

Witch 156, George de Hault 1

Witch 156: B8677 no 2, George de Hault of Clingotte.

31 January 1596; at request of substitut for procureur général de Lorraine, following general rumour in ban de Saulcy and that village, prévôt of St. Dié goes to Saint Lienard to take informations about George de Hault, of village of Clingotte.

(1) Colas Gerard de Saulcy, c. 40

Reputation more than 16 years. Had been called witch at house of Jean Valencin at Autrepierre and elsewhere, but had never sought reparation. He himself had a bad hand since last St. George, which had cost him 40 ecus, and he feared this might have been caused by Georges, although they had not quarrelled.

(2) Demenge Marchand de la Warde de Saulcy, c. 40

Reputation more than 12 years. Some 10 years earlier his brother met Georges when gathering wood, and they had a quarrel in the course of which he was threatened. Brother was frightened of Georges on account of reputation, and began trembling; remained ill for 7 years, unable to feel arms and legs, so that he could not work to support himself, and finally died. Had warned witness to avoid quarrelling with accused, lest he suffer similar fate.

(3) Nicolas Jeannel de Contremolin, c. 60

Reputation 10-12 years. Some 6 or 7 years before George had been drinking with others at his house, and during an argument had called witness a bastard; he replied he had rather be that than suspected as a witch like George. Refused to make reparation when George asked for it, but 2 or 3 days later George came to one of his mills, and said they need not quarrel; partly out of fear and partly to live in peace, witness then offered some wine in reparation, and they drank together.

3 years earlier, when he was maire of ban de Saulcy, went to collect taille for duke; George spoke angrily to them when they asked him for 4 francs, and in the end the witness paid the money himself. He and his doyen (now dead) both subsequently lost fine pigs, and he had continued to lose them since; believed this might well have been result of threats George made to them.

(4) Demenge Valencin de Moucel, maire des chanoines in mairie de Meurthe, c. 75

Reputation 18 years. Some 3 or 4 years earlier George had held guard of 'menu bestail' of Clingotte and Moucel, but had lost it when Jean Mansuy offered a lower rate for the job. George had been angry and told him he would repent; repeated reproaches a fortnight later, when they met at St. Dié, and finally 'sortit de la ville grondant'. He and Mansuy, who had been taking grains of tithe there, went to dine with his son-in-law Gabriel Rasaille; he felt something hurt in his loins, and said he was sorry he had been involved between George and Mansuy, and it might cause him 'quelque mal'. Had pain and difficulty riding home, and had to be helped to bed; from decription clearly had abscess on thigh. Sent valet twice to ask George to come and see him, but he would not, and later told valet that if he had known why he was sent for he would have chased him away. During illness Mansuy and his late father had visited him and suggested that he should prosecute George, and they

would share costs, since it was well enough known he had killed various animals. Mansuy's father went to see George, and told him the maire intended to have him arrested unless he healed him; he replied 'qu'il n'en mourait pas et qu'il le falloit encor laisser un peu.' After this he gradually recovered. When better he was in field seeing his servants, and saw George nearby; called out angrily to him that he had made him ill, and he would have him burned. Then told his valet to take an axe and kill George (this to frighten him), at which George said 'Monsieur le maire je suis homme de bien quoyque l'on dise mais jamais je ne vous feray plus de mal ny aux votres et veult demeurer votre amy.'

Had again threatened him with an axe when he found him stealing wood; he had fallen to his knees begging mercy and promising not to do it again. Also told how George's late mother-in-law Richarde had asked him to take action against George, who had beaten her, telling him that there were strange noises on roof of their house some nights, as if there were musicians with drums, and George would go out at all hours of night. Witness replied 'si on vouloit bien faire il le faudroit brusler et que de luy il n'en s'en mesloit volontier de ses affaires par ce qu' auparavant il s'en avoit desja mal trouvé'. Did however cite George to appear before prévôt at St. Dié, but heard that they had made up dispute. Richarde had told him everyone would be 'bien esbay' if she told all she had heard of George, but asked him to say nothing because she feared him.

(5) Claude Dieudonne le maire d'Anoulsey, c. 50

Some 4 years before he had been drinking in house of Jean Valencin at Aultrepierre, where there had been a dispute between George and the late Demenge Pierel of Anouzey; Pierel accused George of having killed two oxen he had on contract from Nicolas Miette of St. Dié, and demanded that he be taken to St. Dié and charged with being a witch. This was done, but witness did not know if it had come before officers; he had lent Pierel money to pay the 'coustengee', but didn't know if he had been found in the wrong. Could say no more of George, as he lived in a different village.

(6) Catherine veuve de Colas Mengeat de Clingotte, c. 50

Reputation 20 years (residence).

(7) Idoult fils Idoult Thiebault de Clingotte, c. 29-30

Told how 10 years earlier George had been angry when he found him collecting fallen fruit under trees in which he and witness's father had a share. Threatened to break his leg, but they then returned together; as they parted George said that if they lost any animals they need suspect no-one but him. He told George's nephew about quarrel and said that if his threat came true he must be a witch. Later that day George came and told his mother she was a 'ribaude', and that her children defamed him, at which his brother Colas struck him on the cheek in anger. Nothing more came of this, but his late mother had told him that George once quarrelled with her and told her she would wake to find she had lost ten ecus - next morning a cow was dead. Also thought that previous summer he had been responsible for death of another cow, angry that his father's animals had been grazing near his field.

(8) Jeanne veuve de Claudon Jeannat de Clingotte, 55+

Reputation 20 years. Had several quarrels with her husband before latter's death 15 years earlier, and if he was a witch might well have caused this. Previous year her husband had taken over collection of tithes, which George had often done; on seeing him George told him he would not collect them next year, and by then he was dead. Had several times heard him called witch; when there were others present he would pretend not to hear.

(9) Plaisotte femme a Georgeon Jean Thomas, c. 30 (d'Aubripare)

Reputation as long as she could remember.

(10) Georgeon Jean Thomas, c. 37

Reputation more than 6 years. He had quarrelled with George, who had told him that he would repent, but he told him he didn't fear him unless he was a witch - no misfortune followed.

(11) Mengette femme a Dieudonne Scemmenat des Cours de Saulcy, c. 24

Reputation as long as could remember.

(12) Marguitta veuve de Dieudonne Pierat du Moncel, c. 45

Reputation more than 12 years. Some 20 years earlier her husband had a dispute with accused, who told him he would repent - a week or so later her child aged 18 months died suddenly in cradle, without even making enough noise to disturb another child in same room, and believed George had been responsible.

(13) Valentine veuve de Jean Pierat de Clingotte, c. 70

Some 8 or 9 years earlier her son Jean had a dispute with George, as a result of which they went to justice, and before the maire of the ban de Saulcy George said 'qu'il falloit qu'il le tuast ou bien qu'il le fut'; Jean called maire to witness this, saying that 's'il luy mesadvenoit il en feroit recors'. Shortly after fell ill, losing feeling of all limbs, and was in bed for 4 months before he died, saying he felt something strange inside him, and knew he must die. Believed this to have been work of accused. During quarrel with another of her sons, Claudon, the previous year George had said 'qu'il avoit ja faict saulter un sien autre frere, et qu'il luy feroit encor saulter un autre sault'. Long reputation, and had often been called witch without taking action.

(14) Catherine veuve Jean Marchand de Saulcy, demt. a Claingotte, c. 40

Reputation 18-20 years. Her late husband feared him greatly, and tried to keep out of his way, but they still had several quarrels. Became ill and languished more than 8 years, believing that George had caused his illness. Commonly went about village threatening people.

(15) Marguitta femme a Jean Demenge Valentin d'Aulbripare, c. 38

Reputation 16 or 17 years. Told of a dispute in fields when she and her husband had been ploughing; George had previously called husband a thief, and latter now called him witch, saying that if any misfortune came to him he would sell his

draught oxen rather than not have justice. George then approached witness when husband was at other end of field, asking her to intervene and make peace, since he wished them no harm and wanted to be friends. She said she would try, but once her husband had said something it was very difficult to make him change it, When they returned home George made reparation to her husband, but they made none to him.

(16) Fleuratte fille de Hidoult Thiebault de Clingotte, c. 20

Reputation several years. Previous year one of her father's horses had eaten a little of some grain outside George's house, and he had angrily said they would pay it 'au double' - soon after three fine pigs died suddenly.

(17) Marguitte femme a Jean Manguin de Clingotte, c. 43

Reputation 10-12 years; often called witch. Around that time had quarrel with late Claudon Jeannat, and told him he would lose a good 100 francs within 3 days; he lost a valuable young horse. On another occasion she heard her late father-in-law quarrelling with George, and then calling him witch and threatening to have him burned. She told her father-in-law he should not dispute in this way, but about a week later she became ill, without feeling or memory. Her father-in-law again threatened George with burning, saying he had bewitched his daughter-in-law, and he replied that he had not, and she would recover after a slow convalescence. A few days later he came to see her, encouraging her to eat and telling her she would recover, but it would be slow; this duly happened, and she believed he had made her ill. Once she and her husband had told George that if he threatened people and misfortune followed he would be thought the cause; he replied that it was his 'mauvaise mode d'ainsy parler', and any misfortunes came from other witches.

(23 February 1596)

(18) Jean Claude Jean Noel de Clingotte, c. 32

Reputation more than 20 years. Reported conversation with Hidoult Thiebault in which George had said it would be he who caused death of his father's animals. Also told of threat to Claudon Jeannat and loss of horse. Had heard George tell Claudon Jean Pierat that he would cause him to make a jump as he had his brother. Further told of the quarrel between Jean Demenge Marchand, his father-in-law, and George, during which latter had threatened to make him ill, of his return believing himself bewitched, and long illness, during which he ate normally but never had any strength.

(19) Colas Collenat d'Aubripare, c. 40

Reputation more than 12 years. Some 3 years earlier he had sold him 3 resaulx of oats for 14 francs, but could not get payment for 6 months after date it was due; finally had to go to court for it, and even then only got 12. Later had argument over balance, and heard George go past house cursing him; chased after him with a 'paux', although not intending to harm him, whereupon he sat down crying 'alarme'. Then told witness he did wrong to call him witch, and would repent - lost valuable cow 8 days later. Also told of how when he had been at law with Jean Pierat he had threatened to kill him, and shown an axe with which he meant to do so, and others

present had warned him not to speak so much, and he might well repent if any evil came to Pierat. Often called a witch without seeking reparation.

(20) Hidoult Thiebault de Clingotte, c. 70

Long reputation; after quarrels with him he habitually suffered losses. After first quarrel 12 years before he immediately lost a fine cow. Then told of a dispute with his late wife, because one of sons had put his horse out of a field, and within 4 or 5 days a fine ox sickened. Noted that in such quarrels it was his custom to threaten people. Then told of disputes with his sons, already reported in their testimonies. When he had been on good terms with George latter told him that when he quarrelled with him he feared there was someone who caused him losses - but would not say who.

(21) Jean Mansuin Collenat de Clingotte, c. 68

Around 20 years before his father had often quarrelled with George, and had told him that if he suffered any losses he would have him burned, and he had the means to do so. He and his father had called him witch a hundred times or more without his ever seeking reparation; had never suffered any loss, because he did not spare him, and it was George who feared him, not other way round. Then told of incident 7 or 8 years earlier, in which George had quarrelled with daughter of late Dieudonne le Maire of Aulbripare over some wood of her father's which he claimed was his, and told her she would repent; soon after she became sick and died after languishing for 10 weeks, during which she claimed George had caused her sickness. Also told of quarrel with Jean Pierat; he had assisted Pierat, and been present at hearing when George produced an axe and talked of killing Jean. During subsequent illness of Jean he often visited him and heard him blame George for it. Also told of hearing George quarrelling with Hidoult Thiebault and Claudon Jeannat, and of losses which had followed threats. Another dispute with Dieudonne le Maire had started when latter complained that George's geese were waking him. Seeing Dieudonne with six oxen at plough, George said 'qu'il faisoit bien du maitre d'avoir six beoufs devant sa charrue, et que la semaine prochaine il ne viendrait avec les six'. Indeed one of them - and he thought possibly two - had died within the week.

Also told of his wife's illness some 8 or 9 years before; his father had still been alive, and meeting George in fields threatened to kill him with his scythe or have him burned if he did not cure his daughter-in-law. George was astonished, denied causing illness, and said that she would recover. His father later told him of this, saying he would soon see a change, and when he returned home he was surprised to find his wife out of bed. She said she had been visited by a fairy dressed in white, resembling George, which had given her some white cheese to eat, and she was now recovering.

(22) Jacquotte femme a George Demenge Babel de Sarux, c. 40

Reputation more than 20 years. Some time before her sister Claudatte, daughter of Dieudonne le Maire, had been very ill. George's brother-in-law Claude Rachat (now dead) had spoken to witness saying he had heard that her sister was accusing George of causing her illness, but she denied this. A week later he asked her how her sister was, adding that perhaps if she had not communicated she might be helped.

(23) Claudatte fille de feu Claudon Jequat de Clingotte, c. 30

When she was small had heard George threaten her father, who lost a valuable horse afterwards. Previous year had quarrelled with him herself over 'esglands' she called him witch while he threatened her, and afterwards (3 days) she lost a fine pig, which was only ill for a day. Some 4 years before she and her brother had been ill, and George came to see them; brother accused him of causing illness, at which he first said nothing, but then recovered himself and denied charge, but said he should have patience and he would soon recover - as he did.

(24) Mengette femme a Mengel Demenge Yalencin d'Anoulzey, c. 40

More than 10 years before her first husband Demenge Pierel had a quarrel with George, who told him he would repent; a week later two oxen sickened, and died within a day of one another. Husband believed George had caused this - long reputation.

(25) Colas fils de Hidoult Thiebauld de Clingotte, c. 30

Some 15 years before he had chased a horse belonging to George's brother Jean off his father's land; George later told his mother he had been obliged to go to fete at Raves on foot, and that they would repent. A week or two late they lost an ox after 3 or 4 day illness. Also told of occasion when he had hit George, and they had subsequently lost a horse; on another occasion when his mother quarrelled with George a previously fit cow had died by the next morning. Also told of attempt by George and his wife to attack him with stones, which had been followed by death of one of his father's cows.

(26) Claudon fils de Jean Pierat de Clingotte, c. 26

Reputation as long as he could remember; told of two occasions, first some 4 or 5 years earlier, when George had told him he could make him take a jump as he had done his brother. Said he generally used threats.

(27) Jean Claudon Jeannat de Clingotte, c. 20

Had heard his late father and mother talk of loss of a fine mare after a quarrel with George some 15 years earlier. He had been servant whom Demenge Valentin sent to ask George to come and see him, on pretext that he would pay him grain that was due for looking after a sheep. Soon after this witness passed George's house, and latter spoke angrily to him and threatened him. Four days later became seriously ill, and had to leave service and return to mother's house; then told of visits by George, on one of which he brought him cherries, Also confirmed sister's story that he had accused George of giving him illness.

(28) Jean Demenge Valentin d'Aubripare, c. 40

Told how two years before he had quarrelled violently with George, and finally threatened that he would sell two of his draught oxen to get justice. Seeing that he intended to have him taken to St. Dié, George preferred to seek arbitration from Jean Doyen of Clingotte, so that he had to make reparation to the witness, but latter made none for calling him witch.

Also told how long before the late Demenge Pierel had secured his arrest, and he had been imprisoned in witness' house. Pierel had told George that he had two dead oxen which 'crioient dans un fosse', which witness took to mean that he sought vengeance. Was taken to St. Dié, but did not know what happened. Reputation about 20 years.

(29 February 1596)

(29) Jean Pierel d'Anoulzey, c. 28

Told how some 12 years before his late father had quarrelled with George over a debt; George had told him he had power to make him repent, and soon after he lost two oxen. Long reputation.

(30) Colas Dieudonne le Maire, de Courtz de Saulcy, c. 30

Had various quarrels with George, but suffered no losses; had told him that he would take action if any misfortune befell him. Jean Mansuy had told him of occasion when his father had lost an ox after complaining that George's geese were taking seed off his land.

(31) Magdellaine fille de Hidult Thiebault, femme Dieudonne Bon Didier of Entre-deux-Eaux, c. 42

Told how George used threats whenever he quarrelled. Some 23 years before a dispute with her step-mother had been followed by threat to make her repent same night, and a cow had indeed died.

(32) Mengette femme a Jacqueline Blaise du Viel Marché, 56+

Had left village of Clingotte 24 years before, and knew nothing.

(33) Jean Colin de Raves, demeurant en Courtz de Saulcy, c. 45

Told how on a Sunday some years before, when he had been at 'quaraille' with Dieudonne Pierat, George had come and quarrelled with latter, threatening him 'qu'il luy meschoiroit et qu'il faisoit mal de se prendre a luy'. A few days later Pierat's child was found mysteriously dead in cot. Witness's own wife had advised him not to quarrel with George, but he did not fear him, and had occasional minor disputes without suffering threats or losses.

(34) Jean Demenge Colin de Saulcy, c. 40

Told how in 1588, when he had been levying tailles, he went to Clingotte and saw Jean Demenge Marchant, who had a strange illness, so that he was all bent and his limbs trembled. Witness asked if he did not suspect witchcraft, and Jean told him of his suspicions against George.

(35) Andreu Colas Pierat des Courts de Saulcy, c. 27

Told of having a dispute with George when he was cutting wood some 3 years earlier, threats, and 6 month illness which followed.

14 March 1596; interrogations

Said he was about 60, and had always lived at Clingotte. Had married wife named Jenne some 20 years before, and had three children living. Asked about disputes, said he had some with Hidoult Thiebault and his children, who called him witch; had no witnesses, so could not seek reparation. Had also quarrelled with Jean Mansuin. Agreed that he had been reproached by Demenge Valencin with taking his wood, and also that he had refused to go and see him during illness.

Claimed that when Demenge Pierel called him witch he had obtained reparation before Jean de Scarux, then doyen de prévôt. Said that he had a dispute with Jean Marchant's wife when he was 'dismeur' and wanted to know how many sacks of grain were on a cart she was taking to town; her refusal to say led to a court case.

Generally admitted to extensive range of quarrels, but denied the compromising threats attributed to him, and having done anyone harm. Said he had not sought reparation from various people who called him witch because he lacked the means to do so.

19 March 1596; confrontations

No result here; did not reproach any witness, but admitted wide range of disputes.

25 March 1596; Remy, as procureur général de Lorraine, asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire.

26 March 1596; Change de Nancy agrees

1 May 1596; interrogation under torture

Began at 7 a.m. Having denied that he was a witch, he suddenly confessed that some 30 years ago, when he was about 25, he had seduced the young wife of his brother Jean (she was Claudette fille de Jacques Collenat, and now dead). For next 7 or 8 years, until his own marriage some 20 years ago, they had continued to have intercourse, being careful to do so when his brother was in fields or away on business. Said that he 's'amouracha' of her, and had often solicited her before she agreed. Judges suggested that one such great crime usually led to others, but he would confess nothing else.

Was given thumbscrews, which did not seem to hurt him much, then racked. Then confessed that when as youth he had been guarding animals for Colas du Paire, with whom he lived at le Paire St. Margaree, Mre Persin had appeared to him on a horse, and he had promised to serve him. Refused to say whether he had renounced God, so racked again briefly, after which he talked of Persin giving him powder some 15 years before, with which he had killed various animals after disputes.

Interrogation then broken off, and resumed at 2 p.m.; marginal note in hand of Remy or clerk says that torture should not be renewed at such an interval. Now gave more complete description of his first seduction, 40 years before. However had refused to do harm, and been beaten by Persin on one occasion for throwing away powder. Had only started to perform malefices after his marriage - Persin visited him when he was in bed at 2 a.m., his wife being at the poisle [spinning-bee] with



other women. Then confessed to series of killings of animals and persons. Said that within 10 weeks of giving illness to a person, they could be helped by bread and ashes from his house - but had never used this cure.

Asked about Dieudonne Pierrat's infant, and whether he had not killed it or given his master leave to do so, opted for latter. Confessed to attending sabbat twice, but only persons he identified were Catherine of le Paire, now dead, and George Jobert's wife of St. Margaree, already executed. Had been about 30 present on each occasion, but were masked. Had been an argument about whether or not to damage crops, which ended in their being left unscathed. Despite being questioned severely about accomplices, protested that he did not want to damn himself, and would say no more.

2 May 1596; interrogation

Added a few minor malefices, confirmed earlier confession.

4 May 1596; Remy calls for death sentence

5 May 1596; Change de Nancy approves

14 May; execution carried out. In final statement George still denied knowing my accomplices. Added that he had stolen hay and grain from fields on various occasions, from his brother and other villagers, had several times taken fish from ponds and rivers, and had stolen some planks.