

Voter Explains Why She Wasn't

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Special to The New York Times

SHAWNEE MISSION, Kan.—Faced with a choice between Richard Nixon and George McGovern, Mrs. Wayne Tobin stayed away from the polls Tuesday.

She was not alone.

Forty-five of every 100 Americans of voting age did likewise, the lowest election percentage since 1948, when Harry S. Truman and Thomas E. Dewey failed to inspire 49 of every 100 potential voters.

"I simply couldn't stomach either Nixon or McGovern," Mrs. Tobin said, explaining her decision to withdraw from a system whose lifeblood is citizen participation.

Then, taking a break from cleaning chores in her two-story house in this Kansas City suburb, she added:

"I felt I just couldn't trust either man — Nixon because that's the way he is and McGovern because he threw Tom Eagleton off the ticket. So I just sat this one out." Senator Eagleton is a Missourian.

Survey Showed Malaise

The New York Times/Yanekovich voter survey reflected the malaise expressed by Mrs. Tobin.

When asked which candidate was the more attractive, 33 per cent of all voters said Mr. Nixon, 23 per cent said Mr. McGovern, 7 per cent said they were unsure and 37 per cent said "neither."

Mrs. Tobin, a 31-year-old Democrat whose husband is a psychiatrist, has not always shied away from political involvement. In 1968, for instance, she passed out campaign literature for Eugene J. McCarthy, then voted for Hubert H. Humphrey when the McCarthy drive faltered.

"I've always tried to participate, at least with my vote, particularly since the war became an issue," she said, adding:

"When McGovern promised to end the fighting, my hope and enthusiasm for the man soared. But then came the Eagleton thing, and McGovern started acting just like all the rest of the politicians."

Husband Was 'Furious'

Mrs. Tobin said that Mr. McGovern's handling of the Eagleton incident also "turned off" her husband. He, too, stayed away from the polls.

"He's in mental health," she continued, "so he was really furious. Me, I might have stood for it if McGovern had at least been his old straightforward self."

The confusion that embroiled Mr. McGovern's welfare and tax proposals also perplexed Mrs. Tobin, whose family budget must cover not only herself and her husband but also their three children.

"At times, McGovern seemed pretty mixed up on money matters," she said.

Mrs. Tobin's mistrust of Mr. Nixon is classic of the genre.

When she discusses the President, her face becomes more animated and her hands punctuate her remarks. She said:

"The man frightens me. He has so much anger and resentment for the people who don't see things his way.

"I wouldn't buy his used car. He's out for Nixon and doesn't



The New York Times/Rick Solberg

Mrs. Wayne Tobin of Kansas with reports of the election in which she didn't take part.

care about minorities, the poor, the needy, only Richard Nixon and his place in history.

"He's scary, very scary."

Mrs. Tobin decided about six weeks ago not to vote in this year's elections. She was approaching her voter registration booth in a nearby shopping center when she suddenly asked herself:

"Why? What's the use this year? What good will it do? Even the local races don't mean anything."

She turned away, knowing that the system depended upon her vote, that her decision was contradictory. Since then, she has felt frustration but no pangs of patriotic remorse, not even yesterday as she watched her neighbors walk past her house toward the polling place a block and a half away.

"The only hard part, really, was explaining it to the children," she said, rising to resume her household chores.