

Business card

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Collections / From the Conquest to the founding of Canada / business card



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Black and white photograph of Jacques Viger (1787-1858). He was Montreal's first mayor. He was also an antiquarian and archaeologist, as well as a journalist, author, militia officer, civil servant, landowner and collector.

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Fabricant / Éditeur Livernois

Period 1st half of the 19th century

Medium and Support silver print, paper; cardboard

Technique glued, printed

Measurements 10,5 x 7,1 x 0,1 cm

Historical context

During the 19th century, the small photo known as a calling card was commonly exchanged between family members, citizens, tourists and collectors. Calling cards of important figures in Montreal's history can be found in the personal collections of many Montrealers. Such is the case with this one depicting Montreal's first mayor, Jacques Viger. With the adoption of its first charter in 1832, Montreal held elections in 1833. 42 men, scattered throughout the city's eight wards, elected 16 councillors. On June 3, Jacques Viger was chosen by his counterparts to run for mayor. The mayor's annual terms, renewed in 1834 and 1835, focused on work to limit the spread of epidemics, such as drainage and sanitation of various suburbs. He also took part in the creation of the city's coat of arms, which presents the main groups living there with characteristic symbolism: the English (the rose), the Scots (the thistle), the Irish (the shamrock) and the French Canadians (the beaver). He finally incorporated the Catholic cross and the motto "Concordia Salus" (salvation through concord).

When, in 1836, the colonial authorities placed the town under trusteeship, the post of mayor was abolished. Viger took an interest in founding Montreal historical societies, and in archival and editorial work. He remains an important citizen in the early days of the new political city, and a key figure in early Montreal calling card collections.

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