

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Jeannette Rankin Residence

AND/OR COMMON Wellington D. Rankin Ranch

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER Avalanche Gulch, about 30 miles due east of Helena and 2½  
miles northeast of the Helena-Diamond

CITY, TOWN City Road. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE VICINITY OF COUNTY CODE  
Montana 30 Broadwater 007

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

| CATEGORY  | OWNERSHIP                                   | STATUS  | PRESENT USE   |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT               | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC             | <input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED      | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE              | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH               | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS           | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE                   | <b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>                   | <b>ACCESSIBLE</b>                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT                 | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC         |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED   | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED          | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION     |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> NO                         | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:               |

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Wellington D. Rankin Estate

STREET & NUMBER P.O. Box 615

CITY, TOWN Helena VICINITY OF STATE Montana

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Clerk and Recorder's Office

STREET & NUMBER Broadwater County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN Townsend STATE Montana

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE None

DATE  FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

During her lifetime, Jeannette Rankin had numerous residences in Montana and elsewhere throughout the United States, but she lived in most of them only a few years. She made this ranch her home longer than any other place. From the time that her wealthy brother Wellington purchased it in 1923 until 1956, Jeannette passed almost all her summers here. In fact, she spent more time here than did Wellington, who owned numerous ranches in Montana and who often left the management of this one to Jeannette. Today the historic area covers about 90 of the original 2,000 acres, and the ranch itself includes more than 14,000 acres. The Rankin family has maintained ownership.

Believed erected about 1923 by Dan Flouree from whom Wellington bought the ranch that same year, the ranchhouse is a simple, one-story, gable-roofed, white-painted frame dwelling. It consists of an approximately 25-foot-square main block, a similar gable-roofed wing off the right side, a 30-foot-long, gable-roofed ell in the rear, and a small, enclosed, gable-roofed porch on the left side. The wing and possibly the ell were added in the 1930's. A full-length porch sheltered by the overhang of the roof slope graces the front facade of the house and is supported by four piers of uncoursed fieldstone and partially enclosed by a high, similarly constructed railing. Another full-length porch is created by the overhang of the roof across the end of the three-bay-wide right or south wing. This gallery is fully open and supported by four square, wooden columns. There is a similar but smaller porch underneath the roof of the northeast corner of the rear ell. At one time either a coal or a wood-burning furnace heated the house from the poured-concrete, partial basement, and the smoke thus created apparently exited through a brick chimney that still pierces the roof of the rear ell. The house has two fireplaces also. These are served by fieldstone chimneys. One stands just outside the north gable end of the main block, and the other rests just inside the opposite gable end. Most of the windows in the ranchhouse are one-over-one, double hung sash with simple, wood facings and sills. On each side of the south wing, there is a rectangular, shed-roofed bay with mullion six-over-six sash openings.

The house has five entrances. Each of the four porches provides entry through a single door, while a double, glass-paneled door allows admittance at the northeast corner of the main block. Inside, the main block consists of a front parlor, and an informal, rear dining-sitting room. From the right of the parlor, a corridor leads through the south wing to the south porch. To the right of the corridor are two bedrooms--the first of which was Jeannette's--and to the left a bath and Wellington's bedroom. At the rear of the

(continued)

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD                                    | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW |   |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC      | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC  | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING     | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE         | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499        | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC     | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION           | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW                            | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599        | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE             | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS              | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE                     | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699        | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE            | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION              | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY                       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799        | <input type="checkbox"/> ART                     | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING            | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC                          | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899        | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE                | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY                     | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS          | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)                |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION              |   |   |

SPECIFIC DATES 1923-56

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Probably Dan Flouree

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

According to biographer Hannah Josephson, the Nation's first Congresswoman, Jeannette Rankin "was a dynamic figure in the true American tradition." She "became a symbol to great numbers of people, as a suffragist and feminist, as a pacifist, as a political reformer, and as an example of how life could be maintained to a great age with meaning and purpose."<sup>1</sup> Rankin made her mark initially in the woman suffrage movement, playing an important part in helping women win the vote in California, Washington, New York, Ohio, and Wisconsin and leading the suffrage campaign in her native Montana. She possessed a "genius for political organization" and in 1916 won election as a Republican Member of Congress from Montana.<sup>2</sup> This made her the first woman in the world ever elected to a national representative body. Naturally she attracted much publicity, for most States did not even allow women to vote. Although best remembered for her vote against American entrance into World War I, Rankin played a significant role in other proceedings of the 65th Congress. She helped advance the woman suffrage amendment and sponsored important social legislation.

An unsuccessful candidate for the U. S. Senate in 1918, Rankin in the postwar period became a lobbyist for a number of citizens' groups--particularly organizations devoted to world peace like the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the National Council for the Prevention of War. Then, in 1940 she was again elected to Congress. Dedicating herself to preventing war, she staunchly advocated a popular referendum before any Congressional declaration. Believing that Roosevelt's policies had caused the Japanese to attack Pearl Harbor, Rankin became the only Member of Congress to vote against the declaration of war in 1941, thus making her the only Member to oppose American entry into both world wars. After leaving Congress in 1943, Jeannette Rankin dropped almost completely out of view for the next quarter century, then in 1967 she reemerged as a vocal critic of the Vietnam War. Until her

(continued)

<sup>1</sup> Hannah Josephson, Jeannette Rankin: First Lady in Congress (Indianapolis, 1974), x.

<sup>2</sup> Belle Fligelman Winestine, "Mother was Shocked," Montana: The Magazine of Western History, XXIV (Summer, 1974), 72.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Flexner, Eleanor, Century of Struggle: The Women's Rights Movement in the United States (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1959).

Harris, Ted C., "Jeannette Rankin in Georgia," Georgia Historical Quarterly, LVIII (Spring, 1974), 55-78.

(continued)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY circa 90 acres

UTM REFERENCES

No UTM tick marks on available U.S.G.S. map.

|   |                      |                      |                      |   |                      |                      |                      |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| A | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | B | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
|   | ZONE                 | EASTING              | NORTHING             |   | ZONE                 | EASTING              | NORTHING             |
| C | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | D | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(see last page of description)

NW. Lat. 46°37'48" Long. 111°34'35"  
 NE. Lat. 46°38'04" Long. 111°33'55"  
 SE. Lat. 46°37'42" Long. 111°33'45"  
 SW. Lat. 46°37'27" Long. 111°34'06"

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE George R. Adams, Managing Editor  
 Ralph Christian, Assistant Editor

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| ORGANIZATION                                     | DATE            |
| American Association for State and Local History | December 1975   |
| STREET & NUMBER                                  | TELEPHONE       |
| 1400 Eighth Avenue, South                        | (615) 242-5583  |
| CITY OR TOWN                                     | STATE           |
| Nashville  | Tennessee 37203 |

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL  STATE  LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE DATE

|  |      |
|--|------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY   |      |
| I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER |      |
| DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION                 | DATE |
| ATTEST:  | DATE |
| KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  |      |

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CONTINUATION SHEET Wellington Ranch EM NUMBER 7 PAGE one

dining-sitting room a doorway opens into the rear ell, where there is a walk-in pantry on the left, an enclosed stair to the basement on the right, and a large kitchen. Beyond the kitchen and adjacent to the northeast porch is a small servant's quarters. Floors are hardwood through, and walls and ceilings are papered. At present the house is unoccupied, and except for a large icebox and wood-burning kitchen stove, there are no original furnishings. The structure is in sound condition, however, and may soon be put into use again by ranch personnel. The roof was recovered with modern shingles in 1974.

There are eight irregularly situated outbuildings in the historic area. All are positioned to the rear of the main house, and none are especially outstanding. Together, however, they help create the essential setting of the ranch. A small, gable-roofed, plank-covered, log icehouse stands about 40 to 50 feet north of the ranchhouse, and just south of the icehouse there is a small, shed-roofed, frame outhouse. A few feet further south stands a rectangular-shaped, shed-roofed, board-and-batten ranchshed and northeast of it two larger sheds. Both are open along one side. The northernmost one is constructed of logs and covered topside with tin, while the other is a newer, frame structure moved to this location in 1951. Further to the rear of the ranchhouse is a one-story, rectangular-shaped, frame bunkhouse with a wood-shingled, gable roof. North of it, toward the entrance to Avalanche Gulch is the site of a large barn that burned in the 1930's and was not replaced. Still further north toward the gulch and beyond the access road is a large, rectangular-shaped, gable-roofed, frame corncrib that was built in the 1920's.

Situated at the foot of a range of the Big Belt Mountains, the ranchhouse and all the support buildings stand only a few hundred feet south of the entrance to Avalanche Gulch and on the eastern edge of the prairie as it slopes gently into the depression created by Avalanche Creek. There are no trees except those surrounding the house. The dwelling, picturesque in this setting, faces southwest across an expanse of prairie land toward Lake Sewell (created from the Missouri River) and the Spokane Hills.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Wellington Ranch ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE two

Boundary Justification. The Big Belt Mountains and Helena National Forest in the rear of the ranch form a natural northeast boundary for the historic area, as does Avalanche Creek on the northeast. The other two bounds--southwest and southeast--are drawn at right angles to form, in conjunction with the natural boundaries, a rectangular-shaped area encompassing all the ranch buildings, principal land features, part of the creek, and a portion of the primary, unimproved access road.

Boundary. As indicated in red on the accompanying maps, a line beginning in the entrance to Avalanche Gulch precisely where the Helena National Forest boundary crosses Avalanche Creek and extending southwestward approximately 2,700 feet along the west bank of the Gulch, and continuing on to the point at which Avalanche Creek crosses the western boundary of Section 14, T. 10 N., R. 1 E.; thence, due southeast approximately 2,600 feet to an unmarked point; thence, due northeast about 1,800 feet to the base of the mountain in rear of the ranch buildings; thence, northwestward about 2,000 feet along the mountain base to the starting point in the gulch entrance.

Continuation Sheet Wellington Ranch Item Number 9 Page one

Josephson, Hannah, Jeannette Rankin: First Lady in Congress  
(Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1974).

Larson, T. A., "Montana Women and the Battle for the Ballot:  
Women Suffrage in the Treasure State," Montana: The Magazine  
of Western History, XXIII (Winter, 1973), 24-43.

Winestine, Belle Fligelman, "Mother was Shocked," Montana: The  
Magazine of Western History, XXIV (Summer, 1974), 70-78.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Wellington Ranch ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE one

death in 1973, she traveled the country advocating pacifism, direct election of the President, and election of Congressmen from multi-Member districts.

During her lifetime Jeannette Rankin had numerous residences in Montana and elsewhere across the United States, but she lived in most of them only a few years. For that reason and because she represented Montana in Congress and because her girlhood home in Missoula has been destroyed, this ranch appears to commemorate her **life**, lifestyle, and career best. From 1923 to 1956, Rankin spent almost all her summers in this one-story, gable-roofed, white frame ranchhouse. It is little altered and in sound condition.

Biography

Jeannette Rankin was born June 11, 1880, on a ranch near Missoula in Montana Territory. Her father, John Rankin, was one of the territory's leading citizens, and she had a comfortable childhood, living on the family ranch in the summer and in Missoula in the fall and winter. From an early age, she demonstrated "a passion to observe and learn things for herself, an enjoyment of nature and of people, a strong sympathy for the underdog, and above all a willingness to undertake any task that promised to be interesting"-- characteristics she maintained until the end of her life.<sup>3</sup>

In 1898 Jeannette entered Montana State University, but her 4 years at this school apparently did little to stimulate her. After graduating in 1902, she worked briefly as a teacher and dressmaker, but did not find satisfaction. Two years later, while visiting her brother Wellington, who was a student at Harvard, Jeannette for the first time came face-to-face with poverty in the Boston slums. In 1908, believing she had found her calling as a social worker, she left Montana and worked in a San Francisco settlement house. The following year she studied social work at the New York School of Philanthropy. Returning to Missoula and finding little to do there, she accepted a position with an orphanage in the State of Washington, but disagreeable experiences there soon soured her on social work as a career.

(continued)

3 Josephson, Jeannette Rankin, 17.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Wellington Ranch ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE TWO

While in Washington, Jeannette became involved in the woman suffrage movement in that State and learned a great deal about organizing a political campaign. When she returned to Montana for Christmas in 1910, she decided to push for the reform there. Jeannette, who "preferred the moderate reasonable approach rather than bombast" appeared before the 1911 legislature and delivered a persuasive speech that insured eventual legislative approval of a suffrage amendment.<sup>4</sup> Two years later she organized a successful campaign that persuaded the male electorate to approve woman suffrage despite strong opposition from the copper companies and liquor interests. At the same time, she traveled to New York, California, Ohio, and Wisconsin, trying to help women in those States win the vote.

By 1916 Jeannette had decided to enter politics, and she announced as a Republican candidate for Congress. Running on a platform which advocated a national woman suffrage amendment, stronger legislation for the protection of children, and streamlined Congressional procedures, she defeated seven men in her party's primary and proceeded to win over her Democratic opponent in November by 7,567 votes. Thus, she became the first woman in the world ever elected to a national representative body.

As the first Congresswoman, she attracted much publicity since most States did not even allow women to vote. According to historian Eleanor Flexner, "she was a visible embodiment on the House floor, among 421 men, of the growing pressure on that body for political legitimacy for her sex."<sup>5</sup> Entering Congress in April 1917 when President Woodrow Wilson called a special session to ask for a declaration of war against Germany, Jeannette found herself in a difficult position. Eventually, she voted against the war, declaring "I want to stand by my country but I cannot vote for war."<sup>6</sup>

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4 T. A. Larson, "Montana Women and the Battle for the Ballot: Woman Suffrage in the Treasure State," Montana: The Magazine of Western History, XXIII (Winter, 1973), 34.

5 Eleanor Flexner, Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States (Cambridge, 1959), 283.

6 Josephson, Jeannette Rankin, 76.



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CONTINUATION SHEET Wellington Ranch ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE three

During her tenure in Washington, she helped advance passage of the woman suffrage amendment; won increased employment opportunities for women by securing an amendment to the Lever Act; forced Secretary of the Treasury William F. McAdoo to grant better working conditions to his government employees; mediated a copper strike in Montana; and sponsored legislation that allowed women who had married foreigners to retain their citizenship and provided information on child care, venereal disease, and birth control.

Because of Jeannette's vote against the war and her championship of miners against copper companies, Montana Republican leaders decided to get rid of her. The legislature divided the State into two Congressional districts and made hers heavily Democratic. Realizing the odds against her, she decided to run for the U.S. Senate in 1918 so that she could canvass the whole State. After a vigorous primary, Jeannette came in second in a field of four candidates. In the fall, she ran on an independent ticket against the Republican and Democratic candidates but lost heavily.

After leaving Congress in 1919, Jeannette served as an American delegate to the Women's International Conference for Permanent Peace, which met in Zurich, Switzerland. After her return to the United States, she became a professional lobbyist, serving organizations like the National Consumers League, the Mississippi Valley Conference for Labor and Welfare, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in this capacity. By 1923 world peace had become her primary interest, and in that year, she purchased a farm in Georgia, making that State a "base of operations for peace activities in the late 1920's and into the mid-1930's."<sup>7</sup> In 1929 she accepted a position with the National Council for the Prevention of War, the Nation's largest and most active peace group, and lobbied in behalf of the Kellogg-Briand Pact, the World Court, the Ludlow Amendment, and mandatory American neutrality.

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<sup>7</sup> Ted C. Harris, "Jeannette Rankin in Georgia," Georgia Historical Quarterly, LVIII (Spring, 1974), 55.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Wellington Ranch TEM NUMBER 8 PAGE four

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Despite having a farm in Georgia, Jeannette maintained a summer home and her voting residence in Montana. There in 1939 she launched another campaign for Congress, and in 1940 she defeated incumbent Democrat James O'Connor by 9,264 votes. Returning to Washington, Rankin dedicated herself to preventing war, staunchly advocating a popular referendum before any Congressional declaration. She believed Franklin D. Roosevelt wished to provoke Japan into starting a war, and when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, she was the only Member of Congress to oppose the resultant declaration of war. Thus, she has the unique distinction of being the only Member of Congress to oppose American entry in both world wars.

Because of intense hostility to her vote against war, Jeannette did not stand for reelection. In 1943 she returned to Montana to care for her ailing mother and dropped almost completely out of public view for the next quarter century. Not until 1967 did she again attract public attention when she became an outspoken critic of the Vietnam War. Participating in many marches and demonstrations despite the fact that she was in her late 80's, Jeannette found herself a much sought after public speaker. By 1971 she was a regular on the lecture circuit, using her forum to advocate pacifism, direct election of the President, and election of Congressmen from multi-Member districts. She died on May 18, 1973, in Carmel, Calif., a few weeks before her 93rd birthday.