

Witch 277B, Jennon Valtin 1

Witch 277B; B 8713 no 2, Jennon femme Claudon Valtin, de la Chapelle

30 May 1614; informations preparatoires

Taken at request of Noel Prevost, who had made himself partie formelle against her, and of procureur d'office at Moyenmoutier

(1) Jean Colas Simoné, de la Fosse (terre de Spitzemberg), 30

Some 14 years earlier she had come to la Fosse, when she was girl living at la Wouevre, with a small boy, and taken cherries from tree belonging to his late father. She fell and broke or dislocated bones; he and others laughed when told of this, but his mother told them off. She said Jennon was suspected of witchcraft, having long been in service of Demenge Simmoné of Ste Marguerite; he and his wife had recently been executed. 2 or 3 days later his father also fell from a cherry tree, and was killed outright; had several times heard his mother say she suspected Jennon over this.

(2) Marguitte veuve Colas Simoné, de la Fosse, 60

Same story about fall from tree; she said it was husband and family who laughed. When news of his fall arrived Jennon was still in house; she asked if he had been killed without going out to look. Still believed she had caused this by her witchcraft.

(3) Mongeatte, servante à Jean Noel de Sansy, 23

Had served accused for a year 6 years earlier, and seen no harm in her. Had only heard her accused since Easter.

(4) Marion veuve Mongeon Jean, 60

Long reputation, but no personal suspicion.

(5) Thoussaince veuve Jean Marie, 50

Similar deposition.

(6) Curien femme Idoul Marie, 55

Similar deposition.

(7) Jean Reullemant, 50

Similar deposition.

(8) Marguitte femme Jean Girard, de St Jean d'Ormont, 36

Knew nothing against her.

(9) Jean Reullemant jeune fils, 22

Knew nothing against her.

(10) Jean Barthelemin, 26

Reputation 5 or 6 years, but no personal suspicion.

(11) Dieudonnée femme Curien Marie, 36

Reputation 9 years, but no personal suspicion despite quarrels.

(12) Mongeatte femme Colas Jean Simon, 30

A year earlier last Lent her husband had quarrelled with husband of accused, after which Jennon told her 'qu'il y en auroit de ceux qui en guateroient leurs oreilles'. After this threat a healthy cow died the same day, followed by its calf 3 days later. If she was witch as long reputed believed this had been her doing.

(13) Nicolle veuve Jean Valentin, 35

Long reputation, but no personal suspicion.

(14) Thoussaince femme Claudon Olry, 40

Had heard Jennon's husband behind house of father of witness, saying that 12 years earlier his brother had told him his wife was a witch. A few days earlier had heard small children calling one another witches, at which she told them 'que sorciers puissent ils devenir' - this and reputation made her think badly of her.

(15) Jennon femme Idoul Adrian, 30

General reputation, but no personal suspicion.

(16) Marion femme Jean Valtin, 40

After quarrel between husbands 7 years earlier heard she had told her brother Rossinand 'Rend luy de par le diable', since when she had always been angry with them. A month later her husband fell from cherry tree and injured his neck, after which accused said they would be dear cherries for him and he would not recover quickly. Had been ill for several weeks, and was still unable to turn neck, while shoulders were deformed - she blamed this on witchcraft of Jennon if long reputation was correct. Recently she had quarrel with Noel Prevost's wife over a hen, after which there was an exchange with veiled suggestions of witchcraft. Claim that husband had talked of brother's accusation 12 years earlier. When Prevost's wife had been in childbed a month earlier witness had been called in because there was no midwife, and knew accused had been angry about this. Soon after an ox had fallen strangely ill, so that it was thought bewitched; was still swollen and stinking, and thought this was her doing.

(17) Mongeatte femme Noel George, 50

5 years earlier animals of accused had damaged their field, and when witness complained to Jennon she went off muttering to herself. She immediately fell ill,

and remained so for 3 weeks before gradual recovery; was sure this was her witchcraft. Long reputation.

(18) Marguitte femme Veltin Thouvenin, 36

7 years earlier husband had bought house of late Claudon Jean Claude, but then saw he had made a bad bargain, and was trying by every means to get that which husband of witness had bought from his father. Jennon was very angry about failure, and a few days later said 'que sy elle estoit sorciere, elle seroit plustost sept ans a poursuyvre ung homme qu'elle n'en deust avoir sa raison'. Witness asked of whom she spoke, but she would not reply; within days her husband became ill in strange fashion, losing his mind, and was only healed after 2 months. Suspected this was her doing, and she was long reputed a witch. 4 years earlier their animals had strayed into Jennon's field, and she told children 'qu'ils se puissent couper le col et les jambes'; 2 days later her son Valtin had his leg broken in 2 places as he guarded animals, without any obvious cause; if she was witch believed she had also caused this. 2 years earlier, when witches from Donipaire were on trial, Jennon had come to their house and said 'qu'elle vouloit prendre son enfant a son giron, et qu'elle s'en iroit par les champs, qu'elle reconnoissoit que les biens de ce monde ne luy vailloient plus rien'. 3 weeks earlier had heard her say at spring below village 'qu'elle prioit que tous ceux et celles qui n'estoient point sorciers, le puissent estre, a fin qu'ils voyent et cognoissent comme il en va a ceulx qui le sont.' Witness had very poor opinion of all this, seeing her fear of being arrested, and words she spoke.

(19) Curien Marie, 40

Reputation 4 years, but no personal suspicion.

(20) Colas Jean Simon, 30

A year ago last Easter had quarrel with her husband, who had not taken his turn to guard cattle. Did not hear that she made any threats, but 3 or 4 days later cow died, followed by its calf - believed this had been her witchcraft, long reputation.

(21) Marguitte femme Claudon Toutellat, de Moyenmoutier, 40

No personal suspicion, but she was reputed a witch.

(22) Idoul Marie, 60

Similar deposition.

(23) Valtin Thouvenin, 40

Similar deposition to wife - but he put remarks about wishing others were witches 3 years earlier, not 3 weeks.

(24) Noel George, 60

Similar deposition to wife.

(25) Jean Valtin, 55

7 years earlier Jennon's husband had been fighting with Nicolas la Hiere, and witness struck him with his fist - this was quarrel described by wife (witness 16). After his fall from tree she came into house and said 'qu'a ce coup il avoit beau a bariller et qu'il barille tout son sould', then told wife it would be a long time before he picked cherries again. 2 weeks later tried to go and see what servants were doing in fields, but met Jennon, who told him he should not be up yet, and he did indeed have to return home. Tried again a week later, but met her once more; when she said 'Dieu vous garde' he replied 'Ha faulce genaxe'. Then story of sick ox as told by wife.

(26) Noel Prevost, 25

5 years earlier his wife was pregnant, and Jennon asked to be godmother to child; because of reputation they asked someone else. She was very angry, and said 'qu'ils n'avoient voulu accepter pour leur comere, mais qu'ils ne feroient guiere de proffit de leur enfant'. Child then fell ill and died 9 weeks later, which he believed had been her witchcraft. She had also told him 'qu'elle le poursuyvroit plustost sept ans durants qu'elle ne luy d'eust causer quelque deplaisir'. After last Christmas had quarrel with his wife, after Jennon alleged one of her hens had been in their house and never come out. Wife called her witch, then husband of accused took them to court for reparation, and for the lost hen. Just after start of case an ox became swollen, and died in 2 weeks - believed this had been her witchcraft. This had been reason he made himself partie formelle; also had a cow which became ill a week before the ox. General reputation.

4 June 1614; interrogation

Said she was about 30. Parents were Estienne and Pieratte Martin of la Woeuvre, who had died so long ago she could hardly remember them. From time she was 4 or 5 had lived with Demenge Simmoné, whose wife was relative of her mother; stayed there for some 15 years, until they were burned together at St Dié. The spent 18 months at la Fosse Quenoille, and another 18 months at la Woeuvre, where she married Claudon Valtin. This was about 13 years earlier.

Asked about quarrels, admitted she had quarrelled with husband's brother Valtin because he falsely called her witch.

Said she remembered fall from tree at la Fosse, and still suffered from effects, but denied having caused death of Nicolas Simmoné, or remembering that he and others laughed at her.

Agreed she had said to Marion, wife of her brother-in-law Valtin, 'qu'elle voudroit que tous ceulx qui donne la chasse aux sorcieres que sorcieres puissent ils devenir, et qu'ils scauroient comme ils leur en va et ceulx qui le sont.'

Denied series of further charges, expressing wish that those who made them might have as many devils around their souls when they died as they made accusations against her.

Said that Jean Valtin had called her witch in the fields, 'mais sy elle est peu retrouver une pierre elle luy eust jecté ce que sy elle l'eust peu tuer ce fust esté une belle aulmosne, que presentement il ne seroit en peine de deposer contre luy. Que tous les diables soient en son ame mort et vif parce qu'il est cause de ce que presentement elle est entre les mains de la justice.'

Agreed she had accused Noel Prevost of killing her hen, but continued to deny any witchcraft.

5 June 1614; confrontations

No reproaches to any witnesses, except for suggestion that Noel Prevost was a thief, but denials of all charges.

8 June 1614; procureur d'office asks for question ordinaire

10 June 1614; Change de Nancy approves

11 June 1614; interrogation under torture

Resisted thumbscrews, but confessed when racked. Said she had been seduced by Mre Navel as young girl, 17 or 18 years earlier. Her mistress, wife of Demenge Simmoney, had regularly beaten her without good reason; one day after beating she was keeping animals she was approached by man in black who told her she was angry about beating and promised her money so that she would never want. Usual seduction scene; money was leaves, powder black/kill and grey/languish.

Tried powder on calf belonging to master, which died. At la Fosse killed horse of Laurent Didier Gratain, because he told her off for allowing animals to stray on his land.

Had only been to sabat once, on Cambas (between St Dié and Taintrux). Carried up chimney and through air by her master; those present were masked, and only recognised Demenge Simmoney and his wife. Ate unsalted meat and danced back to back to flute, then master took her home.

Admitted she had consented to Navel's proposal that he should cause fatal fall of Colas Simoney. Also admitted similar causation for fall of brother-in-law Jean Valtin, who was always quarrelling with her husband, but had been to injure not kill.

Also admitted most other charges, but denied causing illness of Mongeatte femme Noel George. Said she had daily quarrels with Noel Prevost, so Navel suggested she kill his ox. Had also killed his child.

Now said she had been to sabat 3 more times, on côte de Repy and at Grimalbois near Hurbache. Gave hen every year to be exempted from going more often. Those present were masked, and she had only recognized Catherine femme Jean le Maire le Jeune of le Paire, commonly called la Barbriere, and Marion femme Jean Vairin, of same village. Also recognized an old man from Hurbache, but did not know his name or if he was still alive. Asked about hailmaking, agreed she had joined in this on one occasion.

Asked about reason she had not confessed earlier, said that Navel had been in her body preventing her from speaking during torture, until he said he was forced to leave her.

12 June 1614; confirmed earlier confessions. Said she had only recognized the 2 women at sabat from clothes and speech, but did not see their faces, so could not make charge definitely. Claimed Navel had often beaten her for refusing to do his will, and begged pardon for her crimes.

Interrogated again later that day, repeated that her confessions were true. Procureur then asked for death sentence.

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16 June 1614; Change de Nancy approves