

Ethnohistorical collection

Panel advertising

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Full-color billboard advertising the Quebec tobacco company Millers & Lockwell. Made of wood, it features an illustration of an open P.P.P. The Mayors cigar box on a dark red background. Around the box, inscriptions

are painted in white and green.

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Fabricant / Éditeur The Miller & Lockwell Co. Ltd.

Period 1st quarter of the 20th century

Materials paint, wood

Measurements 63,3 x 45,3 x 2 cm

Historical context

In 1897, Camilien-Joseph Lockwell joined forces with Edgar Miller. They took over the estate of tobacco manufacturer Fréchette on rue Saint-Pierre in Quebec City, and acquired the rights to produce the traditional Fréchette black powdered tobacco. Miller & Lockwell competed directly with numerous Quebec tobacco manufacturers, including LeMesurier, B. Houde and the giant American Tobacco Company. In 1911, the company ceased operations.

The use of tobacco in Quebec is rooted in the pre-industrial French-Canadian economy. While tobacco was grown according to local native methods, farmers' processing practices established traditions and a certain taste for Canadian tobacco.

In Quebec, from the end of the 19th century to the end of the Second World War, numerous companies traded domestic pipe tobacco specifically for French Canadians. The industrialization of foreign

tobaccos went hand in hand with the urbanization of French-speaking communities, making French-Canadian tobacco a national symbol. The arrival of the American Tobacco Company in the United States is one of the key factors behind the promotion of Quebec tobacco by the government and tobacco companies. They present their product as authentic and local.

Nonetheless, for many (Anglophones and Francophones alike), the use of this tobacco represents a backward step for rural French-Canadians. In particular, the origin of the tobacco is considered dubious, and the territory unsuitable for its production.

To another extent, smoking became gendered: the association of tobacco with the male gender took hold from the 1850s onwards. This phenomenon is symptomatic of the many social transformations taking place in Quebec, and of the gendered differentiation of cultural habits.

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Photo by Michel Julien