

Piggy bank home

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Home-made money box from the Caisse Populaire canadienne Desjardins. The plastic case is white, black and green. A slot is placed on the roof of the house. The two main sides of the box feature the institution's name and an illustration. An opening is located under the box.

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Period 2nd half of the 20th century

Materials plastic

Measurements 14 x 11,3 x 7,5 cm

Historical context

In the 1810s, Canada followed in the British footsteps, and its first savings banks were established as separate branches of the major chartered banks. In 1841, a law was passed allowing the foundation of independent savings banks. In Quebec, a network of caisses populaires developed in towns and rural villages: La Caisse Populaire Desjardins. Because of their similarity to European institutions, their cooperative philosophy meant they were likely to adopt the piggy bank system, a means of promoting home savings that originated in the United States in 1890. 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.

They quickly became symbolic objects beyond their primary function. Their shapes vary, and can be evocative depending on the culture of the country in which they are used, 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 themselves differ from manufacturer to manufacturer and from period to period: early models dating from the 1920s evoke the architecture of urban houses, while more recent models, often made of plastic, evoke suburban homes.

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Photo by Daphnée Bouchard

On display