

Witch 337, Catherine Diez 1

Vosges G 707 no 2; witch 337, Catherine veuve Jean Diez, de la Bolle

14 August 1593; informations preparatoires

Already accused by Claudatte Haulterolbe, and recently by l'Hospitaliere du Viel Marché.

(1) Colas Gerard, 50

Reputation 6 years.

(2) Toussaint Fresse, 40

12 years earlier was helping Jean François to kill a rabid dog when latter was killed outright by a thunderbolt. Later heard that accused had told him 'qu'il se taise et que le diable luy cuisoit une soupe', which was reason why whole village thought she was cause of his death. Shortly before her husband was arrested and executed a young bull belonging to witness ran after cow of accused, and although he and his wife followed as fast as they could they were unable to prevent it entering house of accused. On emerging saw it was ill, so had it bled in fear it was bewitched, and it recovered. Asked Jean Diez if he had struck it, to which he replied 'que s'il est esté a la maison alors, ce n'eut esté tout ung'. Believed one of them had given it something intending to kill it.

(3) Laurent Jean Mours, 50

She and late husband long reputed witches. When rumour went around that she would be arrested she told witness 'que sy on la prenoit, elle en feroit prendre des aultres'.

(4) George Mengin, 25

Long reputation, and had heard her called witch.

(5) Jean Mengin, 30

4 years before had quarrel over horse which had strayed into her field, and that night it broke its leg in the stable - suspected this had been witchcraft by her or husband, in view of long reputation. On another occasion he and husband bought some meat together, and shared it out in house of accused; she then gave him something in which to carry it. On way home fell into river from damaged 'rux' and was nearly drowned, which he believed had been her witchcraft.

(6) Demenge Mourel, 50

General reputation.

(7) Toussaint Guillemotte, 40

Day after Christmas his pig escaped into her garden, and she called him 'Grand cocquin', to which he replied 'Vielle sorciere, qu'est ce que tu dis, il n'y a guieres que ton marit a esté bruslé et sy fauldra encor qu'on te menne avec luy'. At same hour child fell ill, and he made his belief that she had bewitched it public. Around time of Lent she came to house asking for some salt, and rubbed child's leg, after which it immediately started to recover. Had heard her say that if she was arrested she would cause others to be.

(8) Georgeatte femme Claudon Prevost, 50

Story of death of her first husband Jean François after threat, and suspicion that she or late husband had ben responsible for the thunderbolt.

(9) Mengeatte femme Demenge Mourel, 60

3 years earlier Pierron d'Orbay had wanted to marry her daughter, but she had refused him. When she met the accused she said she had not wanted to give her daughter to Pierron, but she would repent. When witness asked if this message came from Pierron she said it did not, but her husband had said she would not find anyone as rich. Next Christmas he was betrothed to another girl, and daughter attended ceremony, then became sick and died 2 weeks later. Had suspicions against both the accused and d'Orbay, in view of reputations.

(10) Beniste femme Colas Gerard, 40

After execution of husband heard accused quarrelling with Georgeatte femme Claudon Prevost, and saying that if she was arrested she would have Georgeatte arrested too.

(11) Jehennon veuve Anthoine Alezey, 50

9 years earlier her husband quarrelled with accused, then died after languishing from St George to St Luke. In view of great reputation as witch, believed she might have killed him.

(12) Jehennon femme Toussainct Guillemette, 30

Told how she had visited her sick child, and said that perhaps the oatmeal bread had dried him up. Witness replied that it was a long time since he had eaten either wheaten or oatmeal bread, then accused rubbed his leg from knee to foot, after which he recovered and was still healthy. Believed she had caused illness then cured it.

(13) Zabel femme Mengeon Gillat, 35

Had heard her tell Jean Mengin's wife that if she was arrested she would have her arrested too.

14 August 1593; interrogation

Said she was about 50, 'travaillant ordinairement pour gagner sa pauvre vie'. Could not remember how long she had been married to husband; 'quant à elle, jamais elle ne print garde sur les malefices de son marit, aultrement estoient de bon accord'.

Said Toussaint Guillematte had called her witch, and she did same to him, when they quarrelled over small sum of money she asked him to repay. Said that when people spoke of having her arrested she might have said 'qu'aultant en pendoit à l'oeil a tous les aultres.'

Continued 'Que c'est simplesse de luy parler de telle chose, qu'elle at en ung doigt, au dessus, enfermé de lealbe beniste et des pampies et que ce fit ung prebtre, Messire Claude Pierel, luy vivant curé de Sainte Margarée, par le moyen dequoy, elle est conservée, et ne peult estre abusée ne tentée du malin esprit. De faict elle nous a monsté ledit doigt, sur le dos duquel y at apparence d'une croix noircie au dedans.

Luy avons sur ce remonstré, Que ceste croix est une vraye abusion et ung indice certain, Que le malin esprit l'a tenté et abusé, et affin de la retenir des siennes, et qu'elle puisse abuser les personnes l'a muny de ce signe, Affin qu'on penche, qu'elle soit esloignée de sa puissance et compaignie, Mais que nous sommes sy farçis de telles impietés et impostures, que n'y adjoustons non seulement point de foid, Mais encor prenons dela ung certain et vray presage et argument qu'elle est vrayement sorciere.'

After this she did not want to say anything, claiming they would not believe her. Denied various threats she was alleged to have made, and claimed her husband had been responsible for broken leg of Jean Mengin's horse.

Said 'qu'il est impossible, Qu'il n'y ait des gens dampnés de faire contre elle, ce que faisons, Que sy dieu venoit maintenant luy dire, Que sy elle n'est sorciere, elle precipite en soy, ung cousteau, et qu'il ne luy feroit mol mal, elle en feroit aussy tost, asseurée comme elle est de son innocence et prudhommie.'

Asked to be confronted with l'Hospitaliere, but when latter was questioned by judges she withdrew her accusation, saying she had made it to avenge herself, because she had been accused by Jean Diez. Catherine was told it was not expedient for the confrontation to proceed, and sent back to prison.

20 August 1593; Change de Nancy states that she may be tortured if Mengeatte femme Lallemand persists with her accusation, otherwise should only be shown the instruments.

No more documents, but statement in accounts shows that goods were sold for 13 francs, so was evidently convicted.