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Facing the Revocation: Huguenot Families, Faith, and the King's Will

Carolyn Chappell Lougee

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The Edict of Nantes ended the civil wars of the Reformation in 1598 by making France a kingdom with two religions. Catholics could worship anywhere, while Protestants had specific locations where they were sanctioned to worship. Over the coming decades Protestants' religious freedom and civil privileges eroded until the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, issued under Louis XIV in 1685, criminalized their religion.

The Robillard de Champagné, a noble family, were among those facing the Revocation. They and their co-religionists confronted the difficult decision whether to obey this new law and convert, feign conversion and remain privately Protestant, or break the law and attempt to flee secretly in what was the first modern mass migration. In this sweeping family saga, Carolyn Chappell Lougee narrates how the Champagné family's persecution and Protestant devotion unsettled their economic advantages and social standing. The family provides a window onto the choices that individuals and their kin had to make in these trying circumstances, the agency of women within families, and the consequences of their choices. Lougee traces the lives of the family members who escaped; the kin and community members who decided to stay, both complying with and resisting the king's will; and those who resettled in Britain and Prussia, where they adapted culturally and became influential members of society. She challenges the narrative Huguenots told over subsequent generations about the deeper faith of those who opted for exile and the venal qualities of those who remained in France.

A masterful and moving account of the Hugenots, *Facing the Revocation* offers a deeply personal perspective on one of the greatest acts of religious intolerance in history.

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