ASSASSINATION OF ARCHDUKE FRANZ FERDINAND

In the year of 1914, the political situation in Bosnia had been unstable. Bosnia was under the control of Austria-Hungary, but some Bosnians wanted a union with the country of Serbia. A Serbian nationalist group had been hoping to inspire a revolt against Austria-Hungary.

On Sunday, June 28th, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, visited the city of Sarajevo, Bosnia with his wife, Sophie. They first visited City Hall, then proceeded on to inspect military troops. While in a motorcade, an assassin tossed a bomb at the Archduke’s car. This assassination attempt was unsuccessful. The bomb was deflected to the following car where it had exploded and injured the passenger in that car. The Archduke was enroute to the hospital to visit the injured man around 10:45 AM when 19 year old Gavrilo Princip drew his pistol and shot the Archduke in the neck, and then proceeded to shoot his wife Sophie in the abdomen. Both were killed in the shooting. Gavrilo Princip, a member of Young Bosnia* strongly believed that killing Franz Ferdinand would mean freedom for the Bosnian people.

As a result of the horrific murders, Austria-Hungary demanded Serbia permission to be involved in the investigation of the assassination, as well as the prosecution of the conspirators. The Austrian government knew it had the support of Germany before making their demands. When Serbia refused to comply with all of the demands, the Austrian army mobilized for war. On July 28th, 1914, a month after the assassination, Austria-Hungary had declared war on Serbia. As a result an enormous European conflict soon erupted which was called World War I.

* Young Bosnia - A revolutionary movement active before World War I, consisting of mostly school students who were ethnic Serbs but included Bosniaks.