

Basic Detail Report



Pouch

Date
early 20th Century

Primary Maker
Chawai

Medium
Leather, mirror and pigment

Description

This is a leather money holder that comes from the Chawai tribe in Nigeria. The purse was most likely intended to be worn over a belt. The holder contains a small pocket and a tin edged mirror in the interior. On the exterior are displayed tooled designs on one side and black printed crossed designs on the other. Fringe is attached to the end of the holder and has black horizontal running across the glossy face with the ends colored black. There is a strap meant to close over a squared leather button. The Chawai tribe lives in the Plateau and Kaduna states of Nigeria in a series of villages. Though the tribe has turned to small farming in the recent decades, hunting has religious and ritual significance. In West Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries, currency was usually worn or displayed. The bulky currency could include large anklets, ingot rods, weaponry, items that could not be carried in a money holder as small as this one. This money holder reflects a shift in currency and commercial exchange within the 20th century. With the entrance of European influences, African cultures began shifting from large stores of wealth in the form of metal tools and displays to coins that could easily be traded, transported, and accessed.

Dimensions

3 3/4 × 2 1/2 × 5 in. (9.5 × 6.4 × 12.7 cm)