



Miser's purses (known in the period as "long purses", "short purses" or "gentlemen's purses") were designed in the late 17th century to carry coins. The purses have a stocking-like appearance and often have one square end while the other was round. The ends are called "toes". The differing ends allowed the owner to tell what denomination of coin was in each toe without the trouble of opening. Instead of differently shaped ends, some purses have tassels at one end for instant denomination recognition. The middle of these purses have a slit in which the coins could be inserted. Both rings were slid to one side of the slit so that the coin could be placed inside. Then the coin was slid into the desired toe and the ring closest to that toe was slid down to hold the coins in place. The other ring was then slid past the slit so that a different denomination could be inserted and

slid into the other toe of the purse. That ring was then slid down to hold the coins in place. The purse was dubbed "miser's purse" because of the difficulty in sliding the coins back to the center slit to be removed. Miser's purses were popular until the beginning of the 20th century. They were used by men and women and could be worn over the belt or sash. Early purses ranged in size from 4" to 36". These 10" purses are typical of mid-19th century styling as are the cut-steel beads.

