

Jeannette Rankin:
Speaking Out to Stand Up for Peace, Humanity, and the Ballot

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Individual Website

I have been interested in government for a while now so I wanted my topic to be about barriers broken in Congress. I was then further interested in women in the government when I came across Jeannette Rankin and how she was the first female congresswoman as well as a suffragist and pacifist. I learned how influential she was throughout her entire life, not just at one moment and I decided I wanted to look deeper into what she did, and how it all happened.

I started my research from the newseumed.org site that gave me lots of primary resources like pictures and newspapers from the era. I did a general search on Google to find other secondary sources like the history.com article and the various articles I got from the U.S House of Representatives page. In addition to just a quick search that got me background information on Jeannette Rankin, I looked into two different books covering her and her story; “Jeannette Rankin; America’s Conscience” by Norma Smith and “Jeannette Rankin; America’s First Congresswoman” by Peter Aronson. I also was able to conduct a phone interview with Joan Hoff, a research professor at Montana State University and a Jeannette Rankin expert. She was able to give me many great resources along with information that she had found within her research. With all of these ways that I conducted my research, I was able to get a lot of quality information about Jeannette Rankin and her legacy within Congress.

I decided to do an individual website because of my skills with technology and interest in making a website for the first time. With the many photos and video clips I was able to find, I figured that a website would be a good way to showcase all of the information I learned about Jeannette Rankin. The interactive abilities of a website were also a contributor to choosing a website as I knew it would add many layers to my research and help strengthen my argument.

Jeannette Rankin broke many barriers throughout her lifetime including ones for suffrage, pacifism, and women in government. Jeannette Rankin persevered through all of the struggles of a woman in politics and was able to break the gender barrier in Congress when she became the first woman in the House of Representatives. Before she was even elected, she was pushing at the women's suffrage barrier. She campaigned through 15 states to give women the right to vote, having success with many of them including her hometown state Montana. Along with her 15 state campaign, she worked hard within Congress to further the rights of women with the new Committee on Women's Rights and her involvement in bills that influenced the 19th Amendment. She also broke barriers for peace, being the only person to vote against both World Wars.