

Wallet

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Purse with paper label bearing the name J.J. Girouard.

Accession Number 2009.16.43

Date 1854

Materials fiber, skin, leather

Measurements 3,5 x 13 cm

Historical context

This leather wallet belonged to Jean-Joseph Girouard (1794-1855), notary in Saint-Benoit (Mirabel) and member of parliament for Deux-Montagnes County from 1831 to 1838.

As an MNA, Girouard supported the Parti patriote's demands in the Legislative Assembly of Lower Canada in the 1830s. The Patriote deputies demanded democratic reforms from England, notably when they sent 92 resolutions to London in 1834. London's refusal to accede to the demands contributed to the Patriote uprisings of 1837-1838, in which Girouard took part.

For this reason, he was arrested for high treason and incarcerated in Montreal's Pied-du-Courant prison from December 1837 to July 1838, and again from November 4 to December 27, 1838. An artist in his own right, Girouard spent his time in prison creating portraits of fellow patriots imprisoned with him. The collection of portraits that still survives today is a unique heritage treasure, and some of the drawings are the only surviving representations of some of the great historical figures who took part in the events of 1837-1838.

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Photo by Alain Vandal