



France and the Chesapeake: A History of the French Tobacco Monopoly, 1674-1791

Jacob M. Price

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In 1674, King Louis XIV of France, acting on the advice of Colbert, established a tobacco monopoly to be leased to a private group of entrepreneurs. Thus began an enterprise which was to involve French finances and court life, international economy, and the lives of thousands of people in the Old World and New. In this definitive study, Professor Price reconstructs the intricate political, financial, and commercial history of the tobacco monopoly. He is concerned not simply with facts, but with process—the process by which court decisions were made and the process by which those decisions ultimately affected the lives of many ordinary people in France and distant lands. Price's book is at once a representative study in the interrelations of statecraft, finance, commerce, and society in the ancien regime and a remarkable account of the functioning of a particular monopoly. This monumental work of scholarship is a resource scholars will be mining for generations to come.

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