The granting of voting rights to women in the United States was a landmark achievement in the struggle for gender equality, culminating in the ratification of the **19th Amendment** to the Constitution in **1920**. This was the result of decades of activism, advocacy, and perseverance by women’s suffrage leaders and organizations.

**Key Events in the Women's Suffrage Movement**

1. **Early Advocacy**:
   * The movement for women's voting rights began in earnest in the mid-19th century.
   * **Seneca Falls Convention (1848)**:
     + Often considered the start of the women’s suffrage movement.
     + Organized by **Elizabeth Cady Stanton** and **Lucretia Mott**, the convention issued the **Declaration of Sentiments**, demanding voting rights for women.
   * **Susan B. Anthony** and **Elizabeth Cady Stanton** became prominent leaders, co-founding the **National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA)** in 1869.
2. **Post-Civil War Setbacks**:
   * After the Civil War, women suffragists split over the **15th Amendment (1870)**, which granted voting rights to Black men but excluded women.
   * The NWSA focused solely on a federal amendment for women’s suffrage, while the **American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA)**, led by **Lucy Stone**, pursued state-by-state efforts.
3. **Progress at the State Level**:
   * The movement gained early victories in Western states:
     + **Wyoming (1869)** was the first territory to grant women the right to vote.
     + Other states, including **Colorado (1893)**, **Utah (1896)**, and **Washington (1910)**, followed suit.
4. **Unification and National Strategy**:
   * In 1890, the NWSA and AWSA merged to form the **National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA)**, led by **Carrie Chapman Catt** in the early 20th century.
   * NAWSA adopted a dual strategy: lobbying Congress for a federal amendment and campaigning in individual states.
5. **Militant Suffragists**:
   * **Alice Paul** and the **National Woman's Party (NWP)** took a more confrontational approach, organizing protests, pickets, and hunger strikes.
   * In 1917, NWP members picketed the White House, leading to arrests and increased public awareness of the movement.
6. **Impact of World War I**:
   * Women’s contributions to the war effort helped shift public opinion. Their work in industries, nursing, and other critical roles during the war emphasized their importance to society and strengthened the case for suffrage.

**The 19th Amendment**

1. **Congressional Passage**:
   * The **19th Amendment** was passed by Congress on **June 4, 1919**.
   * It stated: *“The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.”*
2. **Ratification**:
   * The amendment required ratification by 36 states to become law.
   * On **August 18, 1920**, Tennessee became the 36th state to ratify the amendment, ensuring its adoption.
3. **Certification**:
   * The 19th Amendment was certified on **August 26, 1920**, officially granting women the right to vote.

**Significance and Legacy**

1. **Empowerment of Women**:
   * The 19th Amendment enfranchised millions of women, marking a significant step toward gender equality in the U.S.
2. **Continuing Challenges**:
   * While the amendment was a victory, many women, particularly African American, Native American, Asian American, and Latina women, continued to face barriers to voting due to discriminatory practices like **poll taxes**, **literacy tests**, and **Jim Crow laws**.
3. **Foundation for Future Movements**:
   * The suffrage movement inspired later activism, including the **Civil Rights Movement** and the **Women’s Liberation Movement** of the 1960s and 1970s.
4. **Women in Leadership**:
   * The right to vote paved the way for women to participate fully in democracy, leading to increased representation in political and leadership roles over time.