OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Title: Jacob Aloysius Dorf Papers

Collection Dates: 1909-1972

Extent and Forms of Material: 0.15 cubic feet (1 box)

Creator: Jacob Aloysius Dorf and Opal Dorf Haviland


Collection Number: AC0193

Preferred Citation: Jacob Aloysius Dorf Papers, 1909-1972, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, gift of Opal Dorf Haviland.

Administrative/Biographical History: Jacob A. Dorf (1879-1965) was born in Cedar Hill, Missouri where he spent his first then years. His family’s name was originally Blittersdorf. He moved to Bourbon, Missouri with his parents and in 1901 to Anaconda, Missouri, where he owned and operated a blacksmith shop. In 1911 he purchased a hardware store in Cuba, Missouri which he operated for more than forty-nine years. He was the father of ten children by his first wife who died in 1954. His third marriage took place in 1960. He died in 1965. In all, he had about three years of formal education because of the need to do farm chores as a child.

Throughout his long business career he was an innovative advertiser in the local press and elsewhere, sponsoring a radio program in 1924 which stimulated letters from thirty states and Canada. Dorf was active in community affairs, particularly during the depressed 1930s. In 1933 he led an effort which saved the local bank from failing. He branched into other business lines, including real estate and at one point financed the purchase of a better breed of cattle for local farmers.

Scope and Content: The collection consists of newspaper clippings and correspondence relating to Dorf’s activities particularly in the hardware business. Biographical information and obituaries are included as well as samples of his unusual advertising.

Acquisition Information: This collection was donated to NMAH by Opal Dorf Haviland, a daughter of J.A. Dorf on January 16, 1986.

Access Points:

For more information contact the Archives Center at archivescenter@si.edu or 202-633-3270
Subject-Topical:
Advertising – 1890-1900
Hardware stores – 1900-1970 – Missouri
Blacksmiths
Storekeepers
Depressions – 1929 – United States

Subject - Geographical:
Missouri – 20th century

Form / Genre:
Clippings
Correspondence – 20th century
Advertisements
Obituaries

Don Darroch, January, 1986
Rev. Amanda Loeb, June, 2010

Container Listing

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<th>Description</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Jacob Dorf Recollections</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Scrapbook pages; newsclippings of Dorf’s advertisements; Price List no. 2, Banner Buggy Co., St. Louis, Mo., 1920; correspondence 1924-1958; and poems</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Biographical newsclippings</td>
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<td>Dorf patent for wire pin, 1945</td>
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<td>J.A. and Florence Dorf Deed of Trust, 1912</td>
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Robert S. Harding, January, 1986

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