

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

EUGÈNE A.A. BOUILLON  
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1869 - 1959  
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Born in Jersey, Eugène Auguste  
Albert Bouillon served the Robin  
Company in Gaspesia for 69 years  
rising from clerk apprentice to  
general manager.

Ken Annett

EUGÈNE AUGUSTE ALBERT BOUILLON. 1869-1959

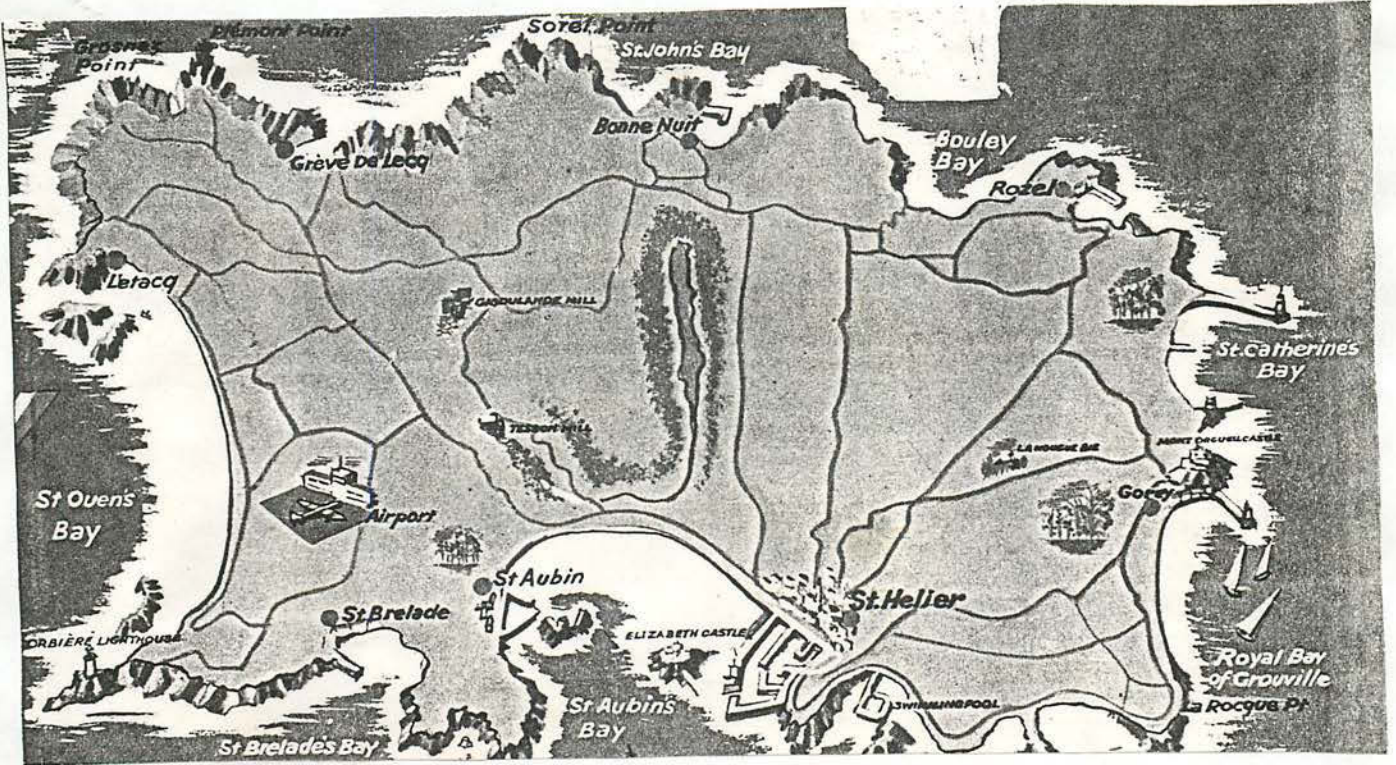
The career of Eugène Bouillon in Gaspesia is remarkable for a number of reasons, not the least of which being that he served the Charles Robin Company and its successors for sixty-nine years. It is likewise noteworthy that he rose steadily from the lowly rank of clerk apprentice to the influential and responsible post of General Manager and Resident Director of the Company. In his management role for the twenty-two branches of the Robin firm his decisions had a significant and wide-spread impact on the communities and public of Gaspesia.

IN THE BEGINNING

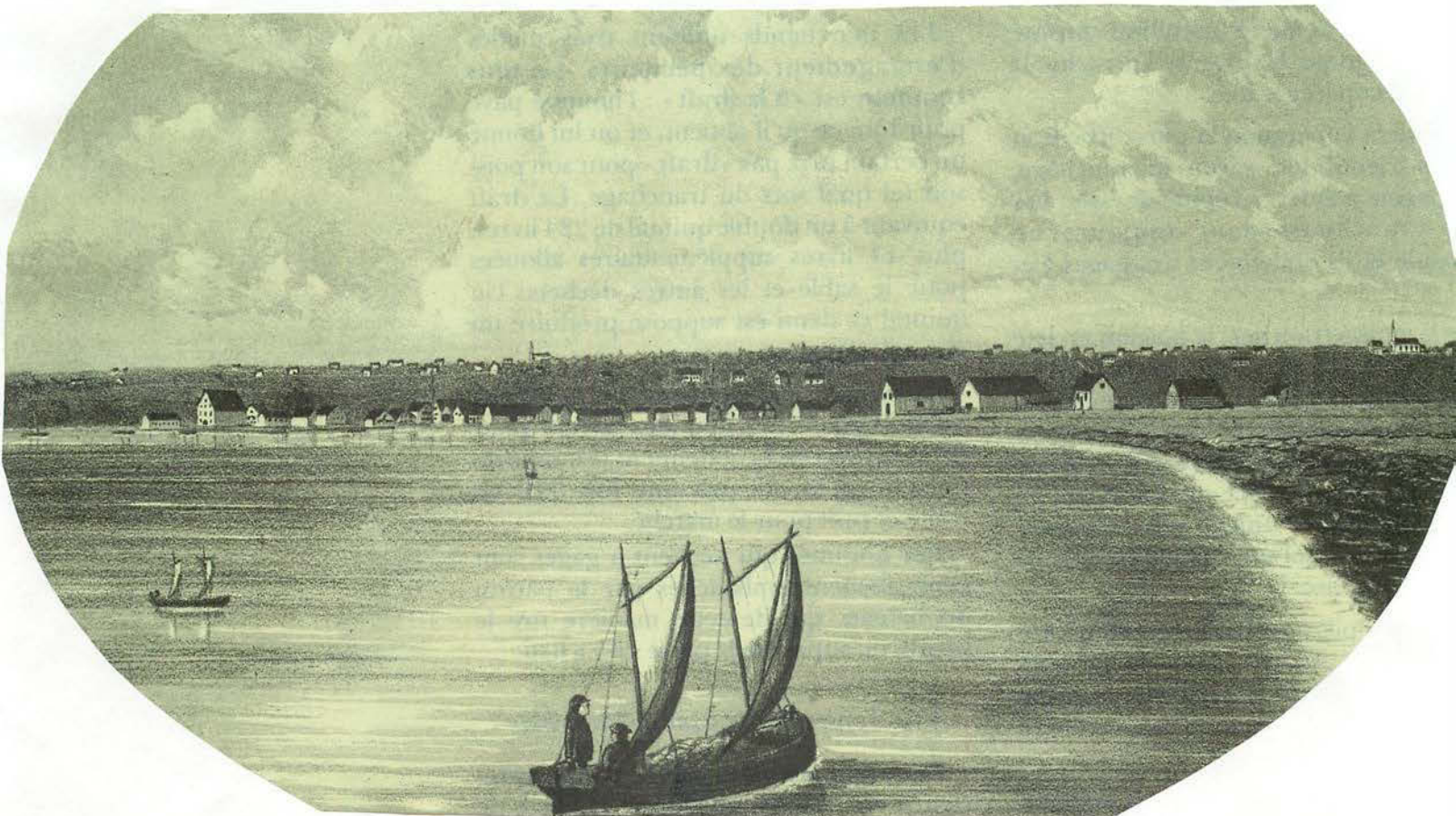
Eugène Auguste Albert Bouillon was born at Bagot, Jersey, the Channel Islands on September 18th., 1869. His father, Eugène Bouillon, a native of coastal Normandy, had moved to Jersey with his wife, née Le Mière, and established himself there as a merchant. Their son, Eugène, recalled some incidents of his boyhood days on a return visit to Jersey just prior to his death. He saw himself as a lad trotting through the Royal Square along side of his father. Abreast of the statue in the Square two men leapt out to attack them. His father laid one out with a deft punch- the other turned on his heel and fled. That and other memories had stayed with him for the seventy-five years that he had been away from his native Jersey in distant Gaspesia.

It was at Parlett's School, in Green Street, that the youthful Eugène Bouillon was educated prior to joining the Charles Robin Company as a clerk apprentice at the age of fourteen years. His father insisted that he learn both French and Jersey-French, in addition to English. This trilingual facility stood him in good stead later as a business man in Gaspesia and Atlantic Canada. On April 10th., 1883 he sailed from St. Helier, Jersey on the barque "SEAFLOWER" and landed at Paspebiac a month later on May 10th. A remarkable association of seventy-six years of company service and retirement years in Gaspesia began. It is of interest to note that the Robin Company had, at that time, been established for 117 years in Gaspesia and the Maritimes. Thus the youthful Eugène Bouillon was entering an apprentice regime that had been developed

FROM JERSEY, C.I.



TO PASPEBIAC, GASPEZIA.



and refined, to meet the needs of the Company, over more than a century.

#### COMPANY EMPLOY

The first year of Eugène Bouillon's apprenticeship in Canada was spent at the Robin Co. establishment at Caraquet, N.B., across Bay Chaleur from Paspébiac. By coincidence, it was at Caraquet that the company's founder, Charles Robin, had business dealings when he arrived in Bay Chaleur in 1767. (Ref. THE ROBINS IN GASPE. 1766-1825 David Lee. ISBN 0-88902-952-0 1984) There had been a Robin establishment at Caraquet since 1819. Then the youthful clerk served at several of the other Robin stations along the Gaspé coast from 1884 to 1890. Evidently his work and attitude impressed the executives of the company for in 1890 he was chosen as envoy to the General Manager in Canada upon the retirement of Mr. Le Montais, Chief Agent of the erstwhile Philip Robin and Co. division of the Robin business.

In 1896, thirteen years after his arrival in Canada as a clerk apprentice and at the early age of twenty-seven, Eugène Bouillon was appointed Assistant Manager at Paspébiac when, upon the death of Mr. George Romeril, the Board of Directors in Jersey named Mr. Walter F. Hamon as General Manager. When Mr. Hamon retired in 1917 Eugène Bouillon was appointed to succeed him as General Manager. In the context of that time in Gaspesia the significance of the rank of General Manager of a business of the scope and age of the Robin Company was indeed great. Decisions taken on policy and operations in the office of the General Manager touched the life of many an individual and community throughout the Gaspé Coast.

Over time, the company known today by the single name, ROBIN, bore a number of titles, including:

- . Charles Robin and Company.
- . Charles Robin and Company Limited.
- . Charles Robin, Collas and Company Limited.
- . C. Robin, Collas and Company Limited.
- . Robin, Jones and Whitman Limited.

Eugène Bouillon served all of these companies in his 69 years of employ, from 1883 until his retirement in 1952.



"THE PARK", PASPEBIAC HOME OF E.A.A. BOUILLON AND FAMILY

### OVER AND BEYOND

The interests and talents of Eugène Bouillon were not confined to the company he served so long and well but were diverse and extended generously to the community at large. For 55 years he was a Lay Reader of the Church of England, Diocese of Quebec. On occasion he relieved the clergy when an incumbent was on holiday. He was Managing Director and later the President of the Bonaventure and Gaspé Telephone Company. For his vast knowledge of the fishery he was sought out as a member of the Consultative Committee, Quebec Department of Fisheries and as an Honourary Director, The Fisheries Council of Canada. Recalling some of the other interests and abilities of his father, his son Selwyn recalls:

"He was an amateur architect, having designed a few buildings for his Company, as well as a coastal cruiser or two. Engines were a hobby with him. I remember a few times when a garage man could not find the trouble with his car - he would put on overalls and discover the difficulty. I sailed on schooners away back in the twenties with father along the North Shore of the Gulf as far as **Natashquan** and found out that he knew all about compasses and navigating. When Dad died in 1959 I was his Executor. When I sought some advice from my employer, The Royal Trust Company, and showed them his twelve-page holograph Will, they told me that no Notary could have done a better job..."

### IN RETIREMENT

An interesting glimpse into Eugène Bouillon's activities in his early retirement years is provided by a letter he wrote to the Editor of the JERSEY WEEKLY POST on November 17th., 1956 from British Columbia. In part, the letter reads:

" Dear Sir,

I have before me a number of clippings from your papers of 17th., 24th., and 31st., March, 1956 which were handed to me in Victoria, B.C. by a Jersey lady, daughter of the late Philip Larbalestier of famous Jersey Eau de Cologne renown, who, among others there, was pleased to meet an old Jerseyman who could speak yet "le bouon vieth Jèrriais."

" Being then on my journey back tfrom Barbados, B.W.I. via Curaco, Venezuela and the Panama Canal to Los Angeles and San Diego by air and Royal Mail Line, thence overland to Seattle, U.S.A., I had crossed back into Canada at Victoria, British Columbia.

It will be realized how dumbfounded I was at reading about my being dead. Dead !,NO ! There I was on a 12,000 mile journey in my 88th year !

As among photographs taken by my son and travelling companion was found a rather good one of me,I have had an enlargement to be presented to some confrères of my days on the Board of Directors of Robin, Jones and Whitman Ltd.,and at the same time a glossy print for your good self, Sir, lest you might care to have it inserted in your valuable paper...

...As I shall be leaving for South for at least four months, my address will be....

Respectfully yours,

E.A.A.Bouillon.

The JERSEY WEEKLY POST of April 26th.,1958 marked the return of Eugène Bouillon to his native Island with the headline-

AN OLD PIONEER RETURNS AFTER SEVENTY-FIVE  
YEARS ABROAD

"Jersey sure is different", he says.

The WEEKLY POST continued -

In the Royal Square recently an old man in a blue pin-striped suit, his white hair glinting in the sun, looked up at the statue of George II for the first time in 75 years...

...Mr.Bouillon has returned to Jersey for two reasons. He wants to see the place where he was born, where he was educated, where his father's business was.

Secondly he wants to prove to people in Jersey that he is still very much alive...

...He is indeed alive and kicking. Although he cannot walk too well,his conversation is bright, his manner hearty, his memory excellent...



Eugène A.A. Bouillon -1958.



The WEEKLY POST inquired of him how it felt to see the Island for the first time in 75 years.

"I'm not really sentimental", Mr. Bouillon replied, but his son and travelling companion (E. Linden Bouillon, A.R.I.B.A.) said, "Don't you believe it : It gave Dad quite a kick to see his Island again"

The "old pioneer" told the POST that the beauty of Jersey had not been spoiled by development and that though St. Helier had changed greatly, such change had been for the better.

The year following his return visit to Jersey, Eugène Bouillon died on Thursday, April 16th., 1959 at his home in Paspebiac.

FROM JÈRRI JADIS  
OF  
GEORGE LE FEUVRE

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY has referred previously to the remarkable volume, JÈRRI JADIS by George F. Le Feuvre written in Jersey French and published in 1973 by the Don Balleine Trust of Jersey. In it the author recounts in detail his visit to the communities of Gaspesia in search of Channel Islands families. With reference to Paspebiac and the Bouillon family he wrote as follows:

Jé n'pense janmais à Paspédgia sans r'gretter l'pâssage au r'pos ètèrnel dé man vièr anmîn Moussieu Eugène Auguste Albert Bouillon (1869-1959), Agent-général des Robîns dans san vivant. J'ai pâssé bein d's heuthes pliaïsantes auve li et san fis distîndgi, E. Linden Bouillon, Êtchuyer, A.R.I.B.A., à Paspédgia, en Jèrri, et à Barbade dans l's Îles Britanniques Occidentales. J'voudrais en êcrithe pus long entouôrre lé défunt Sieur Bouillon, vrai moussieu, solide citouoyen et illustre homme d'églyîse, mais j'y prendrais trop d'run à détailli ses qualités ichîn. Ou trouv'thez m's êloges à s'n êgard à la page 471 du deuxième voleunme des Bulletîns d' L'Assemblée d'Jèrriais.

Lé bouanhomme Moussieu Bouillon et sa fanmîle sont entèrrés ichîn étout: Eugène Auguste Bouillon, né en Jèrri, 1869-1959, et Elizabeth J. Bisson (soeu dé Walter Giffard Bisson), sa femme, 1867-1942, et lus êfants Sybil Mary, décédée en 1897 à 5 mais et 29 jours, Eugène Harold, 1892-1892, et Leila E. M., 1902-1932, femme dé William H. Luce. Mâme. Luce, eune belle janne femme dé 30 ans, fut prinse malade dans l'chant d'l'églyîse duthant l'sèrvice un Dînmanche, et mouothit quâsi subitement sans r'prendre connaîssance.

13 April 1959 **Obitu**

**Eugene A. A. Bouillon**

A funeral service was held on Saturday in St. Peter's Church, Paspébiac, Que., for Eugene Auguste Albert Bouillon, who died on Thursday. He was 90.

Mr. Bouillon was former resident director and general manager of Robin, Jones & Whitman, Ltd. Born in Bagot, Jersey, Chan-



**EUGENE A. A. BOUILLON**

nel Islands, he went to the Gaspé coast on the barque "Sea Flower" in 1883 as an apprentice to the then pioneer firm of Charles Robin & Co. He served with this firm and its successors for 69 years until 1952 when he retired.

He was the last surviving provisional director of the Bonaventure & Gaspé Telephone Company, of which he had been managing director and later president.

Mr. Bouillon was a lay reader of the Church of England in the Quebec diocese for 55 years. He had been a member of the Quebec Labor Superior Council and a member of the consulting committee of the Quebec Department of Fisheries and honorary director of the Fisheries Council of Canada.

He is survived by a daughter, Mrs. John R. M. Mackenzie (Blanche) of Fredericton, N.B., three sons, A. Howard of Montreal, E. Linden of Paspébiac and W. Selwyn of Montreal, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.