

Essay Contest 2020
German Inventors
Inventor Nikolaus Molitor

There are many famous German inventors but for this essay, I have chosen my Great Grandfather Nikolaus Molitor. He invented a DC motor and produced electricity for several towns in Rheinland Pfalz. Around 1900, he bought a mill in Kobern-Gondorf, a town near Koblenz in Rheinland-Pfalz and used his inventions, including the DC Generator to produce electricity and bring light to the area. It was the first small power station in the Eifel region.

Before his invention in the late 1890, the people living there had to use candles or oil lamps to have lights in their homes and had no electricity. During that time, not too many people were aware of electrical energy and had to live in the dark. Word got out that Nikolaus Molitor could power small towns with his invention. Some towns were across the river called “Mosel” and that presented a major obstacle. They thought, that they would never be able to be connected to his small power plant. My Great Grandfather came up with the idea to use a small boat to cross the river and place a thick cable on the bottom of the river. The cable was connected to his power station and he was able to deliver electricity to towns across the river. Little by little he connected all the small towns surrounding his power plant and produced electricity until the late 1930’s and for his own house until 1960.

When larger power stations threatened to take over my Great Grandfather’s facility, he was prepared and started selling his other inventions. With his newly founded company MOGO (Molitor Gondorf), he manufactured and sold small home appliances, like small home heaters and water kettles. He also started selling and repairing radios.

During World War II, people were only allowed to listen to sanctioned Nazi propaganda stations on their radios. It was forbidden to listen to “Feindsender”, enemy radio stations, especially the British Broadcasting Corporation, BBC, which was airing news against the Nazi government. When my great grandfather heard that the SS was planning on confiscating all of the radios in his shop, he took out a small transistor from each radio. He then claimed to the SS soldiers that the radios were broken and did not work. Once the SS had left, he put the transistors back, and he and the towns people were able to listen to the BBC News again.

My Great Grandfather kept inventing after the war, had many patents and expanded his services. My grandfather took over the company and opened a store in 1962. It still exists and my mom grew up helping in the store. Since my great grandfather, Nikolaus Molitor had done so much for the region, my grandfather Josef Karl Nikolaus Molitor opened a small “Heimatmuseum”, where the inventions are displayed and preserved.