

## SNUFF AND SNUFF TAKING

The history of snuff is as interesting as that of smoking tobaccos and has been closely linked through the centuries since the European first discovered it, in the latter part of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It was Romono Pane a Franciscan friar travelling with Sir Walter Raleigh who on his return reported he had seen ‘New World’ inhabitants burning the dried leaves of a plant or weed and inhaling the smoke, or sniffing the powder made from the leaves. It was in the 16<sup>th</sup> century that Fernando Hernandez brought leaves and seeds of the tobacco plant back to Spain – this being the introduction of tobacco to Europe. In 1560 Jean Nicot (from whose name the word ‘nicotine’ is derived) sent some leaves to Catherine de Medici – the French Queen, with instructions on how to use them as a snuff to cure her migraine.

It was not until the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century that there was a great increase in the habit of snuff taking in England, this was greatly assisted with the spread of coffee houses (over 3,000 in London alone during the 18<sup>th</sup> century). Snuff taking became a major feature of the coffee-houses.

One description of the act of taking a pinch of snuff which appeared widespread around Europe in 1800, divided the ritual into twelve stages:

1. Take the snuffbox with your right hand.
2. Pass the snuffbox to your left hand.
3. Rap the snuffbox.
4. Open the snuffbox.
5. Present the box to the Company.
6. Receive it after going the round.
7. Gather up the snuff in the box by striking the side with the middle and forefinger.
8. Take a pinch of snuff with the right hand.
9. Keep the snuff a moment or two between the fingers before carrying it to the nose.
10. Put the snuff to your nose.
11. Sniff it by precision with both nostrils and without any grimace.
12. Close the snuffbox with a flourish.

## WHY TAKE SNUFF?

Unlike smoking, the habit of snuff taking is a private one, there are, no doubt, many takers of snuff whose habit is unknown to all but their closest acquaintances. Also there are none of the so called perceived “anti-social” aspects of smoking in its various forms. Therefore can be done with no affect on anyone else.

See the other side of this leaflet for details of our range of high quality snuffs.

*Robert Good*  
Segar & Snuff Parlour