

Witch 206, Aley Perrin 1

B 8687 no 8; witch 206, Aley femme Jean Perrin, du Mesnil

29 May 1599; confronted with Mengin Colas Mengin of St Remy, who maintained his accusations against her.

4 September 1599; further confrontation with Didielle veuve Jean Lalance, of Pajaille, who also maintained accusations.

29 September 1600; confrontation with Mengeon Claude Perrin of Brehimont, who maintained his accusations.

2 January 1601; informations preparatoires

(1) Colas Marquis, de Pajaille, 49

Reputation 7 years, no personal suspicion.

(2) Claudon Henry, de Pajaille, 40

Reputation several years, and had heard her called witch by wife of Mengeon Jacquot Ferry without seeking reparation.

(3) Jennon femme Colas Marquis, de Pajaille, 50

Reputation several years, mother already executed.

(4) Jean Jacquot Estienne, du Mesnil, 39

Accused 6 years earlier by late wife of Colas Ferry, later executed herself as a witch; mother executed 20 years earlier. No personal suspicion.

(5) Babelon veuve Phelippe Jean, de Sambois, 50

Reputation 15 years. Previous summer had a pig ill and expected to die; suspected this was her witchcraft, so put it about that she would take action against her if it died. She heard about this, and pig immediately recovered.

(6) Mengeotte femme Mengeon Jacquot Fery, du Mesnil, 50

Reputation 7 years. 3 years earlier had come to house saying she heard they had some fine calves, and asked to see them, then left without saying more. Within 2 or 3 days calves started to sicken, lying with legs in air, and had to call executioner to kill them. A few weeks later she was angry because both their husbands had contract to supply wood to Claude Moyron of Raon, and she wanted this to be for her husband alone. Husband of witness fell ill and became as if possessed; this lasted 2 weeks. A few days later witness refused to sell her some oats, and 2 goats died, then 7 goats got into her garden and 4 of them died. Believing all this to have been her witchcraft she called her witch, threatening that if any more animals died 'elle le porteroit ou feroit trayner a son feu', and although husband was present no reparation was sought.

(7) Alizon veuve Claudon Durand, de Pajaille, 58

Mother executed 20 years earlier; reputation since then.

(8) Catherine femme Mengeon Jean Arnoulx, du Mesnil, 34

Reputation since execution of mother. 7 years earlier had soldiers in house who demanded money, and borrowed a franc from Aley on promise of payment in oats, but she wanted these at such a favourable price that her husband refused to give them and returned the money. Went out muttering and complaining, her face showing her anger and wish for revenge; 2 days later 2 fine pigs died strangely, which she had always imputed to her witchcraft.

(9) Claudatte femme Claudon Ferry, du Mesnil, 32

2 years before had bought small piece of meadow which accused had previously rented, and had been very anxious to buy; she was very angry, and immediately afterwards a heifer sickened and died, which she had always blamed on her witchcraft. Previous summer was told that she had stolen 5 scarves which were drying on their fence, so went to ask for their return, threatening to take her to court. Lacked sufficient witnesses when she denied theft, but a few days later heard from daughter of accused that her mother had taken them and intended to make a shirt for her father. Went to confront her again, and she finally produced them from place where she had hidden them on being told that her own daughter had confessed she had them. Went off muttering, and 2 or 3 days later a cow died suddenly, which she blamed on her witchcraft, and had even said this in public; reputation as long as she had been resident.

(10) Bastienne femme Jean Malley, du Mesnil, 25

Reputation 9 years (residence); no personal suspicion.

(11) Jean Arnoulx, laboureur du Mesnil, 61

Reputation since execution of mother. 4 or 5 years earlier he had six piglets, and refused to sell her one, at which she was very angry. Next day the best one died, and he said in middle of village, in her hearing, that some evil people had envied his piglets; she replied that he did himself wrong in thinking this was cause of death, but he had always suspected her of causing it by her witchcraft.

(12) Sebille femme du precedent, 70

Same story about piglets. 2 years earlier her son had been asked to be godfather to child of accused, and had refused; next day as he was threshing had pain in leg, and was as if out of his mind for 2 weeks until he recovered. Suspected this too had been her witchcraft; long reputation.

(13) Claudon Mallay, du Mesnil, 40

2 years before had been angry to see him chasing her geese out of meadow where they were doing great damage; 2 days later a fine ox sickened, and after a year he had to sell it for what he could get. Thought this had been her witchcraft; long reputation.

(14) Rozemont Jean Aulbry, du Mesnil, 50

Reputation since execution of mother. 6 years earlier his late wife Jennon had been taken by so violent an illness that she died in 5 days, suspecting that Aley had given her this. When Jennon femme Claudon Jacquot Charpentier was being taken to St Dié for execution she told him that she and Aley had killed his wife, at instigation of latter. Aley had been angry because his wife asked for usual payment as midwife, asking 'sy elle n'avoit rien autres choses a menger', which was why they had killed her.

(15) Claudon Jacquot Charpentier, du Mesnil, 45

6 or 7 years earlier some oats belonging to him were stolen from mill, and miller told him Aley's husband might have taken them, being the only person he had seen that day. Asked officer to make search of their house, but then cancelled request, fearing she might use witchcraft against him. She still heard about it, and was very indignant, and with 2 or 3 days he lost a bull and a heifer which died suddenly, which he had always imputed to her witchcraft.

(16) Colas Jean Aulbry, de Pajaille, 55

Reputation 12 years, no personal suspicion.

(17) Claudon de l'Espine, du Mesnil, 55

Reputation 12 years. 8 years earlier he had intended to buy a house from her brother Chrestien Demenge Arnoulx, which she was renting, and she was extremely upset. Wife persuaded him not to go ahead, saying that in view of her reputation he might lose more than he gained. Within a week he lost 2 oxen which died strangely, and had always imputed this to her witchcraft. Some time later she deliberately crossed his path as he returned from woods, without saying a word, and when he was in bed that night developed pain in leg. Forced to stay in bed for a month, enduring great pain, and started to tell visitors that he believed it was her witchcraft; she soon heard of this, and immediately he recovered. When he first went out she asked if he suspected her, to which he replied that he did; she simply said she was not the cause, but he continued to have strong suspicion she was.

(18) Mengeon Jacquot Ferry, du Mesnil, 55

6 years before he and his wife had been cutting hay in meadow they leased with accused and her husband, who were also there, when the women quarrelled and fought; she beat his wife severely, after which she took to bed and languished before dying 2 years later. Said until she died that she had never enjoyed health since the beating, and that death was result of her witchcraft. 4 years earlier she had been very angry when his son Mengeon, aged 13, refused to guard her goats as well as their own. Next day he became ill with sickness which affected one side of body, was bedridden for 6 weeks, and died with half body as if rotten - said from beginning to end that she had bewitched him. He himself had several disputes with her, which were always followed by illnesses lasting 2 weeks or a month - believed these too had been her witchcraft. Long reputation. Had heard Mengin Colas

Mengeon, executed previous year, say that one should avoid quarrelling with her, because she was a perfect witch.

(19) Claudon Jacquot Estienne du Mesnil, demeurant au Vivier, 40

3 years earlier someone stole a whole piece of cloth from him, and his wife Claudine asked Jean Perrin to help him look for it; searched whole day and finally found it in barn where thief had put it. Asked Perrin what he wanted as payment, and he asked for 6 gros, which he readily gave him, but accused was not content and said they had not given what his wife had promised, and she would repent. Within 2 or 3 days wife fell ill and died on fourth day, saying Aley had bewitched her. Reputation several years.

(20) Claudatte fille Claudon de l'Espine, du Mesnil, 25

2 years earlier she had chased 2 of their calves angrily out of her meadow; they died 2 or 3 days later, and had always suspected this was her witchcraft. Long reputation.

(21) Colas Pairson, du Vivier, 40

12 years earlier had been in service of Clemenceau de Ramberviller with her at moictresse called 'a malleplanteuse', and she was already reputed a witch. Master wanted to dismiss her before end of term for some fault, but witness dissuaded him. A few days later a fine ox fell and broke its neck, then a fine horse was found dead in the stable; he had always suspected that these losses resulted from her witchcraft.

(22) Colas Piere, laboureur du Mesnil, 40

Long reputation. About 6 years earlier hay was very dear in winter, and he refused to sell her any because he needed it himself. Did however sell some to moictrier of Malmaison, and she was angry when she heard of this; next day a fine ox sickened and became strangely swollen, so he had it killed. Had always suspected this had been her witchcraft.

3 January 1601; interrogation

Said she was about 40. Admitted she had been often called witch over last 7 years, and that she had been confronted with some convicted witches who accused her. Added that she was also accused by Jennon femme Claudon Jacquot Charpentier, but not confronted.

Admitted great quarrel with Mengeotte femme Mengeon Jacquot Ferry, who had complained falsely to maire that she had threatened her. Denied causing her or anyone else any harm, but after initial denials admitted that she had called her witch, and threatened her with action if any more animals died. Admitted taking scarves, but said she had found them in road, and had made restitution. Also agreed that she had heard of Claudon de l'Espine's suspicions over his illness, and that she had beaten Mengeon Jacquot Ferry's wife, who called her 'lourre'.

At one point said 'ne scait au reste qui est femme de bien, ny homme de bien, et que les personnes qui sont desja damnez d'eulx mesmes ne se soucient point de faire des faulx sermentz.' Agreed that her mother had been executed some 18 or 20 years earlier.

3 January 1601; confrontations

Said beforehand that one might well believe that witches accused good people, since she had been accused so often when she was innocent. No reproaches to any witness, but maintained denials as firmly as before.

6 January 1601; Change de Nancy approves question ordinaire et extraordinaire

12 January 1601; report that she has claimed to be 10 weeks pregnant, and had therefore been examined by the midwife Mengeotte femme Bastien Jean du Bul and 3 other women judged capable of assessing the matter. They reported that they could see no sign of pregnancy, but that they could only be sure in another 8 weeks. It was therefore decided that she should remain in prison, but be treated rather better in the interim.

14 March 1601; interrogation under torture

She now admitted that she was not pregnant, and that her periods had returned; she had hoped to be released, but was now prepared to endure torture.

Was given thumbscrews, then rack, and during latter suddenly said she wanted to confess. 16 or 17 years earlier had been in service at Honniviller in Allemaigne, where she married Bastien Zinzemant of Ste Marie aux Mines, but he died 3 years later, leaving her alone with daughter aged 18 months, having to beg for her existence. Out begging one day when she was seduced by Persin, who promised her money so that she need never want; gave her money and yellow powder. Tried latter out on hen which died, then a year after became angry with her daughter, who was preventing her earning her living in fields, so gave her some powder and she died in a week.

Spent 5 years as widow, at Ste Marie, St Dié, Ramberviller, and her native le Mesnil, during which time she committed no other maléfices, then married Jean Perrin. Admitted that she had made ox of Colas Pierre ill, because he would not sell her any hay, and that she had killed son of Mengeon Jacquot Ferry, who refused to guard her goats. Made oxen of Claudon Malley lame, because he had driven away her geese, then was warned that they suspected her, so used different kind of powder to heal them. Had killed calf of Claudon Ferry when angry with his wife over meadow they had been leasing, and pig of Catherine femme Mengeon Jean Arnoulx because they wanted too high a price for some oats. Also killed calf of Claudatte fille Claudon de l'Espine, and one belonging to her father. Had made Rozemont fils Jean Arnoulx ill because he refused to be godparent, then had pity on him and healed him.

Had been to sabat more times than she could remember. Had seen several already executed (Didielle la Lance, Marguitta veuve Pernot Chappon, Mengin Colas Mengin, Jehennon femme Claudon de la Ruelle, and Claudatte femme Colas Duchemin). Also some still alive; Laurence femme Vincent Bandecay and Marie femme Colas Perrin, of Pajaille, and Epnatte femme Jean Taxerant of St Remy. Danced, and ate unsalted meat cooked by little devils, but had only once helped to make hail.

15 March 1601; interrogation

Confirmed earlier confessions, except that she now said she had not killed her own child. Added that she had given Claudon de l'Espine bad leg, then had pity on him and cured him. Had also killed Jennon femme Rozemont Jean Aulbry, with whom she was angry because she demanded payment of a debt - did this with Jennon femme Claudon Jacquot Charpentier, to whom she gave powder with her consent to kill her, and she threw it on the victim.

Now withdrew accusations against the 3 living women she claimed to have seen at sabat, saying she had made them out of hatred. Replaced them by Margo femme Colas La Lance, of le Vivier, Jennon femme Claudon Girard, of St Remy, and Marguitte veuve Jean Colas Arnoulx of le Mesnil. Asked why she had not accused them before, said they had made pact not to accuse one another, but overnight had thought she would be damned if she concealed the truth. Had been many others present, including young boys and girls, but they were masked. Had been carried to and from sabat by her master.

16 March 1601; confirmed confessions, but now discharged Jennon femme Claudon Girard. Inhabitants handed her over to duke for sentence.

17 March 1601; death sentence from Change de Nancy

27 March 1601; execution at St Dié