

Witch 290, Mongeatte Johel 1

B 8719 no 1; witch 290, Mongeatte femme Jean Johel de Moyenmoutier

10 June 1617; informations preparatoires

These were taken after Nicolas Johel of Moyenmoutier had declared himself partie formelle, and made himself liable for costs

(1) Anthoine Robert de Moyenmoutier, 48

Reputation since marriage and residence 18 years earlier; mother previously convicted in ban d'Etival. 10 years before his wife had chased three of their piglets out of their garden, and she had claimed one of them was injured; threatened wife that 'mal joye et santé puisse elle accoucher'. Wife subsequently had stillbirth, which they firmly believed to be her witchcraft; had not come to childbed despite 3 invitations.

(2) Beniste femme du precedent, 50

Same story as husband.

(3) Barbe veuve Demenge Surien de Moyenmoutier, 44

In 1610, when husband was doyen, had been required to 'guager' husband of accused; she had threatened him, he replied by warning her that if she threatened him he would know 'a qui se prendre', and she responded that because her mother had been executed as a witch was no reason for her to be one. About a fortnight later he was drowned in the river, and later heard that after recovering the property which had been taken she had been near bridge and said 'que soub ledit pont puisse il estre noyé'. In view of long reputation and threats, suspected her of causing husband's death.

(4) Claudon la Bolle de Moyenmoutier, 50

Some 8 years previously his children Jean and Idatte were guarding pigs when a wolf appeared towards evening and took a small pig belonging to Mongeatte; she was angry and told them off, to which Jean replied that perhaps she had taken it. Then told how a few days later Idatte was attacked by moonlight by a grey cat which came from house of accused, but disappeared when others came running at her cries. When witness returned from working at Raon he said to her 'Sorciere qu'a tu affaire de menacer mes gens et d'ainsy faire de ma fille' (girl had swollen neck), to which she replied that she would remember this and he would repent. Some 5 weeks later lost cow worth 7 ecus which died rabid, and if she was convicted believed this to be her doing - reputation 16 years. Claimed he had reiterated accusations, telling her to get witnesses and seek reparation, but she had done nothing.

(5) Barthelemin Husson de Moyenmoutier, 48

Had been neighbour 7 years earlier, but in view of reputation and fearing losses he sold his house. Some 6 years later his son Jean, aged 17, went to war in Germany, and on his return witness was told she had said 'que le Diable l'avoit ja bien apporté, mais qu'il ne viveroit guiere'. He died 2 days later, and in view of threat and long reputation suspected her.

(6) Jean La Bolle, 23

2 years earlier previous Easter she had given him some yarn with which to weave cloth for her, and as he started to do so a piece of his loom broke; she was angry, although it did no harm to her cloth. Later had to ask her for more yarn to finish job, and after bringing this she leaned against loom watching him in silence for some time. Came back after another quarter of an hour and continued watching him; after she finally left he became ill with strange illness, and this lasted 10 weeks, so that he had to take to bed and could hardly walk. Finally recovered slowly, and suspected her of being cause; his father Claudon had told her he would have her arrested, and she only replied 'qu'il avoit bien de la langue'. Repeated father's account of incident with pig killed by wolf; he had said to her 'que peut estre c'estoit elle, ou le maling qui l'a tanté, qui l'avoit esté prendre en forme dudit Loup'.

(7) Claudatte femme Francois l'Hoste de Moyenmoutier, 60

Some 2 years before her daughter Claudatte, aged 14, had been told off by Nicolle, daughter of accused, on grounds that she had joined other girls fishing in stream outside her house without being asked. Next night she became ill, and died 4 days later from strange illness, 'se jectant ca et la la teste enbas, ce que denotoit ladite maladie n'estre ordinaire'. Witness believed this was Mongeatte's doing; long reputation, even before residence, execution of mother.

(8) Chrestienne femme Jean Blaise de Moyenmoutier, 60

Some 8 years earlier Jennon, wife of her late brother Mongeon Robert, had quarrelled with accused, who called her 'ribaude', to which she replied 'sorciere'. Soon afterwards Jennon, who was pregnant, went out to fetch a cow, and fell down in street and died suddenly, without saying a word. Witness had always believed this was witchcraft; reputation since residence. Also blamed her for death of her brother a year later, who was only ill 15 days with strange malady. Added that cow her sister-in-law had gone to fetch fell down same day and had to be killed.

(9) Claude Mourchat de Moyenmoutier, 30

4 years before he had prohibited her being invited with other neighbours to celebration after his wife had a child, on account of her reputation. She had heard about this, and they had a quarrel; he called her witch without her seeking reparation, she said 'que jamais elle ne l'aymeroit, et qu'au lieu qu'il la devoit supporter comme son parent'. His late uncle Colas Hannel had married her mother. 5 weeks later his wife Jennon became ill, and remained so for 3 weeks, as if 'frenetique', then started to recover 2 days after being visited by accused. Had been

told by 'une certaine Sarasine que celle qu'avoit donné la maladie a sadite femme estoit toict a toict de sa maison, et que pour ung teston elle la feroit venir promptement'. Did not agree, but nevertheless she appeared 2 days later, and wife then recovered; long reputation, execution of mother, suspicions in ban d'Etival.

(10) Elie femme Colas d'Avould, 30

Told of how she was suspected of causing death of her sister Epron 2 years earlier; they had dispute over pasture, then she fell ill. A day or so before her death she was visited by Mengeotte, who said she would send her some fish to see if she could eat it. Epron could hardly eat, but said she would try a little to see if it would cure her or kill her; died at 8 next morning, maintaining to last that accused had caused her illness. Long reputation. 2 days before arrest had said to witness 'qu'elle estoit sa bonne voisine, et qu'elle ne scauroit rien déposer contre elle, adjoustant qu'elle la devoit bien consoler, Aquoy elle repartit qu'elle ne diroit que ce qu'elle scavoit.' Had also heard from her husband that she had absented herself on hearing rumour she was to be arrested, but had returned following morning.

(11) Marguitte fille feu Jean Voirin de Moyenmoutier, 22

Told of occasion when she had been in service of accused 12 years earlier, and unknown little black dog had appeared and scared her when Mengeotte was absent.

(12) Claudatte femme Colas Vaultin de Moyenmoutier, 50

Some 12 years earlier neighbours had warned her that Mengeotte was having an affair with her husband, although she did not believe this. Some time after accused walked rapidly past her without saying anything, which frightened her; no immediate consequence, but some 3 months later her daughter Annon, aged 8, became ill, unable to walk, and died after a month. Believed this was her doing. 3 years earlier had dispute over damage done by one of Mongeatte's pigs in her garden, and some 3 months later another daughter, Dieudonnée, sickened and died. Had fever, became all swollen, died after a month - this too she imputed to witchcraft by accused. Also thought she might have killed some animals.

(13) Jennon femme Claudon Mourchat, 40

Repeated husband's deposition, but claimed that she had told Mengeotte that la Sarasine had identified her as the witch, and she replied this was a lie. Before arrest had told her they were 'mauvais voisins' because they had not warned her of what was intended against her, and said she had done her no harm, to which witness said she could only depose what la Sarasine had told her.

(14) Jennon femme Colas Chrestien mulnier de Moyenmoutier, 46

About a year before had a minor quarrel with her at mill, and in view of reputation 'conceut quelque mauvaise opinion contre elle'. Husband was going to

attend to mill, which was frozen up, and she warned him to be careful and recommend himself to God, telling him of quarrel. At that moment the millwheel, which had been rebuilt only a fortnight before, broke into pieces, which she had always suspected was her doing.

(15) Colas Marchal de Moyenmoutier, 50

When the Sr Jean Godard had kept a forge some 12 years before, the wife of the forgeron mre Chrestofle sent small daughter to buy apples from Mengeotte, but sent them back again as not being worth the price; child died soon after, and wife told witness with tears that she blamed this on accused. Had himself quarrelled with her 5 years before, after accusing her of stealing hatband he had dropped, and she threatened him. Two weeks later, on way back from St Blaise, was taken by a wind and thrown in river, where he nearly drowned, but escaped after calling Jesus Maria; was sure she had caused this.

(16) Jennon femme du precedent, 50

Repeated story of forgeron's daughter, whose mother had openly accused Mongeatte and called her witch. She herself had called her witch only a week earlier after a clash between their cows, inviting her to seek reparation, but she only went back into her house.

(17) Claudon Thonnere de Moyenmoutier, 60

7 years earlier assisted the doyen Demenge Curien to 'guager' her husband, taking a cart among other things, and she cursed them saying 'qu'ilz puissent avoir ledit char deans le ventre'. Witness then had strange illness and was bedridden more than 4 months; his wife met accused and her husband at mill, and told them of his suspicions. Her husband then came to see him, 'luy demandant s'il vouloit dire que sa femme soit sorciere, et luy estant respondu que non, mais que sy elle estoit telle qu'on la soubconnoit qu'il luy mescroyoit icelle maladie, et reparty par ledit marit que sy luy qui depose le vouloit dire qu'il en formeroit plainte, et luy estant arrier reparty par iceluy, que de son costé il la feroit aprehender et ledit marit se deporta sans en faire plus grande instance'. After this gradually recovered, when previously everyone judged him moribund; firm suspicion against her, in view of reputation and mother's execution.

(18) Francois de Beze, messenger a Moyenmoutier, 70

Some 9 years before, when sent to Nancy, had seen her beating river behind house with small white wand around 11 at night, after which it hailed for an hour. Had subsequently called her witch in her hearing and that of husband without any action following.

(19) Claudon Francois, 35

Had been living in her house 13 years before, and had quarrel when he wanted to move out; she falsely accused him of attempted rape, so that he was imprisoned. Some years later became very ill for 22 weeks, and suspected her, but when she came to see him and told him of rumour that he suspected her he denied it. Then gradually recovered.

(20) Pauline femme Jean du Train de Gemainfaing, 40

Told how her first husband Jean Husson had been Doyen at Moyenmoutier, and obliged to 'guager' her husband, so that she was furious and threatened him with finger, saying 'qu'il n'yroit plus guiere'. Soon after became ill, so that everyone said he was bewitched, and died after 15 weeks - believed she had caused this.

(21) Vincent Harmant procureur de la court spirituelle de Moyenmoutier, 53

Told same story as previous witness; he had accompanied Jean Husson, and she had been especially angry that they took a cauldron. Said to Husson 'qu'il avoit encore des enfans bien jeunes, mais que de sa part il n'y iroit plus guiere'. Reputed a witch ever since marriage, and as procureur knew that when she had been called witch by others her husband 'en faisoit des accordes soubz main', notably with Jean Bertrand and Demenge Voirin, without going to court.

15 June 1617; interrogation

Said she was about 37; husband was a 'verrier'. Father was Nicolas Hannel of St. Remy, ban d'Etival (long dead), mother Marguite, who came from Basin, executed as a witch. Knew she had been arrested on charge of witchcraft, but they did her great wrong.

Very long and thorough questioning on all charges, to which she opposed fairly resolute denials. Admitted one or two quarrels, and being called witch in private; also remarks to neighbours when expecting to be arrested. Said she would have liked to beat Claudatte wife of Colas Valtin over her suspicions of an affair with her husband, if she had been strong enough - charge was untrue.

Followed by confrontations. Said that Beniste femme Anthoine Robert was a thief, but could only allege hearsay. Francois de Beze said he had told her and husband about seeing her making hail, and husband had recently tried to give him a blow with an axe for this. Otherwise no reproaches, but no progress.

15 June 1617; procureur d'office asks for question ordinaire et extraordinaire

17 June 1617; Change de Nancy approves

21 June 1617; interrogation under torture

Given thumbscrews, then racked. Asked to be taken down, and then exhorted to make 'une confession entiere et generale', to which she replied that she was 'femme de bien, et sy desiroient de la faire dampner', to which judges

responded that on the contrary they only wished to save her soul. Racked again, finally confessed she had been seduced by Mre Navel. This was some 7 years earlier, when she was very unhappy and angry at being called witch when she was not one; she agreed to believe in him 'fort legerement'. Gave her black and white powder, to kill and to cure, which she tried on her own pig and horse. Her master had given fatal illness to Jean Husson after suggesting this to her, and had made Claudon Thonnaire ill then cured him because she felt pity for him. Various other similar episodes - always suggested by her master. He had pressed her 'estrangement' to consent to his killing Jean fils Barthelemin Husson, whom she hated because he was a verrier who competed with her husband. At end of confessions repeated that she had never wished to do harm, but had been 'estrangement sollicitée' by her master, who had beaten her several times.

Had been taken to sabbat on broomstick greased by her master, which took her up the chimney; were more than 100 people present. Danced back to back, ate unseasoned meat; all masked, thought she recognized by their speech and clothes Babellon femme Mongeon Voirin of Moyennoutier and Catherine femme Jean le Maire le Jeune of Le Paire. Had only been twice, then made pact to give master a hen around every St Martin to be excused. On two occasions she did go did not want to agree to spoiling crops, because she was poor and had children, and was beaten for this.

22 June 1617; interrogation

Confirmed previous confessions. When interrogated second time said she could not maintain her accusations against the two women with certainty.

22 June 1617; procureur d'office asks for death sentence

23 June 1617; Change de Nancy agrees

27 June 1617; sentence carried out at St Dié