

Piggy bank automatic cash register

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Automatic money box from the US branch of the Norway Plains Savings Bank. The chrome-plated case is cylindrical in shape. It has several different deposit slots with graduations. On the top there's a hole and a plaque with the name of the institution.

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Fabricant / Éditeur Nat. Rec. Safe Co.

Period 1st half of the 20th century

Materials metal, chrome

Measurements 6,3 x 9,2 cm

Historical context

From the last decade of the 19th century onwards, many American financial institutions adopted the portable piggy bank system developed in 1890 by the American Charles Owen Burns. These boxes became one of the banking institutions' preferred means of promoting savings. They appealed to the many manufacturers on the market, the vast majority of whom offered similar models.

Although these piggy banks were particularly well established in the market, a new model appeared in December 1902: cash register piggy banks (automatic and mechanical). The idea stemmed from the fact that savers wanted to know exactly how much money they had accumulated before their piggy banks were full. For automatic models like this one, coin deposit slots are distributed along the sides of the piggy bank, and openings allow the amount saved to be ascertained and calculated.

Initially, these piggy banks were rectangular in shape. However, oval, lightweight and smaller versions were introduced in 1909. These automatic models were a great success and made the fortune of their

creator, Robert J. Thomson.

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On display