

UA1980.38

Dorr Felt Papers

Dates: 1918-1921

Creator: Felt, Dorr (1862-1930)

Extent: .21 linear feet

Level of description: Folder

Processor & date: Meredith Gozo, May 2012

Administration Information

Restrictions: No restrictions.

Copyright: Consult archivist for information.

Citation: Loyola University Chicago University Archives and Special Collections. Dorr Felt Papers, 1918-1921. Box #. Folder #.

Provenance: Records transferred to Loyola University Archives in November 1955 by Raymond Koch, son-in-law of Dorr Felt and then president of Felt and Tarrant Mfg. Co.

Separations: No separations.

See Also: Dorr E. Felt Collection – United States Employers' Commission to Europe, 1918-1920; Dorr E. Felt Collection – Railroad Strikes, 1916-1921; Dorr E. Felt Collection – International Trade and Labor Conferences, 1919-1921; Dorr E. Felt Collection – Felt and Tarrant Manufacturing Records, 1916-1926; Dorr E. Felt Collection – World War I, 1901-1930

Biographical Sketch

Dorr Eugene Felt was born in Rock County, Wisconsin on March 18, 1862. At fourteen he began working in a machine shop in Beloit, Wisconsin. He moved to Chicago in 1882 and obtained work as a mechanic. A perceptive and skilled worker with an entrepreneurial spirit, in his free time Felt devised and constructed a computation device out of such crude materials as a macaroni box, rubber bands, and metal skewers. Felt called the machine a Comptometer. A mechanical calculator, the Comptometer was the first mechanical calculator to greatly improve upon the first mechanical computing device created, the arithmometer, which was first commercially distributed in 1851. Felt opened Felt and Tarrant Manufacturing Company with Chicago businessman Robert Tarrant in 1889; a large manufacturing facility in Chicago, out of which he built and sold Comptometers. The Comptometer computing device became a great commercial success and was sold and used world-wide. Felt went on to invent more devices and acquired 46 domestic patents and 25 foreign patents.

As a result of Felt's experience as president of a large industrial company, he was asked by the U.S. Department of Labor to participate in a study of labor relations in Europe. Joining a team of other individuals from the United States, Felt toured England and France in order to examine manufacturing facilities and to speak with owners, managers, and laborers about the successes and frustrations of labor conditions in the two countries. The results of the commission's inquiries were reported and published, but more importantly this trip marked the beginning of Felt's close involvement with national and international trade and labor interests. Felt attended and spoke at labor conferences

and wrote about labor conditions, unions, communism, Bolshevism, and other labor-related subjects.

In addition to writing and speaking on broad topics, Felt held posts as president and director of the Illinois Manufacturers Association, president of the Illinois Society Sons of the American Revolution, and director of the United States Chamber of Commerce in 1920. Felt was a regional advisor on the War Industries Board in 1918, a board member of the Chicago Association of Commerce, and a member of Chicago's Union League Club.

Scope and Content

The Felt Papers consist of .21 linear feet spanning the years 1918 to 1921. The papers consist of personal and business correspondence and are arranged chronologically.

Series 1: Personal Correspondence, 1918-1921, Box 1

The series containing Felt's personal correspondence pertains almost in its entirety to letters exchanged with immediate family members. Many of the letters were written while Felt was abroad in Europe analyzing labor conditions. Often, Felt had handwritten letters typed; in some instances, the letters are present in the collection in original form, typed copy, or both.

Subjects:

Comptometer

Europe

Felt, Dorr

Felt and Tarrant Mfg. Co.

Labor

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<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Dates</u>
		<u>Series 1: Personal Correspondence, 1918-1921</u>	
1	1	Correspondence: Family and friends	December 1918
1	2	Correspondence: Family and friends	January 1919
1	3	Correspondence: Family and friends	February 1919
1	4	Correspondence: Family and friends	March 1919
1	5	Correspondence: Family and friends	May 1919- Oct. 1921