

Hélène Boullé

Champlain's Young Bride in New France

Married to a 43-year-old Samuel de Champlain at the age of 12 in 1610, Hélène Boullé was the daughter of the wealthy Nicolas Boullé, a chief advisor to the king. Hélène possessed a significant dowry of 6000 livres, which Champlain used to support his Quebec trading post. Due to her young age, Hélène remained with her parents for two years after their wedding.



Hélène Boullé Arrives in New France in July 1620
Canadian National Archives



Hélène Boullé in 1620
Canadian National Archives

Hélène accompanied Champlain to Quebec in 1620. The natives were intrigued by the young, exotic woman. Hélène, with her title, fine clothes, and courtly manners, was also popular with the French colonists. The young Madame Champlain, however, missed cosmopolitan Paris and she returned to France in 1624. She never returned to New France.

Ten years after the 1635 death of Samuel de Champlain, Hélène joined a joined the Ursulines of Sainte-Ursule convent in Paris. She took the name Sister Hélène de Saint-Augustin. Sister Hélène founded an Ursuline Convent in Meaux in 1648. Madame Champlain died in 1654 at the age of 56.