

ST. CASTIN: A LEGEND REVISED

IN 1701 Jean-Vincent d'Abbadie de Saint Castin, the Baron who was an Indian chief on the Penobscot, returned to France from Acadia. In 1703 he was commissioned "Lieutenant of the King to the government at Pentagoet", on the site of present-day Castine, Maine, by Pontchartrain, Louis XIV's minister of the navy. But ships sailed for Acadia in 1704, 1705, 1706, without the Baron. And in 1707 the Baron de St. Castin died at or near Pau in the province of Béarn on the French side of the Pyrenees.

Had St. Castin returned to Acadia in 1704 or 1705, would he have been able to reverse the tide of conquest that had been running in favour of the English? St. Castin was a man of ability in border warfare, and it is quite possible that he would have hindered the English in their taking over of Acadia. But it seems most questionable that a different course of events in Acadia would have markedly affected the outcome of the French-English struggle for supremacy in North America. That contest was decided, not in the little border province of Acadia, but on the broad plains of the interior of the continent and at the strategic heart of Canada.

It cannot be contended that St. Castin, had he taken up his duties at Pentagoet in 1704, would have shown the greatness of a Frontenac for historical action. But it is certainly true that his failure to return to Acadia was a serious blow to French hopes. As the Minister wrote Vaudreuil, the Governor of Canada, on June 30, 1707: "his death is a great loss for the great credit he had with the savages."

After an absence of thirty-four years, St. Castin had returned to France in 1701 with two objects: he wished to dissipate at the French court certain accusations against him, chiefly that he traded with the enemy English, and he wished to claim his considerable patrimony. In one of the "Wayside Inn" tales, Longfellow, who is not to be trusted for historic fact, has the Indian

wife of the Baron de St. Castin accompany him to the Béarn district, but this seems unlikely because the Baron planned to return to Acadia as soon as he could perform his business in France. In fact, he had asked for a concession on the Rivière de la Pointe au Haistre, clear proof that he expected soon to come back to New France.

At Versailles, St. Castin quickly dispelled the charges against him, and soon afterwards he was in correspondence with Pontchartrain, affirming his zeal for the service of Louis XIV and offering counsel on the frontiers of Acadia. French affairs in Acadia continued to deteriorate, and in the autumn of 1703 the English came to Pentagoet and sacked St. Castin's house. In the meantime Louis XIV had expressed a wish that St. Castin return there and had commissioned him as a lieutenant at a salary of fifty livres a month. But although the hope was expressed that St. Castin would soon depart for Acadia to carry out His Majesty's wish that ways be found to engage the Indians in war against the English, St. Castin did not leave at once. In 1704 Colonel Benjamin Church led an expedition to Pentagoet and points to the eastward.¹ St. Castin stayed on in France, mired in litigation.

The last six years of St. Castin's life were in dispiriting contrast to his life of action in Acadia. From Versailles, the centre of an empire, he went south to the Béarn district and into the midst of venomous family quarrels, conflicts of sordid interest, and contests about succession. He found himself opposed by his brother-in-law, the lawyer Jean de Labaig, a scoundrel who might have been invented by Molière. Labaig had married St. Castin's sister Marie and had dominated her; as her husband he had made himself the sole executor of the Baron's patrimony; he had even registered the St. Castin arms in his name.

The Baron underwent a period of frustration in the intricate legal game that was played with him by Labaig. At first he was allowed to win a small victory. On July 21, 1702, he obtained the adjudication of a sum of 2,400 livres deducted from the estate of an uncle, Jacques de Bonasse. Then on January 16, 1703, at Oloron, occurred what seems to have been mainly a paper transaction, with little money changing hands. From his brother-in-law Jean de Labaig and his nephew Jean-Vincent Labaig, St. Castin accepted an obligation of 24,000 livres which represented the Baron's share in inheritances from his mother and from two uncles, the curé of Arette and the arch-priest of Galan. On the other hand, he acquired a receipt given to Labaig for supplies and advances over a period of about twenty-two years:

buried in this was the repayment of a loan of 4,000 livres and the expenses of a trial.

These were side-issues. The principal subject of contention was the inheritance of the Baron's elder brother, Jean-Jacques d'Abbadie, who had died in 1674, but over whose estate Labaig had held power of attorney since 1672. Labaig had enjoyed the management of this fortune and had no intention of relinquishing it to the faraway relative who had made an unwelcome appearance after so many years in the wilderness.

First of all, the magistrate of Senechal ignored the existence of any title or inventory or enumeration of goods of this heritage. He pretended that no such inventory existed and demanded that St. Castin write monitory letters. Then, in a turn worthy of a Molière plot, the revelations of a third party forced Labaig to admit that he himself had the missing inventory! He had signed it in 1675 "because of the absence of the Baron of St. Castin".

The fighting was now out in the open, and St. Castin demanded to be believed on his own oath that the sum of 30,000 livres was his share in the succession. Labaig used all his trickiness to interpose delay. Pontchartrain wished to speed up settlement, and on order of the King he wrote the First President of the Parliament at Pau to urge a quick judgment. St. Castin wrote to Pontchartrain that he would sooner abandon his own affairs than the King, and offered to draw up a memoir of steps to be taken to save Acadia. But, mindful of the future of his children, St. Castin hung on in Béarn.

The urgency of Pontchartrain only made Labaig more determined to wait out the issue. It fed his hope that St. Castin would soon have to return to Acadia and leave the field to him. Again Versailles asked the First President of the Parliament at Pau to expedite the St. Castin case: "His Majesty desires that you would give orders you consider needful to finish this business." It was to no avail. Labaig simply interposed new obstacles.

On an unknown date in the first half of 1707, at the age of fifty-five, the Baron of St. Castin died. No death record has been found. Are we not at liberty to set down the cause of his death as exhaustion brought on by the law's delays?

St. Castin had to wait until the fourth decade of the twentieth century for reliable biographies to appear and place him correctly in the shadowy history of Acadia. In 1934 appeared *Une figure légendaire de l'histoire acad-*

ienne: Le Baron de St. Castin by Robert Le Blant; in 1939, *Le Baron de Saint-Castin, chef abenâquis*, by Pierre Daviault, was published.

It is of interest to note the places where these books, to date not translated into English, were published. Le Blant's *A Legendary Figure of Acadian History* was published at Dax in France, near the region in which the Baron of St. Castin's ancestors lived and in which he was born. Daviault's *Baron of St. Castin, Abenaki Chieftain* was published at Montreal. As might be expected, Le Blant's research included the local archives in the Béarn country as well as the national archives in Paris, and Daviault's research concentrated on Canadian archives in Ottawa and Quebec. American writers had never fully availed themselves of these sources of fact, and consequently their accounts of St. Castin were insecurely founded. The Americans had relied on Rameau de St. Père's *Une colonie féodale en Amérique* and had trusted the *New Voyages* of the Baron de La Hontan, authorities whom Le Blant and Daviault correct. Writers such as Herbert Milton Sylvester in *Maine Coast Romance*, whose five volumes came forth between 1904 and 1909, had further romanticized the romantic treatments of Rameau de St. Père and La Hontan. Now, thanks to the industry of Le Blant and Daviault, we have an increased number of incontestable facts upon which to draw anew the portrait of a figure that has never been realistically portrayed. The truth about St. Castin is still circumscribed by ambiguity, but we know enough to dispel the romantic view of St. Castin that still prevails in our histories. A revised account is overdue by twenty years.

The *extreme* romantic view was, of course, never accepted by our historians, but there was a tendency to think of St. Castin as a cultured Frenchman. So he appears in a fanciful book—*The Neutral French*, by a Mrs. Williamson, published in 1841—which Longfellow perhaps read, for in this book and in Longfellow's "The Baron of St. Castine" the Baron's wife appears as a beautiful Indian princess, gracious and civilized. Mrs. Williamson quotes the recollections of Gasper St. Pierre Le Blanc (whoever he was) at the age of ninety. This dreamy old man provided a handsome residence for the Baron at Pentagoet (Castine), a long, low building, partly wood, partly stone. The old man said that he saw the Baron seated in a panelled study, a Greek and Latin lexicon spread before him, instructing his son: the room was lined with shelves holding papers, parchments, and books. It is absurd to suppose that the actual St. Castin, who lived among the Abenaki Indians for the greater part of twenty years, ever evolved into a scholarly Frenchman. For practical purposes, he could talk in Indian and English as well as in his

native French tongue, but it is doubtful whether he pored over a Greek and Latin lexicon in the wilderness.

The first effect, then, of reading the Le Blant and Daviault biographies is the destruction of the romantic conception of St. Castin by the facts about his life among the Indians that have been unearthed by these authors. The second effect is the realization of how little we really know about the man who was probably the greatest figure in Acadian history.

For one thing, we have no definite idea of St. Castin's appearance. That picture of Baron de Castin—bearded and breezy—on the five-cent post cards on sale at Castine is entirely imaginary. It was painted toward the end of the nineteenth century by Will Hicok Low. A painter and illustrator of some note in his day, Low did murals and stained glass windows for buildings in Newark, New Jersey. He was commissioned to invent an image of the Baron by the editor of the Newark *Daily Advertiser*, Noah Brooks. Brooks had been born in Castine and later returned to live there. The biographer of General Henry Knox, and author of books for boys, Brooks' local patriotism impelled him to demand a portrait of St. Castin by his Newark acquaintance, the artist Low. But he was unable to give Low a clue to St. Castin's real appearance. Low took hints from Whittier's lines in "Mogg Megone":

In the harsh outlines of his face
Passion and sin have left their trace;
Yet, save worn brow and thin grey hair,
No signs of weary age are there

but Whittier had never seen a picture of St. Castin nor read a physical description of him.

We cannot fill in the outlines of his countenance, but we can fill in the genealogy of the Baron de St. Castin. Le Blant traces the paternal line back to a nobleman, D'Abbadie de Maslacq, in 1385, but the maternal line was even higher. On his mother's side this legendary hero of Acadia was descended from the illustrious family of Foix-Grailly. There were two redoubtable soldiers in this line, Bernard de Béarn, known as the Bastard of Béarn, and a Captain Bonasse. Bernard de Béarn, a natural son of the Comte de Foix, was born about 1382; a notable mercenary, he became a faithful follower of his brother, Gaston IV, Comte de Foix. Founder of the illegitimate branch of the house of Foix, Bernard de Béarn joined the Bonasse family and established the line of Béarn-Bonasse. This brings us to Captain Bon-

asse of the mountains, who was the great-grandfather of St. Castin's mother, and a man of fierce exploits that endeared him to the people of Béarn.

Daviault adds the interesting genealogical note that the Baron de St. Castin was a "great" cousin of Henri d'Aramits (Aramis), one of the Three Musketeers of Dumas.

The near ancestors of St. Castin were his grandfather with the same name, Jean-Vincent d'Abbadie de St. Castin; his father, Jean-Jacques d'Abbadie; and his mother, Isabeau de Béarn-Bonasse. Jean-Vincent, the grandfather, was baptized in 1626; he became curé of Arette in 1665, produced his letters of nobility in 1670, and in 1685 died in the house of the unscrupulous M. de Labaig at Oloron.

Jean-Jacques D'Abbadie, the father, married Isabeau de Béarn-Bonasse on February 4, 1647. Three years later Isabeau gave birth to a son, christened Jean-Jacques, who died in 1674. The following year Isabeau bore a daughter, Marie, who was to marry Jean de Labaig, a lawyer and member of the Navarre legislature—the man, as we have already seen, who was to exert a baleful effect on the fortune of Isabeau's third child, Jean-Vincent d'Abbadie de St. Castin.

He, the future hero of Acadia, was born in 1652, probably at St. Castin, although the baptismal record—like his death record—has not been found. Soon after his birth, Isabeau died of the plague, the exact date, November 17, 1652, being known. In 1654 the widower, Jean-Jacques D'Abbadie, obtained from Louis XIV the elevation of the land of St. Castin into a barony.

We can say that an adventurous spirit was an inheritance of the young Jean-Vincent, but we cannot speculate on what the early loss of his mother meant, for we know nothing about his childhood or education. At the age of thirteen he was enlisted in the famed Carignan Salières regiment. When he was fifteen, this regiment was sent to Canada, and somewhat later it was disbanded. But it was not until 1670 that Jean-Vincent d'Abbadie de St. Castin first stands in a clear historical light.

On July 17, 1670, a French vessel, the *Saint-Sebastien*, commanded by M. de la Clocheterie, passed Mt. Desert island to starboard and entered East Penobscot Bay. On the *Saint-Sebastien*—perhaps he had come on board at Port-Royal—was an eighteen-year-old ensign, Jean-Vincent d'Abbadie, the future Baron de St. Castin. The *Saint-Sebastien* was on her way to the tiny

frontier settlement of Pentagoet, which the English had formerly called Penobscot, and, when she reached the waters of Pentagoet, a small boat was sent ashore. In it was M. Hubert d'Andigné, Chevalier de Grandfontaine. The previous July he had obtained from Colbert, the chief minister of Louis XIV, the power to receive from England the colonial region called Acadia, and he had with him the papers for the transfer. Seated with the Chevalier de Grandfontaine were his lieutenant, Pierre de Joibert, seigneur de Soulanges et de Marson, who was to become hostile, and the young ensign, Jean-Vincent d'Abbadie, whose loyalty to Grandfontaine and Chambly, his successor, was to be exemplary. Grandfontaine had an order dated March 5, 1670, signed by Colbert, which commanded him to secure restitution from the British in Acadia.

The situation there had been confused for a number of years. In 1654 the English under Oliver Cromwell's order had occupied Pentagoet, but they had let the French settlers remain. Cromwell had named Sir Thomas Temple governor of Nova Scotia. Then came in 1667 the Treaty of Breda and the cession by England of the province of Nova Scotia to the French. To clarify this treaty, an article was added in 1668 which ceded to the French the whole of Acadia, Pentagoet or Penobscot being specifically named. On one pretext or another, however, Temple delayed turning over Pentagoet to the French. He hoped to get an indemnity from the English government for the loss of the fishing monopoly. At last he could delay no longer, and on July 7, 1670, he wrote from Boston to Captain Richard Walker in charge at Pentagoet that he had been presented that day with a letter signed on August 6 of the preceding year by Charles II of England confirming the restitution of Acadia to the French. The letter had been brought to Boston by the Chevalier de Grandfontaine as a preliminary to taking possession of Pentagoet. Feigning illness, Temple declined to go to Pentagoet. "The poor Temple, the broken-hearted", writes Daviault with mock-sympathy, "could not himself participate in the sad ceremony" on August 5, 1670, when Captain Walker turned over to the French, the future Baron de St. Castin standing among them, the fort at Pentagoet.

Neither Rameau de St. Père nor the American writers who followed him were sure when or how Jean-Vincent reached Pentagoet, and they conjectured much. It is better to throw away the guesses and keep to the incontestable fact, now so brightly illumined, that Jean-Vincent came to the Penobscot region on the *Saint-Sebastien* in July of 1670.

The light of history also shines more brightly on Jean-Vincent in the years 1670-1674 than it did before the Le Blant and Daviault biographies. The record is corrected by the story from the French side with its blame on the inadequate support given by France to its Acadian colony. The English peaceably transferred Pentagoet to the Chevalier de Grandfontaine, but the Chevalier soon found that he had to trade with the English or starve. He did not choose to starve and was reprimanded, the strength of his instinct for self-preservation being no excuse in the eyes of the French court. On May 5, 1675, he was recalled to France.

The Chevalier had had his quarrels with his lieutenant, Joibert de Marson, but the young St. Castin was mature enough, balanced enough, to keep aloof. One of St. Castin's commissions was to re-establish a fort on the Saint John River, of which the disaffected Joibert de Marson was commander. St. Castin efficiently put the fort into condition and installed cannon from another establishment—without becoming a partisan of M. de Marson.

The ability of the youth was further recognized when he was commissioned to establish overland communication between Pentagoet and Québec, about two hundred miles distant. He was sent to Québec to express to Frontenac, Governor of Canada, the grievances of Grandfontaine against his lieutenant, M. de Marson, and again St. Castin avoided becoming a partisan.

Chambly, an officer of the disbanded Carignan Salières regiment, succeeded the Chevalier de Grandfontaine in command of Pentagoet. He came into misfortunes. He was fooled by John Rhoades, who disguised his English nationality and visited Pentagoet for four days in 1674. Soon thereafter, on August 10, came disaster: the *Flying Horse*, flying Flemish colours, hailing from Curaçao under the command of Jurriaen Aeronouts, with the spy John Rhoades on board, appeared off Pentagoet. One hundred and ten men landed and attacked the defenders, who numbered only thirty-eight. Count Frontenac's version of the attack, sent to minister Colbert, stigmatized the attackers as "a crew of buccaneers . . . who had just come from St. Domingo, and who had crossed over from Boston . . . who, after landing kept up their attack for an hour". He gave a poor opinion of the garrison—"only thirty disaffected and badly armed men"—who surrendered, whereupon the "pirates" pillaged the place, took away the guns, and carried Chambly off to Boston. In time Colbert wrote that Louis XIV "could not persuade himself that there has not been a little negligence upon the part of Sieur de Chambly".

What St. Castin did in the fighting, we do not know. In some accounts he is said to have been wounded. In the Le Blant-Daviault accounts

he is subjected to torture (unspecified) and manages to escape (how is not known), gain the woods, and join the Indians. We find him somehow on his way to Québec; he is carrying a letter fixing the ransom of Chambly at one thousand beaver skins. Has he been appointed a ransom envoy by the "pirates"? He arrives in Québec, Frontenac goes into his own pocket to meet the ransom demand, and he then gives St. Castin a mission that is to determine the whole pattern of his future life.

The discovery of the mission that Frontenac gave St. Castin in 1674 is the greatest contribution that Le Blant and Daviault make to the understanding of St. Castin. It provides a key to much about the man that has baffled us. It is the basis for the whole revised account of St. Castin's role in French colonial history.

Frontenac gave St. Castin a bill of exchange for the ransom. St. Castin gave him a notarized receipt, but on this receipt he acknowledged that he had been given a delicate mission. The mission? It was to engage the Abenaki Indians of Maine in the interest of France. Le Blant and Daviault fully appreciate the significance of this old scrap of paper.

Thereafter St. Castin lived most of the time with the Abenaki Indians. He intermarried and became a chief. In the revised account, St. Castin ceased to be French in order to become Abenaki, as one takes on a new nationality by naturalization. Was this treason? Le Blant and Daviault answer "no", and their answer is convincing.

They point out first the neglect and forgetfulness of the French court toward the colony of Acadia. The twenty-two-year-old St. Castin was given by Frontenac a most difficult post, then he was virtually abandoned by Versailles. He was never put in charge of Pentagoet until 1703—it was too late then—nor did he have until 1703 any official connection with the little colony.

Chambly, a prisoner at Boston, was ransomed and came back to Pentagoet in 1676, but only for a brief stay. He was named governor of Martinique in 1677. Versailles appointed no commander of Pentagoet in his place. The disaffected lieutenant, Joibert de Marson, administered the colony's affairs but had no title; he died in 1678. Still the French court named no successor to Chambly. Finally Frontenac on his own responsibility put La Vallière in command. At last, in 1684, France appointed the infamous François Perrot governor of Acadia.

This record reveals very well the neglect suffered by St. Castin and the other Frenchmen in Acadia, and it should be kept in mind when it is said that St. Castin changed his nationality. But we must add that he did not change his race too; he became a "naturalized" Abenaki but never gave up being a Frenchman.

Thus when the Dutch came back to molest Pentagoet in 1676, St. Castin was not there but was among the Indians. A small fleet of English vessels hailing from Boston came into view, and the pillaging Dutch slipped the cable of their ship and made off. Then St. Castin repossessed the fort.

The question, of course, has arisen: did St. Castin live with the Indians through predilection and taste? Was he a Rousseauist before Rousseau was born? This is very doubtful. He adopted by necessity the manner of living proper to savages, but it is possible that he also had some liking for the life. He was not the beachcomber type.

The seriousness of St. Castin's Abenaki "naturalization" is shown by his marriage to Mathilde, the daughter of Madockawando. The poets have credited Mathilde with great beauty, but we know nothing about her. Her father seems to have been a remarkable chief, an Etchemin by race but a Kennebec by adoption. The Pentagoet Indians whom he ruled were Etchemin. We know, too, that he was the adopted son of Essemonosque, the Kennebec sagamore who signed deeds in 1653. Pasquine, a French contemporary, wrote of Madockawando in 1688 that he was "a brave and upright man and of an acute and subtle understanding."

It is a great handicap to understanding St. Castin that we know so little about the wife whom he married according to Abenaki custom. Later this union was regularized by Christian ritual. There exists a certificate dated September 30, 1684, in which the bishop of Québec orders Father Jacques Bigot, missionary among the Abenakis, to marry the Baron de St. Castin to Mathilde, daughter of Madockawando. The ceremony took place in the little Catholic chapel on Panawanske Island, now called Indian Island, at Old Town on the Penobscot. From this union came a son, Anselm, and a daughter, Anastasia.

Every effort has been made to make a scandal of St. Castin's life among the Indians. He was accused of libertinism and debauchery and was even put under arrest at Port Royal from April 22 to July 9, 1687, by M. François Perrot, governor of Acadia. But Perrot's accusations were greatly weakened by his quarrelsome and greedy character. Perrot, when governor of Montreal,

had quarreled with Frontenac (who put him in prison for ten months) and with the clergy. He engaged heavily in contraband traffic and hated St. Castin as a business rival.

It should be noted here that St. Castin seems to have been a good business man. The claim has been made that he amassed three hundred thousand crowns' worth of furs; if this is true, it signifies considerable trading ability. At any rate, Perrot was jealous of St. Castin's success as a fur trader; St. Castin made the countercharge that M. Perrot "wishes to be the only dealer in Acadia." As for his arrest by Perrot, that, St. Castin wrote, was "on pretence of a little weakness I had for some women." The real motive was commercial. Eventually, the unpopular Perrot was removed from office and later was taken and robbed by pirates, a fitting punishment for a man who had been a partner of bushrangers. Perrot was indeed a very poor witness against St. Castin.

St. Castin was cleared after a fashion by M. de Denonville, the Governor of Canada who preceded Frontenac's return as Governor in 1689. Denonville was esteemed for piety, probity, and honour, and his judgment carries weight. In a report in 1687 to the Minister of France, Denonville admitted that "it is true that he [St. Castin] has been addicted in the past to libertinism, but they assure me that he has very much reformed and has very good sentiments."

And there is the opinion of M. de Meneval, who succeeded M. Perrot as governor of Port Royal. In 1688 Meneval wrote, "I have induced the Sieur de St. Castin to live a more regular life. He has quitted his traffic with the English, his debauchery with the savages, he is married, and has promised to labour to make a settlement in this country."

Later, when Anselm² renewed his father's contest for his inheritance, there was a flare-up of stories of Jean-Vincent's debauchery among the Indians, but these tales were traceable to the zealous self-interest of lawyer Labaig, who wanted to prove Jean-Vincent's children illegitimate. Labaig rounded up what evidence he could secure from Acadia that St. Castin had a second wife, although her name has not come down to us with any certainty. (The English said St. Castin had three or four wives, but they could not know.) This second wife may or may not have been Marie Pidianiskie, whose name was recorded as the mother of St. Castin's daughter Thérèse. It is certain that the "evidence" in support of Labaig's charges was both malicious and exaggerated. The probability is that Mathilde was St. Castin's only wife by Catholic marriage.

Moreover, it could even be that Madame Mathilde de St. Castin and Marie Pidianiskie were the same person. That is the bold suggestion of Pierre Daviault. A sober and responsible biographer, he believes that Pidianiskie was the Indian name of St. Castin's wife and that Marie-Mathilde was her name by Christian baptism. A plausible supposition.

We may agree with the opinion of Father Petit of Port Royal on the weakness of St. Castin's spiritual nature without conceding anything to St. Castin's enemies, Perrot and Labaig, with their ignoble motives for blackening his character. On a visit to Port Royal, St. Castin, presenting himself as a devout Catholic, requested a resident priest for the Pentagoet station to convert his Indian friends. Father Petit commented that St. Castin "himself had need of spiritual aid to sustain him in the path of virtue." No doubt; but he was not a libertine.

In contemplating St. Castin at his wild outpost, we must always keep in mind, first, that he was virtually forgotten by the French court for twenty or more years, and, second, that he was, despite this neglect, remarkably loyal to France's interest in the New World.

That St. Castin's sympathies were entirely with France was shown in the complicated John Nelson affair. Nelson was the nephew and heir of Colonel Thomas Temple, the disgruntled governor of New England. In the time of the La Tour-Aulney feud in Acadia, Temple purchased goods of La Tour; he had been damaged by the return of Acadia to France, and he had never renounced his "rights" there. Now in 1686 John Nelson, regarded by both Le Blant and Daviault as a shady character,—“an English La Tour”—insisted on the “rights” of his uncle and employed some of his uncle's tactics. He wanted to do business with the “usurper”, St. Castin. Nelson had even been willing to become a naturalized Frenchman if the Acadians would restore his goods to him. The Acadians rejected him, yet managed to trade with him. An ambiguous character and an ambiguous business.

In August of 1686 *La Jeanne* from Piscataqua, commanded by Captain Phillippe Syuret, put in at Pentagoet and delivered to St. Castin a cargo of wine marked for “Nelson, Watkins and associates.” Disputation followed, for the English did not like French administration of this region, and the cargo was quickly involved in questions of who owned Pentagoet. The agents of the Duke of York at Pemaquid—Judge Palmer of New York and Mr.

West—sent a ship, commanded by Captain Thomas Sharpe, to Pentagoet to seize the cargo on the pretext that the unloading had taken place in English territory without any customs formality. The cargo in English eyes was contraband, and Judge Palmer in ordering confiscation told St. Castin not to oppose its removal. He warned St. Castin not to enter into collusion with the savages.

At the same time a bribe was held out to St. Castin. Captain Sharpe told him that he must not prevent the removal of the wine or threaten British subjects but, if St. Castin would indicate the lands which he pretended to possess, ownership of them would be conceded to him—another if—if he became a British subject. St. Castin for his part was petitioning Versailles for thirty soldiers. With thirty soldiers he said he would found an establishment at Pentagoet and make it secure with four hundred Indians loyal to him and hostile to the English.

The dispute was complicated by St. Castin's enemy, M. François Perrot of Port Royal, who sniped at him with charges that he was too obliging toward Sharpe, although we now know that Perrot himself was quite indulgent toward Nelson.

St. Castin's reply to the English bid for his oath was a smile of contempt. He proceeded to flout the orders of Judge Palmer, and the dispute was referred to M. de Bonrepaus, the French ambassador at London, who made representations to the English. Finally, in 1689, the English commissioners acknowledged that the left bank of the Penobscot was French, and St. Castin repossessed the cargo of wine.

It also took Versailles three years to act on St. Castin's request for thirty soldiers. The court finally ordered M. de Meneval, the Governor of Port Royal, to attract the services of St. Castin.

During this decade the English consistently abused St. Castin. In 1682, Carter of Salem, who had received permission from La Vallière to fish off Canseau, had temporarily seized St. Castin's house at Pentagoet. Now in 1688 the unpopular Royal Governor of New England, Sir Edmund Andros, came "down east" in the frigate *Rose* to drive St. Castin away. Anchoring opposite the fort at Pentagoet, Andros sent a lieutenant ashore to talk to St. Castin. St. Castin was not there. Andros asserted that he had fled to the woods. Others have said that he was away on a fishing trip. Pierre Daviault, however, has established that St. Castin was in Canada at the time of the Andros raid. He had gone there at the head of a party of Abenakis to join Denonville's expedition against the Iroquois.

In St. Castin's absence, Andros pillaged his house, leaving only a small altar, some pictures, and a few ornaments. The rest of St. Castin's property (arms, powder, shot, wine, kettles, trucking cloth, chairs, etc.) Andros put on the *Rose* for removal to Pemaquid. He seems to have given Madockawando some presents and to have said that Madockawando's son-in-law could recover his property at Pemaquid by taking the oath of allegiance to the English king. At about this time St. Castin sent a bark from Quebec with flour and other goods to "revitalize" the Acadians, but Andros intercepted and seized the bark.

The Andros raid now became a topic of the diplomats, and the French lodged protests at London. Louis XIV expressed the wish that the Indian fur trade be confined to the French, and compensation to St. Castin for the damage he had suffered from Andros was ordered. St. Castin was given a concession of land two leagues in length along the Saint John River near Jemsec.

This is a good moment for a glance of appraisal. When St. Castin received the concession near Jemsec, he was thirty-seven years old and had passed twenty-two years in the rude life of New France. His elder brother had died in 1674; that had made him, a forest dweller, Baron de St. Castin and heir to an estate in France—but he had not received any income from his estate. Since 1674 he had been carrying out an assignment from Frontenac to win over the Abenakis to France. He had received very little help—in fact, no help—from the French court, and he had been calumniated by French officials in Acadia. We do not, however, have any real clues to his personality. He had married Mathilde, the daughter of an important Indian chief, and he had children. Again we lack the clues: we do not know the kind of husband he was or how he filled the role of father. He had prospered as a trader but had been obliged by the poor supply measures of the French to do business with the English. He had been able at frontier enterprises—reconditioning the fort for Joibert de Marson, maintaining a line of communication between Québec and Pentagoet, building a mill at Port Royal, achieving leadership among the Indians—and had at last caught the eye of Versailles. He was for Versailles its advanced sentry in Acadia, and his information was to be important to the court. For, at last, Versailles was to take Acadia more seriously.

The second of the French and Indian Wars, commonly known as King William's War, has sometimes been called "la guerre de Saint-Castin", so large a part did the Baron play in it. Yet it is hard to define his part.

"La guerre de St. Castin" broke out in May of 1689. Certainly, during the next few years St. Castin was very much involved in its events, but we get only a few glimpses of him in the raiding of English settlements, in the fighting, in the crude diplomatic struggle. There is to be one clear moment of glory. But usually we do not know just what his role was.

For instance, in 1689 about a hundred of Madockawando's Indians, accompanied by Father Thury, a Jesuit priest on the Penobscot whom the English considered an "apostle of carnage", captured Pemaquid. Was St. Castin with them? Daviault speaks of these Indians as "St. Castin's Indians." Was St. Castin the instigator, as some Englishmen alleged, of the terrible Indian raids in 1689 and 1690 that carried havoc to the Piscataqua, the river that runs along the southern border of Maine? Andros and his successor, Governor Bradstreet, tried to counterattack. They were unsuccessful, and in Maine only the villages of Wells, York, and Kittery survived the raiding of 1690. Governor Bradstreet's efforts to conclude peace with the Indians were, we know, frustrated by St. Castin. Bradstreet had induced an Abenaki chief to preach to his fellow chiefs the burial of the hatcher and had given him a supply of gold, but when this chief reached Pentagoet, St. Castin quickly changed his disposition and turned him against the English.

In May of 1690 there was a great rendezvous at Pentagoet at which Madockawando and St. Castin took personal command of the Indians. They proceeded to attack Casco and went on to Wells and Exeter. It has been alleged that St. Castin was at Casco.

The English had one taste of success in 1690. Sir William Phips, dealing with the Abbé Petit and M. de Meneval, seized Port Royal. A daughter of St. Castin was taken on board the sloop *Mary*, commanded by Captain John Alden—this probably should be called a kidnapping—and the sloop sailed for St. John, Passamaquoddy, Machias, and Pentagoet to search out the French and make them take the oath of British allegiance. Captain Alden was given precise instructions for a bargain with St. Castin. St. Castin was to liberate his captives in exchange for the freedom of his daughter. If St. Castin took the British oath, his lands and mills at Port Royal would be restored to him. A pledge would be given him that if he went to Boston, he could return at will. And recommendations for an honourable peace with the French and Indians were to be offered to St. Castin.

This offer could not be made because St. Castin was at Casco. Sir William Phips proceeded to seize St. Castin's possessions at Port Royal and sailed back to Boston, leaving the place without garrison but under the governance of a collaborating council of inhabitants. It is tantalizing that we do not know which of St. Castin's daughters was taken on the sloop *Mary* or how tender were her years or how she was returned to the Acadians.

In 1691 Joseph Robineau de Villebon, nephew of La Vallière, was given the mission to retake Port Royal. Here the mysterious John Nelson reappears in the Acadia story. He sent pacific messages to the Abenaki and to St. Castin, but St. Castin persuaded the Indians to spurn these advances.

Early in 1692 a hundred and fifty of Father Thury's Indian converts joined with a band of Kennebec Indians to attack York and leave it in ashes. After a victory celebration which the French gave them in New Brunswick, the Abenaki promised to go to a grand rendezvous and war party at St. Castin's station of Pentagoet. "At the beginning of June", wrote Francis Parkman, "the site of the town of Castine was covered with wigwams . . . Malcites, and Micmacs, Abenakis from the Penobscot and Abenakis from the Kennebec, were here, some four hundred warriors in all. Here, too, were Portneuf and his Canadians, the Baron de Saint-Castin and his Indian father-in-law, Madockawando, with Moxus, Egeremet, and other noted chiefs, the terror of the English border. They crossed Penobscot Bay, and marched upon the frontier village of Wells." But they were foiled at Wells, and their ardour cooled. We must assume that St. Castin was at Wells, but no historian has positively placed him there.

The English now reoccupied Pemaquid, and the French set themselves the task of retaking it. The French plan, to which Madockawando was privy, was to send from Quebec two ships of war with above four hundred men, to take on board at Pentagoet two or three hundred Indians, and then to reduce Pemaquid. But when the French and Indians reached Pemaquid, they found already there an armed ship from Boston. Iberville, the intrepid French naval commander, believed that his means were insufficient and bore away instead of attacking, an action that has mystified historians.

The English now concocted a plot to kidnap or assassinate St. Castin. "whom", said Parkman, "next to the priest Thury, they regarded as their most insidious enemy." The plot started with that stirrer of troubled waters, John Nelson, a captive at Quebec, who managed to lead astray two French soldiers, Armand de Vignon and François Albert, and bribed them to take a letter to

Boston. In this letter Nelson gave news of a plan for offensive action by M. d'Iberville in conjunction with St. Castin. Sir William Phips decided on a surprise stroke against the baron. Boston authorities were holding prisoner two Acadian sailors—Jacques Petipas and Saint-Aubin (sometimes called Charles de Lareau)—who had been seized at sea, with their families, in August of 1692. The two sailors were promised liberty if they would join the two French deserters, Vignon and Albert, "to go to carry off by force the Sieur de St. Castin", their wives and children meanwhile to be kept as hostages. The four plotters sailed on a fishing vessel of 20 tons and reached Penobscot Bay on October 24. Here the sight of Iberville's ships emboldened the two Acadians. They overpowered and bound Vignon and Albert, and told their story to Iberville. The deserters were brought before Villebon and made complete confession. They were executed. According to one account, Villebon inflicted on them the agony reserved for traitors, cracking the skull edgewise, but according to Judge John E. Godfrey, a student of early Maine history, Vignon and Albert were shot before Nelson's eyes at Québec.³

Some evidence has been offered that in 1693 St. Castin gave his adherence—only temporarily—to the English crown. Le Blant and Daviault paid no attention to the French documents in the Massachusetts State archives that attest to St. Castin's English adherence and hence ignore the suggestion that St. Castin gave this adherence in 1693 because he looked ahead and foresaw the eventual supremacy of New England on the Maine coast. In the Le Blant version, St. Castin is virtually an Indian chief with steady, uninterrupted Francophile attitudes and loyalties. Le Blant notes that in 1693 the exhortations of M. de Villebon to the Abenaki and Kennebec were accompanied by a large distribution of presents and that St. Castin was not forgotten. Versailles ordered a special gratuity for St. Castin of 100 pounds of powder and 300-400 pounds of lead. St. Castin, Le Blant declares, was therefore a chief, and it was a question of having him well disposed toward France, or at least of recompensing him for his good will.

In 1693 there was a strong movement among the Abenaki for peace with the English, and in this St. Castin's father-in-law, Madockawando, seems to have been a leading spirit. Madockawando had been a fierce foe of the English, but in 1693 he was dissatisfied with the French and wanted to re-open trade with the English. Although some French called it only "pour-parlers", a treaty between the Abenaki and the English colonists was actually signed on August 11, 1693, with Madockawando and Ahonquit signing for the Pentagoet Indians. Under this treaty the Indians freed their English

captives, renounced their allegiance with the French, and recognized the King of England as their sovereign. They gave five hostages, among them Wenongahewitt, a cousin of Madockawando. The attitude of the Indians makes plausible St. Castin's alleged adherence to the British crown.

St. Castin did not sign this treaty. Why did he not sign? Was it from prudence or duplicity? Daviault thinks it was from another motive. No one in those days took seriously treaties signed by the Indians; they were considered to pledge only breathing-spells. But if the word of a European were given, the word of a former French officer, as it would have been given by St. Castin's signature, then St. Castin would have had to impose respect for the pledged word of the Indians. He wished to evade that. And, in fact, the treaty was soon taken lightly. It was broken by the Indians on July 14, 1694.

Some persuading of the Indians was nevertheless required to bring about the breaking of the treaty. Father Thury and the officer Villieu especially strove to defeat the peace movement. Early in May, 1694, Villieu appeared at the juncture of the Mattawamkeag and Penobscot rivers to stir up a pro-war chief, Taxous. Villieu and Taxous paddled down the Penobscot to a large Indian village near the place today called Passadumkeag, and there Villieu exhorted the assembled warriors to follow him against the English. It took time and much giving of presents to win the Indians over to becoming an expeditionary force. Early in June the whole flotilla paddled down the Penobscot to Pentagoet.

According to Parkman,

here the Indians divided their presents, which they found somewhat less ample than they had imagined. In the midst of their discontent, Madockawando came from Pemaquid with news that the governor of Massachusetts was about to deliver up the Indian prisoners in his hands, as stipulated by the [August 11, 1693] treaty. This completely changed the temper of the warriors. Madockawando declared loudly for peace, and Villieu saw all his hopes wrecked. He tried to persuade his disaffected allies that the English only meant to lure them to destruction, and the Missionary Thury supported him with the utmost eloquence. The Indians would not be convinced; and their trust in English good faith was confirmed, when they heard that a minister had just come to Pemaquid to teach their children to read and write. The news grew worse and worse . . . Villieu now despaired of his enterprise . . . when Thury, wise as the serpent, set himself to work on the jealousy of Taxous, took him aside, and persuaded him that his rival, Madockawando, had put a slight upon him in presuming to make peace without his consent. "The effect was marvellous", says

Villieu. Taxous, exasperated, declared that he would have nothing to do with Madockawando's treaty. The fickle multitude caught the contagion, and asked for nothing but English scalps; but, before setting out, they must needs go back to Passadumkeag to finish their preparations.

Later Villieu "gave the Indians a war-feast, at which they all sang the war-song, except Madockawando and some thirty of his tribesmen, whom the others made the butt of their taunts and ridicule. The chief began to waver. The officer and the missionary beset him with presents and persuasion, till at last he promised to join the rest."

It is curious that there is no mention of St. Castin in these meetings. Did he exert no influence whatever? Was he in sympathy with Madockawando, who wanted peace prolonged until all prisoners had been returned? Did he share Madockawando's distrust of the French? The French had sent help, but how regularly would it come? In the end Madockawando changed his mind when he learned from his spies that the English had assembled a thousand men at Piscatqua "to pounce on the Abenakis and destroy them" and that Phips's offer was only a ruse to gain time. Then Madockawando no longer hesitated.

At the end of June, Villieu and Father Thury, Madockawando and Taxous, with one Frenchman and a hundred and five Indians, began their long canoe voyage to the English border. They by-passed Pemaquid, perpetrated the Oyster River massacre near the New Hampshire border, and fell to marauding in the vicinity—Groton, Piscataqua, Kittery. On September 15 this force, now said to be under St. Castin's orders, attacked Deerfield.

At the beginning of this campaign Villieu had rushed to Québec and flung thirteen English scalps at the feet of Frontenac as a sign that the Indians were again allies of the French. But by 1695 the Indians were losing their enthusiasm for the alliance. French policy was responsible for this cooling. Louis XIV had held the view, and so had Villebon, that France need depend only upon the Indians; the King need only provide officers for an army composed of Indians. This thinking was in accordance with the wish not to spend money on soldiers in Canada. The Indians, however, considered themselves allies of France, not subjects of the French king. St. Castin represented France to them, and they would not have liked to have him supplanted by another European.

But what made matters bad between the French and the Indians was the niggardliness of supplies. The Indians had carried devastation almost to the outskirts of Boston, but provisions were slow in reaching them, and it

was not long before their affection for France was anything but lively. The English were superior at sea. Pourparlers between the English and the Indians actually began in 1695, but St. Castin and Father Thury persuaded the Indians not to answer Phips favourably but, after they had harvested their maize, to retire to the depths of the forests, beyond the reach of the English. This they did, and then William Stoughton, Acting-Governor of Massachusetts after Phips's death, antagonized them to the pitch of renewed open hostility.

There was to have been an exchange of prisoners; St. Castin had been appointed to act for Frontenac in the negotiations. Seven Pentagoet Indian emissaries were captured by Pascho Chubb, the commander at Pemaquid, and reached Boston in chains. Not all of them, however; three or four were killed en route. At this point Acting-Governor Stoughton made the mistake of being menacing and pitiless. The Indians reacted by refusing to sign a treaty and agreed only to a thirty-day truce. In the belief that the French had regained control of the sea, they went on the warpath after the truce expired.

St. Castin's great moment of military glory came at Pemaquid in 1696. Frontenac wished to destroy English strength everywhere in North America, but the French court was convinced that the control of the continent would be determined by a struggle in the interior. Aside from the deep interior struggle, they wanted to dislodge the English from only three places where they menaced trade: Pemaquid, Newfoundland, and Hudson's Bay. Frontenac believed that the fate of Acadia and the fate of New France were indivisible. The French king, however, did not see the necessity for a comprehensive offensive, and the court decided on a limited offensive against Pemaquid in 1696. That excellent seaman Iberville was sent with a small fleet to subdue the place.

On August 7, Iberville reached the rendezvous at Pentagoet, and here were 250 Indians—90 from Pentagoet, 70 from the Kennebec, the rest from Passamaquoddy and the Saint John River—to whom Iberville distributed presents. Villieu went by sea; St. Castin, Father Thury, Father Simon, and the Indians went by land to close off escape routes from Pemaquid. The Indians reached the vicinity of Pemaquid first and made a road for the transportation of cannon and mortars. The fleet arrived on August 13, and on the next day St. Castin, acting as interpreter for the assailants, dispatched a letter to Pascho Chubb, the English commander, saying that if he resisted he would be given no quarter but would be delivered to the fury of the savages. Chubb replied that even though the sea were covered with ships and the land with Indians, he would not surrender until he was compelled to do so.

The Indians opened fire, and Iberville, who had landed during the night and set up batteries, fired four or five bombs at the fort. Under an order from Iberville, St. Castin sent a second summons to surrender. This warning was effective. The garrison of this strong fort—ninety-five men with fifteen cannon and a good stock of provisions—capitulated on the promise of protection against the allies of the French, and came out unarmed. Iberville transported them to an island within range of his cannon, "where they had no fear they would be insulted by the savages, and this precaution was more necessary than they believed."

It was indeed a close thing, for Villieu, the first to penetrate the fort, had found there a wretched Abenaki in irons under sentence to be hanged, "almost ready to expire", and this had put the Abenakis into a rage. It was with difficulty that Iberville and St. Castin restrained them.

On August 17 the fort was set on fire and burned for two days. Its capture had cost only one life, that of a sailor who caught pleurisy in the cold, wet business of transporting cannon and mortars.

St. Castin shone quite as much by his humaneness as by his leadership.

If St. Castin's deeds at Pemaquid had the quality of the August weather the natives of Maine like to call "sparklin' a-plenty", then the few glimpses we catch of him in the next five years may be compared to glimpses of a man in a Maine fog that fitfully lifts. In the end we shall find that the hero of Pemaquid had been put on the defensive for his conduct.

In 1697 Frontenac made great preparations for war against New England, but a squadron of ten war vessels from France ran into adverse winds and lost two months in crossing to Newfoundland. Its commander thought the season too advanced for operations and returned to France. On September 20, King William's War came to an end with the Treaty of Ryswick.

The Governor of New York sent St. Castin a copy of this treaty, but St. Castin soon ascertained that the Pentagoet Indians considered that they had been overlooked in the treaty negotiations. They pointed out that their tribal members who were prisoners of the English were not restored to them by the treaty. Consequently the Indians continued to ravage the English settlements.

In 1698 the Indians suffered a great loss in the death of Madockawando "of a grievous unknown disease which consumed them wonderfully", accord-

ing to Cotton Mather. The Abenaki now found that they could expect no more help from France, and Frontenac told them not to count on him. French presents to the Abenaki noticeably diminished. It was a favourable moment for the English to make peace overtures to the Indians, and they made them.

The truth is that the Indians had no recourse but to do business with the English. We must give full weight to this necessity when we come upon irrefutable evidence that St. Castin entered into commercial relations with France's enemy, the English. What else could he do? After Madockawando's death he had greater responsibilities among the Indians. He seems to have begun trading with the English even before the Treaty of Ryswick. French complaints, principally made by Villieu, of illicit dealings with the English were multiplied in the dying years of the seventeenth century. Certainly, commercial relations between Boston and Pentagoet, involving the Pentagoet priest as well as St. Castin, were re-established. In 1700 Villieu charged that St. Castin had sent to Boston a ship properly belonging to Villieu which had a cargo of furs valued at more than a thousand crowns, to be exchanged for goods for the Abenaki. And in 1701 Villieu was incensed because the Abenaki accepted gifts from the English and buried the war hatchet beneath a pyramid of masonry.

All this time the French court was demanding that all trade with the English be stopped. Matters came to a head in 1701 when M. de Brouillan succeeded Villebon as governor of Acadia. Brouillan was a violent man, jealous of his authority, but he was also competent and conscientious and had integrity. He investigated the accusations against St. Castin and partly exonerated him:

The Sieur de St. Castin whom I had come here [to Port Royal] to have explained to him the intention of His Majesty on the commerce which people pretend St. Castin has engaged in with the English made me to know that he was not culpable as he was charged. He ought to go to France to give an account of his actions. I have felt that he could not do better to serve me than by trying to lead back to us in our interest the savages who have been ready to abandon us. As these people have faith in him, they have done everything I could hope. Also I have spared nothing to engage them as our friends.

Toward the end of 1701, St. Castin sailed for France to justify his conduct. He was unaware that his frontier life as a "chef sauvage" was over. In time of war he had been a faithful ally of France, but now he had to explain that in time of peace it had sometimes happened that the interests of

the Abenaki were at variance with the political economy practised by the Court of France. It was in the intervals of peace that he had not hesitated to trade with the English. The extenuating circumstances were of the greatest force. "His faults", as Francis Parkman later declared, "were not of the baser sort."

With the departure of St. Castin for France went France's last hope of holding Acadia against New England, but the history-blind court at Versailles could not read the future. Twelve years later came the Treaty of Utrecht that declared that "all Nova-Scotia, or Acadia, with its ancient boundaries, also the city of Port-Royal, now Annapolis Royal, and all other things in these parts, belonging to the crown of France, or any subjects thereof, and also the inhabitants of the same, are resigned and made over to the crown of Great Britain forever."

NOTES

1. The biographers of St. Castin have been mystified by a statement of Colonel Church. "Among our prisoners", he wrote, "was found the daughter of *St. Casteen* who told us that her husband had gone to France to rejoin her father, *monsieur Casteen*. As her children were with her, the commander was full of consideration for them." Who was this married daughter? Who was this son-in-law? St. Castin's known daughters, Anastasia and Thérèse, were not married until 1707. How much credence should be given to Colonel Church's report?
2. Bernard-Anselme, born 1689, studied in a Quebec seminary in 1704 and at an early age was given an official mission to the Abenaki, thus succeeding his father.
3. Nelson is a puzzle to the biographers of St. Castin. He was sent to France and imprisoned in the Chateau of Angoulême. Released on bail, he promised to secure the liberation of French troops at Port Royal. But the English refused his negotiation, and Nelson again became a prisoner in France, this time in the Bastille. After ten years he came back to Boston, freed by the intervention of Sir Purbec Temple, presumably a kinsman, who had secured his bail.