothes later on? I saw you once, and I thought you were very elegant, for example, last evening in your blue and white striped jacket and skirt. You don't sew anymore, do you?

Rankin: No.

Josephson: But did you make a beautiful dress you wore at Katharine's one day about ten years ago? As I recall it, it was almost—not quite—a goldenbrown silk. You weren't making your own clothes ten years ago?

Rankin: No. I made a lovely suit years ago—I shipped it from Hull House and it never arrived. I don't know; that must have been after the First World War.

Josephson: When you were running that Mississippi Valley conference?

Rankin: Or something.

Josephson: How about the dress that you wore at the opening of Congress in 1917? It's been described in the books as a blue chiffon suit-dress with white collar.

Rankin: It was a very elegant dress; I had very elegant clothes at that time because my brother had a client who knew dressmakers and so on in New York. I don't think he ever paid Wellington very much for the

work he did. But he gave Wellington the idea that I ought to have these wonderful clothes. So Wellington paid for them; I don't know where he got the money. He was just a young lawyer then.

I had elegant clothes. They were packed up at home once when I was away, and were all sent to a ranch of Wellington's and were stolen. I haven't got anything to show for them, except some pictures.

But people in the West who had money knew how to spend it. I mean, they knew what was most important. Now, for instance, Mrs. Laidlaw had a dress that was made of chiffon and had trimmings on it. But they were machine-made. And I had a dress that probably looked like it, but it was all hand done. It was a very elegant dress.

Josephson: Is that the one you wore for the opening of Congress?

Rankin: No. What I had then was dark blue and it was trimmed with lighter blue and white chiffon, sort of graduated colors. One man said they'd never let a woman come into Congress again without getting from her a description of the dress she would wear. [Laughter] They couldn't describe it; it wasn't like any other dress; but it was very elegant.

Josephson: Was that made in New York?

Rankin: Yes.

Josephson: You were on a speaking tour at that time also, as I remember, before Congress opened. You had to have a lot of clothes; you had to have evening clothes and so on.

Rankin: I had three evening dresses while I was in Congress the first time. I don't know whether that included a sort of aqua blue watered silk; do you remember watered silk? And it was gorgeous! I wore that in Buffalo. You know, the suffragists wouldn't let me speak in New York City because they were having a suffrage campaign and they thought I'd hurt it. But Buffalo invited me, and I wore this aqua—it was between a blue and a green—and it was so elegant. They won by a larger percentage in Buffalo than they did in New York. [laughter]

Josephson: I'll bet it was the dress. [Laughter] I saw a photograph of you in *Newsweek* in the thirties in which you looked very elegant too. You're standing by a car and you have a hat on and white gloves and there's a placard on the car that says, "No More War." But you looked just as though you'd stepped out of a bandbox.

Rankin: I can't remember that dress, but I never made dresses after that maroon colored suit, and it was elegant material.

Josephson: This was the one that was lost?

Rankin: They were all lost.

Josephson: But in New Zealand you earned your living as a seamstress.

Rankin: I advertised as an American dressmaker who would go out by the day for twelve shillings a day, and it was such a high rate that they thought I must be good. I had forgotten what I did know about sewing. If I made a mistake or missed something, I'd say we would call this something else in America. I did what they said the Negroes did, they would do just enough to get something to eat and then quit.

Josephson: But you were down there to see the world, anyway, weren't you?

Rankin: Yes, and I did see it. I had one amusing experience. Of course, I was interested in labor and things of that kind. This was after we won suffrage in 1915. The war was on and that was the only country you could go to. Strikes were against the law in New Zealand then. But of course you can't have a law against people quitting work. So the waterside workers weren't working;

of course, it wasn't called a strike. But they held a meeting.

The leader of the strike was a Scotsman [Peter Fraser]. I think he hadn't been in New Zealand too long. He'd had his teeth out and so he could speak at the meeting. He was a young man. He stood around. Of course, he could talk to an American woman interested enough to go to the meeting, and we talked a good deal. I saw quite a little of the people that were doing things there at this waterside work-stoppage.

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When I was in Congress the second time, the Second World War was on. Fraser had become the prime minister.

Josephson: This very man? He had a new set of teeth!

Rankin: Yes, and I couldn't tell whether they were false or not from the picture in the paper. I wanted to write to him. But I couldn't say, "Do you remember me," or something, because I wasn't sure he was the man, don't you know? [Laughter] So I wrote him, I spent a half a day think, composing this letter.

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Some Other Activities for Peace

Josephson: Well, more about Florence Kelley. I don't know very much about what work you did for the Consumers League.

Rankin: I don't either because there wasn't very much; it was speaking and working in the legislatures, you know—lobbying in the legislatures.

Josephson: Where was that?

Rankin: In Illinois and Iowa. I remember those two because I remember when I was entertained at Hull House.

Josephson: Yes. Is that when you got to know Jane Addams?

Rankin: No. I knew her in the suffrage movement.

Josephson: That's right, yes. And you knew her also at the Women's International League.

Rankin: Yes. I went to the first meeting; the one she organized in 1915. But it wasn't called that at that time. Then in 1919, Miss Addams went to Europe and held the first International meeting. At that meeting, it was named the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Miss Addams was wonderful to me. This was

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after my war vote. And she never hesitated, She used to have me sit next to her at her table. I think I didn't set well with the thirty other women at the meeting. When she had callers she always had someone with her, and she always took me. The other women complained, and she said, "Well she's so easy to introduce." All she said was, "She was the first woman in Congress," and that ended it. I didn't talk. I listened but I didn't talk. Of course, she could talk. Those were wonderful times!

There was an Englishman; I've forgotten his name. He had raised the money in England to give America statues of Pitt and—Bryce, wasn't it? Who was that political writer?

Josephson: Lord Bryce.

Rankin: Well, there were three or four statues. Miss Addams asked him, "What inspired you to do all this?" He said he'd been over here and he hadn't seen many statues of Englishmen, and he thought we might like to have them. And she said, very quietly, "Well, George Washington was an Englishman." [Laughter]

She was very warm and very conscious of things that were going on. She used to tell a funny story, in a very quiet voice. An inexperienced girl once came to her and asked her about peace. Miss Addams told her why she was for peace. When she got through, when it came to a pause, this girl said, "Well, when you get peace, what are you going to do then?" [Laughter] I'd say the women in the WIL that time wouldn't let anybody else talk. They'd just talk down to an interviewer and then they'd say, "But we haven't time for any more."

Josephson: That's what I liked so much about the Jeannette Rankin Brigade—we sort of took off spontaneously.

Rankin: And everybody thought it was their parade. There was no definite leadership; It was their parade. And I think that's what scared the army.

Josephson: Yes. Tell me—do you have any hopes for these April demonstrations?

Rankin: Yes. I think they all help. But I think that— it worried me all during Eugene McCarthy's campaign— everyone was too enthusiastic; they thought we could win. I knew they couldn't win and I knew they were going to be disappointed. But I didn't have the courage to say that McCarthy hadn't a chance in the world. Despite all their work, it wasn't going to count—because I thought they were expressing what ought to be expressed.

I always said, in my speeches, "Whatever happens in this campaign, we can do it." After I had talked for McCarthy, I would say, "We've got to get rid of the military system."

Josephson: He didn't go that far, did he?

Rankin: No. Not that he didn't believe it, but he didn't say it in the campaign. Well, I didn't care whether he did it in the campaign or not; it was the people who were working for him that were going to be disappointed, and he was disappointed so they were disappointed, when they shouldn't have been disappointed. They should have known that he couldn't be elected, because people will not learn organization. They think that a few getting into office and handing out beautiful words is going to make a difference, and it isn't going to make a difference.

I learned early—no, I guess it wasn't early— but my feelings were confirmed when I went to Denmark and learned about the work of Gundwig. Did you ever hear of him?

Josephson: No.

Rankin: He started the folk schools in Denmark. But before that, he was a preacher and he was a writer; he did everything to reach the people. He got discouraged; nothing worked. He wrote books and they weren't read. Finally, he decided that the only thing that moved people was the living word.

So he organized these folk schools. Young men, without any credentials and without eighth

grade or anything, came to these schools at a season when their work was slack. And the women came at another time when they had less work to do at home. They came to this school and they sang and they read and they took care of themselves. They did their own cooking and everything, and there was no formality. There was a library.

One of the first authors that they read and enjoyed was Jack London. Never was there any preaching as to what they should do in life or what they should become or anything. But the whole cooperative movement in Denmark was started by these folk schools.

Gundwig talked about the living word, and that always impressed me. That was before the Second World War.

Josephson: It wasn't before the First World War?

Rankin: No, before the Second. But now I've forgotten what this had to do with our conversation.

Josephson: Well, you began by talking about the need for organization. How did that relate to the folk school?

Rankin: Well, the people at the folk schools went out. They weren't afraid. They had been dumb, fearful, ignorant people who didn't think for themselves because they were always put down. But when they learned that they could think and talk, then they went out and talked on their own, you see.

Josephson: Yes. And did he have a body of principles? Was he a pacifist?

Rankin: I think he was; I've forgotten whether he taught pacifism, but he taught people. He loved people and he wanted people to work together. Well they did work together. Now there's a big church in Denmark dedicated to him.

Josephson: I wonder if we could relate that to what you had tried to do in Georgia. You have, after all, lived here a long time. Tell me about your various programs in Georgia.

Rankin: Ted Harris got his Master's Degree on that, and the book is in the library here; I don't know

whether it's at the university. Not a book—a thesis. He gave me a copy and I lent it to a friend who is coming down the eighth of April

Josephson: Do you think she'll bring it back with her?

Rankin: When is April? is this April?

Josephson: Yes. Is she coming on Saturday?

Rankin: No, she's coming next Tuesday.

Josephson: Yes. That's right, because the first, I think, was yesterday. At any rate, we'd better check it. [Laughter] I was wondering, if Ted doesn't have an extra copy, perhaps I could get it by interlibrary loan. I might be able to get it from Yale. I must speak to Ted and ask him about those things. He told me in Washington that one of your activities in Georgia was campaigning against Vinson. Can you tell me something about that?

Rankin: It was a terrible fiasco. I think it helped to a certain extent. A sort of backhanded help, don't you know. I campaigned against him. He never had any opposition, and I didn't have any resources or anything, except a car and some gas. I couldn't get a candidate to run against him. Then I tried to bribe a man to run against him.

Josephson: Not with money?

Rankin: Yes, with money. [Laughter] I offered to pay his fee, but he didn't run. So I didn't succeed in that. I don't know whether I told that to Ted or not, But he looked it up and he read it in the papers.

But I worked in Georgia in that district, and

all Georgia knew about it. As a result, I became a very contentious person and the American Legion went after me and went after the school [Brenair College]. A crazy publicity woman told a newspaperman that I'd been given this chair of peace.

Josephson: Yes, I know that story.

Rankin: And so on. But Vinson got more votes than he'd ever got. They'd always taken him for granted and he never had to campaign, but he had to campaign in order to overcome my opposition, it was a terrible fiasco for me, however.

Josephson: It was a case of Jeannette Rankin against the whole United States Navy, wasn't it?

Rankin: And the army. [Laughter] it was awful.

Josephson: Did you learn something from that campaign?

Rankin: Oh yes. I learned an awful lot, but that didn't help peace very much. I had one good story out of it. This American Legionnaire wrote in a veteran's column [in the *Macon Evening Journal*] that I was a Communist, that I'd been convicted by the courts in Atlanta and it was time the majority of people knew. I had to sue the paper, and I won, out of court.

Josephson: Did the other newspapers in the state come to your defense?

Rankin: No.

Josephson: They stand together, don't they? I've noticed that.

Rankin: Ernest Gruening sued so many times, and the papers paid enormous sums, but they never would print a retraction. He was on *The Nation*. I used to go and see him; we were both for peace and different things— usually it was just for peace, I guess. I felt we were very good friends. One time I had broken

an engagement with him; I didn't say why at the time. Afterwards, I explained that I couldn't keep it because I had had such a bad cold. He said, "You shouldn't have worried about that. I was a doctor; I wouldn't have minded." [Laughter] You know, he would have been sympathetic with it.

Josephson: I didn't know he was a medical doctor. He sent a very nice message to your birthday dinner.

Rankin: Yes. He was there.

Josephson: I didn't recognize him, but there was also a message that was printed on the program.

Rankin: He had a sister who was very radical; did you ever know her?

Josephson: What was her name?

Rankin: I can't remember. I don't think we ever met—maybe only years afterwards. But she was a friend of Katharine's and Elisabeth's and she was very much in favor of my vote against the First World War and so on. She adopted a colored child and went to Paris to live.

Josephson: I hadn't heard that story. You see, I only came to know Katharine and Elisabeth in the thirties, after we moved to Sherman. We met them through Charles and Mary Beard. Elisabeth gave a party for one of her adopted daughters.

Rankin: Oh, they gave the party at—

Josephson: At Katherine and Elisabeth's house.

Rankin: What did they call that? I've forgotten now.

Josephson: Did the house have a name?

Rankin: Well, what was the town?

Josephson: It was Gaylordsville.

Rankin: Gaylordsville. Katharine and Elisabeth called themselves "The gay ladies of Gaylordsville." [Laughter]

Childhood in Montana

Rankin: Our house in Missoula was a very nice house and it had a tower on the mansard roof. All the children in town used to love to come and play there. We didn't know that there was anything unusual about it because it was ours.

Josephson: Is it still standing?

Rankin: No, they bulldozed it for a highway. But I had a picture of it; I haven't got it now. All the grandchildren were born in it.

Josephson: You mean your sisters would come home to have their babies?

Rankin: Yes. They were all born there. Father died when Edna was twelve, I guess; I don't know—eleven or twelve or thirteen—somewhere along there. And she was the youngest. Then everybody left and there was no one to live in it.

But the great grandchildren—none of them were born there.

Josephson: How about the ranch house? Is the ranch house where you were born still standing? It is? Is that Wellington's?

Rankin: No. no. When Father died, Wellington sold the ranch, or we all sold it but Wellington did the managing. It was bought by some neighbors and they had a milk ranch. Then some ranchers from Colorado bought it and they fixed it up. It's a lovely place.

Josephson: That's at the foot of the Bitter Root Mountains?

Rankin: No, we had a view of the Bitter Root Mountains. But the river ran down, and the Bitter Root ran in this way and the Grand Creek ran down this way, on the other side. And we were up I don't know how many feet above Missoula, but I think it must have been not a thousand but almost that. It was right up this steep canyon, and then it opened out; it was just beautiful.

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Josephson: How far a drive was it?

Rankin: Six miles from town.

Josephson: Oh that's all? Did you go every weekend?

Rankin: Well, there was no other shopping place. What we bought had to be bought there. When we went to school, we'd go down—late. We didn't get there the first day of school and we left before the last. [Laughter]

Josephson: A long weekend.

Rankin: No. When we entered school, we didn't get there the first day.

Josephson: Oh, I see. Did this upset the school teacher.

Rankin: No, no. They said they were glad to have the children in school. We didn't learn anything.

Josephson: You grew up with the town. When you were a child, it was a very small town, wasn't it?

Rankin: Yes. It was till the end, until we all left. It's still just a small town.

Josephson: It sounds very beautiful.

Rankin: Our home in Missoula was built on the site that Lewis camped on when he came back from the Pacific Ocean. He didn't go through Missoula on his way west. But when he came back, he camped on this hill where the Indians camped, above this creek. The creek was called the Rattlesnake. And the Rattlesnake came down and was parallel with Grand Creek. Rattlesnake came down this way, and then farther on was Grand Creek. Lewis camped there, but Clark went back over the trail he'd come on. Lewis took a shortcut from Lolo Creek up to Great Falls, and I don't know just where he went through the mountains there. But it was always known that Lewis had camped where our house stood.

The Indians would always pass our house when they were going from one camp to another. We all used to run to the windows to see the Indians.

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Josephson: Did they have an interesting costume, or didn't they travel with feathers?

Rankin: No, they didn't travel with feathers but they had— I've forgotten what they call it—sort of long poles that went on the side of the horse, and the horse dragged them on the ground. On those poles they had camp things piled up. I've forgotten what they called them [travois poles]. We used to see them going by.

Josephson: That means they couldn't go very fast.

Rankin: Oh no. The horses just trotted along very slowly—the ponies. Some of the Indians were riding. I don't think I ever saw the fancy feathers in my childhood.

Josephson: They use those only for ceremonial occasions, don't they?

Rankin: Yes, that's all. And then, of course, we went to all the Indian dances, as we called them, when they took place. But they weren't very often. There were more when we got higher in school. We didn't have a high school; we had a preparatory school for the university.

Josephson: The university was very new, wasn't it?

Rankin: It had just started. It started with the high school, the preparatory school, and then went on from there.

Josephson: Did you find the Indian ceremonial dances impressive?

Rankin: Yes. Very interesting.

Josephson: Frightening or interesting?

Rankin: No, no. just very interesting. They beat their drums and the women sang and the people danced around. We all could do the dances at the time, but I couldn't do it now. They were very simple steps.

Josephson: Schaffer says that you used to enjoy swimming in hot springs, bathing in the hot springs.

Rankin: He's been so wrong in every way. I told him things to illustrate how wrong certain procedures were. Then he'd put them into his book as if I thought they were right. He just didn't get the point— he had no experience in politics. One thing stood out the most. I said to him that petitions were of no value because anyone would sign a petition. The women's organizations would give me suffrage petitions to get signed and I'd come home with two or three signatures, but I'd come home also with the names of two or three people who were converted to suffrage that nobody knew about. I'd spend the time converting instead of getting the petitions signed. The suffragists said they wanted signatures.

So I went out again. I'd go into a saloon or any place and I'd say to the men, "Did you vote for Delaney?" They'd say yes. I'd say, "Well I have a petition here for Delaney to do such-and-such. Would you sign it?" "Sure I'll sign it." I came home with pages of signatures. The men who signed didn't know anything about what was in the petition. They knew Delaney; if they saw Delaney, they'd say, "I signed a petition for you the other day." Delaney knew that if they signed that petition, they didn't know what it meant. So the petition was of no value, and there was no value in going around.

Josephson: Oh, I understand your point because I know what Schaffer said. Yes.

Rankin: All the way through.

Josephson: I'm very glad to have you tell me that.

Rankin: I wanted Wellington to sue Schaffer for another thing he wrote, but Wellington said, "No one will read his book." I wanted him to sue because Schaffer gave the impression that Wellington asked Walsh to make certain bids to me to withdraw, so if I didn't run, it would seem that I was bribed, don't you see, not to run. But as a matter of fact, a perfectly good-for-nothing politician

who had been lieutenant governor and had served one time when the governor

was away—they called him Governor Spriggs—who was just a no-account man, wrote to Walsh and said that he could use this, or something of that nature in the campaign. But Walsh never answered it. Now why they kept it in Walsh's papers, I don't know. But Walsh never said anything about it; he never acknowledged the letter because he knew what a scoundrel this man was.

Then Schaffer made out that Wellington had instigated this. I was just furious. They wanted to publish Schaffer's book in the State of Washington, and I said, "If you do, I'll sue." But I couldn't tell Schaffer what was the trouble; I couldn't ever explain to him that he was such a damn fool.

Josephson: You needn't worry about that. But I thought an item to the effect that you enjoyed swimming in the hot springs; I thought that was a harmless thing. It's not so?

Rankin: Well, we used to go to Laurel Hot Springs; I think maybe I was there twice but not more than twice. And I never said anything about swimming.

I once made a speech near Baltimore. The president of some committee for the League of Nations had asked me to speak. Well, I came East from Montana and picked up a friend of mine in North Dakota, and we got to the meeting a little late because of the train or something. I spoke. I didn't know who had charge of the meeting; I didn't know anything. I made fun of the war propaganda. It was after the First World War but before the Second.

Japan was fighting in the Far East but we hadn't gone in yet. I hadn't run for Congress a second time. I don't know when it was. I said something that one woman was very much disturbed by: "It just happens that it's exactly the same distance from San Francisco to Japan as it is from Japan to San Francisco."

Josephson: Why did this disturb that woman?

Rankin: She said, "She's spiffing us." [Laughter] We

had been saying that we couldn't attack Japan but Japan could attack us, you know. I was making fun of the idea that Japan could attack us.

I believe that Eric Goldman heard this speech. There were lots of laughs in it, and anyone with intelligence could find my point funny. Schaffer wanted a subject for his doctoral dissertation, and Goldman suggested that he write about me.

Josephson: I believe Goldman was his professor.

Rankin: Yes. And Goldman, I think, was at that meeting, but I'm not sure. But some way or another there's a connection between Goldman and that meeting.

Josephson: Goldman comes from Baltimore; It's very likely that he did hear the speech, or might have heard about it.

Rankin: Well, he told Schaffer about it. Then I had a friend—Jeannette Mirsky. She knew Goldman, and she was a great admirer—and still is, I think— a great admirer of mine. We're very good friends but she's awfully hard to keep up with. She knew Goldman and she said that I was worth writing about or something. That's the way Schaffer got it.

But all through Schaffer's writing this, Goldman said he wasn't doing a good job.

Josephson: Oh really? Then why did he grant him the Ph.D.?

Rankin: Did he grant it?

Josephson: No, it's granted by a committee, I think.

Rankin: Before it came out—before I received it—Goldman told Jeannette Mirsky that it wasn't a good paper or something. Now when Ted Harris was writing his

Master's thesis I told him what Claude Kitchen, who was the leader of the Democrats in the House had said during the debate on the First World War, and his professors wouldn't let him put it in until he found the exact quote from the records. They wouldn't take **my** quote until he got it from the record. I don't know whether they're being more accurate now.

Josephson: I think they're trying to be.

Rankin: Schaffer had another handicap. He was terribly in love at the time and was married right afterwards. He didn't know what he was writing. [Laughter]

Josephson: You know him well then? You've had many meetings with him?

Rankin: I was waiting for a boat to go to South America. I was staying with Katharine Anthony. I don't know how he got in touch with me but he wanted to come, and I talked for hours with him. But I didn't realize that he didn't know what I was talking about.

Vote against World War I

Josephson: Was he accurate—or did I read that in John Board—about your vote against World War I, that Wellington tried to dissuade you from voting against the war because of the possibility that you might not be re-elected? You answered Wellington that you were not going to send any boys to be killed in order to be re-elected. Is that accurate?

Rankin: I don't remember saying that.

Josephson: I thnk John Board has something about that; I think he said that Wellington told him as much.

Rankin: He may have. But he did talk a lot with Wellington. That first vote was hard to explain because I had lobbied for woman's suffrage in Congress and I had talked to Congressmen and I had sat up in the gallery. The suffragists divided the members of Congress among different workers, and they gave me the South;

I talked to these Southern Congressmen.

I think that had an influence on my coming South to live, because these men were not militarists, I mean they were not so opposed to woman's suffrage as they seemed. My feeling about peace, I think, was deeper than my feeling about suffrage, in a way. I never talked it, but you could sense it.

And the southern Congressmen were more against war than people realize. (For instance, this McReynolds of Tennessee—he was doing what Roosevelt wanted but he was for peace underneath.)

And I had sat in the gallery days and days and watched them vote. I'd seen men walking around on the floor that I had talked to who just weren't voting [on the first roll call]; they might vote on the second roll call, don't you know. They knew how it was coming out. They didn't change their vote, but for some reason or other they wouldn't vote on the first roll call.

Wellington and all the suffragists were begging me to vote for war, the suffragists because it would hurt suffrage if I didn't, and Wellington because as he said, "You're the most conspicuous woman and you're best known of any woman" at that time. And he said, "After the vote there'll be nothing." He wanted it for me purely; he didn't want the war. Oh, he was just as much of a pacifist at that time as I was. But he didn't want me to destroy myself.

Josephson: I don't think you did.

Rankin: I didn't and I didn't think I would. With all this pressure for four days, everyone was worn out. He said, "You just listen to the pacifists." I said, I won't listen to the pacifists; I'll not listen to any of them, and I'll not vote until the very last moment. If I can see that I can vote for the war, I will."

So it wasn't that I didn't know what I was doing. The Congressmen had never heard of me, and of course I didn't know anything about that kind of thing. You know, they couldn't believe.

Josephson: By the way, Eric Goldman, in his book, *Rendezvous With Destiny*, has an inaccuracy about your behavior. He claims that you wept or fainted or whatever when you cast your vote; that was not true, was it?

Rankin: No. You couldn't deny it when you'd wept for three days, you know. I couldn't say that. I never wept. And anyway, I didn't realize they'd make such a point of it, but that's all they talked about.

Claude Kitchen stood on the floor and the tears ran down his face and he wiped his eyes and he said, "It takes neither moral nor physical courage to declare a war for others to fight."

And they forgave him. But they insisted that I wept. I didn't have any tears by that time! I was just wept out when I cast my vote. A man named Don Drucker—he was very conspicuous in Holland; Holland made a great fuss over him. He was editor of the *Passaic News*. He was sitting next to me, and he has answered that tear thing in many letters. He wrote to Jack Kennedy, "I was sitting next to her and she did not weep."

Vote against World War II

Josephson: How did you feel in 1941 when you were the only one?

Rankin: I was mad.

Josephson: No tears then either?

Rankin: No. Someone said, "Why do you have to vote against this?" I said, "Because I can't bear to be a worm." [Laughter] I was so mad. A hundred men—I'm sure there were as many as a hundred men—that I had seen when I was lobbying, would say, "I'm just as much against war as you are." And I would answer that by saying, "Would you vote against a war

resolution?" "I certainly would." And then they all forsook me.

The suffragists—I don't know how I could prove any of this, but Dorothy Detzer [of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom], who was the secretary told some Congressmen that she didn't know how she would have voted if they'd come to her.

And Emily Balch, who got the Nobel Peace Prize, wrote me [in 1941]. We were very intimate friends. I've been in her home and everything. She said she wanted to compliment me on my courage and for my sticking to what I thought was right, but that she had changed her mind. And then she got the Peace Prize. That was after the Second World War.

The Quakers made the biggest fuss over me when I voted against the First World War, and they never wrote me a letter after the Second.

Josephson: You were really alone, then, weren't you?

Rankin: Absolutely.

Josephson: How did Wellington feel about your second vote?

Rankin: Pearl Harbor was on Sunday afternoon, and I was getting ready Sunday afternoon to go to Detroit for a paid speech on Monday. Well, I heard that the bomb had been dropped and I couldn't reach any of the Republicans to ask them what the procedure was going to be.

So I took the train and took a radio and had it in my upper berth, and I heard what was happening. I realized that they were going to have a war resolution—the President was going to speak. I got off at Pittsburgh and came back.

I hadn't much sleep that night. I got back in the office, and before anyone could reach me—I knew that the President was going to speak at one o'clock or something—I got in my car and disapeared. Nobody could reach me. Wellington tried; everybody tried to reach me, and they couldn't. I just drove around Washington and got madder and

madder because there were soldiers everywhere I went. They'd gotten them out that quick, as if there was any danger. They had soldiers everywhere. I don't remember whether I thumbed my nose at them or not, but I resented them. [Laughter]

Josephson: You didn't tell me Wellington's reaction. What would he have had you do?

Rankin: I don't know; I never asked him.

Josephson: This time, you knew where you stood; you didn't need any advice, did you?

Rankin: Well, I wasn't going to put myself through that again and I wasn't going to put others through it— trying to persuade me and then my not doing it. I just went on my own.

Josephson: The next morning, you were besieged by reporters, or were they too busy?

Rankin: When I got through voting, I went into the cloakroom. and the floor was just covered with people. I could hardly find a seat, because they broke every rule and let everybody in on this war vote, to make them part of it.

Some young men that had just been sworn in as officers came in and started to condemn me for voting against it. I went up close to them and I said, "You've been drinking! They disappeared. [laughter] Who was the Speaker of the House at that time?

Josephson: Sam Rayburn.

Rankin: I said to the Republican leader, "Why didn't Rayburn recognize me?" I tried to speak after every other speaker sat down. Fulton Lewis, Jr. did the best job for me; he wasn't for me but he did it for me.

You see, when the radio people knew Roosevelt was going to speak about the war, the radios cleared their programs for an hour and he only talked eight minutes. So here they were waiting to talk on the radio and there was nothing to talk about. So Fulton Lewis began talking [to fill in the time]. Every time I'd get up, he'd say, "Miss

Rankin's on her feet again." Then he'd say, "The light's in her eyes; she can't see." Then he'd say something else, because they wouldn't recognize me. "But they don't recognize her."

One time, when I stood up, he left the microphone open and the people heard my voice saying, "Please, Mr. Speaker," over the radio. Then I kept on, every time anyone sat down. The first time I stood up I said, "As a point of order, this has to go to the committee." I don't remember the words I used exactly, but I had it right and I told it right. Rayburn paid no attention; he just didn't recognize me.

Some woman said she had a fourteen-year-old boy and she wished he were old enough to go to war, and things of that kind. They kept doing that until they started the roll call.

When they started the roll call different men came around and sat by me and said, "They really **did** bomb Pearl Harbor." I said, "I know that." But that didn't make any difference; killing some more wouldn't help matters.

To some of them I used my favorite expression— "I can't bear to be a worm." Everett Dirksen came and sat by me and said, "Does it **have** to be?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Well, we'll stand by you," and left.

Josephson: Did you vote on the first roll call?

Rankin: Yes. Then when the war with Germany came, I simply said I was present. We were at war—what difference did it make? If I said "no," what difference would it make? It was all over.

Travels in India

Rankin: Gandhi was a religious man, he was. But he was what we would call a politician; he knew what you could do and what you couldn't do with people. He was a psychologist. He was a politician because he knew what you could expect of the common people and what you couldn't expect of them.

The first president—you see, they have the prime minister system—was Prasad [Rajendra Prasad], and I knew him right after Independence, in '49. He wrote a story of Gandhi's first—supposedly one of his first—experiences with a bad labor situation. That was in this territory that you spoke of, Bihar, with the Indigo strikers. As a matter of fact, the indigo industry was going down. The workers wanted Gandhi and they insisted on having Gandhi come and talk to them.

So he went, and a few friends always went with him. He sat down at a little desk with writing materials and all the others did the same. Gandhi and his friends asked every indigo worker to tell his story and wrote it down. Being a lawyer, he got the truth out of them. He kept after them and scolded them until he got the truth and wrote it down. Then he would take the next man and write down what **he** had to say. He was searching for the truth. The Indigo owners came to Gandhi and said if he continued, they'd put his in jail.

Gandhi met with the workers and said: "Now you all have responsibility, and I'm not asking you to stay an strike. But I'm going on with it, even

if they send me to jail. But I don't ask any of you to stay." Well they stayed and he kept on putting their story down. Pretty soon the indigo owners gave in on everything, because they knew he had the truth.

Gandhi never used the phrase "non-violence" without the word "truth." Truth and non-violence. He hunted for the truth and the other side gave in.

My telephone company story, I think, is related to this. I went to the telephone company and explained that I wasn't going to pay the Federal tax on long distance calls. I said I wasn't hurting them and I wasn't doing anything against them, but that I wasn't going to pay to kill man in Vietnam.

Josephson: You think they understood?

Rankin: They wanted me to put it in writing. I never did write it out for them, but I wrote on a slip of paper, "I'm not going to pay to kill men in Vietnam," and sent it to them with my bill. The telephone company was very friendly during it all. Every month they had at least one telephone bill that they couldn't get through the computer. They never told me it was the computer, but I know it is.

Josephson: I'm sure it is. Tell me more about your relations with Gandhi; when did you first meet him?

Rankin: I never met him. I was there at the first meeting of the All India Congress after they let the leaders out of prison. Gandhi was in Bengal at the time, working on the riots between the Hindus and the Moslems. You know he went into these villages. If the Moslems had disturbed the Hindus, he went to the Moslems and asked them to go over and undo the work—you know, to try to make up for it. If the Hindus did it, he went to the Hindus and asked them to go to the Moslem quarters and rebuild their houses and so on.

The first time I went to India, he was doing that. It was a thousand miles from Delhi. He got up at four o'clock in the morning and walked to the different villages to do his work. Well, if I wanted to see Gandhi, the only time I could see him

was at four o'clock to walk with him. I thought it was a frightful imposition on my part to ask him to talk to me when he had so many other things to think about. So I didn't go.

I made up my mind I'd see him when I'd come back. But before I got back, he was assassinated. The next year I went to India and they had a meeting of world pacifists that Gandhi had planned. They carried out his plan. He wanted this meeting to have a majority of Indians so that the pacifists all over the world would learn about what was being done in India, about their philosophy and so on.

Here was this meeting of a hundred, and fifty-one were Indians, or more—in that proportion. But nearly every Indian leader was there. If they weren't there, they were there in spirit and you heard about them. I spent two weeks in Tagore's last home, at a school that he had established. Then I spent a month in Gandhi's last home; I got there before the crowds of visitors.

Josephson: Was that at his ashram?

Rankin: Yes. They had ashrams everywhere. But this one was his last one, at Sevagram; it was near the middle of India—about half way down and half way across. It was there that Gandhi had his school for basic education. Did you ever hear of that?

Josephson: No.

Rankin: To me, that was the most thrilling thing that I saw in India. It's still there but it isn't working as he thought it would, as he wanted. His was the ideal and they've never been able to get it all over India as he planned.

He would take the children in a certain community and start them on a project of the community. If they were leather workers, they worked in leather; if they were in the cotton district they worked with cotton and so on. This school I visited was in the cotton district.

You know, the Indians were almost self-sustaining

when the English first came to America. Our standard of living and the Indian was about the same. Then when England lost America, they went into India; from that time on, Indian standards went down. In America, where we had free government, the standards went up.

The Indians had all the kitchen utilities and made everything themselves, either in copper or brass or pottery. Then they produced their own clothes. They raised the cotton and spun and wore it and made it into cloth. They never bought from England.

Gandhi saw this. In the nineteenth century the English began to buy raw cotton from the Indians at a low price. They took it to England and then brought it back as cloth which they sold at a high price. Gandhi told them that they should make their own cotton cloth, regardless of England. And that's what they called their cloth, "khadi." What I have downstairs is all khadi; It was hand-woven in India.

Gandhi's school was in that cotton area. He had some buildings or was given some buildings. And when the children came to the school, they made a mat to sit on. Then they took some paper and made a notebook; and they had pen and ink. When they came to school, they started in and wrote in their diaries—this little notebook—"I came to school."

Then they had a blackboard. If they didn't know how to write something, the teacher did it on the board, for them to copy. So, of course, the others got it. Those were all the tools they had.

Then they had bunks, all around the room. The children took care of them. If they didn't have a ladder up to the bunk, they climbed up on the door or something.

They also had what they called "ministers" of housework and "ministers" of streets and "ministers" of toilets and everything that they had. The children elected the ministers—the teacher taught them what to do—and the children did all the work. While we were there, the older students were in charge of the kitchen. They figured out how much they had

to buy and what they had to give us to eat and all that sort of thing. All the time we were there, they figured what it cost to feed us, and that was their arithmetic. We got a written receipt.

The teachers took the cotton and showed the children the seed and how to plant it and how it grew. Of course, they were all familiar with that part of it. The next thing the teachers did was to perform all the processes very crudely so that the children saw them from the beginning. They saw them take the seed out of the cotton and spin it and weave it.

Then the next year, they took each process slowly—first one process and then the second, until the children mastered it. By the time they were ready for the next process, they were experts on doing the preceding one.

They got all their arithmetic from that, and from the kitchen and the cooking. For toilets, they had a trench. Above this trench was a box. No, they didn't have a box; they had two planks. They stood on these two planks to do their job. They then put in weeds and covered them over with dirt as they went along the trench. The ministers supervised that and the children did it. They did every job in the school.

After dinner at night, the older children or anyone who wanted to listen to the head woman could hear an account of current events. She told what had happened that day in the rest of the world.

They also had a library, a very good library. The children could go and study all they wanted.

Josephson: Did they have any music or art or reading?

Rankin: All the reading they did was in their diaries. Every word they knew was a word they used. All the words they needed in their jobs they knew how to write and how to use—how to spell and how to use and so on. And they did their thinking around these words. But they could also go to the library.

When they were examined by the English for higher grades, the thing that they were most proficient in— and this surprised the examiners—was their understanding of the world! You know—where cotton came from and all that sort of thing, and the kind of people they were and everything—not the things that they were supposed to have learned in school. It was a wonderful thing.

Gandhi was the kind of a person that everybody came to; everybody who had a cause or had an idea of any kind came to him, and he listened. He got the ideas of everyone on education—Montessori was very popular in India at that time.

But instead of having them put blocks into the right holes like a computer, as in the Montessori method, they made the blocks and made the holes in other blocks for them to fit into. They went from the other end. It worked so much better.

Then their music. At this school—all the girls and boys; I don't remember the boys so much as the girls—would sit with this spinning wheel [I have a spinning wheel out there that someone took apart and I haven't taken the time to put it together again], they would sit and spin and run this machine with their hands and hold it with their feet on the ground. They would spin one way and back. The turning of the wheel and the action of the children was the most inspiring experience in rhythm and real dancing. The whole body was involved in this thing. And the sound of the machine and the silence of the people—it was the most impressive thing!

Josephson: Now, the children thus trained went out to do what? Were they workers in cotton factories or what?

Rankin: Some went to college. They followed them through these grades so that they could get into certain industries. But I don't know just what they—

Josephson: Was there any difference made between boys and girls?

Rankin: No, they all sat together.

Josephson: I thought that Gandhi's attitude toward women—on

the one hand, it was very loving and respectful and so on—but I thought he was awfully hard on his wife.

Rankin: Tradition was hard on his wife. He never gave up loving her; being the kind of wife most wives are, she would have kept their troubles to herself. But here their relationship was open, and that was hard on her. He said that he went to bed with these young women to prove that he didn't have to have sex, that he had control.

Josephson: I would say there was a little over-emphasis in that, wouldn't you? To whom did he have to prove that, I wonder?

Rankin: To himself.

Josephson: Wasn't he hard on one of his sons?

Rankin: No. One of his sons was a drunkard, and he was a terrible drunkard! When Gandhi was in prison, and his wife was dying, in prison too, his oldest son, Harilal, came and was so drunk he couldn't walk. Gandhi went after him; that's the only time I ever heard of Gandhi's losing his temper and being severe. But here was Gandhi under circumstances that any other man would have been horribly concerned about, and his wife dying, and the son coming in drunk—I can't think of any worse situation.

Josephson: Yes. Eric Erikson seems to think that the boy became a drunkard because of various pressures and neglect that he'd suffered because of his father's mission.

Rankin: Oh yes. There's no doubt about that, as most drunkards are. I mean, it's faulty ecducation, don't you think?

Josephson: Yes. Then too, Gandhi meant so much to so many

people, so many millions of people, that maybe he didn't have time left over to be everything to his son. You know what I mean? His son might have felt left out while all the rest of the world concerned his father.

Rankin: Yes, but I think Gandhi gave as much to his son as the ordinary father does. So many ordinary fathers have drunken sons. But I knew another one of Gandhi's sons—I've forgotten his name; he wasn't the youngest son. The youngest son was editor of the paper in Delhi. But he left Manilal in Africa to carry on his work.

Josephson: That was the one you knew?

Rankin: Yes. Manilal Gandhi. And Manilal's son was a young man when I was there; he joined the Oxford group; he worked with them. He was a nice young man when I was there; he played the guitar. This was in '52; I think it might have been '53. One of the sweetest things that I experienced in South Africa was, at the most unexpected times to find someone sitting in a corner or on the street, playing the guitar. And you'd hear this music and then suddenly see these people. Everybody seemed to have a guitar and they were all playing. That was long before they started here.

Josephson: Did they play that Indian guitar, the sitar?

Rankin: No. This was in South Africa.

Josephson: The sitar is a very complex instrument, I believe.

Rankin: They have quarter tones when we have only half tones. You have to get used to it. I can't get used to the modern music because I'm looking for a certain rhythm and it isn't there, and a certain repetition and it isn't there. But after you get used to it I suppose it doesn't seem queer.

Speaking of Manilal's son, I said something about his guitar to him. I don't know what I said that made him answer, "Well, doesn't everybody have a guitar in America?"

Josephson: And you said, "Thank God, no." [Laughter]

Rankin: I said no. Now, here it is! [Laugher]

Josephson: You said Gandhi's son was on trial.

Rankin: Manilal? He was on trial in South Africa.

Josephson: Yes. What happened to him by the way?

Rankin: I think he went to prison, eventually. He'd been convicted in one court and this was an appeal to a higher court. A man named Duncan, I think, whose father had been governor of South Africa was on trial with him at one time. Duncan didn't want to go to prison and I don't think he did. But I think Manilal did, but I'm not sure.

Josephson: Did you know Nehru in India?

Rankin: Yes. I knew him quite a while. The first time I went to India, 1947, I picked up a man on the airplane. We started talking when we were getting gas or something. I told him that I was in India because of Gandhi and that I was interested in meeting some of the leaders.

When I got back on the plane, he came and sat with me. The plane was late—six or seven hours late. When we got into Delhi, I went to the hotel and he went with me. He couldn't get me a room at that hotel, but they could get me a room at a hotel in Old Delhi—the Swiss Hotel. I got in a taxi to go. He said, "It's seven or eight miles out there." [Laughter] I'd have been scared to death, at twelve o'clock at night in this strange country without a hotel room.

His father was Nehru's doctor. He helped me in various ways. I finally went to the YWCA to stay. They had no facilities for calling you or doing anything. This man came to call on me one evening, and I told him I wanted to see Nehru.

The following day he came and said I could see Nehru at ten o'clock the next morning. No one could call me at the Y, you remember?

I was in such an excited state that I got up early and got all ready and got a tonga [a light, man-drawn vehicle] and started out. I knew I was early but I didn't think I was too early. I had an awful time finding the place. The tonga man didn't know where to go, and we wandered around.

Finally, I came to a place that I thought was the right place, and talked to a man on the outside of the building and said I wanted to see Nehru and that I had an appointment at ten o'clock. He beckoned me to come in, and I had a hard time keeping up with him he walked so fast.

He took me down a hall and up some stairs and so on. Finally, we came to a room where there were all these people waiting. I knew they were waiting for Nehru and that I was in the right place.

He went up to a door and took off his shoes, or stepped out of his shoes, and went in. Then he came back and told me I could go in. I went in. There was Nehru's secretary. I had seen him at a meeting so I knew who he was, but he didn't know me, of course. I said, "I'm a bit early." He said, "Yes, Just twenty-four hours early."

Josephson: The appointment had been put off?

Rankin: Yes, they tried to reach me but I had left too early.

Josephson: You were at the YWCA?

Rankin: Yes, and I had already gone, you know, when they tried to reach me. Well, he said, "But your day isn't lost. You can see some other people." I had intended to leave Delhi the next day, but I stayed over. I had already got a reservation on a plane. So then I started out to see these people in government that he'd given me the names of.

One was the daughter of Patel she was a very prominent woman. I finally, with enough "NO" and

"yes," got to her house. When she came in she was very, very haughty; I could feel her antagonism. I said, "I'm an American; I'm not English," because everybody thought I was English, just from my looks. She said, "We don't like the Americans either."

I started to tell her about myself and about I don't know what. Anyway, I finally won her. Then she started in to talk and told me about her sari and was very friendly. But by that time, I was exhausted; I didn't stay very long. It was a great experience.

I got in to see Nehru the next day. He was very pleased when I said something about how women in India had contributed so much to the independence movement. Then he sat down and he talked, just as if he was alone in prison. He just looked straight ahead and talked about all the things that the women had contributed to Indian life and how good they had been. I don't remember the details but I'd read them all in his books. I said I wanted to take this message back to American women.

He was very, very friendly and very nice. The next day, I was supposed to leave India. But they called me up the day before and said—no, I had two days I guess—and said that my plane, instead of going at twelve o'clock, would go at eight o'clock in the morning.

I hustled up and got off at eight o'clock. In Karachi, where I was to connect with another plane to Turkey, I found that they had confiscated my reservation for twelve o'clock because Nehru and Jinnah were going to England for a conference [and needed the twelve o'clock plane for their staff]. Nehru was in the same hotel that I was in Karachi. But I didn't know it and he didn't know it, that night, because he came on the other flight from Delhi.

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Then the next time I was in India—I don't know whether it was next time or the time after—I was up in the mountains, and I met some Americans. One was Gertrude Emerson Sen, she wrote The Voice of India or something of that kind (I have it downstairs), a very good book. She'd married an Indian. She was the sister of the girl that lived with that artist who painted so much for the United Nations—the League of Nations—the story of the latch key and different things. Did you know her?

Josephson: No.

Rankin: She was an artist, too. I knew her name and knew her and she was a terror. Gertrude Emerson's husband was a scientist; they had a scientific establishment of some kind there.

When I went up there, I drove my own car, a car that I bought over there. I drove up alone. When I met Gertrude Emerson, she was very cordial and we had a good time together. My name was familiar to her but she hadn't any idea who I was. She'd just heard the name.

But we were very good friends, and she lived not very far from one of the prisons where Nehru was held by the British. This story about Nehru is in his book; you probably wouldn't remember it.

His wife was sick at this time, and he'd taken her to different doctors and places for a cure. When the British would let him out of prison, they never let him know if he'd have to go back or when he'd have to go back. Every night he expected someone to knock on the door and take him away.

He was over in Calcutta with his wife, which was more than a thousand miles away, when they sent and told him he had to go back to Almora, to this

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prison near where Gertrude Emerson lived. He liked that prison because it was high in the mountains, and from his window he could see the most gorgeous view of the Himalayas.

When he got there, he found they had put up a board fence so that he couldn't see the view. It's in his book. When he got out of prison, he went to stay with Gertrude Emerson. The British never gave him any notice about when he would be released. Here he was, miles up in the mountains, with no arrangements made for transportation. But he had these old friends, Gertrude and Boshi, and they asked him to stay. They took care of him until he could get down.

The Englishman who was in charge up there, had been very friendly with the Sens previously, but they never spoke to him again after that incident.

Well, of course, he used to get out at night and exercise in the yard. The guards helped him in this, but the guards couldn't tear down the fence. Everybody knew that he got exercise and did things like that, thanks to the guards.

After that first meeting, I didn't have another long talk with him, but later I met him at a reception; you can't talk long when you're going down the line. I told him who I was

and—oh!—he knew right away because the Sens had talked about me so that we felt as though we knew each other, having these mutual friends.

Then I saw him again; I don't remember just exactly when—it doesn't come to me now—but I know I did. But I was in India when the war with the Chinese began, and Nehru came to Bombay where I was staying to greet the navy and to do all sorts of things. I just couldn't bear to go to see him. There was no common area of discussion, and I didn't see him a couple of times when I was there when I could have. Oh yes—he came and talked to the birth control people once when I was in India.

They were awfully disappointed in him because he said he had hoped they would come up with something that could be used for population control in India, but they had offered nothing.

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Josephson: This was before the time of the pill?

Rankin: Oh yes, long before. And they had nothing. It was at the time that many people advocated the rhythm method. This is one thing I've always held against them. What is that health education thing that the United Nations has? They have a health program.

Josephson: World Health Organization.

Rankin: World Health Organization. My sister Edna Mckinnon was with the Planned Parenthood organization in Chicago. She worked with them for twenty years and she was in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Indonesia on this job for years.

Edna wrote to me that the World Health Organization was going to send someone into India and come out and say that the rhythm method was the right thing. This was planned before he got there! That's just what he did. He trotted all around India and came home and said the best method of birth control was the rhythm method. Now, wasn't that deceitful! I mean, how can you trust an organization that will put on such a show to tell such a stupid myth!

Josephson: The other day, you said that birth control— limitation of births—really depends on people having more to eat, not less to eat, but more to eat. I approached it from another way; I think it's a matter of the standard of living—giving them running water for example. But I think there's no doubt that birth control, like wars, is an economic problem.

Rankin: Absolutely. You can't get birth control people to talk about that. Edna knows it, but she never stresses that. She thinks it's more or less of a political problem. That's the same thing.

But they had no foolproof method at that time, and the pill isn't a good method either. Besides, it's awfully expensive unless you're poor. I worried because Matty [Robinson, Miss Rankin's cleaning woman] used to pay twelve dollars a month for pills. I asked her doctor the other day about this and he said, "Not it doesn't," that they gave them to her free now, because she's been on relief for a time. To have to think of a pill like that every time is just—

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Josephson: Not only that, but they have discovered that it has had side effects. No, I think birth control depends on having a higher standard of living, having running hot and cold water, knowing the limitations of your budget. When you're desperately poor, you have no budget because you have no money.

Rankin: Yes. When I was unemployed, Wellington did everything he could to make me feel I had money of my own. He'd give me something that would make money, you see. Then I wasn't conscious that I was living off of him all the time because he made me feel that I had an independent income.

Someone asked me about my budgeting and I said, "Now how do you budget for a two-dollar dress?" I had on a two-dollar dress when I was talking.

Josephson: What period was this?

Rankin: I didn't have a job from the time I voted against the Second World War until '67 when I made a job for myself and I never got anything for it.

Josephson: What was that job in '67, which one? You mean with the Brigade.

Rankin: The beginning of the Brigade. That was the only time I was ever connected with any of the peace people, after World War II.

Josephson: I'm very interested in that period of your life, between '41 and '67. What **did** you do?

Rankin: I travelled. Wellington paid for some of that, and I sold some timber once here, and I sold some land here once to pay for the trip.

Josephson: You must have been awfully bored; you weren't travelling all the time, were you?

Rankin: I was either getting over a trip or planning the next. Living in Georgia, I didn't have running water. I loved to tell that story. When I went to poor countries, I'd say, "You all think Americans are so rich; I haven't running water." I

didn't tell them how I used my ingenuity to overcome that.

I didn't spend money to get running water, as Viola Paradise suggested; that was the cost of a trip to India; I'd rather take the trip to India.

Josephson: You went to India four times? Five times?

Rankin: The last trip was the seventh.

Josephson: The seventh time. And all those after the war was over?

Rankin: Yes. I took care of my mother from '43 to '46.

Josephson: Was that in Montana?

Rankin: Yes. I'd go out to look after her at Wellington's ranch about April and stay until about October. She never came here after she became feeble. I planned this house so she could, but she died at ninety-four; it was pretty late. She didn't come here but I took care of her in the summers and then my sister took care of her some of the winters. Different things happended.

Josephson: Then—seven trips to India, one trip to Africa—only one?

Rankin: Yes, and only one to South America. But I had two to the Middle East and one to Russia.

Josephson: You'd been to Russia before this one you'd planned this time [in 1970]?

Rankin: Yes.

Josephson: I see. And you've left out Japan

Rankin: I went to Japan nearly every trip I made around the

world. I'd either go coming or going or both coming and going.

Josephson: Yes. Did you stay in Japan long enough to get a sense of the place?

Rankin: I was too miserable in Japan because I felt that we had done such terrible things to Japan, and I couldn't enjoy myself because I felt like a worm. They never recognized that I voted against the Second World War. Of course, I didn't do it for Japan.

Speech Training

Josephson: You were telling me about somebody who taught you this method of breath control; who was that?

Rankin: It was just a school teacher.

Josephson: You never had any special training?

Rankin: I went to a woman who was supposed to give me training during the suffrage campaign; I don't remember her talking about it, but I think she did. I thought she'd lost interest in me. But I found out afterwards that she said I did what she told me to and she evidently ran out of things to tell. That's why she apparently lost interest.

Josephson: I see. But you must have learned something about breath control because I was watching you very carefully at the Washington dinner, and you never had that sort of wheezing in talking that inexperienced speakers have, you know—sort of looking for their breath. It's breath control, isn't it? Are you conscious of that, or is that unconscious?

Rankin: It's unconscious when I speak; I'm very unconscious when I speak. I'm hunting for the next sentence. I don't always get it and I sometimes repeat because I haven't gotten it. But I've learned that by listening to myself on the television, which is the worst agony you can think of. [Laughter]

Josephson: Where did you get your speaking experience? Was

it in New York first, when you came to the New York School of Philanthropy?

Rankin: No, it was in suffrage.

Josephson: Yes. Where was that, in California?

Rankin: I spoke in Washington state first, just to smaller groups. Then we started street speaking. In street speaking, you had to get it out. Oh yes, I did have another teacher in Washington D.C. when I was lobbying. He emphasized that I was not to breathe through my nose, that it made a noise that could be heard over the radio and television and to breathe through my mouth, that it was quieter.

Lobbying in Albany and Washington, D.C

Josephson: Isn't that interesting? I never thought of that. Do you know what Al Amith called the radio? He called it "the pie plate." Did you ever hear that phrase?

Rankin: I read it in your book

Josephson: It must have been New York State slang; I never heard it anywhere else.

Rankin: I always admired Smith, and I was so pleased to hear how much Frances Perkins influenced his thinking.

Josephson: Yes. I'm not sure it was Frances. I think she was the instrument of the kind of thought that was going through all you young people then. That was it. He was a very sensitive man. He was aware of currents of opinion, I think almost by osmosis or something.

Rankin: Like that blind Indian. Did you read that book? What was his name?

Josephson: Ved Mehta? Yes, I did read his book.

Rankin: Smith was so sensitive. He was in the Legislature, I told you, when I lobbied there. But I never talked to him; I wouldn't have **thought** of talking to him! I was so worshipful.

Josephson: You were there at a very significant time, it seems to me, up in Albany. Weren't you there when women from the Women's Trade Union League were working along with Frances Perkins for the eight-hour day for women, and the fifty-four hour bill?

Rankin: I think that came just a little after I was there.

Josephson: I see. You weren't there at the time of the fire in the State House at Albany.

Rankin: I don't remember. If I remember rightly, I was there in '12.

Josephson: Then it was just after the fire. Strangely enough, the Triangle Shirtwaist fire—

Rankin: I was in New York when **that** happenned.

Josephson: Then it was after that that the State House in Albany had a serious fire.

Rankin: Wasn't that when I was in the School of Philanthropy in 1907?

Josephson: No. The Triangle Shirtwaist Fire took place in 1911.

Rankin: Then I was working for suffrage and Mrs. Laidlaw.

Josephson: You had a lot of distinguished women up there lobbying in Albany at just that season.

Rankin: Well, they didn't want a lot of people representing different organizations, and they wanted to concentrate. There was the National American Woman Suffrage Party, and then there was the—no, the national party wasn't there then; they didn't come till later. The head of the New York Woman's Suffrage Party was Mrs. Laidlaw. Then there was Mrs. Belmont of the Woman's Party, and then the Equal Franchise group; I belonged to the Equal Franchise group when I was in Congress, when Mary Ware Dennett was the head of it.

Josephson: No, I don't mean that there were a lot of women working only for suffrage in Albany at the time, but there were women—who was that very lovely woman

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from the Woman's Trade Union League?

Rankin: I know her name, and I know who you're talking about. She was German, wasn't she?

Josephson: Yes, of German extraction.

Rankin: And she had sisters, and her husband was Raymond Robbins.

Josephson: That's right.

Rankin: I'd forgotten about her. I haven't talked to you about many of these women; there were so many.

Josephson: Yes. It was a gruelling period.

Rankin: It was. I was always taught that there was a brilliant period at the time of the Revolution, but I think that the first twenty years of this century had many brilliant people, especially women.

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Rankin: The only lobbying that I did that I thought was worth the salt was the embargo on arms, and he [Frederick J. Libby] doesn't give me any credit or that. I thought that, whether you liked the embargo on arms or not, it was a victory in Congress, don't you think?

Josephson: Yes, I do.

Rankin: Then Mr. Libby and I had several rows. He wanted me to work twelve months a year for a hundred and fifty a month. I said I was willing to work six months for three hundred a month, but I wasn't willing to work the year around for such a little bit. It wouldn't cost him anymore, but I didn't want to work all that time. We'd had a row or two.

Campaigning for Congress, 1939-1940

Rankin: Then in '39, I went to Montana and decided I'd ran in '40. But I didn't tell anyone but the family; I don't know whether I told Wellington or not. I think I did say I wanted to, but it was just very vague. All the papers had located me in Georgia. They campaigned against me because I was from

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Georgia and all that sort of thing.

So I had to establish my residence in Montana in such a way that they couldn't argue. I decided to start in and speak to the fifty-six high schools in the district (it was a single-member district). I wrote ahead—not too far ahead—that I'd be in their town a certain day and that I was available to speak at their high school.

By this time, they knew who I was. Every principal knew who I was and that I would arrive and leave at a certain time; they had to get the speech in while I was there. I didn't give them any return address or anything so they couldn't write and say "no."

I started in on Monday morning when school started, and I went to one or two or three places, as it happened, and I drove to the high school. If I had friends in the place, I stayed all night

with them; if not, I stayed in a little hotel in the town.

I did fifty-two of the fifty-six high schools, starting on Monday morning and working continuously till Friday afternoon. Then I'd go back and try to help Grace take care of my mother. Then I'd start again Monday morning and work until Friday afternoon.

Josephson: How many weeks did it take you?

Rankin: I can't remember, but it took me over two months—over eight weeks, eight or nine weeks.

Josephson: But these weren't voters. Why did you need them?

Rankin: I went to them and I said, "I come here not to entertain you but because the world is in a very serious situation and you can help. I want to tell you how you can help." Then I started in; sometimes I started in by telling about myself—that when I went to school, a Congressman came and he talked to the boys. Then he'd see the girls and he'd say to the girls, "Perhaps some day, you'll be the wife of a president." [Laughter] I wiggled this around until I finally said, "Now women have won all these rights, and some day we'll have a woman president."

Then the boys hooted. I said, "But the opportunities aren't only for the girls; there are opportunities for men too. Perhaps one or these men may be your husband." That put the boys in their place. [Laughter]

Then I'd tell them about the war. I'd say, "The thing you can do is to talk it over with your mother and father and get them to write to the president, and you write to the President, and to your Congressmen. I didn't want to say, tell them you're a high school student." I didn't want to say, "Lie to them." So I said, "Now when you write to them, you don't need to tell them how old you are. I never do." [Laughter] When I'd say, "I never do," they would just roar.

Then I'd tell them a story. I had one story that I told, which is a true story. When I was in school, there was a boy that we always pointed out and talked about because when he was a tiny baby, he had a very unusual experience.

His mother and father were crossing the plains in a covered wagon with a group of others. One day, when they were parked, they heard the Indians coming. All the men ran to the wagons to get their guns, and this little boy's mother ran to the wagon to get her tiny baby.

She took this tiny baby and went out in the direction the Indians were coming from, and when they came she handed them this tiny baby. They looked at it, and it was the first time they'd ever seen a white baby, probably. They passed it around and talked. She couldn't understand what they said, and they couldn't understand whether she said, "We're not going to hurt you," But they could understand that that tiny baby was the most precious thing that she had, and that if she handed it to them, she trusted them. They handed the baby back and went away.

Then I'd say to the students, "You can't hand the President a baby, but you can write him a letter." [Laughter] The students just loved it. I had the most wonderful time. In one school, I stayed an hour and a quarter, and the children asked me questions.

In one school—I'll never forget—they brought in all the grades instead of just the high school because I was there. This little thing got up, all ruffles and fluffy, just a doll, kind of, and she

said, "But what about Mussolini?" [Laughter] They were all thinking.

One high school I went to, I think they had a half a dozen in the high school or something like that; it was way on the top of the Continental Divide. I asked for questions, and one little boy put up his hand. He was about the size of Jeff Robinson; he was thinner but about that age. He got up and started in talking about the Middle East and the problems in the Middle East.

He made a long speech, and I found out the teachers didn't know anything about the subject. His mother and father couldn't speak English but he could read their papers and translate for them. He could read the English-language papers, too, and translate for them, so that he had been doing this for his parents, and he knew all these problems. The teachers were just the most amazed people when they heard this child giving forth all this information.

Josephson: What was the overriding Middle Eastern problem in 1940?

Rankin: I don't remember. This happened just before 1940; it was '39. But the war was on in Europe, and this boy knew what had happened in the past and so on. It was just before we went in. Every little while I said, "Be sure you talk it over with your mother and father." I wanted them to like me and I wanted them to tell their parents what I said. The mother and father never knew how I arrived or when I left; they didn't know whether I was in the state all the time or not, but their children had seen me.

So, when the vote came, if they'd ever heard of me, it was all right if the parents had never heard of me, their children would say, "That's the woman who talked to our high school." And I think it had a tremendous effect.

Josephson: Is that the only campaigning you did?

Rankin: That was the largest part. That was the year before, don't you see; it wasn't the year I ran for Congress.

Josephson: Yes. You had to establish residence.

Rankin: I had residence, but they didn't know it. I had to disabuse their minds of what the papers were telling them.

I think that was very important, because the children didn't forget me. When I came to Helena, the teachers were worried. They said, "They're awfully bad children; I don't think you can hold them." So many times they limited me because they were afraid the children wouldn't listen. But the children did.

The children in Helena—I worked hard there because I knew they thought I couldn't hold them. I held them when I talked to them. There was a lawyer in town—a very conservative lawyer. His father had been a lawyer, I think, and he was too; he was a good lawyer. He met Wellington on the street and he said, "Your sister talked to the high school yesterday, and my daughter came home and put me up against it to answer." (I've forgotten just how he said it.) But he had a hard time answering her questions. The lawyer was very impressed—he didn't say that but his action showed—that I could interest his daughter so much that she came home with an opinion of her own. Of course, the teachers were amazed that the children listened.

But they listened. They listened if you talked sense to them. They'd listen if you treated them as if they had some intelligence. I had two or three stories that always brought a laugh—first, when I said, "Maybe you'll be the husband," [from discussion of a woman president] and

second, when I said, "I never do" [refers to request that high school students write their congressman without mentioning their age]. [Laughter]

Josephson: Tell me, how did you manage to win over the Republican party machine?

Rankin: I didn't; they fought me all the time.

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Josephson: Was there a primary in that second election?

Rankin: Yes, and in the first too. And the Republicans did everything they could against me. My sister [Grace] went into Republican headquarters during the campaign and said she was from Idaho; she didn't know any of the people in there; I guess she told them she was from Idaho. She said, "How's the campaign going?" She talked about the governor or something. Then she said, "How's Jeannette Rankin getting on?" "Oh, she won't get anywhere; she lives in Georgia, you know."

Then Grace answered and said, "She doesn't live in Georgia. She's in Montana every summer; you just don't happen to see her." I was. But I was thirty miles from nowhere [at her brother Wellington's ranch].

Josephson: So you got no help from them?

Rankin: Not a particle. And in the first campaign, I think I told you, they were going to send me out with a young lawyer who was a good speaker. He loved to speak and he was very cordial to everybody; you know, he could meet anyone and talk. Wellington says that what he'd do would be to stand on the platform and praise me and tell them that they should vote for me, and then go into the saloon and laugh at me, and make fun of me. So Wellington didn't let me go campaigning with him; he knew what kind of a man he was and so did I.

But Wellington had me go with a wonderful man who was running for lieutenant governor, as dull as dishwater. We didn't have big audiences but we got around the state.

Josephson: That was the first campaign?

Rankin: The first campaign. Then, the night before the election the last meeting was in Missoula. This lawyer I spoke of was from Missoula. He hadn't lived there all his life, but he'd known me all my life. He said that he was going to be the chairman. We had such a big audience—just an enormous audience; we'd never talked to one this big. He started to talk; he talked and he talked. When he'd talked a half an hour, the audience began to get restless.

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After three-quarters of an hour, if he suddenly came to a pause, they'd applaud. Then they got so they'd stamp their feet, and they stamped him out! He had to quit; he never introduced me. [Laughter]

I got up and started to talk. That was the way the Republicans treated me. That was the man Wellington wouldn't let me go with. In that speech, I was not supposed to mention Wellington because Wellington felt that it would make enemies or something. But in that speech I said, "Now Wellington says that all I need is fifty percent of the vote and one more, and then I've won. You may be the one to make me win." [laughter] The audience took it beautifully. Wellington didn't know I was going to say it; I didn't know I was going to say it. But I made the point.

Josephson: How did he come to be named Wellington.

Rankin: Father had smallpox. A man took care of him whose name was Wellington.

Josephson: It had nothing to do with the Iron Duke?

Rankin: No, not a thing.

Josephson: That's very illuminating to me, too, your second campaign, because in none of the accounts I've read so far has there been any description of that. Would you attribute your victory at that time to the anti-war feeling?

Rankin: Yes, definitely. And not only to the anti-war feeling, but they knew I meant it. They were convinced by all the opposition that I had had, that I had stood up and voted against war and I was still standing against war. And I was willing to work against it.

In April of '40, I started to campaign for the nomination and I went to man after man and woman after woman who were precinct chairmen of the Republicans. They were in tiny towns—sometimes just a broad place on the road. I'd see a man working on a car and I'd stand and talk to him while he was working. I said, "I've come to find out what you thought of my running for Congress. I haven't decided, but I'd like to have your opinion."

They'd say something about Thorkelson, who was in Congress on the Republican ticket, because of a fight among the Democrats. I said, "He's a good man and I'm not against him. But I've been lobbying in Congress and I know more men in Congress than he does. I think I could have more influence with them, and I think I would make a better Congressman than he does because I know the state better," and so on.

Then I'd go to the next man or woman. I always drove the car and I always drove alone. I didn't have a driver; I was sixty and they would have used that against me. When the time came to announce, Wellington—he didn't tell me at the time but he told me afterwards—had decided that the Democrats would re-nominate Jerry, and the Company didn't like Jerry.

Josephson: Jerry who?

Rankin: James F. O'Connor. And that I'd have a chance to defeat him. But it was a very soul-searching process of deciding whether I'd run, after I'd done all the campaigning. Then Wellington decided that it was all right to run; I wasn't going to run if he didn't think so, because he'd have to pay for it.

These opponents of mine on the Republican tickets—I think there were four or five; I'm not sure—they'd go to a man and say something about me— anything—the man would answer, "Oh, she's been here" The slogan my opponents planned to use was, "You aren't going to send an old woman to Congress." [Laughter]. They couldn't say that after they'd heard that I'd been there already.

The man knew I'd come alone, and the man knew I had asked his opinion. The men I'd spoken to didn't give it to me; they didn't say whether I should ran or not, but I certainly asked them if they thought it would be wise for me to run. I didn't tell them I was going to; I said I was thinking about it.

Suffrage Campaigns

Josephson: Where did you learn all this? These are very sophisticated political techniques. You were no amateur. Did you learn them in the suffrage campaign?

Rankin: Yes. Then trial and error.

Josephson: But in which suffrage campaign? In the California campaign?

Rankin: Well, the campaigns weren't separated. I talked suffrage from September, 1910 to '16 when I ran for Congress in Montana. I had tried out everything; some things worked and some things didn't work.

Josephson: Schaffer says something interesting about the California campaign. This is something to which you can't take exception. He says that you were recruited to work in the rural areas; and in the final count, it was the rural areas that swung California in favor of women's suffrage. So that was really your first experience on a statewide basis.

Rankin: It wasn't statewide; I only had a certain part of California. But I worked in California after I'd worked in Washington. In Washington, the first thing they sent me to do was to go to Ballard and see what I could do. I went into this perfectly strange little lumber town and I talked to the ministers and the newspapers and found out about some women.

Then I started going to the women who might be interested. I went to one woman who was perfectly lovely. I was so interested in her that I went back the second day; when I went back the second time, she wouldn't let me in. Her husband had come home and told her not to. That was a great lesson to me.

Then we had this meeting in the city hall, I think—a tiny room not any bigger than this. We got a speaker from Seattle, and there were no more than seven or eight people there! [Laughter]

Josephson: How big was the town altogether?

Rankin: I don't know how many votes; it wasn't very big. It was bigger than Watkinsville [Georgia, Miss Rankin's home]. I never mentioned this. I was so ashamed and so humiliated that things had gone so wrong— all the work I'd done and we had only those few people. When the campaign was over and we were discussing it, someone said, "The minute we saw what you could do in Ballard, we couldn't urge you to stay there," and they had sent me to all these other places. [Laughter] But I thought they'd sent me away because I'd failed, and I didn't know until afterwards that I had done a good job. I realize now I **had** done a good job.

Wherever I campaigned, I had better results than they thought I was going to have. Now, for instance, I worked in Ohio; every place I worked, we carried. It wasn't my work alone, but I didn't hurt the campaign. We carried. In California, they sent me out to the north. I didn't tell you this? I don't know who I told; I seem to be such a repeater.

Josephson: You haven't repeated a single story to me.

Rankin: Is that so? Well, they sent me to this town up in the mountains off the railroad, in northern California. I went up in a **real** stagecoach drawn by horses. It was that far off the beat, and they still had a stagecoach. On the stagecoach going up was the superintendent of schools. He said that he had a girls band in his school. I said, "Why girls?" He said they were more

reliable; they'd come to practice and they'd do things. I was going to use this anecdote in future campaigns, and he offered to have the band play for me. So I spoke on the street and the girls band played.

Josephson: You attracted a large audience?

Rankin: Yes, I had a good audience, and I told them why women should vote. That was to me a thrilling experience.

Josephson: Working in states like Florida at that time couldn't have been easy.

Rankin: It was very interesting and very complicated.

There was one man—there is an interesting end to this story—who was lobbying (I don't know what for—railroads or something like that)—

Josephson: Where was this, in Washington?

Rankin: In Florida. In Tallahassee, the state capitol. He became interested in what I was doing. He used to talk to me an awful lot and I learned a lot from him—certain things. He was lobbying too, and we'd compare notes. He always wanted to know how many votes I had, and I never would tell him. I think I should have told him. He was willing to manipulate the votes [to try to strike a bargain between those who favored suffrage and those who favored his project.]

Josephson: He was the man who told you, "Try to sleep a lot, but if you can't, eat a lot?"

Rankin: No, what he said was, if you were forced to be awake at night and couldn't sleep, you didn't miss your sleep if you ate something. Years later I met a man in Atlanta when I was hunting for my suitcase (and finally found it). He said his father was in Tallahassee with me and that he, as a little boy, had heard about me through his father. Now, wasn't that iteresting, that I should find the son of that man?

Josephson: Yes. You evidently left a deep impression. But the Florida situation was a difficult thing in any case. Did you have any hope of winning over Florida? What year could that have been?

Rankin: I think that was in '12. It wouldn't have been hard if we'd had a little more support from the women. The man weren't opposed to it so much, but they had no support from the women—the women weren't organized.

There were women in the suffrage campaign from New Orleans—these hoity-toity grand ladies. They were always telling people what they should do and telling me what I should do, and I felt as though I knew lots more than they did. [Laughter]

Josephson: Is there any accuracy in the story about your going

to a Mississippi Senator and his refusing to get up when you came into the room, saying, "You women are so you don't mind if I don't get up?"

Rankin: No. I never had that experience.

Josephson: It's attributed to you and another woman.

Rankin: Oh, I think that was when I was lobbying in the Congress. And I walked out. I said I wanted to discuss the navy, and he said he'd already discussed it with some important men. So I smiled.

There was someone with me, and he wouldn't get up. I remember that. I remember that, now; that was later, when I was lobbying for naval reduction, not for suffrage.

When I worked for suffrage, there was John Sharp Williams—did you ever hear that name? He was a very noted Senator at the time. I started talking about woman's suffrage. He said yes, he believed that women should vote and so on, but that you couldn't do it in the South. You heard that?

Josephson: I heard that story, and I know your answer. [Laughter]

Rankin: And he said, "You can't hit your baby's nurse over the head with a club!"

Josephson: Yes. There was another instance of rudeness—not rudeness but violence—practiced against you all, and that of course is the suffrage parade of 1913.

Rankin: I wasn't conscious of any violence. I was in that parade.

Josephson: I know you were. You were not one of those who was tripped up and spat at and abused?

Rankin: No, I didn't see anything of that.

Josephson: But it did happen.

Rankin: Yes, I guess did.

Josephson: It was all over the newspapers. And it sounded very much like one of those recent marches on Washington—the peace marches, the way they were handled. The character of the police remains the same over the years, doesn't it? Unless they're otherwise instructed.

Rankin: LaGuardia told me what he did to the police that slowed down their rackets and that sort of thing. That was, he didn't accuse them of anything, but he moved them far away from their usual beats and disturbed their rackets. Then Dewey came in and said he'd done it, but he couldn't have done a thing if LaGuardia hadn't handled the police. LaGuardia stopped an awful lot of their rackets by doing that.

Josephson: You liked him, didn't you?

Rankin: Very much. When I was first elected, I went to New York and made that speech in Carnegie Hall. Out of all the congressmen in New York City—and there were a lot of them then and there are still—LaGuardia got another young man that was elected for the first time and invited Wellington and me to lunch with them at the Waldorf. He was the only Congressman in the whole of New York City—Manhattan—who knew I was elected. LaGuardia did. From then on, we were always very good friends. He always stood up for me and he always said I was right in the First World War and he was wrong. He was a wonderful friend.

Josephson: May I bring you back again to the suffrage march in 1913 because some of the stories I've heard about it are very picturesque. If they're true, I'd like to put them down; if they're not, all right. You were bringing the Montana delegation in cowgirl

dress, in cowboy dress?

Rankin: No.

Josephson: That's how the story is told.

Rankin: The time we did that was when Wilson was inaugurated.

Josephson: Yes, I know.

Rankin: Oh, I thought you said in New York.

Josephson: No, no, no—in Washington.

Rankin: Yes. We had a large girl in Montana with a beautiful face. She had brown eyes and brown hair and she really looked as though she might be Indian. She promised to come. I borrowed a white buckskin costume and she was to wear that.

Josephson: She was to be the Indian who led Lewis?

Rankin: Yes. Sacajawea. But she didn't turn up and Edna had to wear the costume. Edna was much smaller and had light hair and blue eyes.

Josephson: And your girls did not wear cowgirl costumes?

Rankin: No, not cowboy—Indian costumes.

Josephson: The other girls—the other women from Montana?

Rankin: No, I think they wore Indian costumes if they wore costumes.

Josephson: It must have been fun anyway.

The Woman Suffrage Amendment in Congress

Josephson: The war intervened to postpone national adoption of

woman's suffrage. If not for the war, I really believe that woman's suffrage would have been granted by about 1917, I think it would have become universal. Don't you think so?

Rankin: The first time it ever passed either house was when I was there in 1918, and it carried by one vote. The story of that vote was very dramatic.

James R. Mann was the leader of the Republicans and he was up for Speaker of the House, and Champ Clark was the Democratic candidate. I think Champ Clark won by one or two votes. There was pressure on me as a Republican not to vote for Mann because he was considered such a reactionary by all our group. But Wellington said, "You have to vote for Mann." I hadn't said I wasn't going to, but he just made the comment. He said I had to vote for Mann and that was the only thing to do.

I found that Mann was an honest man, that he had views that were opposed to mine but he was not a scoundrel. And the packing interests—because he was honest and they couldn't get to him—did everything to make people think that he was with them. They'd started a story that they had given him a horse; he **had** a new horse and they said they'd given it to him. Well that was spread everywhere. They never gave him a horse, but he had one. They did things like that to him. It was a great lesson to me in how the opposition works.

The opposition will attribute statements to a politician that he never made, to injure him. For example, the military supported Johnson in the 1964 campaign and opposed Goldwater (who

was really a very stupid man). So they spread the idea that Goldwater favored the military even more than Johnson so that Johnson would win the votes of those who were against the military. They planted all Goldwater's unwise statements, or made them up.

Well, it was exactly the same thing that they did to James R. Mann when I was sixty—no, in my first term. During the campaign for suffrage in Congress, Mann came to me and asked who Mrs. Catt was, and asked about the suffrage amendment. I told him, and I think I told him the truth. He said, "You and I will put it through."

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Then Mann got sick and was in the hospital. The amendment came up for debate. But before it came up, there was another man in Congress—his name was Joe Walsh—who was violently opposed to woman's suffrage, I was told. I always sat back of him so that he couldn't see me, and I wouldn't be a thorn in his flesh by being there. I didn't speak to him and he didn't speak to me.

One day I was sitting in back and he came and sat by me and said, "I hear you're going into my district over the weekend." I said, "I haven't heard." Someone was planning my speaking schedule and I didn't know about where I was to go. He said yes, and there was nothing I could say and nothing he could say; I didn't know anything about it. So I went into his district.

This Joe Walsh sat on the floor, and every time the Democrats did an irregular thing, a thing that required unanimous consent, or were just trying to slip something through, he'd get up and stop them, by objecting or by doing one thing or other. He would always be there so that they couldn't put over things that they wanted to.

When I got to his district, I said I wanted to compliment them on sending such an able man to Congress and told the audience what good things he had done. I made a good campaign speech for Joe Walsh. [Laughter] I said, "But there's one thing that's wrong with him, and that's your fault: he isn't for woman's suffrage, and you have to convert him."

This was on a Saturday night, and I got back to the Congress on Monday morning. The Republicans had called a meeting; they wanted to make me chairman of the suffrage committee. I said no, that we had to have the vote of every Democrat that we could get and because I was a Republican it would antagonize some of the Democrats even though there were other Democrats who would vote for me because I was a woman and on the woman's suffrage committee; it would make some of them mad and create an issue.

Walsh didn't want me to be chariman of the

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committee but he didn't want to vote **with** me, and he couldn't make his speech. He'd try to say something and then he'd say something else, but he couldn't get going because I wanted the thing he wanted!

Josephson: He didn't want to range himself on your side at any cost, I suppose. [Laughter]

Rankin: But we argued. The man who had been chairman of the committee and had been working for woman suffrage was a man named John E. Raker from California. Why put him out just because I was a woman? Well, I insisted that I didn't want it and that it shouldn't be. They agreed with me at the end.

The next day Walsh got a letter from his district. He came around and he wanted to apologize, but he didn't want to admit of course that he'd been so nasty about me. He wanted to thank me for saying such nice things about him, and he was **so** embarrassed [laughter]; you've never known a man so embarrassed!

I was just pleasant and bashful and pretended I didn't know what he was talking about.

Then, when the suffrage resolution came up, I went to see him. I went to his office, and I said to him, "Now I'm not asking you to do anything against your conscience. If you're opposed to woman suffrage, I'm not asking you to vote for it. But I **am** asking you not to make a speech against it. You make such a good speech, and you can convince them. I ask you not to."

He said, "Well, when they say—" I said, "Leave the room. Don't listen to them and don't make a speech against it." He said, "I'm having a hard time." He didn't know what he was doing. [Laughter] So when the time came to vote, he didn't make a speech, and when it came he voted against it. We carried by one vote.

They had a recapitulation—that is, they counted the vote over, and you could change your vote if you wanted. He sat at the table where they could change, and he said, "If you change your vote, I'11 change mine."

Josephson: He said this to whom?

Rankin: To the ones he thought were going to change it from **for** to **against**. "If you change your vote, I'll change mine," and he kept them from changing their vote, the ones that had been for us who might have voted against it. He was my best friend from then on. [Laughter]

Josephson: I think you played a mean game, Jeannette. [Laughter]

Rankin: I played an **honest** game, and I told him the truth as far as I knew it.

Josephson: You were having a high old time. Those two years of your first term in Congress were terribly busy, weren't they?

Rankin: Oh yes. And I was young and green. There were only ten Congressmen in Congress that were younger than I at that time—I think it was ten. I felt very green, but I knew I knew certain things which they didn't know I knew—like the rules of Congress and so on. I did plenty of stupid things, but I remember the things that weren't so stupid.

Josephson: The important things too.

Rankin: Well, I thought that it was quite a victory to win Walsh from making a speech against me. He was a **very** good speaker, and he could martial his facts in such a way that they were very convincing. I think he became a suffragist.

Josephson: Anyway, he had to take it. [Laughter]

Rankin: He had to take it. But I love that story about Walsh; I love to tell it.

Josephson: On the other hand, you were treated with considerable courtesy by many of the Congressmen, weren't you?

Rankin: All of them. Someone told me—not the man himself—that he was in a committee and a bill came up. They were ready to throw it out and some man said, "I think you ought to consider

this. There's a very curious-minded Congressman who's introduced it, and I think we ought to pass it." They didn't pay

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much attention and sort of argued against him, and finally someone said, "Who is it?" He said, "Jeannette Rankin." "Oh, yes! We'll pass it!" They passed it.

Josephson: You had them terrified. [Laughter]

Rankin: It was a courtesy, don't you know? He played on that, and we got the bill through. I don't know whether it was that bill or another one, that concerned a woman who lived a block or so away from us in Missoula. Her husband had been an Indian fighter and he had certain privileges as an Indian fighter. They were poor and they wanted something. I wasn't interested and yet I was interested; she was a friend.

I did what she asked. Her husband had died and she wanted a pension, or something like that. It went through. Nobody told me and I didn't know it had gone through. When I'd come to Missoula, every time I'd see her, I'd dodge—I'd go down the street or do something of the sort. Finally she told someone, "I never can see Jeannette; I try to but she's always busy. I want to thank her for getting that through."

Josephson: And you weren't even aware that you had done it! [Laughter]

Rankin: I knew I had tried, and I don't know whether that was the bill that they passed because it was mine.

Josephson: What were the halls of Congress like when you went there first? The reason I ask is something you may recal from our book on Smith—Fanny Perkins' description of what the New York State Assembly looked like when she first came there in 1911, I think it was, to lobby for the fifty-four-hour bill. She said it was very dirty; the place was full of spittoons and cigar butts and generally filthy. The lunchroom was disgusting, and the dust and grit everywhere was just unspeakable. What was Congress like in 1917?

Rankin: In 1917, they had spittoons—very fancy brass ones. They were all around. Men chewed tobacco; a great many of the Congressmen chewed tobacco.

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There was a man from Michigan who had white hair; it was his first term. He was a very courteous, lovely man. I had to sit next to someone; I couldn't sit out alone very well. I'd make it a point, if he was around, to sit next to him because no one would think I was flirting with him. He would get up and move the spittoon. [Laughter] I think the members of the House laughed at that.

Josephson: Were there any accommodations for ladies? Did you have a retiring room or powder room?

Rankin: No. They talked about this in the paper and on the *Merv Griffin show*. Griffin asked me, "What did they do about the women?" And did I have a ladies' room to myself? I said no. He said, "What did you do?" I said "I used a public one." [Laughter]

Josephson: I don't remember hearing that.

Rankin: Maybe it wasn't in the broadcast; it might have been cut.

Josephson: It might have escaped me but I can see your problem.

Rankin: But the funniest thing was, about my retiring room— they had one later and they have lovely ones now— I mustn't forget to tell Ted Harris about Dr. Mary Walker. Did you ever hear of her?

Josephson: Yes. Tell me more about her.

Rankin: She was a doctor, and in the Civil War she wanted to practice, to take care of the sick and wounded. They passed a law in Congress that she could wear men's clothes—the same kind of clothes men wear—and practice her profession. She wore black broadcloth pants and a vest, and a long coat and a silk hat. She used to come to Washington to lobby I don't remember what for.

One day she was standing on the steps of the Capitol, or coming up the steps. There's always a

wind there for some reason, and the wind blow her down and she had to go to the hospital. I went to see her at the hospital and I said, "How long have you worn men's clothing?" She said, "I never wore men's clothes; they were always my own." [Laughter]

She used to come to see me, and I used to encourage her. When she came to the Capitol, she had to use the public accomodations. And the girls in my office came running to me—"There's a man in the ladies room!"

She wore those clothes all through the Civil War and afterward. She always had projects of some kind. She was from New York State.

Russian Trip—1962

Josephson: When did you go and what was your purpose in going to Russia?

Rankin: I had never been there.

Josephson: That was reason enough.

Rankin: I always thought that was the craziest thing I ever did. Well, did you ever hear of Jerome Davis? He was a professor of sociology at Yale. He was born in Japan of missionary parents. He was, I think, one of the first sociologists who connected up his study with the community, with facts. He had always been a peace man, and he had an organization called Promoting Perpetual Peace, or something of that kind.

I had connected with a California group to go to Russia, and when I called Jerome Davis and said I'd like to go he was delighted. He knew me. I thought it was going to be a gorgeous trip; it was such more expensive than I was in the habit of paying.

Josephson: Did you take that on your own or did you go with the group?

Rankin: I went with the group; there were thirty-seven of us, and the group was too large. But it was a very interesting group. Davis had been there sixteen times and could speak Russian. Then there were five or six others who were born in Russia and could

speak Russian.

One was a Hollywood promoter of films. He was tremendously interesting. He had to go to Russia on some business or other. When I asked him why he went with us, he said, "I didn't want to go alone." He was a jolly, wonderful man. His family met him in Leningrad, and we all met them. Of course, they couldn't speak English but he could.

Then there was a woman who'd been born in Moscow. It had been seventy-one years since she'd been in Russia; she was ten years old when she left. She was eighty-one and I was eighty-two at the time.

Then there was Mrs. Hinton from that school in Vermont—what was its name?

Josephson: Putney?

Rankin: Putney School—she organized that, and we'd kept more or less in touch. Do you know her?

Josephson: No.

Rankin: She lives near Philadelphia and she's a pacifist. Then there was a woman and her husband, he was Jewish; she had been born in Kiev. Then there was a doctor and his wife from Brooklyn, I think. He was a psychologist, I think—yes, he was a psychologist or psychoanalyst or whatever (I never can distinguish between them). Well, we were thirty-seven, some awfully dumb; but **these** were all interesting, and there were other interesting people.

We went to Leningrad and then Moscow. Then we went to the Black Sea, which I thought at the time was very silly—to go to a resort. But I found it

was **very** important because otherwise Russia was dull.

They were building numerous places for workers to live at these resorts, the dullest houses! But they were a place where they had a room and a bath or maybe two rooms and an entrance hall where they could hang their winter clothes. But every one of the workers who lived in these dull places had a month off to spend at these resorts. A month is a good long vacation, and all year they could think of this vacation, don't you see.

This vacation spot was most amusing. They had lectures and also a sort of vaudeville entertainment. One man played the accordion; first he played one, then another one and another one and another one. They were such simple but delightful, amusing things

Then the vacationers had a place where they could be alone; there were a million little tables where they could go alone and eat. But all this month's stay was so inexpensive and so much of it was paid by their unions and by different organizations that **everybody** could go. They had every kind of a bath—

Josephson: You mean hot bathe and sulfur baths?

Rankin: And cold baths and different kinds of therapy and all that sort of thing, so that all the hypochondriacs could have a good chat.

Then, of course, we went to Yalta and all those places. We went way up in the mountains—terrible road! They never had a map and I never could find out exactly where we were and what we were doing. But it was a delightful trip.

Jerome Davis was along; he was a grouchy old man and was always fighting with somebody; you couldn't get to him. (I had a row with the travel agent in America; he did some horrible thing.) But I really had a wonderful trip. I didn't fly over with the group—I went to Ireland first

and met

them in Sweden. Then I left them in Poland, I think it was, and went to Turkey; while they went on to Western Europe. I didn't want to go to Western Europe so I went to Turkey on my own.

Josephson: While you were in Russia, did you see any Russian officials or talk to any?

Rankin: Oh yes. They had us meet all kinds of people. And they had peace meetings; we met with the peace people. Our group would always ask questions like "When did you stop beating your mother," and always criticizing Russia. So I never spoke; I never said a word. I was so ashamed and so **distressed** at the awful way some of the Americans acted.

Jerome Davis never even treated me as if I were one of the party; he never told anyone who I was or anything, that I'd voted against war twice. At the last meeting we had with the Russians there were some interesting looking men present. So I beckoned to Davis, who was across the table a way, to indicate that I wanted to speak. I heard him say to one of the Russians—sort of in a whisper— that I was the first woman in Congress or something.

Well, I was disgusted with the peace attitude of the American group. I got up and I started to talk. I said "I wanted to talk to you. I'm not representing the opinion of this group; it's just my own opinion. I don't know how they stand on this." I said that I thought that since the Russians controlled their military organization, they could do what we couldn't do—that we were controlled by a military dictatorship, but that what I wanted was for the United States to disarm immediately and totally and unilaterally. And I said, "But we can't do it because we're controlled by the amry! But you control your army; therefore, you could do it."

Well, it just put those Russians on the spot! They turned and looked at me and they never spoke to anyone else.

Josephson: Did they like the idea of their disarming unilaterally?

Rankin: They were stunned; they didn't know how to answer. They wanted to be polite but they didn't want to commit their government to doing it. They didn't really answer, but everything they said and did was directed to me. Someone said that that was the most interesting meeting we had had, but they didn't recognize that I'd made it interesting.

There were quite a few Russian women—prominent Russian women—who knew Mrs. Hinton and others in the group, and we had chances to talk with them. At the same time, there was that world conference on peace that Kruschev organized. They had it in that gorgeous, gorgeous hall. Have you been there?

Josephson: No.

Rankin: Well, it's the most wonderful thing I ever saw.

Josephson: Is this in Moscow?

Rankin: In Moscow. And delegates came from all over the world, in every kind of a costume. It was the most colorful, delightful thing that you could think of, just to see. There were six thousand seats with an electric thing that you could—

Josephson: Translating devices?

Rankin: —put on and hear the speeches in any language you wanted. Kruschev talked for two hours and a half.

Josephson: That must have been a trial. [Laughter]

Rankin: No, it wasn't because each interpreter had a stint of only fifteen minutes. They'd have a man and a woman alternate with a different kind of voice every time. They translated so expertly that **every gesture** of Kruschev's corresponded to the translation. You never were conscious that you were hearing a translation but you didn't get tired of the voice, and you could see Kruschev and you could feel his emotions. It was the most delightful

translation I've ever listened to. Of course, I haven't heard that many.

Josephson: Better than what they do at the United Nations?

Rankin: They all said it was much better. This was in '62, and it was brand new; they had the latest of everything. That meeting was wonderful.

Josephson: What was the upshot of the meeting?

Rankin: Kruschev invited the whole world to discuss peace and how we could get rid of war. Well, you can't get rid of war unless the will for it comes from the bottom, and you get some nations to say "We won't have it." It was just like the United Nations, but this was Russian-controlled instead of an English-American-controlled United Nations. They met for a week. There were some brilliant women there, and they came from everywhere.

There was Miss Lipscomb from Boston; did you ever hear of her? She was in the suffrage movement and she knew me and she made herself known to me. Erich Fromm was there. Florence Lipscomb was active in the WIL. There were a hundred in the official American delegation.

We didn't stay too long. We had three or four days, but we were not delegates; we were invited there by the Russians to come. You could mix with the delegates. I had such an interesting talk with the people from Guinea and South America. The Indians weren't there officially, I don't think, but there were visitors from there. They were from everywhere! Six thousand!

Josephson: And they weren't all Communists?

Rankin: Oh, no! And it wasn't a Communist meeting; it was purely for peace. I guess it got no notice in America.

Josephson: Very little; I remember it very dimly.

Rankin: They had escalators in this building where the meetings were held up to the top floor, where there was the most gorgeous eating place you can imagine! They had different levels, you know, so that though you were up high you could look down. Then they fed us the most gorgeous food!

Josephson: Did you find Moscow a beautiful city?

Rankin: Yes, it was different. The Kremlin—I hadn't known enough about it, but there was every type of architecture in the Kremlin, instead of being all harmonized and of one period. But the

museums— you could just spend all your time there. It was just gorgeous. I don't know whether we have any museums that can compare with it.

Josephson: Did you find Leningrad beautiful?

Rankin: Yes, and delightful. I've forgotten what they called one place, but it was Peter the Great's playground—what do they call that? I've forgotten.

Josephson: The Winter Palace?

Rankin: The Winter Palace. That was the loveliest thing. It was a cold day, I remember, when we were there, but it was so full of fun and joy. There were fountains everywhere, and there was one place where you had to cross a bridge—over a kind of pool. When you crossed the bridge you'd get sprinkled [laughter]—you've heard of that.

Josephson: Not there, but I know about it in other palaces. That was supposed to be funny.

Rankin: It was funny because everyone who saw what happened would think, "Well, I won't step on that" (whatever triggered the spray), but they were always doused. There was a man underneath in the bushes who made the thing work.

Then, in another place, there was a children's theater and they were putting on plays, not for us but for themselves. That was beautiful, Just beautiful!

Josephson: Did you go to the ballet and the theater and the opera?

Rankin: Yes. I have a little pin. They mixed us in with the Russians; they didn't have us all sit together. I sat next to a man who had a little boy, and I tried to talk to the little boy. Of course, I couldn't. I gave him a Lincoln penny and pointed out Lincoln to him. He gave me a little star with a picture of Lenin in it, a little pin. I always said it was the Jesus Christ of Russia; it was the prettiest thing

Josephson: This was in Leningrad?

Rankin: Yes, it was in Leningrad. This to the first time anyone's ever asked me about Russia.

Josephson: Well, I'm very interested.

Rankin: There was a mix-up in my visa caused by my American travel agent, so I had to go to Poland to get to Turkey, to Warsaw. When I got there—I went alone— the Polish woman at the office they sent me to couldn't speak English but she could speak the other languages for the region and I couldn't speak anything but English.

One day, there were two or three black men there who helped me. They were from West Africa and they were studying medicine. They spoke beautiful English.

Josephson: They were your interpreters?

Rankin: Yes. They could, from Africa, speak both English and Polish. Wasn't that interesting? I enjoyed it and they enjoyed it. I had the most fun. Whenever I got stuck like that, I would tell people my age— eighty-two, which was **terribly** old. I felt terribly old and they thought I was terribly old.

Josephson: But it made them respectful.

Rankin: Not only that, but they enjoyed it. They'd laugh. In one place in Africa—no, it was in Turkey—

I went into the ladies room and there were three black women. I said, "Do you speak English?" and one of them said, "We speak correct, grammatical, idiomatical English."

Josephson: That was lesson one. [Laughter]

Rankin: So we did talk. Then when I told them I was eighty-two, one woman just fell off her chair. [Laughter] It was the cutest thing I've ever come across.

Josephson: One more thing about Russia—did they take you on tours of factories and plants?

Rankin: Yes.

Josephson: How did you find that? Was it boring?

Rankin: It was tremendously interesting.

Josephson: Wasn't it just the same as going to the Ford plant?

Rankin: I've never been there, I'm sorry to say; I've never been in any car factories in America. It depended; they just allowed you to see certain things. I had sense enough not to ask a question that was embarrassing. But I went to a machine shop, and you could see a lot. I said, "How many women do you employ?" A man said the majority were women. Then he smiled, and said they had two hundred engineers who were women. Of course, they didn't show us the engine they were making; why should they? I wouldn't have known what it was, but they just didn't.

They showed us what the working conditions were and so on, both for men and women. It was interesting.

There was one factory—it was a cotton factory, I think, where they spun the thread and also made cloth and made it into clothes, children's clothes. And the head of it was a woman. She was a buxom woman and she couldn't speak English. She talked very fast and very pleasantly and they interpreted for us. The interpreters were so worshipful of her. You could just see in everything they said and did that she was smart.

They showed as the factory and any question we

asked she'd answer right off and answer well. You could just see she was a powerful woman.

Josephson: A real administrator, I guess.

Rankin: She had the **whole** thing in her head. They told us how big it was and how many were employed. I don't know whether that was the same factory, but in one factory, as we were walking through, suddenly there was a signal on the loud speaker and music started. Every one got up from his or her chair and went this way and that way and the other way in certain exercises. Then the music stopped and they sat down. They did that every so often. Instead of having a coffee break, they had this music and these calisthenics or whatever you want to call it that broke the monotony and made it interesting. Their factories were very interesting. They'd have, over the doors, the pictures of those workers who had excelled in the factory [stakhonovites]. I enjoyed it.

Josephson: You didn't go to see any schools or creches or daycare centers—things like that?

Rankin: It was summer, and there weren't any in Moscow. But we did stop at them on the way and had very interesting times. In one place, some girls connected themselves with me. They could speak a little English and they took me around. I don't know how they selected me, but they gave me a red handkerchief that Russians wear. I still have it.

Josephson: A babka?

Rankin: I don't know what they call it, but it's a triangular place of red silk that you tie around your neck. I came home with all kinds of little pins that they gave me. When I left home, I wanted something to give away and I didn't know what to get, so I went to the store here and got several boxes of chewing gum. The children were just crazy about it! But my group just about mobbed me for giving it to them because they said it made beggars out of them. I didn't care if they begged for it; if they wanted it, I wanted to give it to them. But I couldn't live with the group and do it. [Laughter]

Josephson: Did you offer that to Turkish children too?

Rankin: I've forgotten, but I think I gave it all away before I left Russia.

Travels Elsewhere

Josephson: What did you find in Turkey that was interesting?

Rankin: I went to Turkey in '46 and spent the winter with a missionary friend, who is going to be here the fifteenth of April; she's an American—a Wellesley graduate. Oh, I had a grand time with the Turkish people. I stayed at a school for girls. My friend Harriet had to go away for a while and I was there alone. The people that were around the school in the summer were very nice to me.

I went down the street one day and saw a Turkish woman with a Turkish girl—she looked like a girl—who was carrying a baby. I stopped and looked at the baby and chatted (of course, they couldn't understand), and I asked in sign language did the baby belong to her—was it her baby? She said yes. I asked if she'd let me hold it and she let me hold it, and I talked to it of course. They couldn't understand, but I held the baby. It was the littlest thing I ever held.

Josephson: A new baby?

Rankin: Oh yes. Then I gave it back. We smiled and talked and then went on. The people at the school couldn't believe that a Turkish woman would let me hold her baby. But I couldn't always get along with people that I couldn't talk to. I could talk but even if they couldn't understand my words they knew I was friendly.

One of the things I found in India—but it's in all countries—is that women very often wear earrings. I would admire their earrings and then I'd take off mine and show them, and we'd have these long conversations about earrings. [laughter] It

didn't matter what we talked about; they were very friendly—I mean, we could communicate our friendship.

Josephson: When you got away from your group after the Russian trip, you went down to Turkey just to see your friend again?

Rankin: Yes. I stayed a month down there, but Harriet had to be away part of the time.

Josephson: Did you go to Greece at that time?

Rankin: No.

Josephson: Have you ever been to Greece?

Rankin: I've never been to Greece. A boat I was traveling on in '46 once stopped over for the day in Piraeus. It was an unsinkable boat; it was American. [Laughter]

Josephson: How do you know it was unsinkable?

Rankin: It was a converted troop ship and it was just after the war. But when we got to Greece we found that one just like it had been blown up a short time before and sank. [Laughter] We just were around Athens and saw the most conspicuous things. But they didn't have as good cooking as they had in Chicago.

Josephson: Well, it depends on where you ate.

Rankin: The only thing I knew to ask for was mutton; I thought they'd have that.

Josephson: Shish kebab, yes.

Rankin: Then that pastry thing they roll with nuts and honey. What is that? [Baclava] I've forgotten the name. It was so gorgeous in Chicago. I guess I didn't ask for the right thing. But I was alone then on the trip home from Turkey.

Josephson: Did you come back boat.

Rankin: I went over by boat and came back by boat—the most terrible trip I ever took both way.

Josephson: Bad weather?

Rankin: And the ship was so terrible—an American ship, the Carp, once a troop ship. It was just after World War II. I had heard about this ship: some missionaries that Harriet had talked about were to sail on it. So I wrote to the American Express and sent some money for passage. When I got to New York and went to get my ticket—they had my money right there; they hadn't touched it—they tried to persuade me not to go on it. But I did. That was the most amazing trip.

I think there were a thousand pasangers on it, or something like that, and conditions were just terrible. There were a hundred and sixty-six sick at one time. They used to wash the knives and forks in cold water in the dining room. I didn't happen to be, but everyone else was. It was a very amusing trip all the same.

There were Greeks on board—everybody moving because the war was over, don't you know. I said to myself I'd go home any way except on theCarp; (that was the name of the ship). But when I started to come home, I had to wait a month, I think, to get any passage, at all, and at length I had to come on theCarp. This time theCarp had awfully interesting people on it - on the return trip. I was late getting home as it was, because I was taking care of my mother at the time and if I waited for another boat I'd have been delayed even more. But there were some

very interesting people on board.

Josephson: What were they doing—fleeing from Europe?

Rankin: It wasn't from Europe; it was from Asia. They were—yes—on their way home after doing something there during the war. My most vivid memory of Greece is of a Greek bishop or metropolitan—what do you call him? It was in January and we had a terrible storm and the ship went up and down everywhere. The bishop walked around saying that the storm was caused by the sin on the ship and the sinful people, and that God was doing this.

Josephson: Was he saying this in English?

Rankin: No, it was interpreted for me. They had long, narrow tables in the dining room and he was just about opposite me. I think mainly we spoke English, but I'm not sure; I don't remember clearly.

I once went to India by ship from Seattle. I had come back from India on a ship that had a very nice captain, and, when I wanted to go back to India I found that that ship was leaving about the same time I wanted to go, and he was still in command. So I arranged to go on it.

On my first trip on this boat I had one of these huge cabins with two beds in it, and I was the only single woman and I said I'd take it. So I had a gorgeous time in this cabin. When I went to the officer to arrange it, I said, "Do you suppose I can have a cabin alone?" She said, "Oh, I think so." When I got on the boat the second time I had this same cabin. The only other passengers were a Japanese who spoke English and his wife who didn't

Josephson: And it was a long voyage. I hope you had plenty of books with you.

Rankin: The crew was just lovely. They did everything to entertain me. Of course, I didn't drink coffee and they were always offering me coffee as were sailing along; but they were a nice crew. I liked the captain. I joked about it as my yacht; they didn't like that—I had to quit. [Laughter]

Josephson: That was a freight ship, I take it?

Rankin: A freighter, yes. And it would hold twelve passengers, but we were three. The others got off at Japan and I was the only passenger from there to the Philippines.

Josephson: Then you took another boat?

Rankin: Then I took a plane; I couldn't make the connection.

Josephson: Do you sometimes wish you'd made these travels when you were younger?

Rankin: No. I wouldn't have enjoyed them as I did late

because I could be alone and not be unhappy, and I could arrange things. I had more confidence in arranging my travel schedule.

Josephson: I gather from what you say that you made your interests clear wherever you went. In some cases you went to a specific meeting, like the WIL and so on. But some of these trips were just to climb the mountain, weren't they?

Rankin: Well, no. I had to do something, instead of sitting in Georgia in the winter or sitting in the hotel in Montana or something of that kind. And these trips weren't expensive. Then I enjoyed

talking to the Turkish woman and her baby.

Lobbying for Peace

Josephson: Now, let's go back a little way, if you don't mind, Jeannette. I heard Ted say something last night that sparked my interest. He said something about your first meeting with Libby; is there something special about that?

Rankin: No.

Josephson: Or about your first connections with Libby? What did he first employ you to do?

Rankin: After the Consumers League, there was an organization in New York called the—I don't remember what it was called.

Josephson: Was it the Women's Peace Union.

Rankin: Yes. Cook—wasn't that the name of the woman at the head?

Josephson: I don't know, but I think it was the Women's Peace Union.

Rankin: They were working to amend the Constitution to do away with all war. They employed me to lobby in Congress, but their idea of lobbying and mine was quite different. They had no idea of a constituency

or educating a constituency or of educating a Congressman or anything of that kind. They wanted speeches that you'd give to the Congressmen and get them in the record. Of course, I couldn't do that.

Josephson: I don't see what use it would have been.

Rankin: So use whatever—an insult to the Congressmen. While I was lobbying for them—it was only a few months—the National Education Association was meeting in Atlanta [in the fall of 1929]. You've heard of Katherine Blake?

Josephson: Vaguely.

Rankin: She was in it, but she had a friend—Caroline something—I can't remember her last name—who was from some school in Vermont or something, who was a very dear friend of Katherine Blake's. She invited me to speak to this National Education Association meeting.

I came down to speak to them, and the Georgia Legislature was in session. Dick Russell was the Speaker of the House. He had been to my house to tea and I had known him; he was a young man and I was older. We'd had lots of conversations I told him I'd like to speak to the Legislature on this idea of amending the Constitution to do away with **all** war. He said all right, and we sat on the platform together and I made the speech. [Some members had introduced a resolution to petition Congress to outlaw war.]

I don't remember what I said, but I talked about doing away with war entirely. Then the members asked question, and from the way they asked questions, they seemed so friendly and so understanding that I said to Russell, in a whisper, "Do you think they're going to pass it?" And he said, "If I think so, I'll go down and stop it." [Laughter]

After a while, someone made a motion to send the bill to committee, which, of course, killed it. They didn't kill it; they just sent it to committee. But the House was just about ready to do it.

Josephson: Jeannette, yes, but for the pressures behind them.

Rankin: Later, of course, I didn't think—I never dreamed they would. But the sentiment was there; they were willing to do it, but they weren't allowed to do it. Anyway, they were tricked away from it, don't you see? They didn't know what else to do and they wanted to be polite so they sent it to committee.

Well, I was attacked fearfully by the peace groups in Georgia because I hadn't told them I was going to do it. I was just a renegade. But it didn't do any harm and it did do some good.

Then I spoke to the National Education Association and I went back to Washington. Then, when I quit the Women's Peace Union, I telephoned Libby and said I wished he'd give me a job. He hesitated, but he finally did.

Afterwards, he admitted—I don't remember how he expressed it—that I didn't make demands on him because I'd been in Congress; I wasn't a hoity-toity. I just went in and worked. He was very pleased for a while. Then, every little while I'd express some opinion, and he would just be horrified. He never dreamed. I had any ideas about anything.

I always thought his little plans were so trivial, the things that he wanted. Then, when I got hopeful of the peace movement in Georgia, I found every Congressman friendly and willing to talk about the issues and would have voted for it. But the minute Roosevelt took office, they just turned right around because of his pressure. Not that they had changed their minds, but they didn't dare express themselves without being defeated.

Josephson: There was another question that I wanted to bring up. This came to me from Mary Beard—the Beards cooperated with you, I know, during the thirties. I remember Mary Beard being very indignant because the Jews

were bringing pressure, she claimed, to get the United States into war because of what Hitler was doing to the Jews. Was that opinion shared by Libby and you?

Rankin: No. We didn't feel that the Jews were pressuring us, and we had lots of Jews in our organization. I remember we once had a dinner, and this Jewish woman that I was very fond of stopped me, and we were talking about the problem. I wasn't mad; I was just earnest. And she wasn't mad, but she was so emotional about it that we were trying to adjust our individual relations when somebody came and pulled us apart; they thought we were going to have a fight. I didn't feel emotional, but she did, maybe to protect her people.

Anyway, I didn't feel it and Libby didn't feel it.

Josephson: Libby does intimate something of that sort in his book. Of course, the Jews, I think, moved out of the National Council in the late thirties, didn't they?

Rankin: I don't know whether they did. You see, by that time, the Council didn't have very much money. I was rowing with them because I wanted to work in the districts and they wanted to work right in Congress, you know, to beat out the brains of the men who were voting against it [the Neutrality Act], when you didn't do any good that way.

The Council had a magazine, and one day they were having a discussion about a name for it. For some reason, I had to leave before the discussion was over. While driving along, I thought about what we'd been talking about. I went to a gas station and telephoned that a good name for the magazine would be *Peace Action*. And they named it that, but they **never** gave me credit; they had never thought of it until I told them.

Josephson: It's a very good title. What would you have had the Jews do in Germany?

Rankin: I don't know. There's nothing you can do when you have war. War is wrong and everything that happens is wrong, and there's no way out. The only thing is to **prevent** it. I knew that the English were siding with the Americans to help get Hitler in

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power, because of my experience in the League of Nations, so that I was just furious to think we hadn't stopped Hitler when it was possible to stop him.

Josephson: I couldn't agree with you more. But when Munich came and the English made the last concession they thought their people would allow them to make to Hitler, in England and France—

Rankin: It wasn't a concession; it was to have stopped him.

Josephson: Well, Munich didn't stop him; Munich was the concession that gave him tacit permission to go into Czechoslovakia. When that happened, then, you'll remember, the offensive was taken up by Hitler; he moved into Poland. Then he moved into Norway and into France and so on.

Rankin: I have no opinion about anything they do because I don't want any of it; I want to do away with war as a method of settling disputes. As long as they have war, I haven't anything to say because I have no way of making force and violence right. There's no way you can do it.

The only way you can do it is to start at the bottom and create a new system of settling disputes and create it in the hearts of the people. The only thing is to start with children and people everywhere. We are all human beings and we have to live on this earth and we have to find a way of settling our disputes without force and violence.

The minute someone on the television starts talking about war, I turn it off. I never read about it in the papers. I haven't any time for it. I would much rather pull weeds.

Josephson: Yes, but still it seems to me the important thing would be to do away with the causes of war.

Rankin: No, it isn't the cause that's important, the cause has nothing to do with it. The cause can be settled

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in some other way. The thing is the method of settling. We always have causes for disputes, but we don't have to hit each other to settle them. We can run away with dignity or we can do something else. What they call "causes of war" are always lies. The real cause is that we have a military system that has to exist, and that military system creates disputes, and governments, in order to keep power, cause disputes.

The English, for example, have always divided and ruled. Whenever there was a dispute, their way of settling it (until they got **us** to fight their wars), was to divide and rule.

Josephson: I think I see your point of view more clearly. I think it's going to be an awfully long process.

Rankin: It shouldn't be if people would think and would do something. But not as long as they concentrate on whether it's right to try Calley or not for the My-Lai massacre, instead of saying, "How are we going to get rid of the whole thing?" Now Calley, stupid as he is, said something the other day that was reported; I didn't try to hear it but I did. He said that if he ever got out of this mess, he was going to work against war. He was right in that.

The only thing is the war system and the war in the hearts of the people.

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Childhood in Montana

Josephson: Can you tell me more about the kind of hospitality your family, your parents and your brother were always offering to innumerable people? Did you ever have any time to yourselves?

Rankin: Oh, yes, we had more than we wanted. We're all gregarious, even if we are loners. But we always liked company. We used to have Sunday company when we lived thirty miles from Helena. The last ranch that we lived on [Wellington's] was a hundred and ten miles away, and that was too far to come for dinner. Some people did do it, but not as many as used to come, certainly.

This is interesting now. A woman on a Great Falls paper called me up and she told me who she was. She had been at the ranch when she was a little girl. I knew her father and so on. Here she is now; she's been married and divorced and is now a reporter on a paper. She wrote the best story, I thought, about me, when I was out there, and she interviewed me over the telephone.

Josephson: When was this? Recently?

Rankin: Year before last. Last year I wasn't there at all because of my hip; the year before, I guess it was.

Josephson: Did the same hospitality obtain when you were a little girl at the ranch?

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Rankin: Yes. Mother always wanted company; Father did too. Father not only liked company, but he liked to go visiting. Mother didn't; she wouldn't go places. My father danced. He used to tap-dance, and he used to jump up and clap his feet together twice.

Josephson: Well, he was a Scotsman; of course he knew how to dance!

Rankin: He wasn't born in Scotland; his mother and father were. But he loved to dance. I suppose he loved square dancing but I never saw him at a square dance. That was the thing the pioneers used to have. Father, when he first went out, had a younger brother [Duncan] who either came out with him or came later, and he was a gay person. He was quite a little younger than father—four or fire years.

The families that came to the dances would put the children in blankets away from the dance floor. Then they'd dance and have a good time. This young brother at one time changed some babies—unwrapped two babies and changed them and wrapped them up. When the parents started home, the baby cried, and they discovered that it wasn't their baby and they had to go back. He was a great joker.

Owen Wister—did you ever read *The Virginians* ?—told the story in his novel. But this happened long before the book came out. Whether it was a common practice or not, I don't know. [Laughter]

Josephson: Did you ever go to Canada to visit your grandparents?

Rankin: No. My father took me when I was twelve to see his mother who was living with a daughter in Michigan, and she died shortly after that at eighty-four. But his father had died long before.

I do remember the letters that his father used to write because they were in very small lettering and perfectly beautiful and so nice. But Father had hardly any schooling. He read quite a good deal, and he could solve all our arithmetic problems; the teachers didn't know how he did it. [Laughter] I think he had modern mathematics—the new math. He didn't have much schooling, but he liked people and he liked dancing and he liked doing all that sort of thing. But he didn't do it much as he was

getting older.

Josephson: Speaking of schooling, didn't you go to a one-room school house? What was your first school in Missoula?

Rankin: It was a pretty big school house; it was all the school there was in Missoula. It was just about as far from our house as from here to Wonder's house.

Josephson: Yes. But your mother didn't teach there anymore?

Rankin: No, no. The one-room school where my mother taught was right across the street from the new school house. We used to always point out this cute little building; that was the one-room school. When she taught, the Indians used to come and sit on the fence and look in, but of course they didn't teach them anything.

Josephson: Then you went to the preparatory school attached to the university?

Rankin: It was the beginning of the university. That was all there was of the university, a preparatory school. Then they went on to set up the university, but they had to get a class through the preparatory school to get students for the university.

Josephson: And about the time you finished the preparatory school, the university—the college—had already started classes?

Rankin: Well, they started with the same students that had graduated from the preparatory school. There were a few others there besides—very few.

Josephson: Wasn't the University of Montana first established in Helena?

Rankin: I don't think so.

Josephson: No? First established in Missoula?

Rankin: Yes.

Josephson: Well, Frances Perkins says something very interesting in her oral memoirs. After she went to Mount Holyoke, she took courses at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.

She was so interested in the courses that she said something I thought might have paralleled your experience. She said, "I found that I could **think**. I never realized that I could think by myself." Going to the School of Philanthropy, did you also go up to the Teachers' College for courses?

Rankin: No, we had all our courses there.

Josephson: I wondered if it was only after you got out of college that you really began to be interested in your studies and in independent thinking. It's not your experience?

Rankin: No. I have more memories of thinking on the ranch than I have in any school. I mean, things that I thought then. But I was a very poor student and I didn't enjoy going to school.

Josephson: You went to the University of Washington for a while.

Rankin: After I'd been to the School of Philanthropy, I took a job as a social worker. I gave that up and went to the University of Washington, just to finish out the year, and got interested in some things.

Josephson: I know; the history books all tell that, how you placarded the campus with "Votes for Women" signs and that's how they became interested in you and asked you to join their organization. Yes, I've got that from John Board and from Schaffer too, I think.

Rankin: It was in the *Woman's Journal*. Have you looked at the *Woman's Journal* ?

Josephson: Not yet; do you think I can find copies of it?

Rankin: Oh, yes. I think they have copies of it here [in the

library of the University of Georgia], but I'm not sure.

Josephson: Well, I must try the New York Public Library, which is in such bad repair now. But then I think Frances came from a much more limited, much more conventional background than you did since you were a westerner. Westerners at that period had much larger ideas than easterners.

Rankin: And the way some people talked of western history, as if the pioneers were all the scum of the earth. When I went around the state when I was working for something, I was amazed. Now, for instance, there was one family; the younger generation were very nice. They had a square piano that they'd always had that was brought over by covered wagon. And they had all these cultural things. There were some very good minds among the pioneers.

For instance, there was one family that we knew about—the Bucks. They came from Michigan and they were university people, or college people, or whatever the schools were in Ann Arbor at that time. The oldest son came out and began mining right near one of our ranches, Wellington's ranches.

Later on, two boys came and asked him for a job. This man looked at them and so on, and then they said, "Don't you know us? We're your little brothers." [Laughter]

Josephson: Little brothers?

Rankin: Yes, they'd grown up and they'd come out and he didn't know them. They weren't riff-raff, but they weren't hippies; they didn't fit in at home, don't you know.

But the Civil War was fought in Montana over and over again by individuals.

Josephson: Did many southerners come to Montana?

Rankin: Lots of southerners. One man came up—Sanders; he was a very wonderful man. At the last political speech he made when he was running for office, he couldn't resist going after the southerners, and

he lost the election [laughter].

Josephson: Was that early in the history of Montana?

Rankin: The territorial days. I was born in a territory.

Campaign Tactics

Josephson: You were talking about the cultivated people who came to Montana; I'm sure there were some. But there are lovely stories in the history of woman's suffrage about your campaign for suffrage, about how in covering the state you would hold a meeting after a square dance, or wherever people congregated.

What is that story they tell about you or some of your assistants approaching miners wherever they were at their work, and one of them saying to you, "Do you ladies want the vote? We'll be glad to let you have it," and things like that. Did you ever see that account in the history of woman's suffrage?

Rankin: No. I wondered where people had got these different stories, because they were possible but I'd forgotten them. I did go to mines and talk to the men as they came off. And there was another thing that I did that I thought was very effective; I would go to the Union Hall night after night because there'd be a different local meeting every night. And I would sit and wait and say, "I only want to talk for five minutes if you'll let me," and they'd say, "When we get to a certain place, we'll call you."

The union men would go in and out and in and out, while I was sitting there. Of course, they found out who I was; I didn't tell them, but through curiosity they would find out who I was. Then they'd know that I had waited for all this time to talk to them for five minutes. Usually they asked questions and I talked a little longer.

Josephson: Was this in the suffrage campaign or your first campaign for Congress?

Rankin: I did everything in the suffrage campaign first, and then did it in my own campaign, and in Wellington's campaigns I would sit in the Union Fall until I had a chance to talk.

Most people say, "But the union people wouldn't listen to you." They **always** listened to me, and they'd listen to me now but I never get a chance to talk to the union.

Josephson: They're so bureaucratized now—

Rankin: Well, the rank and file isn't so bad, but we never get to them. Now I have a friend who was head of the strike that they had here at Westinghouse, and he's now in the union and he's working. He's one of my "little boys." But he never gets me a chance to talk.

He says, "I'll arrange it; I'll let you talk." I said, "You don't have to have a big meeting—just a few is all right, but I want to talk to them." But he never does.

Josephson: Don't you feel that labor has taken a bad turn in recent years through being tied up so closely with the military-industrial complex? For example, the story of Boeing and the men fired from Boeing because the SST was voted down.

Rankin: That wasn't because of any ideological thing; It was because they hadn't any jobs.

Josephson: I know. But their jobs are tied to war.

Rankin: Yes, but that wouldn't prevent them from talking about war; that wouldn't prevent them from listening, if they had a chance to listen. They don't have a chance to listen. Nobody that wants something else pays any attention to the union. I never heard of a peace organization going near a

union. The rank and file—I don't mean the top people.

There was a man in Washingon; I've forgotten his name. I think he was secretary of some union local. He had something to do with John Lewis's organization—the coal miners. I tried to get to the unions, and I tried to get to Lewis, and he never could arrange it.

Finally I decided I'd go to Lewis directly. I telephoned and said that I would like to have a talk with him. He said he was busy right then but that he'd call me back. Well, I forgot; I thought that was just the end. But he called me back and he asked me to lunch.

We went to lunch at the Dodge Hotel and in came this man. I think he'd been fired by then but I don't know. I said, "That's the man that wouldn't let me talk to you." [Laughter] Just jokingly. He said, "What did you mean?" I said, "I tried to get him to give me a chance to talk to you."

And here was Lewis—when he said he'd call me back, I forgot it, but he did call me back and made the arrangements to have lunch with him. But these people below were the ones that were stopping me.

Recollections or Missoula, Montana

Josephson: Did you have any childhood accidents that stay in your memory?

Rankin: No, I don't think so. I think I used to faint once in a while, but I think I've always been conscious that I could get attention if something happended to me [Laughter].

Josephson: Aren't we all that way?

Rankin: I expect we are. We don't do it consiously; it's unconscious. But I've always analyzed it that way.

Josephson: Did you really faint?

Rankin: Not very often; once or twice.

Josephson: Your diet was very good and you lived outdoors a great deal.

Rankin: I don't know how good our diet was; we ate what we had.

Josephson: Were you athletic? Were there any games or sports you liked?

Rankin: We played games; I played basketball, and I broke my nose.

Josephson: But no other organized sports? No tennis or—

Rankin: Wellington had a tennis court at Avalanche, but I never played.

Josephson: Ice skating?

Rankin: We didn't have cold enough for ice skating. It would freeze and we'd skate and then it would thaw. And then maybe it would freeze again and maybe it wouldn't. We weren't good skaters and we weren't good swimmers. The water was too cold and the river was too swift. We learned to swim after we were grown. I mean, it wasn't a common thing to teach children to swim then; the water was too cold.

Josephson: Did you roller skate?

Rankin: No, I never did.

Josephson: Did you have board sidewalks?

Rankin: We had a few board sidewalks when we were very young, but I don't remember the sidewalks after that. They had one thing in Helena that was the most amazing thing. They had a roller skate on a flat board or something and then they'd just skate

on one; I don't know what they called them [skateboard].

Josephson: I thought they were very dangerous. I saw little children almost falling under the wheels of cars.

Rankin: I didn't see that, but my! they'd go so fast on the hills in Helena.

Josephson: Was Missoula a town with a lot of hills?

Rankin: You could almost see where the glacier came through in the Ice Age. It was this level, level place. And then the mountains went up on each side everywhere. But Missoula is perfectly flat. And then these high mountains.

Back of our house was a great big grass-covered mountain fifteen hundred feet above the town and it looked just like an elephant. We always called it Jumbo. Everybody could see the shape of the elephant.

Josephson: What's happened to that since? Is it all covered with houses?

Rankin: Oh no, no. It's almost perpendicular. But it's covered with grass. You've heard them talk about the stone mountain in Nevada? Stone Mountain hasn't any real form, like Jumbo, but it's about the same size. It's a granite rock that stands there, the biggest rock anywhere around here; I don't know about the rest of the world. And Borglum started to carve things on it, and he rowed with the local people; they didn't want what he wanted. They've done something about it now. Then he went to South Dakota to Mount Rushmore, and did what they might have had in Nevada.

But we had nothing on Jumbo. There was a mountain across the river, and they called the place between the two mountains Hell Gate. It was just a gate between these two mountains. One was a little higher than the other.

Josephson: Didn't your father build some of the first bridges across the Missoula River?

Rankin: Yes.

Josephson: Were those wooden bridges?

Rankin: Yes. And there was an island and part of the bridge went to the island.

Josephson: He must have learned some engineering, then, somewhere.

Rankin: Well, he worked it out. I don't know how he did it; his mathematics was very good, but how he did it we never could find out.

Josephson: Did you see that bridge when you were a child?

Rankin: Yes, but I don't remember it. I don't know whether I remember it or have just been told so many times where it was. The bridge goes straight across now, instead of to the island and then across.

[Jeannette went on at this point to tell of how she and the other children would go to watch the sawmill in operation although it was expressly forbidden, and watched the birth of a litter of pigs, which they knew their parents would not have approved of.]

Hannah Josephson Interviews Jeannette Rankin—Tape Interview History

TAPE NUMBER I
How World War I Affected the Progressive Movement; Free speech, a broadcasting experience; popular election of senators; multi-member districting; working from the bottom up; Jane Addams; women's liberation
Years in New York—Working for Suffrage and Peace Friends; meeting Frankin D. Roosevelt; Peace Congress of 1919; Mary Beard; Mable Dodge Luhan
Childhood in Montana—Family Attitudes and Influences; Indiana; on the thinking of children; Interest in sewing and fine clothes; trip to New Zealand

TAPE NUMBER II
Some Other Activities for Peace—The Consumers League; Jane Addams; the Jeannette Rankin Brigade; Gundwig and the Danish Polk Schools; Campaign against Carl Vinson; Ernst Gruening
Childhood in Montana—Correcting Schaffer's account
Vote Against World War I
Vote Against World War II

TAPE NUMBER III
Travels in India—Gandhi; Nehru; birth control; other travels
Speech Training
Lobbying in Albany. N.Y. and Washington, D.C.

TAPE NUMBER IV
Campaigning for Congress, 1939-1940
Suffrage Campaigns—Suffrage parade, Washington, D.C., 1913; La Guardia
The Woman Suffrage Amendment in Congress—James Mann; Joe Walsh; other experiences in Congress,

1917-1918; Dr. Mary Walker

TAPE NUMBER V
Russian Trip, 1962
Travels Elsewhere—Turkey; ocean voyages
Lobbying for Peace—Relationships with Libby; Jews and the peace movement; war is no method for settling disputes between nations

TAPE NUMBER VI
Childhood in Montana—Hospitality on the ranch; education; Montana pioneers
Campaign Tactics—Labor unions; John L. Lewis
Recollections of Missoula, Montana

Biography of Malca Chall

Graduated from Reed College in 1942 with a B.A. degree, and from the State University of Iowa in 1943 with an M. A. degree in Political Science.

Wage Rate Analyst with the Twelfth Regional War Labor Board, 1943-1945, specializing in agriculture and services. Research and writing in the New York public relations firm of Edward L. Bernays, 1946-1947, and research and statistics for the Oakland Area Community Chest and Council of Social Agencies 1948-1951.

Active in community affairs as a director and past president of the League of Women Voters of the Hayward Area specializing in state and local government; on county-wide committees in the field of mental health; on election campaign committees for school tax and bond measures, and candidates for school board and state legislature.

Employed in 1967 by the Regional Oral History Office interviewing in fields of agriculture and water resources, Jewish Community history, and women leaders in civic affairs and politics.

Appendix

The Lady From Montana by John C. Board (*Montana*, the magazine of Western History, Volume XVII, No. 3. Summer 1967

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The Lady
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Jeannette Rankin: The Lady from Montana **by Phil Rostad (*Montana Historian*, Vol. 3, No. 1, Autumn, 1972**

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Commitment Knows No Season by Barbara Saville (*Naval Postgraduate School Officer Student's Wives Club Magazine,* Volume 11, No. 8

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Peninsula Profiles

Commitment Knows No Season

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***Across 9 Decades: Jeannette Rankin* (*SRS News*)**

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***Some Questions About Pearl Harbor* (Remarks of Jeannette Rankin in the House of Representatives, Tuesday, December 8, 1942)**

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Brief Biography of Jeannette Rankin

JEANNETTE RANKIN was born 11 June 1880 on a ranch an the outskirts of Missoula, Montana (which became the 41st State in 1889), graduated from the University of Montana in Missoula in 1902 with a B.S. in biology, worked with her parents (cooking for the ranch hands and helping raise the other six children) and did much reading from 1902-08

followed a suggestion of Jane Addams that young women should enter social work and attended the School of Philanthropy (now the Columbia School of Social Work) in NYC during 1908-09

began working with orphaned children in Washington State in 1909, but soon realized that the problems she faced were caused by conditions in society and became increasingly interested in suffrage as a way to make the voice of women effective in politics

worked for suffrage in Washington State until it was won in 1910, then began the campaign for suffrage in Montana and made her first major speech to the State Legislature in Helena in 1911, and established a state-wide organization county-by-county which was instrumental in bringing suffrage to Montana in 1914 ("without the loss of a single life")

agreed with her co-workers that the next step would be to have a woman in the national Congress, campaigned throughout Montana, and was elected to the House in 1916—the first woman in Congress, the first native-born Montanan in Congress, and the first woman elected to a major legislative body in any free country in the history of civilization

cast her first vote in Congress against United States entry into World War I on Good Friday, 6 April 1917, at the end of a week-long special session called by President Wilson

introduced the first bill to grant women citizenship independent of their husbands, and also the first bill recommending subsidy of health care and teaching women hygiene during pregnancy and early maternity

was a founding member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1919, lobbied in Congress for peace between the world wars, and has travelled throughout the world, and especially to India

was elected to Congress a second time in 1940, running on a peace platform, and cast the sole dissenting vote against entry into the war with Japan on 8 December 1941

led the JEANNETTE RANKIN BRIGADE of 5000 women to Washington, D.C., on 15 January, 1968, to protest the wars in Southeast Asia.

DURING 1972 JEANNETTE RANKIN has travelled extensively, advocating the direct election of the President and multiple-member Congressional districts as ways to bring about a participatory democracy which will be more truly representative of the interests of **all** the people and conducive to equality of rights, of opportunity, and of responsiblity, and to the major social graces of peace and freedom

has spoken at Amherst, Barnard, Hampshire, Smith, and Wheelock colleges, the universities of Georgia and Massachusetts, and a number of grade-school classes and church groups

given major addresses at the Georgia Women's Political Caucus (Atlanta), the Onandaga County Women's Political Caucus (Syracuse), the Arkansas Women's Political Caucus (Little Rock), the Constitutional Convention in her native Montana (Helena), and the Southern Women's Conference on Education for Delegate Selection (Nashville)

appeared on the *Larry Angel Show* (Baltimore), *Betty Hughes & Friends* (Philadelphia), the *Dick Cavett Show*, the *David Frost Show*, the *TODAY Show*, *WOMAN* (New York City), *From A to Zenker* (Boston), and numerous short news spots and interviews and radio and TV.

On 12 February at the Eastern Regional Conference in New York City, the NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN established the SUSAN B ANTHONY HALL OF FAME and proclaimed JEANNETTE RANKIN to be "the world's outstanding living feminist."

Jeannette Rankin John Kirkley
Watkinsville, Georgia 30677
404-769-5389

An Afternoon with Jeannette Rankin

Jeannette Rankin lives in modest splendor in Watkinsville, Georgia. The modesty is evident in the small frame house with grey shingles. The splendor is discovered gradually by the visitor, first in the rich profusion of flowers—irises, tulips, and daffodils—surrounding the house, then in the diverse furnishings of the home, which have been gathered and collected by Ms Rankin during her years of travel and adventure, and finally in the variegated and colorful personality of this most interesting lady. A confirmed pacifist and feminist, she lives alone, yet is surrounded by people—a secretary when needed, the Robinson family (who live on the property and keep it up), and a constant stream of visitors, not to mention her prolific correspondence.

The visitor is first greeted by the flowers and then by the three Robinson children on their bicycles, who tell you that Ms Rankin is (or is not) in, and at which door to knock. Stuck in the window of the door is a card saying "Promote Peace" and bearing the symbol of the dove. And in the kitchen one encounters on the wall a quotation from Aeschylus: "In war, truth is the first casualty."

"My first interest is to get rid of war," says Ms. Rankin, but we can't do that until we end military control of our economy and goverment." Though one does not get a lecture during an interview, an integrated system of thought emerges from the variety of comments. The major theme is that war is a vice mankind can no longer afford: it is expensive in terms of time, money, products, and, most importantly, lives. Besides this, it has no use: "War has never settled a dispute and never will."

The content of her mind develops around this central idea. The second theme is that the military runs the country: "Every time we have a war, the military establishment grows stronger." Big war requires big industry: our country practically doubled production during each of the two world wars. Power in our society is founded on money and organization, and these are concentrated in what Eisenhower termed "the military-industrial complex." The power has many manifestations: the money and organization are used to control the nomination and marketing of politicians and, hence, our government and laws; young men are caught up in the machine

and sent off to war; those who do not go to war, and those fortunate enough to return, labor for wages or salaries within the general war economy; much money in education comes from government grants for war-oriented research, etc.

Many persons may concur without reservation that war is a vice while not accepting completely the thesis concerning the nature of our society. In either case, Ms. Rankin's solutions to the problem are of interest.

"The only power is in the people, no matter what the form of government." Ms. Rankin is a confirmed believer in the efficacy of the ballot, and she practices what she preaches. As a leading suffragette during the second decade of this century, she campaigned in her native Montana for extending the franchise to women. Succeeding in this battle, she ran for the House of Representatives and became in 1916 the first woman in Congress. As such, she man the only woman able to cast a vote for woman's suffrage, which passed in the House of Representatives in 1918. She also voted against United States entry into World War I.

Though the strength of our nation resides in our people, the people have in effect abandoned their power, or at least their consciousness of power. To attack and break the control of the military-industrial complex, the people must first become aware that their interests are at stake and are unrequited by the status quo. Then they must organize their energies and pool their resources so that they become a match against the money and organization of the military.

She believes women have a unique contribution to make to our society because their traditional role of staying in the home and raising and educating their children has allowed them to develop habits of personality and temperament men often lose in the pursuit of material ends. Thus she agrees with Ramsey Clark that "if half the members of Congress were women, we would not be at war today."

Forging these ideas into action, the "Jeannette Rankin Brigade to Washington" was organized. In the spring of 1968, five thousand women marched with Ms. Rankin from the White House to the Capitol to protest the war in Viet Nam. At the end of this march, Rankin and a few others were allowed to go inside the Capitol to present a peace petition to House Speaker John McCormack and Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield. Ms Rankin told Mansfield, "We should bring the boys home immediately." When asked how this could be done, she responded straightforwardly, "By planes and ships."

True to her pacifist nature, Jeannette Rankin ran for Congress a second time just prior to World War II and, once elected, was able to cast the only dissenting vote against entry into what she regards as "Mr Roosevelt's war."

Currently she is espousing the direct election of the President by popular majority. Yet this idea is not a new one for her, for she advocated direct election in a speech at Carnegie Hall in February of 1917. Today the concept has developed into that of the preferential vote. There would be a list of candidates from which to choose and the voter would list his preferences from first to last; computers would tabulate the votes. This idea was first seriously promulgated by members of both parties during the conventions of 1968, and it has the distinct advantage over our present system of giving more weight to the general sympathies of the public, for a man would win not only according to the number of "first choice" votes he gets, but also according to the general attitude of the people towards him as expressed in the "other choice" preferences.

But whereas the chief advantage of direct election is the immediate expression of the will of the people, the special advantage of the system of preferential voting in a direct election is that it allows the people a wider choice of candidates. "You can't have progress without choice, and American voters today get no choice. We have two-of-a-kind with different labels—Republican-Democrat, conservative-liberal, Nixon-Humphrey but they are exactly alike." Some system of selecting "major" or "serious" candidates could be devised, and this

would eliminate the manipulation of the nominating conventions and encourage voters to consider the man and the issues rather than what are now largely vacuous party labels. Ms Rankin is not sanguine about the prospects for international peace through theUnited Nations. "The UN is controlled by countries with great military interests and expenditures—The United States, Britain, France, China, and Russia. You can't outlaw war and prepare for it at the same time."

She lays greater emphasis on developing human understanding and relations and on concentrating on internal problems "You can't shoot an ideology: the only way to control communism is to have a better system at home. We haven't taken care of our children. We haven't educated our people. We haven't done the things necessary to make a happy nation." We must work together to raise not only the general standards of living, for much of our crime comes from poverty, but also "the quality of the people—of their minds," for a free, intelligent, and sensitive people would not allow the toxic conditions in our society to continue.

"The quickest way to promote world peace is total unilateral disarmament," says Ms Rankin, "and though immediate disarmament is not possible for economic reasons, we could begin at once and set a reasonable timetable of, say, three to five years, for conversion of war industry to peacetime uses and the resulting shifts of jobs and labor."

The strong sentiment for disarmament after World War II fell prey to negotiations and the kind of discussion and argument which goes on in the United Nations. But this is an adversary process and, hence, is inimical to the very ends it espouses. A proper model for comparison is the Supreme Court of the United States. It makes final decisions on vital questions touching every aspect of our lives, including the function of the federal and state governments, yet it has no member of physical coercion to effectuate or enforce its decisions. But its rulings are followed. Why? Because of public opinion and a general respect for the law. Here again the power resides in the people; but mere laws and mere force would not be able to save a lawless people from themselves.

Asked about the practical political problems of unilateral disarmament, Ms Rankin stated she believes the fear is illusory. In the first place, the American people are immune to ideological or cultural attack from the communist nations. Secondly, our economy would be strengthened rather them weakened as we turned our production over more and more to desirable and usable goods. But thirdly, and most crucially, she believes that America is also immune to military takeover. "A foreign invader could not win a guerilla war fighting us on our own soil, a lesson we should remember from our own revolutionary history and see in reverse in our bitter experience in Viet Nam." Furthermore, the governments of Russia or China would be deterred from direct nuclear attack because of general undesirable consequences and from other forms of military attack "by public opinion and sentiment among their own peoples as well as within the larger community of nations."

The moral impact of unilateral disarmament by the United States would be tremendous and would not only restore our faltering image abroad, but also establish us firmly as a leader among nations. And the practical economic consequences would be momentous. Other countries would follow suit and use their resources for useful agricultural and industrial development. "The people of Russia and China would not let their governments spend money on arms if there were no enemy—and we are their enemy." The nations of the world could devote resources previously devoted to the military use of nuclear energy towards developing peaceful uses.

Under conditions of the cold war and the arms race, our credibility as a peaceful nation is undermined abroad by our actions, just as the protestations of the Russians are not believed by us. Some nations regard us as an aggressor nation, and others are suspicious. poor and underdeveloped nations squander their scant resources to maintain a show of force. Furthermore, the continued development and proliferation of arms in the United

States compounds the problems internationally, for "we get rid of our outmoded weapons by arming smaller nations. We have a law against selling arms abroad, so we give them away, and our discrimination in giving fosters additional hostility and suspicion of our motives."

Asked whether she supports what is now called "Women's Liberation," Ms Rankin said, "Women have no liberty because men have no liberty. When I went to school, all the boys were going to step into their father's businesses. Today, every man has a job, and no man with a job is free—he does what is required of him." Hers is a broad, humanitarian concept: "You can't have freedom for anybody in a society unless you have freedom for everybody." And this applies for minorities also. As Lincoln said, "If you want to keep a man in the gutter, you have to keep standing on him." Neither master nor slave is free.

Many of the particular problems of women result from the materialistic values and "crazy money system" in our country. "Most women would rather take care of their own homes and children, but the system of wages, inflation, and taxes is such that many must work," and Day Care Centers would be a help for them. "Women have much to contribute to our society because of the attitudes home life has developed in them, yet many of the things women are striving for today are personal matters which can only be resolved within a context of personal relationships."

There was a parting question, "What should young people do today?" At once she responded, "Organize." The youth movement or so-called counter culture "Is against hypocrisy, and this is fine. Hypocrisy is saying one thing and doing and other. But many of the young people today have a different vice, which is saying much and doing little." Organization is needed to formulate and promulgate a concrete program—to give focus to ideas, to elicit support from other groups, including women and the ethnic minorities, and to increase political efficacy.

The warm April sun had set long since, and what had begun as a mere interview had become much more, through the good graces of this charming lady—a meeting of the minds, a conversation between personalities. The intensity of the questioning over, a visitor feels free to notice the brass bowls and pictures of dancers from India, the paintings of the free Himalayas and of scenes from Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks, the spreads and carpets from Mexico, Africa, and the Orient.

And there lingers the impression, as one steps out into the fragrant Georgia night, that the spirit of man is expressed not only in his ideas and words, but also in the beauty of the things he creates, his love of places and adventure, and his curiosity about his neighbor.

John Harris Kirkley

Jeannette Rankin: Why I Voted Against War

My father, John Rankin, born Canadian, came to Montana when it was still a territory and settled in Missoula as a builder—architect, logger, sawyer, carpenter. Mother, Olive Pickering, left the relative security of her New Hampshire home and travelled west to become the second school teacher in Missoula. I was born in 1880, the first of seven siblings—Jeannette, Philena, Hattie, Wellington, Mary, Grace, and Edna.

There was no inequality of work or affection on the frontier, but men and women performed different tasks: father built our house, mother took care of it and raised the children, in a world without radio or television, we had to be resourceful in our play, but also responsible about the house, especially since there were so many of us. It was only natural for the girls to learn to clean, bake, sew, cook, and care for the animals. I remember making a bandage for Shep's foot after he got caught in a trap, swing up a horse torn by barbed wire, and

learning how to operate the sawmill, We walked to school (when the snow wasn't too deep) and rode to church (when the blizzard wasn't too severe), but much of our education came just from doing things at home and absorbing the conversations of our parents.

The frontier was not an easy place to live, but a sense of stability and right-dealing in society arose from the people themselves, from the common need for certainty. Father bought a gun, but didn't need to carry it: he treated others honestly and fairly, and they respected him and his work. But where the law is not written into the hearts and minds of **all** the people, good government is a blessing, and I remember how excited we were when Montana became the 41st State in 1889.

Two stories from childhood have shaped my thinking about the stupidity and cruelty of force and the power of non-violence. A tribe of Indians, making the seasonal move to their hunting grounds, were stopped by soldiers who demanded their rifles. The Indians needed their guns to hunt, but the soldiers were adamant, so the Indians broke camp at night and escaped, but were eventually caught and massacred—all of them. It didn't make sense.

On another occasion, a bond of Indian warriors, understandably vexed by similar military behavior, stopped a family journeying to Montana by wagon train from the east, The mother, sensing the tension, took her baby and handed him to the Chief. The Indians were surprised, curious at this strange creature, the first white infant they had seen. But they understood what the mother had done in delivering to their hands her greatest treasure. They returned the baby, and rode away.

Philena, died when she was twelve, but the rest of us graduated from the University of Montana in our native Missoula, I graduated in 1902 and spent the next six years at home, cooking for the ranch hands, helping Mother raise the younger children, teaching school, and doing much reading. It was during these years that a change of direction was taking place in my life.

Jane Addams was suggesting that young women might take a different course from the ordinary, pointing out that many people, single and married, needed special help and care to bring them to creative and productive living, and that many children in the world lacked the nourishment of a secure home and family. I followed her suggestion and entered the New York School of Philanthropy (now the Columbia School of Social work) in 1908.

After a year of study, I went to Washington State to work with orphaned children. But now another change came as I began to understand that even though these children needed help immediately, the root causes of their problems lay in areas (poverty, education, war) controlled by government. I left social work for suffrage.

At first I thought the word "men" in "all men are created equal" meant "people" and that women need only ask for the vote to get it. This wasn't true: we had to ask, insist, work, persist. I was sent to Ballard and worked for two days to get a meeting place, distribute leaflets, put up posters: and seven people came to listen and talk. I felt embarrassed and defeated, but was sent to other places, and suffrage came to Washington in 1910. It was only later that I could confess my early frustration to others, but when I did, one of the Seattle women said,"After we saw what you could **do Ballard**, we **knew** we could use you."

I campaigned for suffrage throughout the United States and learned that county-by-county, community-by-community organization is necessary for social change, especially in a democracy where the people **are** the government, This principle was applied in my native state, and in 1914 the men of Montana voluntarily gave up half their political power to women—without the loss of a single life!

The suffrage campaign created my abiding faith in the power of free peoples to determine the course of their lives: our Constitution provides the blueprint for a just and well-ordered society, a representative government,

a truly participatory democracy, in which all the people are concerned, informed, and active. Sovereign power is vested in the people, and suffrage taught me that our citizens can shape the course of history through legitimate, non-violent methods.

The next step was to have a woman in Congress: we reasoned that the men would find it difficult to vote against the women in their home states when a woman was sitting with them making laws. Montana's two Representatives were elected at-large, so the people could vote for both a man and a woman—and they did: John Evans and I were elected. Suffrage passed in the House of Representatives for the first time when I was there in 1918, passed in both Houses the next year, and the Constitution was amended in 1920.

But though I had campaigned on a suffrage platform, this phase of my career was already cresting and another was coming on. For this was 1916, Woodrow Wilson had been elected for a second term, war had already broken out in Europe, and our country was soon to be confronted with the crucial issue of this century—the necessity of finding an alternative to war.

On Monday, April 2, 1917, Congress convened in special session, called to the Capital by President Wilson to decide whether the power of this great nation should be given to the force of arms and killing.

There was a vast groundswell of feeling throughout our land, as all our people brought their minds to focus on this single question. Our passion for the ideal reached a breaking point: we felt secure in our democracy and freedom at home, but some felt our ideal threatened abroad by the aggression of others. Against the horror and destruction of war were balanced our love for humanity and peace. Is it possible—practically, logically, morally—to wage war for peace? to use the instruments of violence for humanitarian ends? to kill for love?

On Wednesday the Senate voted to go to war, On Thursday the issue came to the House. The debate continued through the night and into the early morning of Good Friday, April 6, 1917. I had lobbied in Congress for suffrage and know I could pass the first roll call. The tension was acute, As my name rang out the second time, I could sense the eyes of my fellow legislators and of the people packing the galleries concentrated an me. I rose and said, "I want to stand by my country, but I cannot vote for war. I vote NO."

I knew it would be a popular war. I knew I would not be re-elected. I had been told that a "NO" vote might set back the cause of suffrage.

But this was not a question of personalities or self-interest in any narrow sense. One does not make a moral decision on the basis of expediency: you do what is right, not because of foreseeable consequences, but because it is right. I voted my conscience. And as I did so, I was conscious of my position: this was the first time in the history of civilization that a woman had been elected to a major legislative body in a free country—I was a symbol and a representative, not only of women in Montana or in the United States, but of women in all nations and ages.

We did not labor in suffrage just to bring the vote to women, but to allow women to express their opinions and become effective in government. Men and women are like right and left hands: it doesn't make sense not to use both.

I believe women have something special to contribute to the progress of civilization: the belief in the power of a sustained passion for the ideal. During the slow time of pregnancy and the long years of maternity, a mother experiences what it means to care daily for the gradual growth and maturing of her beloved children, Her life is given for her children, not by her death, but by her living, and not only in her working and caring day by day, but also in her looking always to the future, towards the fulfillment of her ideal.

A person can be shot, but an idea cannot. Killing is the antithesis of life and negates the very possibility of growing into fullness. It is the same passion for the ideal, which a mother expresses in her love for her children, which we must achieve and maintain if we want our ideals to mature and flourish in society: self-control, compassion, honesty, integrity, and love must be conceived in our minds, incarnated through our daily actions and living, and patiently sustained in adversity. A dead enemy cannot become our friend. And—just as certainly—the ideal dies within us when we violate it.

I was thirty-six when I cast my vote, and I have not changed my mind. During these past fifty-five years, from 1917 to 1972, 1 have worked steadily for the cause of world peace: I have lobbied in Congress, worked with the National Council for Prevention of War, and travelled throughout the world to study the effects of the dominance of colonial powers on other peoples. I was re-elected to Congress in 1940 on a peace platform and was the only member of Congress to vote against American entry into the war with Japan in 1968 I led the "Jeannette Rankin Brigade" (the military image was not my choice) of five thousand women to Washington, D. C., to protest the wars in Southeast Asia. Today I am working for the direct preferential election of the President, multiple-member Congressional districts, and increased awareness on the part of all persons of their responsibility for government.

Governments make war, and it is only by working through governments that we can end war. Claude Kitchener has said, "It takes neither moral nor physical courage to declare a war for others to fight." Sovereign power rests in the people. We must end violence in our own hearts and in our dealings with each other: and then we can resolve our domestic problems and will have found an alternative to war.

Jeannette Rankin John Kirkley
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Letter to the Editor about Atlanta Peace March, November 9, 1971

Tuesday 9 November

To the Editor:

I was delighted that you gave Atlanta's November & Peace March front page coverage and printed my statement that "governments make war and we have to work through governments to prevent war."

Little children don't make wars. Mothers don't make wars. Man in business, the professions, and private life don't make wars. But governments do. And it is only by becoming concerned, informed and active citizens that each of us can work together to prevent wars.

We must use our voting power to elect men dedicated to peace—and this means the nonviolent solution of all issues and disputes, whether at home or abroad. Fighting and violence, whether with fists, bullets or nuclear weapons, only make matters worse and create the illusion that men and nations are separate.

In reality, all men everywhere are brothers and we must work together through our various governments to stop wars and promote our common ends. We all want adequate food, clothing, housing, medical care, education, equal justice under law, and a job which allows us to develop and express our talents while earning a living.

Our nation has now followed Georgia's example in extending the right to vote to our young citizens. We voters of different generations must see our common interests and elect representatives committed to the nonviolent settlement of disputes. And this holds at every level from sheriff end city council through state legislators and

governor to our President and national congressmen.

I voted against entry into both World Wars and am happy to see so many people today who are co-operating for peace. And I would be happy to speak to any such group about my own experience both in and out of Congress.

Sincerely Yours

[signed Jeannette Rankin]

Jeannette Rankin
Watkinsville, Georgia (769-5389)
(Printed in the *Athens Banner-Herald*, 11/11/71; *Athens Daily News*, 11/12/7.)

Letter to Members of the Georgia Legislature Espousing Multiple-Member Congressional Districts, October 1971

Jeannette Rankin
Watkinsville, Georgia 30677
(404-769-5389) October 1971
The Senate
The House of Representatives
State Capitol
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Sirs:

I enjoyed very much attending the meetings of Georgia's legislature and listening to the debates concerning Congressional reapportionment.

By staying in Atlanta on October 4th, 5th, and 6th, I heard the major portions of the argument and talked at some length with several members of both houses.

Of course, what has now been done will have to do us for a while, but I am disappointed I was unable to converse with each of you personally and marshall more effective arguments for **multiple** -member districts.

Under the current arrangement, there are ten Congressional districts in Georgia with a single member elected from each. This has the disadvantage that, after the voting is complete, only a single man and a single set of ideas represents each district.

With multiple-member districts, each voter could elect at least two representatives and differing points of view could find a vote in Congress, since persons with differing backgrounds and expertise could both be elected.

It has been my experience that women are reluctant to participate in the balloting if they feel their ideas and perspective are not represented. When I ran for Congress from Montana in 1916, the two representatives were elected at large, so that everyone—men as well as women—could vote for **both** a man and a woman, and consequently John Evans and I were both elected.

What holds for women holds also for minority groups, whether the group be racial, economic, political, or whatever: if they feel their needs will find effective voice through the ballot, they seek expression through our democratic processes, thus avoiding violence while helping actualize our American ideals of participatory democracy and universal franchise.

To my mind, much time was wasted in the Georgia legislature concerning where precisely to draw the lines for the ten districts, and such a system is always subject to the accusation of gerrymandering and the vice of splitting cities and counties.

But if Georgia were simply divided into two districts, with five representatives from each, the legislating would be simplified and the people would each have five representatives rather than one.

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The notion that particular geographical areas of the state need representation in the **national** Congress is old-fashioned. When our country was first formed, we were a private people, naturally and happily concerned with local interests. But now, the interests of our state are increasingly interdependent with the interests of the nation, and, indeed, the entire world.

Purely local interests are represented, as they should be, in the State Legislature. But the political, economic, and educational interests of Georgia must be represented nationally, and this must be done by men of large vision who understand that the individual interests of Georgia's citizens and communities are coincident with the interests of mankind.

Some candidate might complain that it would cost him too much time, trouble, and money to campaign over a larger area—but the point is that his travels would broaden his experience and understanding of the people as a whole.

Besides, as the mass media are increasingly used for campaigning, time is saved and communications are broadened. The "personal touch" can be kept by personal appearances—I campaigned throughout Montana, which is three times as large as Georgia, and visited all but two of the fifty-odd counties.

Several members of your legislature have argued that it is now unlawful for a state to have multiple-member Congressional districts. But there is no outrage to our Constitution or to the judicial maxim of "one man—one vote" if each voter's ballot has the same weight.

Georgia could be divided (a) into ten districts with a single representative from each district, as it is now (b) five districts with two representatives from each (c) two districts with five representatives from each, or (d) it could be a single voting unit with all ten representatives elected at large—and in every case, if the districts had equal population, the voting of each citizen would have the same political weight.

But the national Congress, acting within its Constitutional authority, has made a law requiring all states to choose Congressional representatives from single-member districts. This statutory law, while Constitutionally valid, has three severe drawbacks.

First, it removes from the individual states the freedom to determine how their Congressional representatives are to be chosen. I believe the states should have this choice within broad limits assuring voting equality to individual citizens

Second, the problems the Georgia legislature had in determining the present plan, the accusation of gerrymandering, the unfortunate dividing of cities and counties, and the struggle currently arising in the courts through law suits are all the direct results of the "single-member districts" requirement; and all might well be avoided by multiple-member districts.

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Third, under the current arrangement, each voter has only one choice, whereas under an arrangement by multiple-member districts, he would have more than one: he could vote for a man **and** a woman, a black **and**

a white, an expert on education **and** an expert on local economic interests.

With multiple-member districts, the busy legislator would have less difficulty in determining the districts (for larger districts mean fewer districts); the individual citizen would have greater freedom of choice and a wider representation of his varied interests; and our American ideals of participatory democracy and universal franchise would be more nearly realized as more of our people began to feel that their voices could indeed be heard and their ballots made effective at the national level.

But for Georgia to have multiple-member districts, either (1) the national Congress would have to exercise its Constitutional power to revise the confining and limiting law it has made and return to the states their freedom of choice, or (2) Georgia would have to act consciously to defy Congress, pass a state law allowing multiple-member districts, and then become a test case in the federal courts.

Let me say again how much I enjoyed attending your sessions and how much I look forward to our continuing correspondence.

Any reactions or suggestions you have would be welcome, for I intend to publish a brochure on this issue for national distribution.

Sincerely yours

[signed Jeannette Rankin]

Jeannette Rankin Jeannette Rankin:John Kirkley

How to Write to Your Congressman

by Jeannette Rankin

The first lesson I learned in Congress was that the members of Congress are more concerned with their re-election than any issue that could come up—even WAR.

Re-election depends on votes, so anyone who can influence voters is of great importance to a Congressman. If you let your Representatives and Senators know you can influence more votes than your own, it win make a difference in their attitude—and in the attitude of the people in their offices who read the mail!

When I was campaigning in Butte, Montana, a little boy jumped up an the running-board of my car and said, "There are five votes in my family." He was after same campaign posters and buttons, and I gave him all he wanted.

The first thing he had done was got my attention, and you've got to do the same thing. It's not so easy when you're writing a letter, but it can be done. Find out something good about your Congressman, and begin your letter with genuine thanks and a compliment

The next thing to do is ask him a question: "How much of our military budget goes into Southeast Asia?" "Do you support the direct preferential election of the President?" "Would multiple-member Congressional districts give better representation?" Ask a general question, and be sure not to give your own opinion—he's either not interested, or he's heard it before—but ask for his opinion.

Your reply will be a short form letter, written by someone in the Congressman's office. It will read something like this: "I was glad to got your letter and an glad to take your suggestions into consideration. I hope to hear from you again."

Take him at his word—and write again! Thank him for his reply and apologize for taking up his valuable time. Tell him you know he must be conscious of the serious conditions in the countr. And then say, "But you did not answer my question."

The secret is, you don't ask the question again, you just refer to it. The aid or secretary will have to look it up by finding your first letter, You still won't get a definite answer to your question, but this time the reply will be a longer form letter.

Be patient, keep your temper, and write again. Thank him for the reply, apologize for disturbing him, and add that he still has not answered your question.

Even at this point, your Congressman may not see your letter. But keep it up, and eventually your persistence will be brought to his attention. After you've written five or six letters, you'll got a personal, handwritten reply from him.

You have convinced him you're a worker and cannot be ignored, and he'll be interested in you, because he thinks you might work for him. But you should also convince him that you can influence or control more votes than your own, Remember that little boy in Butte, Montana? He told so there were five votes in his family, so I gave him all the buttons he wanted.

The way to do this with your Congressman is to write him on the stationery of same group or organization. If you don't have a club, form me. It's best to have the

name of your community in the title and to make it non-partisan. In Watkinsville, Georgia, we organized a group and named ourselves "Oconee County Citizens for a Participatory Democracy."

Get your neighbors involved, elect officers and heads of committees (such as the Membership Committee), and list these names on your letterhead. You can easily list six or eight names, including some prominent people in your area, in this way, your Congressman will know you're not alone, and, he will also know that a little effort and a single letter on his part may influence a number of votes.

Always write the most polite and honest letter you can. Your patience and persistence are necessary to "break the ice" and open the channels of communication. After this he will pay more attention to your letters. And perhaps he'll even become interested in your opinions.

Another suggestion for getting action from your Congressman is to get your group together and divide the charges on a person-to-person telephone call. Tell him you're at a party, discussing whether we should got out of the Vietnam war, and you decided to call and ask his opinion. Don't tell him what you think, but use this opportunity to draw him out. And then write a letter, mentioning the call and occasion, and thanking him for his consideration.

Whenever you are planning a meeting of your organization, write and invite him to come and speak to the group or send someone to represent him. If you are having a dinner or luncheon or tea, list your Congressman as an invited guest—and keep your local newspapers informed of your activities and guest list!

You don't have to worry too much about his coming, because he probably won't make it. But write and tell him you missed him and that you hope he will be able to come next time, After a while, you may arrange a meeting when you know he's going to be in town. And if he does come, be prepared for him!

Give the relationship time to grow. At first, your Representatives and Senators will not be at all interested in what you think. But your insistence on getting answers to your questions will get their attention, and your use of letterhead stationery. phone calls, and invitations will convince them that you must be reckoned with because you influence votes.

Keep your Congressmen informed of activities in the community without giving a clue to your own thinking an public issues. You will be doing them a service, and when they realize this, they may begin asking for your ideas and suggestions.

Always treat your Congressman as members of your family, because they represent you, and you are responsible for them.

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Occonee County Neighborhood Committee for a Participartory Democracy

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Case for a Direct Preferential Vote for President by Jeannette Rankin

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Newspaper Clippings—1972, 1973

Jeanette Rankin at 91: She Made The First Demands

Source unknown

At 91, Jeannette Rankin is the feminists' new heroine

Life, March 3, 1972

Jeannette Rankin: As Outspoken as Ever ; Capital Protest ; Except from Herb Caen column


Jeannette Rankin: As Outspoken as Ever

Capitol Protests

San Francisco Chronicle, May 9, 1972; November 12, 1972; May 11, 1972

Jeannette Rankin's causes create ripples


Jeannette Rankin's causes create ripples

Arkansas Democrat, Friday, May 12, 1972

Jeannette Rankin Meets Her 'Crush'—Mr. Nadar


Jeannette Rankin Meets Her 'Crush' – Mr. Nader

The Evening Star and *Daily News*, Washington, D.C., Saturday, September 2, 1972

Jeanette Rankin—Pioneer Congresswoman, At 92 She's Still Seeking Reforms **by Ralph Nadar**


At 92 She's Still Seeking Reforms

In the Public Interest

The Capital Times, Monday, September 11, 1972

Voted Against U. S. Involvement in Both World Wars:Jeanette Rankin, 1st Woman in Congress, Dies


Jeanette Rankin, 1st Woman in Congress, Dies

Washington Post, Sunday, May 20, 1972

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In the Public Interest—Jeannette Rankin

by Ralph Nadar

THE NEW REPUBLIC FEATURE SYNDICATE Number 33, September 11, 1972)

WASHINGTON—A few weeks ago we sent a questionnaire to former members of the Senate and House of Representatives, as part of our year-long study of Congress. The most spirited and fundamental response came from Jeannette Rankin, born in 1880 in Missoula, Montana and the first woman ever elected to the Congress.

Indomitable and innovative as always, the great fighter for women's suffrage before 90 percent of today's Americans were born, was not satisfied with detailed answers to our questions. She wanted to come to Washington from her California home to talk to us and make her points more forcefully. She did come for a day and we're all younger as a result.

She wasted no time in telling a crowded room of students working on the Congress study that there can be no real improvement in Congress without changing the system by which the legislators are elected. The system which she has been advocating for over half a century is the multi-member district reform.

Simply put, this reform would reduce the number of Congressional districts in a state for example, New York currently with 41 districts would be reduced to about six district. The 41 Representatives would run from these six districts, thus giving the voters several members of Congress to elect from their own district. In this manner, she reasons, the voters could elect members to Congress who represent the diversity of the population and who will overcome the barriers against women, minorities and younger adults that have made that legislature a bastion of older white males.

With multi-member districts, determined by the individual states, the top, say, five or six candidates (fewer in the smaller states) would be elected from the entire list of those running for Congress in that district. Consequently, as little as 20 percent of

the vote could elect a member of Congress, leading, in her judgment, to a diversity of representation for many kinds of talents, backgrounds and viewpoints.

Ms. Rankin speaks from experience. When she was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1916 from Montana, it was because Montana ran the two Congressional offices at large (or statewide) which in effect is a multi-member district. Since women obtained the right to vote in Montana two years previously, it gave them the opportunity to elect the first woman to Congress.

Will Congress ever favor multi-member districts? She says no, but the "ordinary people" she has explained the idea to wherever she travels around the country, from Georgia to California, understand it readily and most favor its adoption. Over and over again, she repeats that the way to get things changed is "to go to the people."

To permit ideals and conviction fuller play in the Congress, she has long pushed for electronic voting so members can vote on different parts of a bill and not have to "trade-off" good parts against bad parts of any legislation.

Perhaps even more striking than her suggestions for Congressional reform is the combination of her idealism with a practical sense of citizenship responsibility and action in a democracy. Her exhortations to women are to "assume the responsibility of government." Put that way, freedom and peace (she is an unyielding pacifist) are achieved only through the assumption of "duty" or "responsibility" by people to "practice democracy."

Her stamina behind these ideas and ideals is absolutely staggering. What an example for millions of young people today whose commitment to a better society is so temporary and pockmarked by becoming disillusioned or discouraged. For the students in their early twenties, listening to her talk that day, a comparable commitment on their part would extend until the year 2042!

Ms. Rankin rarely talked about the past, unless asked. She is a future directed person who throws herself into her cause. "A 40 hour a week job isn't worth doing," she says. "I'm a bit more frustrated now, however; I worked for suffrage for 10 years, and got it. I've worked for peace for 55 years, and haven't come close."

If aging is the erosion of one's ideals, then Jeannette Rankin is young forever. "I'm 92," she observed, "and I'm thinking about running again—just to have someone to vote for.

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