

Charlotte Corday Biography

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Biography

Charlotte Corday is known as the assassin of the French revolutionist and intellectual, Jean Paul Marat. By all accounts Corday was not a political activist during the French Revolution, but she believed Marat's views were too radical and that his influence had led to the Reign of Terror that condemned many people to death.

Corday, whose full name was Marie Anne Charlotte Corday D'Armont, was born on July 27, 1768 at Saint-Saturnin, Normandy. A descendent of a noble family, Corday received her education at a convent in Caen. At the time of the French Revolution she was living with an aunt in Caen. In 1793 the city became a place of refuge for the moderate political faction known as the Girondists, who were under attack from the radical faction known as the Jacobins. The Jacobins became convinced that political dissenters should be cleansed from society. Criminal procedure was ignored as speedy political trials led to expeditious executions.

Corday, who had supported the monarchy, became attracted to the political rhetoric of the Girondists congregating in Caen. Her political transformation led her to conclude that Marat should be killed for his actions. Thus, Corday went to Paris to seek out Marat. On July 13, 1793, Corday was given an audience with Marat at his house, on the pretext of providing him with names of local Girondists. She stabbed Marat to death while he was in his bath and then tried to escape. She was captured by Marat's friends and tried by a revolutionary tribunal. Corday was convicted and sent to the guillotine on July 17, 1793.