

“I Shall Not Be Denied”

By: Elizabeth Fite

As twenty-year-old Anna Collier walked home from the Women’s Suffrage Museum on a cold Washington D.C. day, she wondered what it would be like to live in those times when women had to stay home all day and take care of the children. If she had lived in this time, she would never be able to go to school to become an environmental lawyer. Even if she had tried to go to law school in those days, she would probably have had to face many obstacles and stereotypes.

When Anna was in the Women’s Suffrage Museum, she saw an exhibit about Alice Paul; she was arrested seven times for having the courage to stand up for what she believed in. Alice was imprisoned, beaten, and force-fed along with other women. Alice organized a hunger strike in jail to protest while they were in jail. While she was in jail, her doctors threatened to send her to an insane asylum due to her hunger strike.

Anna thought about how different life is now from the way it was 100 years ago. Back in those days, women were not allowed to speak at public meetings or even own property. They had to do everything in a man’s shadow and had to overcome stereotypes about themselves. Women could not practice their professions. She thought about what it would be like if she were not going to law school; it would probably be boring.

Another exhibit told about Carrie Chapman Catt. She was the President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. She also founded the League of Woman’s voters which helps everyone with information about elections. This group also helped people register to vote and to make a better democracy. They think everyone should be able to vote and believe women should play active roles in politics. As Carrie Chapman Catt says, *‘There are whole precincts of voters in this country whose united intelligence does not equal that of one representative American woman.’*

Finally, there was a large exhibit about Elizabeth Cady Stanton at the Museum. Elizabeth was one of the first women to start the Anti-Suffrage movement. She was the principal organizer of the first gathering in Seneca Falls, New York. Elizabeth went all across the country organizing and giving speeches about Women’s Suffrage and equal rights. She wrote several books including *Declaration of Sentiments*, *The Woman’s Bible*, *History of Woman Suffrage*, and *Address to the Legislature of New York*. Elizabeth and Susan B. Anthony was a great working pair. Together they published and

edited a woman's newspaper which was called *The Revolution*. This newspaper talked about the rights of women, banning discrimination against women, and women's voting. Together they also formed the National Woman's Suffrage Association in 1869 which achieved women's rights through a federal constitutional amendment.

Anna was driven by how the women did not stop doing what they believed in even when there were large obstacles in their way. After a century of fighting, Women achieved their goal; the 19th amendment ratified on August 18, 1920. I will vote! I will not let their work go to waste.

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