

Witch 313, Mengeotte Durand 1

8735 no 6; witch 313, Mengeotte veuve Anthoine Durand, de Raon

30 December 1624; informations preparatoires

(1) Marie veuve Jean Thiebaut de Raon, 60

Some 3 years earlier they had been neighbours, and accused begged to be allowed to live in her house, but she refused because of her reputation as a witch. Two days later her son Claudon fell very ill, and remained so for 3 months before starting to recover; if she were witch as reputed believed her responsible.

(2) Demenge Maire couroyeur de Raon, 28

Reputation some 4 years. About a year before she came to house to ask for some milk, but as they had none he refused her. She still came back twice more, so in the end he was angry and drove her out with a kick. 2 or 3 days later came into house early in morning, and stood by bed where wife was; soon after she fell ill and died after 6 months all dried up, telling him several times that she suspected Mengeotte. He believed that if she were a witch she had given illness.

(3) Collotte veuve Chrestaille Potier de Raon, 37

Reputation 14 years. Had heard from her late mother that she had fallen from a high chamber in a strange fashion; a fortnight before had heard accused say at Claudon Ozelle's house 'quelle s'avoit ja chaussé avec une sorciere, et qu'elle s'y chaussoit encore'.

(4) Jeanne femme Jean Villemin bouchier de Raon, 40

When going to house of glassmaker outside Raon with other women, she was working by river; one of them said 'Tante Mengeotte faictes tout doucement, laquelle repliqua qu'elle n'estoit tante Mengeotte, mais qu'elle estoit tante Genoxe'. General reputation.

(5) Marie femme Nicolas Lesclaire charpentier de Raon, 48

Reputation more than 3 years. Had recently come to her house lamenting that she was being called witch through town, and blamed for death of child of Nicolas Guerard. Witness agreed this was the case, and 'qu'on en parloit tout communement et haultement'; she replied they did her great wrong, that she was very unhappy and 'estoit bien aisé que son coeur volloit en l'air'.

(6) Dedie femme Lucas Jean Peltre le jeune, 30

Some 12 years earlier had heard her tell how she had been frightened in woods at night, so that she almost fainted, which made witness suspicious. Some 3 months before they had quarrelled, and accused had said to her that she should not only suspect Margueritte Jean Symon (recently executed) over illness of her child

and her own neck trouble, and 'qu'il y avoit encore une qui y avoit aydé', which made her even more suspicious that she was cause. General rumour in town that she had caused illness of Epvre wife of Demenge Maire.

(7) Jennon femme Nicolas Jean de Flin, tailleur d'habitz du grand faubourg de Raon, 36

Reputation 6 years. Some 3 years before she had come to their house twice, asking to buy peas then trying to sell yarn; both times witness refused her, and spoke sharply saying she was 'trop importune'. Next evening her daughter aged three fell ill suddenly and died in 24 hours, vomiting poisonous matter as black as ink, and she suspected Mengeotte. Had heard from wife of Nicolas Guerard that she suspected her over death of child 5 years earlier.

(8) Bastien Sachot le viel de Raon, 54

Some 8 years before she had been living with her son-in-law Gabriel Ozelle, but 'ils menoient mauvais mesnage'; one day heard him say she was 'une vraye sorciere', to which she replied 'qu'elle puisse estre bruslée sy elle l'estoit', which made him suspect her, 'et tant plus qu'elle avoit tousjours en mains un grand chapelet faisante la bigoute, et neanmoins avoit tousjours querelle avec son dit gendre'.

(9) Dedie femme Nicolas Liebault de Raon, 50

Some 4 months earlier the accused had quarrel with her grandson Nicolas, aged 4, and chased him to their house, saying 'qu'elle l'auroit bien tost'. Soon after he fell ill and died in 4 days, with body all black, after bleeding heavily from nose and elsewhere; in view of threats and her ill fame as a witch the witness and her husband suspected her of being cause of this. Had herself accused her, but she had denied it saying she was a good woman. Had heard from wife of Vincent Rosat that she was suspected over death of child of her son Anthoine Durand.

(10) Nicolas Laurent de Raon, 42

Some 8 years earlier he had lived in house of Demenge Jacquot, as did Jean Fleurent son-in-law of accused, so she was often about. Fleurent and his wife fell very ill, and one day he heard him accuse her of being a witch and the cause of their illness, which made witness suspect her.

(11) Claudette femme Nicolas Guerard du grand faulbourg de Raon, 25

Some 6 years before had dispute with accused over seat in church, so that she became very hostile. Shortly afterwards she touched her infant son Demenge, whom witness was carrying, on shoulder and arm, then he fell very ill. Accused was persuaded to visit him, said they should light small candle at each corner of cradle in order to find out if it was 'mal de saint', but he died after 7 weeks, shortly after accused had visited him and touched him again. Believed that if she were

witch as she were reputed she had caused this. Also suspected her over death of son Nicolas 4 months earlier, after threats - no details, but see witness 9.

(12) Alizon fille Nicolas Liebaut de Raon, 18

Had heard father claim that she had caused death of grandson Nicolas.

(7 January 1625)

(13) Jennon femme Nicolas Potier de Raon, 50

Some 10 years earlier her husband had been very friendly with late Anthoine Durand, husband of accused, so they were invited to supper in house of witness day after St Luke (feast of Raon). She stood by child who was sick in bed, who called out to witness that he was frightened of woman by him; illness later became worse, and he died in strange fashion after 6 months. Did not suspect her, but witness and husband believed it might be witchcraft. Around last St Luke met her at house of Francoise Barbonnier, and she started to speak of child's illness, saying 'que c'estoit grand dommage, qu'il falloit bien maudire les sorciers et sorcieres, qu'il les falloit tous brusler et que sa fille (pour lors malade) estoit ensorcelée'. Daughter in fact died soon after, but witness conceived suspicion that Mengeotte might have caused death of her own child, in view of her long reputation.

9 January 1625; Change de Nancy approves imprisonment and interrogation.

17 January 1625; interrogation

Said she was Mengeotte, widow of Anthoine Durand potier d'estain, aged about 70. Father had been Symon Charpentier of Vaudemont, mother Claudon, had lived there, at Blamont, and at Raon. Knew she was accused of witchcraft, but denied it. Then questioned on basis of depositions, admitted virtually all circumstantial evidence - remarks about witchcraft, quarrels, and so forth - while maintaining innocence of any wrongdoing.

Said that when in prison had seen an altar with a virgin all in white on it, with two candles, which she had thought was her guardian angel and the Virgin of Loretto, but it disappeared without saying anything.

18 January 1625; confrontations

No results of importance; maintained position she had already taken. Did not reproach any of the witnesses.

22 January 1625; Change de Nancy approves question ordinaire only, with moderation suitable to her age.

24 January 1624; interrogation under torture

When she was in hands of executioner, after being shaved, judges urged her to confess freely, seeing that she was on the point of doing so, and she begged not to be tortured, saying she had been tempted and abused by Maitre Parsin. This was 12 years earlier, when going to Badonviller in middle of woods; she had been sad, and he promised to give her so much money she would not want. Renounced God and took him for master, but money he gave her in a tapestry purse turned out to be oak leaves. Appeared again 15 days later when she was near village of Monteux near Badonviller, returning from Blamont, and gave her 3 kinds of powder, black, yellow and white (kill, languish, cure); urged her to kill people, especially those with whom she quarrelled. Tried powder out on two chickens which died, but then threw it away and made no use of it. Master met her again 3 weeks later, on way to her husband who was working at Rode, gave her more powders, threatening her with beating if she did not use them, but again she threw them away. Had been once to sabbat - usual dancing and feasting on tasteless meat. Later gave him a hen each year by the bridge at mills of Raon to be excused.

Denied committing any maléfices, despite being given thumbscrews and then the rack.

25 January 1625; interrogation

Confirmed earlier confessions, but added nothing more.

27 January 1625; interrogation

Two more attempts to get her to expand confessions, but no result.

30 January 1625; Change de Nancy approves death sentence

1 February 1625; formal sentence by court at Raon