

# Button

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Red laminated badge celebrating the 85th anniversary of Dupuis Frères. The sock is adorned with a lightly satin-finished blue textile. A faded inscription can be read.

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Accession Number 2021.02.OBJ.35

Marchand Dupuis Frères

Date 1953

Materials fiber, metal, plastic

Measurements 5,5 x 18,5 cm

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## Historical context

This button was created to mark the 85th anniversary of Dupuis Frères. This ethnohistorical object is important for understanding the social policy of this Montreal department store. Dating from 1953, it also provides an insight into the changes in corporate life that resulted from the 1952 strike.

Founded in 1868, Dupuis Frères was a destination for French Canadians. The company defended their way of life, advocating nationalist, Christian and family values. In fact, Dupuis Frères not only promotes the French-Canadian family, but also the family character of the company.

A wide range of social activities are organized to bond and entertain employees, and ensure that their free time is properly occupied. The company is generous towards its staff, inviting them to solemn events such as the company's anniversary, illustrated by this button. Employees thus enjoy a lively social life, centered around Dupuis Frères. This paternalistic management allows the store to show the public the family dimension that reigns within it.

However, by the middle of the 20th century, the social context was tense: an employee strike broke out in 1952. Despite an increase in wages and the continuity of operations, the family atmosphere that had given employees a sense of belonging began to fade. It was the company's first real conflict.

More broadly, this event bears witness to the struggle for change in post-war working conditions. Catholic trade unions were very active in many companies, including Dupuis Frères. Confronting the bosses, it

changed the social meaning of Catholicism by demanding justice for workers.

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Photo by Louis-Etienne Dore