

Piggy bank barrel

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Collections / piggy bank



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Barrel money box from Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Co. of the United States. It is blue in color. The top features the institution's message and a slot. The institution's information is inscribed underneath.

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Fabricant / Éditeur Automatic Recording Safe Co. Ltd.

Period 2nd quarter of the 20th century

Materials metal, chrome, metal, copper, plastic, bakelite

Measurements 6,9 x 4,7 cm

Historical context

From the last decade of the 19th century onwards, many American financial institutions adopted the piggy bank system developed in 1890 by the American Charles Owen Burns. The boxes remain the property of the bank, and are leased to depositors so that they can fill them up and deposit their savings in the bank.

These piggy banks became one of the banking institutions' preferred means of promoting savings. They appeal to the many manufacturers on the market. As a result, a wide variety of piggy banks are becoming increasingly popular.

They are fast becoming symbolic objects beyond their primary function. Their shapes vary and can be evocative depending on the culture of the country of use, or its political context. An increasing number of different models were offered to depositors, albeit with similar standards, including a number and a secure key kept by the banking institution. From the 1950s onwards, these principles were less respected, as financial institutions had to free themselves from

management constraints and costs.

Barrel-shaped themed piggy banks, launched in the 1920s, are typically American. Indeed, they seem to derive from a popular expression referring to an accumulation of money in a barrel.

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Photo by Louis-Etienne Dore

On display