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Business card

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Black and white photograph of Edward Bowen (1780-1866). He was an Irish-born lawyer, judge and political figure in Lower Canada. He was the first Chief Justice of the Superior Court of the Province of Quebec and the second Chancellor of Bishop's University.

Accession Number 2018.11.99

Period 2nd half of the 19th century

Medium and Support silver print, paper; cardboard

Technique glued, printed

Measurements 11 x 7,7 x 0,1 cm

Historical context

This black-and-white photograph shows lawyer, judge and politician Edward Bowen (1780-1866). Born in Ireland, he arrived in Lower Canada (Quebec) in 1797, where he studied law with Jonathan Sewell and John Caldwell. He was appointed Attorney General of Lower Canada in 1808, and became Member of Parliament for William-Henry (Sorel) in 1809.

Bowen's political career began against a backdrop in which Lower Canada's House of Assembly was divided between the French-Canadian majority, grouped around the Parti canadien (later Parti patriote), and the British merchant-bureaucrat minority, which controlled the colony's executive and the appointment of key positions within the colonial bureaucracy. In this quarrel, Bowen sided with the British minority, with advantageous consequences for his career.

Well-versed in the French language and laws, he was French translator to the Executive Council in 1816-1817 and French secretary to the province from 1816 to 1824. Bowen was also involved in a number of causes and societies, especially in Quebec City, where he lived, and became the second Chancellor of Bishop's University in 1856. In 1850, he was appointed Chief Justice of the Superior Court, a position he held until his death in 1866.

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