

Witch 282; B 8715 no 5, Fleuratte femme Bastien des Boeufs, de la Neuveville-les-Raon

3 November 1615; informations preparatoires taken against Fleuratte wife of Bastien des Boeufs of La Neuveville les Raon, who had been denounced as a witch, and maintained so until death, by Georgeatte wife of Didier Malley, executed on May 6.

(1) Jacquat Frouart de la Neuveville, c. 30

Reputation 5 years. During that time had some disputes with her over an 'apparois' between their houses, since when he had lost all his property without knowing how, and been reduced to 'disette et pauvreté'. Also told how about 4 years earlier, after a quarrel with her, he had three times been attacked by a mysterious assailant on way back from Baccarat, who had disappeared when he cried 'Jesus Maria'.

(2) Jean des Boeufs de la Neuveville, c. 60

Reputation 2 years. If she was a witch believed her to have been cause of an accident he had suffered 7 weeks earlier, when sawing timber in woods; a piece had slipped and injured his leg, and he was still suffering great pain from it. She had been asking his wife and son daily where he was, from envy that he worked and earned more than her husband.

(3) Claudatte femme à Diez Lessemat de la Neuveville, c. 27

Some 2 years earlier, when their husbands had been away working, 7 francs sent back to witness had been delivered in error to Fleuratte, who should only have had 18 gros. When she went to ask for them, Fleuratte was furious, saying 'le diable puisse tuer ceulx que luy avoient envoyé et donné'; finally threw money at her. Within 2 or 3 days her year-old daughter was seized by a fever which lasted 18 months. Accused advised her to rub her with water (?) and she made a temporary recovery, but died after another 3 months; suspected that if Fleuratte was a witch as she was reputed she had caused this.

(4) Jean Forgeat de la Neuveville, c. 38

Previous summer he had killed a hen belonging to Fleuratte, which had been damaging barley he had sown near her house. She had been angry, and told him it would cost him more than at the market; same day one of his calves died. If her reputation of several years as a witch was correct, he was sure it was her doing.

(5) Catherine femme à Claudon Mathieu de la Neuveville, c. 36

Some 4 years earlier she had heard Fleuratte ask her neighbour, Georgeatte wife of Jacquat Frouart, if she had heard a disturbance among her pigs during the night. Georgeatte said she had not, whereupon accused told of a small black dog which had been among the pigs, and had then run under her bed and frightened her. Since then witness had thought ill of her, also bearing in mind her common reputation as a witch.

Said she was envious of her husband, and also accused her of causing illness of son aged about 2 who had beaten her child. When he recovered after about a

fortnight she remarked on this; became ill again, this time for 6 months. Their respective husbands both owed money to their brother-in-law, and when accused told witness they should be ready to pay she replied that they were not so well off. Fleuratte was angry at this; witness was pregnant at time, and after delivery accused visited her, and put something under bedhead. She then lost her milk for 7 weeks, during which time Fleuratte advised her it would return; it finally did so the day after she had told accused she would send her husband to a devin to find out the truth. Fleuratte knew it had returned next day without being told.

(6) Nicolle femme de Jean des Boeufs de la Neuveville, c. 50

Told of quarrel some 8 years before when witness's daughter Odille had told Fleuratte that if her grandmother had lived she would not have married present husband. Had borne them ill-will since, and they had lost their money and property, being reduced to poverty. Then told story of her husband's accident in woods 7 weeks earlier, and of her envy that he earned more than her husband (hardly consistent with earlier charge).

(7) Georgeatte femme à Jacquat Frouart, c. 30

Accused had married her brother about 10 years earlier, after death of their mother who had always opposed marriage on grounds of ill repute she already bore. Since then she had always borne then 'une hayne forte couverte' on account of their opposition; they had lost their property and become very poor. Also told of waking in the night and finding room full of cats; after this son aged 2 became ill, and accused advised her to rub him with brandy and rosewater. Immediately became better, though still having leg trouble. Further told how some 5 years earlier she and the wife of Mengin des Boeufs had found accused having a fit, vomiting and unable to speak - believed her master might have been beating her.

(8) Bastienne femme à Demenge Daulphin de la Neuveville, c. 27

Told of quarrel some 2 years earlier over dogs belonging to herself and accused, who were suckling one another's pups. After she had sold one of hers the other became ill, and she called Fleuratte to see it, but it died as she was rubbing vinegar on its muzzle. Suspected this had been witchcraft, as she had long been suspect.

(9) Curien Dautant de la Neuveville, c. 30

After his marriage to his late wife Claudon 6 and a half years before had been neighbours of accused, who was always asking what he was doing, and had been jealous that he earned more than her husband. Some 3 years before had been seized by leg trouble, and leg was so swollen that he went to surgeon, but had been unable to obtain cure, so that he went on crutches and had to beg for his support. Generally agreed that sickness was not natural, but witchcraft, and he believed that she had caused it, being 'la plus fine et rusée sorciere qu'on ne sauroit trouver'. Also believed that she had caused his wife's death previous year, since she 's'informait sous main', and said by 'une envie déterminée' that his wife was better off than her.

(10) Magdelaine femme à Mongin Fourney de la Neuveville, c. 40

Strong suspicions of witchcraft, but had no belief that she had suffered. Told of occasion some 5 years before when she had seemed to have fit, and told them that a 'beste' had tried to strangle her.

(11) Claudon Mathieu de la Neuveville, c. 40

Told how some 3 years before, as neighbours, they had quarrelled over a fine pig belonging to him, which she had been beating when it went to her house. Next day it became ill, and died as if rabid. Long reputation.

9 November 1615; interrogation

Said she was 38, native of La Chapelle, and had been resident at la Neuveville since marriage some 14 years earlier. Agreed that she had been accused by Georgette previous May, and since then only had known she was reputed a witch. Said that Georgette was damned, to which judges replied that she was 'bien heureuse devant Dieu' because she had persisted so constantly in her confessions.

Denied all charges, including advice on treating sick children. Judges remarked on some long silences before she replied.

10 November 1615; voluntary confession

As judges were finishing interrogation, said that she saw she must die, in view of great charges against her, and wanted to confess all her crimes. Thanked judges for their care for her, and said that her master had prevented her from speaking earlier, but he had just left her, on account of her fear of the prison. Said she had been seduced by Mre Navel 7 years before, when her husband had been ill and they were in great want.

Confessed to various malefices. Had caused a cow belonging to Claudon Mathieu to lose its milk about a year before, because they had refused one of her children milk, although they had plenty. Agreed that she had caused Mathieu's wife to lose her milk; this was because she heard someone say 'la diable la puisse emporter' as she entered. Later felt sorry to see child suffering, and obtained healing powder specially from her master.

Said that her master had wanted her to kill her husband, 'a cause qu'il luy estoit rude', but she feared this would leave her and her children in poverty, and refused.

Had been to sabbat twice a year; had been up to 50 persons present. Had seen Seville, daughter of Didier Pescheur, who had later fled when enquiries began about her; Georgette wife of Didier Malley, already executed; her uncle Jean Gelliat, against whom she would maintain her accusation if confronted with him. Had not been able to identify others, who wore masks. Had sat at table with poor during sabbat; rich were at another, and were treated with more respect. Previous summer had tried to spoil crops by raising hailstorm, but bells had been rung in time to prevent success; obscure comment that intention was to spare La Neuveville, because rich did not want to have to aid poor.

11 November; interrogation

Repeated earlier confession, adding one or two more malefices, but claiming that she had always resisted her master's attempt to persuade her to kill people. Most times she had been to sabbat he had greased her hands, then made her take 'un

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ramont' and hold it upright before chimney, whereupon she was carried up into the air.

12 November; interrogation

Confirmed earlier statements.

16 November 1615; Change de Nancy approves death sentence.

17 November 1615; execution took place.

Expenses came to 85 francs, half of this falling on the duchy.