

Witch 310, Didier Chaudron 1

B 8735 no 2; witch 310, Didier Chaudron le jeune, de Raon

15 February 1624; informations preparatoires

(1) Margueritte femme George Jean Gerard de Raon, 30

Some 4 years earlier her daughter Claudette, aged 14, had quarrel with accused over children's game, and she had called him son of a witch, because his mother had been executed shortly before. Soon afterwards she became ill (more ill than she had been), strangely swollen. During illness Didier ran after cart which their servant was driving through faubourg and asked how the girl was; told she was very ill, replied 'qu'on avoit bien a la medeciner qu'il comptoit bien qu'elle n'en reschaperoit'. Soon after she died, as if troubled in her mind, and witness believed that if he was a witch, as he was reputed, he had caused this.

(2) Lucas Toussainct verrier de Raon, 33

Reputed witch for over 3 years; mother's execution.

(3) Babillon femme Claude Malfort de Raon, 30

Mother's execution 4 years earlier; reputation since then. Had also heard that he had been accused by la veuve Barret, executed previous Monday, and that he was suspected of causing illness of Claudon Jean Estienne.

(4) Margueritte femme Jean Baccon marchand de Raon, 33

Common repute; children called him witch. Told of illness of first witness's daughter.

(6 February 1624)

(5) George Jean Gerard de Raon, 28

Told of illness of his wife's daughter (by her first husband Nicolas Claude le maire), which had begun when accused stepped on her foot. Had heard from children that they had been under 'halle' at night and accused had turned himself into a cat, running among them with a great noise.

(6) Nicolas Hugo de Raon, 30

Reputation 2 years; he too told story of Claudette's death.

(7) Demenge Piernille portier de Raon, 70

Two and a half years earlier had quarrelled with him, because he did not want him to lodge in his gatehouse. After this his son fell ill, and was still getting worse. Had told witness that when group of children were gathering firewood on

côte de Repy the accused had not finished as they set off for home, yet arrived back before them, so they said among themselves he was a real witch to have done this.

(8) Gabriel fils Demenge Piernille, 18

Told of quarrel with his father, and wood-gathering episode. After this they had often fought on way to woods, and he had called him witch. Subsequently fell ill, and was still unable to walk. Had heard from accused that his father had been angry with him because he did not earn as much money as witness.

(9) Mengeotte femme Lucas Toussaint, 36

Reputation 6 months, supposedly 'gasté par sa mere'.

(10) Claudette femme Michel Parmentier hostelain de Raon, 40

Some 4 years earlier he had been guarding horse for husband, and when he brought it to house she gave him supper. Afterwards found him taking saplings outside house, and was very angry, calling him 'vray coquin et larron', and saying it was a poor way to thank her for supper. Next day a fine horse in stable developed leg trouble, and died after a month; in view of reputation believed he had caused this. Husband had also been very ill, and although they did not suspect him over this, they were frightened of him on account of his mother.

6 February 1624; confrontation of accused with Jennon veuve Nicolas Barret, already condemned, who maintained accusation

6 March 1624; Change de Nancy authorizes arrest and further proceedings - after this he fled.

9 December 1625; additional witnesses

(11) Collotte femme Didier Canot de Grand Faubourg de Raon, 40

Some 6 years earlier he had often come to house to ask for money husband owed his father, who had kept gate for him. Did not always pay promptly, and around this time had a pig dead, which made them suspect him.

(12) Catherine femme Hanso Mandray, 43

Had a goat which died strangely some 6 years earlier, but had not suspected the accused.

(13) Catherine femme Nicolas Morisot de la Neufville-les-Raon, 23

Her mother had died some 7 years earlier, and during illness sometimes went out with a stick to go into garden, but suspected no-one.

3 December 1624; interrogation

Statement that Didier had fled on hearing of charges against him, and had been at St Nicolas, Art-sur-Meurthe, and Pont-a-Mousson; then had returned to ban de Raon, and been arrested.

Said he was 21, native of Raon, son of late Didier Chaudron and his wife Anthoinette, the latter having been executed for witchcraft. Agreed he had fled in fear of justice and imprisonment. Judges suggested that he had been accused of committing various maléfices at Art-sur-Meurthe, especially in the house of Didier Raville admodiateur.

In response to this and other questions, gave account of his seduction some 6 years before. Had been angry because girls with whom he was gathering wood called him witch. Met a small man in black with hands like claws of bird, called Mre Nave, who promised to make him rich; renounced God, received 3 kinds of powder, black, yellow, and white, which which he was urged to do harm to men and animals. Money turned into oak leaves, which he threw away.

Killed cow belonging to Thouvenin Sellier, because he did not pay money owed to his father. Similarly killed pig of Didier Canot. Hanso Mandray did not pay him for putting 'bois de flotte' in the river, so he killed his goat. After another failure to pay, by Claudon Forget, his master appeared and incited him to kill Forget, but he would only use yellow powder to make his wife ill as she went towards church with a stick; pressed again by his master, then used black powder to kill her. Yet another delay in payment led to his killing cow of Bastien Fournier le jeune.

After this master appeared again to him and gave him more black powder. Another failure to pay, by Demenge Cocquot, and he killed his daughter Jennon, aged 8. Killed horse of Michiel Parmentier after dispute over saplings and reproaches of wife. Questioned about death of Claudette, agreed that he had killed her in anger that she had disturbed game of 'chiques'. Admitted that he had been turned into cat by his master to frighten children, who had run away. Denied causing illness of Gabriel Piernille, but agreed he had made Claudon Jean Estienne ill; he was living in his house, and they hated one another. Finally felt pity for his and used white powder to cure him after 6 months.

Described going to sabbat, dancing back to back and feasting. No suggestion that food was unpleasant; included peas, beans, 'cabut' and mutton. The mutton came from 6 sheep belonging to la dame Durand which he had killed to take to sabbat, where he was responsible for feeding fire with wood. Had seen Catherine femme Jean Hachon du petit faulbourg, with whom he often danced and who sometimes acted as cook; she had been beaten by their master because she did not want to attend sabbat. Had also seen la veuve Barret, already executed.

Agreed he had killed cow of Didier Raville at Art-sur-Meurthe, because his wife had told him 'qu'il falloit qu'il s'en aille a la garde de dieu'.

9 December 1625; interrogation

Confirmed all his earlier confessions.

10 December 1625; interrogation

Further confirmation.

13 December 1625; Change de Nancy approves death sentence

15 December 1625; definitive sentence passed at Raon