

# Piggy bank home

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In-house piggy bank from the Canadian branch of the US-based Western Savings & Loan Association. The metal case is predominantly beige and red. A blue plaque identifying the institution is affixed to the base.

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Fabricant / Éditeur Chicago Thrift Company

Period 1st half of the 20th century

Materials metal

Measurements 7,5 x 10 x 6,5 cm

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## Historical context

Canada's geographic and economic position predisposes it to develop savings practices comparable to those in the United States. In addition to the main chartered banks and the establishment of American banks, numerous financial institutions sprang up throughout the first part of the 20th century. They adopted the piggy bank system perfected in 1890 by the American Charles Owen Burns. The boxes remained the property of the bank and were leased to depositors so that they could 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.

The purchase of a home is a recurring reason for saving. In-house piggy banks support this goal of home ownership. The houses vary according to manufacturer and era: early models dating from the 1920s evoke the architecture of urban houses, while more recent models are reminiscent of suburban homes.

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Photo by Louis-Etienne Dore