



## History & Geography

For this session's History & Geography, we have included a biography of Anastasia Romanov for you and your family to study, as well as a map of the Russian Federation.

We also recommend reading [CM Geography: Book 4 - The Countries of Europe: Their Scenery and Peoples, Chapter 12: "Russia" \(pp.224-249\).](#)

Additionally, you can learn more about Anastasia Romanov, the History of Russia, the fall of the Soviet Union, and more in documentaries linked on the website (they are not included in the PDF).

*"My turn shall also come: I sense the spreading of a wing."*

~ Osip Mandelstam

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# RUSSIAN FEDERATION



**Legend:**

- ⊙ International capital
- City, town
- - - International boundary
- Road
- Rail road

**Scale:**

0 200 400 600 800 1000 1200 1600 km

0 200 400 600 800 1000 mi

**Neighboring Countries:**

1. ESTONIA
2. LATVIA
3. LITHUANIA
4. REP. OF MOLDOVA
5. GEORGIA
6. ARMENIA
7. AZERBAIJAN
8. TAJIKISTAN
9. KYRGYZSTAN

Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



# Grand Duchess Anastasia Romanov

June 18, 1901 – July 17, 1918

Anastasia Romanov, the youngest daughter of Tsar Nicholas II and Tsarina Alexandra, was born on June 18, 1901, in St. Petersburg, Russia. She was the fourth and youngest daughter of the royal couple, followed a few years later by their final child, a son named Alexei.

Anastasia's childhood was spent in the grandeur of the Russian palaces, surrounded by the love of her parents and siblings. Despite growing up amid the opulence of the palaces, Anastasia and her siblings were raised simply. The girls each shared a room with one of their sisters, sleeping on hard cots, and were expected to do chores and create needlework that would be sold for charity.

Anastasia was a bright, spirited child and the jokester of the family, known for making witty remarks and playing pranks on those around her. This earned her the nickname "Shvybzik," meaning "Little Mischief."

However, the tranquility of her early years was disrupted by the outbreak of World War I and the political unrest that followed. The Romanov family found themselves in a precarious position as Russia underwent significant social and political changes. During the war, Tsar Nicholas II went to serve on the front lines, and likewise, his family at home did what they could to help the war effort. Anastasia's mother and her two eldest sisters, Olga and Tatiana, became nurses who looked after injured soldiers. Though too young to serve as nurses, Anastasia and her sister Maria visited the hospital frequently to help raise the soldiers' spirits.

Over the years, Anastasia's family had become close to a man named Grigori Rasputin, who claimed to be a healer and a holy man. He gave their family spiritual counsel, and Anastasia's mother believed he helped young Alexei when he dealt with bouts of a chronic sickness called hemophilia. This scandalized the Russian public, who saw him as a wild, unkempt man, and were disturbed by the influence he held over the royal family. Things came to a head when Anastasia's mother appointed him to a position of political influence, though he had little qualifications, which outraged many, and seeds of discontent continued to take root among the people of Russia. In December 1916, Rasputin was assassinated by members of the Russian nobility. This was just the beginning of the political unrest that was soon to follow.

In 1917, the Russian Revolution began to unfold, leading to Tsar Nicholas II's abdication and the Romanov dynasty's end. Tension boiled over among the Russian working class after years of poor working conditions and mistreatment of peasants by the wealthy. This was followed by food shortages and military losses caused by poor leadership that only increased the hardships. This led to widespread rioting by the people, and the Tsar was eventually forced to step down from his throne. The family was placed under house arrest, and their once secure lives were replaced with uncertainty. As a new political sect called the Bolsheviks took control, the Romanovs faced an increasingly challenging situation.

The fate of Anastasia and her family took a dark turn in 1918. The Romanovs were moved to Ekaterinburg, where they were held captive in the Ipatiev House. On the night of July 17, 1918, Anastasia was executed by Bolshevik guards along with her parents, sisters, and brother. Anastasia was just seventeen years old. This event would mark the end of the Romanov dynasty.

For many years, the fate of Anastasia remained a mystery as rumors circulated that she may have survived the execution. This fueled numerous claims of sightings of Anastasia and her family members. The discovery of the Romanovs' remains in a mass grave in Ekaterinburg in 1991 helped to lay some of these speculations to rest, but two of the victims were not found, leading to wild tales that one or more members of the royal family may have survived. Anastasia, in particular, was the subject of many such rumors, and there were at least ten impersonators of her in the years to follow.

Anna Anderson was the most famous of these Anastasia imposters, claiming she had been rescued by a guard and going as far as to file a lawsuit to prove her identity. Though many who had known the real Anastasia did not believe Anna, there was still great speculation about her claims throughout her life. When she died, it was proven through DNA analysis that she was not related to the Romanovs. In August 2007, two final remains were found in a nearby grave, further discrediting these rumors. Through advanced DNA testing, scientists confirmed the identities of each of the Romanovs, laying to rest the long-standing mystery of their fate. This dispelled the public's lingering doubts about Anastasia's survival.

Anastasia Romanov's life and tragic end have captured the world's imagination, inspiring numerous books, movies, and plays. Anastasia and her family were made passion bearers, a type of saint, by the Russian Orthodox Church in 2000 to honor their deaths. Her story continues to evoke sympathy and intrigue, symbolizing the tumultuous period of the Russian Revolution and the downfall of a once-mighty dynasty. The mystery that once surrounded Anastasia's fate has left an indelible mark on history, ensuring that the memory of this bright, vivacious girl lives on.