

Witch 235, Claudatte Henri 1

B 8699; witch 235, Claudatte veuve Jean Henri de Lubine

26 December 1606; informations preparatoires

(1) Jean Demenge Olry, forrestier du bois de Lubine, 60

Had been resident 16 years, and had always heard she was reputed a witch. Some 5 or 6 years earlier his son-in-law had guarded her field of oats at night, because boars were coming out of woods and damaging it, but she paid him nothing so witness was very angry. Had quarrel, during which he said 'au diable soit l'ordure et a la sorciere'; her only reply was a shake of the head. Two days later his wife suddenly fell ill and was thought to be dying. A fortnight later, suspecting Claudatte on account of her reputation and the quarrel, threatened her with axe in hand that he would kill her if she did not heal his wife. Friends advised him to obtain bread, salt and cheese from her house, which he did by means of his sister-in-law, and as soon as wife had eaten this she felt much better. Had also lost a mare, which became lame, and suspected her over this. Some 4 or 5 years earlier had a bull sick, and his wife called her to 'l'aller signer', as was customary in village. Having been during day, wife found her with animal again at dusk, saying she had come to do it again; next morning it was dead. Had recently had intention of having her arrested, and had said so, but she had absented herself.

(2) Demenge Andreu, maire de Lubine, 55

Reputation more than 7 years. Had several disputes with her, had even been to court with her late husband, but had suffered no harm he knew of. His father had been ill for 2 years before death, and had told him he suspected it was her witchcraft; did not know any reason for this. Believed absence was because Jean Demenge Olry had threatened to have her arrested.

(3) Dieudonne George le petit Colin, forrestier de Lubine, 40

Some 15 years earlier, after his wife had a baby, she held a 'banquet de femme' following local custom, to which neighbours and good friends were invited, Claudatte among them. Soon after witness became ill for 5 or 6 weeks, as if out of his mind, treating his wife very badly, of which she complained to everyone. Claudatte came to see her, and offered to give her something which might cure him, on condition that she kept this secret. Agreed, and was given bread and something else to make a soup, which immediately cured him. Did not know if she had caused illness because had never quarrelled with her - supposed she might have felt slighted at the feast, and had always been suspicious of her since.

(4) Jehennon veuve Benay Dion de Lubine, 70

Accused had been married to her son, who had died suddenly 4 years earlier after being ill only 48 hours. Also told how another daughter-in-law, Catherine, had cow whose milk she was using for her child, when it became bad, and she could find no remedy. Told witness she suspected Claudatte, in view of reputation (to her

great regret she had always heard her reputed witch for 9 or 10 years) and asked her to obtain bread and salt from house. After cow ate this milk became good again, so she became suspicious, 'nonobstant qu'on ne pouvoit toutesfois croire qu'elle fut telle qu'on la soubconnoit'; absence made her presume 'qu'il n'y a rien de bon en son fait', which left her with 'ung grand triste coeur'.

(5) Catherine femme Didier Bernay Dion de Lubine, 26

Told story of cow; this was some 2 years earlier when she lived with mother-in-law and Claudatte. Milk had become yellow and bitter, and this had lasted 8 weeks. Had tried to dissuade her from leaving on rumours that she might be arrested, arguing that if she was a good woman she had nothing to fear, but she had replied it was not for this reason, but she wanted to live with an aunt. Had left some 3 weeks earlier, two hours before dawn, recommending her children to her.

(6) Marion femme Dieudonne George le petit Colin de Lubine, 40

Told story of husband's illness, during which he had seemed out of his mind, unable to work, wandering about, having no memory, and beating her. Then she gave her bread and cheese which she put in soup, and he recovered completely, becoming 'aussy bon marit qui fut oncques'. Always suspected her after this, and absence suggested she could not be a good woman.

(7) Mengeatte femme Pierron Prey de Lubine, 30

Had seen a lot of her, and had suffered no harm that she knew. Was true that around last St Jean, after having a baby, had cooked millet to send to neighbours, and had failed to see one of her children who came to house, after which she had said witness was 'bien villaine de ses biens'. Child then fell ill, and no cure could be found, until some women in village, and notably the accused, advised her to make bath with herbs. Bathed child twice a day for 9 days, after which she recovered; could not say she had caused illness, but in view of reputation was suspicious.

(8) Benay Grand Didier de Lubine, 25

Resident at Lubine for 10 years, 6 in service, then married for 4 years to sister of late husband of accused. Had lived with them, and some 18 months before had said to him that since he had kept sheep she had lost all hers. Within a month he lost 5, which he believed might have been her doing in envy of his potential profit.

(9) Colas ? (text missing)

He had taken Jean Demenge Olry's side in a dispute with her, and thought she might have resented this. Had a mare which became lame, and remained so for 2 years, until one day he was by her door, and she offerd to treat it with a substance she had. Rubbed it with black substance, after which it recovered. Some 18 months later became ill with violent pains in 'petit ventre', so that he could not work; this

was particularly difficult because it was in middle of harvest. Went out to fields to see workers, and Claudatte (who was in neighbouring field) asked if he intended to use grain as seedcorn. He replied that he did, if it pleased God, and immediately felt pain vanish.

(10) Didier Arnould de Lubine, ?

Long reputation. Around last St Martin had some goats placed with her, and decided to take them back when reckoning was made, since he anticipated some profit from this, although she had set a very reasonable price. When he went home his wife told him off, saying they might cost him dearly, and that she feared Claudatte. Had two fine pigs, but when herdsman brought them back next evening told him one of them was sick; put it in barn and covered it with 'fumier', but found it dead following morning. Had subsequently thought that if she was a witch she might have caused this, but could not affirm it. Absence was strong presumption against her - had taken a good part of her goods with her.

(11) ? - text missing here

After an occasion when witness had refused to do some carting for her, because he was too busy, she said she would remember this. 3 days later a cow fell ill in herd, and he had to bring it back on a cart; was going to kill it and sell meat, but Claudatte suggested he should wait in hope that it would recover. Village had system whereby inhabitants took turns daily to help herdsman, and it was her day when misfortune occurred. He told her that since she had prevented him killing cow, if he suffered any loss she would be liable, particularly since she should have looked after it better. Animal died after 3 days, and he then said to her 'O sorciere ceste toy qui a faict mourir notre vache, tu nous la payeras et satisferas, ou autrement nous te ferons brusler'. (Damaged page here, but seems likely that he obtained nothing).

18 January 1607; C.M. Rémy proposes that she should be arrested and imprisoned, but if she cannot be found and does not answer to three summons she should be banished.

19 January 1607; Change de Nancy approves

Subsequent series of formal steps, during which her brother-in-law stated that he did not know her whereabouts, leading up to final sentence on 23 April 1607.