

Witch 247, Sebille Pescheur 1

B 8702 no 8; witch 247, Sebille femme Etienne Pescheur, de La Neuveville-les-Raon

17 October 1609; informations preparatoires

(1) Chrestien Brabans, 33

Reputation 3 years. Mother, Marguitte femme Dieudonné Maronde, executed 7 years earlier. Had taken her husband to court 3 years before to obtain reparation for insults, after which they hated him. Six oxen then became ill suddenly; 4 recovered after 3 days, other 2 only did so gradually - if she was witch as reputed believed she had caused this.

(2) Jean du Couras, 30

Reputation 18 months; no personal suspicion.

(3) Didier ?

Reputation only.

(4) Le maire Bastien Fournay, 50

Reputation since execution of mother 7 years earlier.

(5) Jean Mourxat, 32

3 or 4 years before had been taking communion in parish church, either at Easter or day of Jubilee, and Sebille was in front of him. Curé told her twice to stop lifting hand to her mouth, after she had taken host, and this caused him to have poor opinion of her, and suspect her of intending some 'meschanceté'. Reputation since execution of mother. Since he had spoken to others of what he had seen at communion she had born him great hatred, and said she would never forgive him. A few days later his cow sickened, and had to be killed after languishing for 6 weeks - generally reckoned to be witchcraft, and if she were witch as reputed believed she had been cause.

(6) Jennon femme Demenge des Boeufs, 65

Talked with accused had mentioned affair of communion, and she had said she was woman involved. Reputation 3 years.

(7) Margueritte femme Demenge Mathieu, 32

2 years earlier her son Claude had been passing Sebille's house, and she touched him, saying 'qu'il n'y avoit point de plus gentil que luy en leur maison'. Within the hour became strangely ill; whole body affected and though he would suffocate. Asked to visit him, she did so, and passed hand over his stomach; after this trouble moved to shoulder, where it had begun. They then secured 'par subtile moien' bread, salt and ashes from her house, which produced an immediate cure. Believed that if she was witch as reputed she had caused this.

(8) Jean Dauphin, 27

Reputation 2 years. 6 weeks earlier had been very angry with him after he went drinking with her husband, after which he lost a calf. She had remarked that it was a fine calf as his wife took it to drink, also complaining that they had refuse her some milk.

(9) Sabel femme Demenge Ganaire

Husbands had been to law over 'retraicte' of a plot of land; later their son Demenge, aged 4, became very ill and languished for 10 weeks. Unable to find remedies, they secretly obtained bread, salt and ashes from her house; after drinking soup made with these the boy slowly recovered. If she was witch as reputed believed she had caused this; during illness she said 'que s'il mouroit qu'on diroit qu'elle en seroit cause et qu'elle leur avoit porté grande hayne du passé, mais que pour lors cela estoit passé, a cause de l'accord qu'ils avoient eu par ensembles.'

(10) Didier Chottey, 50

If she was witch as reputed, believed she had caused illness from which his daughter had been suffering for a year - kind of fever, for which no cure could be found. Long reputation, and had several times quarrelled with daughter when living in their house.

(11) Mongeatte femme Colas Labbé, 35

Previous Christmas Sebille had been very angry when she refused her milk; then lost cow which died suddenly after being ill for a week. If she were witch as reputed, believed she had caused this.

(12) Roze femme Didier Chottey, 38

3 years earlier had been very ill, losing use of legs for 8 weeks, then mentally ill for 2 years. If Sebille was witch as reputed believed she had caused this. One evening when she was in bed a 'canne' got into fire and threw out great sparks - had to save child in cradle. On another occasion went out of house in morning and an animal like a foal dropped down beside her with great noise and wind, frightening her. Believed she had always sought to do her harm, out of hatred over a towel she had wanted returned, claiming to have lent it to first wife of her husband.

(13) Sebille fille Didier Chottey, 20

Told story of her fever; claimed accused had always hated her since quarrels when she lived in their house 5 years earlier.

(14) Colas Labbé, 28

Had threatened him a month earlier, and believed that if she was witch as reputed she had caused him misfortune (damage here).

(15) Jennon femme Jean de Liepvre, 37

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Previous Whitsun two of their daughters had died - Chrestienne (5) and Marguitta (3). Suspected that she had caused this if she were witch as reputed, in hatred because witness told her she was 'bien sot' to go and see child of Demenge Mathieu when she was suspected of bewitching him; left abruptly when she said this, and same hour children fell ill.

(16) ?, 36

He had no personal suspicion, but reputed witch since execution of mother 7 years earlier.

(17) Didier de Mazelles, 56

Same as previous witness.

(18) Nicolle femme Jean Dauphin, 24

Claimed she hated her particularly, because of several refusals of milk and butter. Like husband, believed that if she was witch she had caused death of calf just over a week earlier.

(19) Demenge Ganaire

Repeated wife's deposition about illness of son.

(20) Sabel femme Paulus Jean Parmentier, 25

After quarrel with her at time of last harvest witness was brought to bed with child, but delivery took two days and child was stillborn. Suspected that if Sebille was witch as reputed she had caused this, adding that a cat had come at night and made a great jump on the bed, which terrified her.

(21) Claudon Mathieu, echevin en la justice, 33

Had recently been to La Chapelle to buy a broom, and paid 2 ecus on credit, then remembered he had promised to lend them to Sebille. Same hour became strangely ill (damage here), and remained so for some time; if she was witch believed she had been cause. Reputation since execution of mother.

23 October 1609; Change de Nancy approves arrest and interrogation.

? 1609; interrogation

Said she was about 30, native of Thiaville. Father had been Demenge Jean Mathieu, mother Margueritte; latter had come to la Neufville 14 years before on second marriage to Dieudonné Marond, and subsequently been executed as a witch. She herself had been married 6 years. Knew she had been arrested on suspicion of witchcraft. Asked if she would have fled had she known of likely arrest, said she would not, since this would have made people think she was bad.

Claimed to have lived on good terms with neighbours, apart from quarrels with wife of Demenge Mathieu. Said general reputation as witch dated back 3 years, after story about communion put about by Jean Mourxat, who was false witness.

Admitted curé had spoken to her, and made contradictory remarks about putting hand to mouth, but insisted she had taken communion as good christian. Admitted saying she would never forgive Mourxat, adding that she pardoned him and did not want to charge her soul on his account. Otherwise only admitted one or two minor quarrels, and denied all charges.

? 1609; confrontations

No reproaches, and no admissions.

3 November 1609; Change de Nancy approves torture

9 November 1609; interrogation under torture

Started to confess as soon as she was given thumbscrews. Had been seduced 6 years earlier in her house, when lamenting execution of her mother and fearing 'la deshonneur du monde'. Usual seduction scene, given money which was leaves, and powder, black/cure, white/heal. Had tried it out on a hen which died. Angry with Claude son of Demenge Mathieu because he had beaten her son, used powder to make him ill, and then to cure him.

Had killed small daughter of Jean de Liepvre in pity at her illness - had not caused this, which resulted from their poverty. Had also killed small daughter of Nicolas Jacat of Thiaville, who was with other children when animals damaged their field. Had also killed cow of Jean Mourxat because of scandal he had caused, and cow of Colas de Mazellay because his wife refused her milk. Killed cow of maire Nicolas Mercier, 2 or 3 years earlier, because his wife had sold her some bad cheese.

Also admitted making oxen of Nicolas Brabant ill, then curing them because she feared she would be suspected. She had used yellow powder to make Demenge Ganaire's son ill, but had refused to kill him as Parsin wanted, for fear of suspicions which already existed against her.

Had been to sabbat on Cote de Repy, carried like wind on master's shoulders. Were 30 or 40 people there, more women than men, all masked. Usual dancing and feasting. Recognized Didier Grand Claudon of Raon, who danced with her several times, Alix veuve Demenge Bon Temps of Raon, who was the cook, Plaisance veuve Claudon Tout Blanc (recently executed), and Bernarde femme au saulnier de la Neufville (executed 6 years earlier). Compelled to make hail. Went 6 times in first year, then only once or twice a year, having made pact to give master a hen around St John every year.

Parsin had been in her body encouraging her not to confess, but then told her he must leave, and that justice was too strong for him.

Repeated confessions next day, but now discharged Alix veuve Demenge Marond from accusation of having been at sabbat.

12 November 1609; death sentence from Change de Nancy

14 November 1609; sentence carried out.

Costs were 125 fr, shared between duke and abbot of Etival.