

Nikola Tesla :

Exploring an Electrical Era

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When I first heard of Nikola Tesla, I had wondered why his story was not well known. A man who had developed the electricity we still use to this day and numerous other inventions should surely be a recognizable name in today's time. This thought stuck with me for many years. When the time came to decide on an NHD topic, after much deliberation, I finally chose Nikola Tesla. Since his life's work was so broad, I narrowed my topic to his part in the "War of Currents" since it clearly covered all three components of the theme.

My research process began with the use of secondary sources. Using credible websites and books were beneficial for background information. Trips to the public library, Drake University, and Iowa State University also aided the search for resources. As I continued researching, I looked into the New York Times Archives, which provided numerous articles on the works of Nikola Tesla and Thomas Edison as well as the events in the "War of Currents". Other digital archives, like the Library of Congress, also provided primary sources which gave different points of views on the "War of Currents". Along the way, I interviewed five individuals; the president of a Tesla organization, the curator of Electrical Collections at the Smithsonian Institution, a biographer of Tesla, a professor of electrical engineering, and a promoter of Tesla. After taking notes, I cited my sources and created an annotated bibliography which I could refer back to with my research.

Feeling confident in my level of research, I began the construction of my entry. Because I had done documentaries in years past and felt comfortable with the script-writing and technological aspect that was needed, I chose to present my findings in the form of a documentary. I began with writing the script. I compiled all the answers from my interviews and reviewed them until I found quotes which would best aid the overall information being expressed in the documentary. Knowing how important the script was in the flow of the presentation pushed me to rewrite my script five times until I was satisfied with it. I then organized photos, footage of that era, and music that set the tone to create a strong foundation. I utilized Movie Maker and various Adobe programs to build my documentary. After numerous drafts, my documentary was complete.

Nikola Tesla's legacy is evident in our world. The development of alternating current is one of the most important things to happen in history. Without it, we could not be where we are as a society with the tools and machines we have. His encounters with Thomas Edison and George Westinghouse cemented the fact that alternating current was needed in order to progress. Tesla's numerous exchanges with investors and individuals propelled his desire to break through the electrical industry and to inspire a new generation of engineers. Nikola Tesla explored the electrical era and pioneered our world into the 21st century.