

B 7354; witch 124, Barbe veuve Mengin Remicourt, de Vandevre

13 August 1608; C. M. Remy has been advised that several at Vandevre are strongly suspected of witchcraft, notably Barbe; asks for depositions to be taken against her.

18 August 1608; informations preparatoires

(1) Bastien Mangeot, tailleur d'habitz, 31

General reputation, and he was sure she had caused fatal illness of Pacquette fille Nicolas Chenion 7 years before. This followed quarrel when she accused Pacquette of stealing some ashes from her washing, and threatened her. He had seen girl singing songs happily as she swept house before quarrel, and immediately afterwards she fell gravely ill. She called Barbe witch, and wanted to get bread and salt from her house. Witness told her son-in-law Gauthien that he did not want him and his wife in his house any more; the wife threatened he would repent. A month later his son aged 2 died within 24 hours of becoming ill, and was sure this was doing of the daughter, who was reputed to be a witch like her mother. Also story of hearing great noise from kitchen where Barbe was sleeping, which he thought was her master coming down the chimney for her, but there was no sign of anything in the morning. Also told of previous illness of son, which followed occasion when Barbe's daughter called him into her house and picked him up by the feet, holding him head downwards. Further story in separate deposition that after they had quarrelled she cut his hair; he then fell ill, and was expected to die, but she said he would recover, which he did.

(2) Didier Symonin, laboureur, 47

Told story of how 27 years before he and his father were accompanying her and her husband from Nancy to Vendevre and talking about how 'la nuict estoit fort fascheuse et espouvantable qu'il failloit un homme bien hardi de s'y assurer et estre sans peur'. She said she had only been frightened once at night, when there was a storm and something came down the chiney and tried to drag her out.

(3) Claudin Hylaire, fournier du four banal, 54

4 years earlier had obtained lease of house in which Barbe was living from Dame d'Armacourt, at which she was very angry; same night sat next to his wife and threatened to put her 'en haxiere'. Next day she fell very ill, with a great swelling in middle of back it was never possible to cure, and died 3 years later. Had no other quarrel with Barbe and her family, but believed that she had given this because of the house.

(4) Claudin Burthecourt, laboureur, 54

Had been cutting wood 7 or 8 years earlier when he heard cries; went to investigate, and found Barbe lying down with thigh exposed. She said it was a gout which afflicted her, but he suspected it was something else, in view of reputation. Also thought she had been cause of death of his wife after he refused to sell her some flax; she developed pains all over body and died in 4 days.

(5) Isabelle veuve Didier Rouyer, 56

General reputation. One day her daughter refused to take hand of Barbe's grand-daughter to dance, saying her grandmother was a witch. Barbe told witness that if she did not beat her daughter she would do it herself, and a week later she caught her by the arm and beat her, saying 'Tien petite punaise qu'il y a longtemps que je te doibs cela'. 3 days later the girl fell ill, and could only walk with a stick, having become completely impotent; it was even necessary to remove a bone from her neck.

(6) Nicolas Chany, vigneron, 57

When living in same house heard her give great cries every Thursday night; those who heard it said it was the devil tormenting her. When his daughter was ill she called out Remicourthay, Remicourdiable, indicating that Barbe had made her ill. Latter said nothing when she heard this, and the girl died.

(7) Claudio Galbain, vigneron, 30

7 or 8 years earlier heard her tell story about something trying to drag her up chimney, after which she fell down half the chimney without being hurt.

19 August 1608; PG asks for arrest of Barbe and her daughter Clere

(8) Cler femme Nicolas Chany

Told of hearing her say 'que maudit soit la mort et que dieu n'est pendu'; same story as husband about death of daughter.

(9) Claude Thomas, sergent

Story of seeing her throwing water from ditch over head without being wetted. He had refused to let a room to her, and later she came to house and rocked cradle with her foot, after which child soon died - suspected this was her doing.

(10) Dieudonnée femme Claudio Gaulbain le jeune

After her mother-in-law had complained of the witch who had made her ill Barbe (who had been working in vines for her) spoke to witness, saying that if this was meant for her she would leave her in such a state they would have to carry her back. She later died all dried up, and they suspected this was Barbe's doing because they had evicted her from room she occupied.

(11) Francoise veuve Didier Riston

Told how one day they were returning from Fresse and had to take shelter from a storm; this was when she said 'le cinq cent diable soit la mort et que dieu n'est pendu me lasse ty tent vivre'.

(12) Andreu Cougnot

Story about finding her throwing water over her head; son-in-law asked what she was doing, and she said she was refreshing herself. A big cloud then came up with loud thunder.

(13) la veuve Lourand Jacquot

Had heard her late husband claim she had given him his illness, and caused deaths of many of his animals.

(14) Barbe veuve Anthoine Petit Jean

Her late husband had claimed she had bewitched him, while she told him he would be cured by eating 'joute' or cherries. Her daughter had told witness she had much trouble with her husband and was not yet at the end of it; she suspected the two of them had caused his death, and an illness she had had.

21 August 1608; interrogation

Said she was about 60; husband had been manouvrier. Asked when she had abandoned God, said she had become witch 5 or 6 years earlier. Seduced on way back from woods of Arnacourt; she was in despair because she could find no means to live, and had to go to woods daily. Evil spirit was Mre Didier; he promised she would not want in future, touched her on arm, and disappeared. Came to house (down chimney) some days later, where she was rocking child, and had intercourse with her. These were only 2 occasions she had seen him.

Asked whether she had not told sergeant, on way to prison previous day, that she had been witch for 30 years, and had killed horse of Nicolas Parmentier, she agreed this was true. Parmentier had done her various wrongs, and she cursed his horse - did nothing else to cause its death, because Mre Didier had told her to curse it and it would die. Denied that her master had made her renounce God. Then asked about noise from chimney, said that this was her master, and this time he did make her renounce God. Had not made Claudin Hillaire's wife ill as alleged.

Had only been to sabat once; saw her daughter there, and they watched others dancing, but they did not recognize anyone else.

Denied causing death of Pasquatte fille Nicolas Chany; was then asked if her daughter had caused it, but said she did not know. Reiterated that she was sure her daughter la Gautaille was a witch, but said her other daughter was not. Had often wished first daughter to the devil, and she had confessed to her that she was a witch. In connection with story about night as told by Didier Symonin, said he was a liar; on that occasion he had gone ahead with her and tried to persuade her to have intercourse with him in the woods, but she refused.

22 August 1608; interrogation

Now said she had been seduced 22 years before. Claimed to have seen Gironcourt, otherwise known as Bastien Mengeot, at sabat; her master had told her it was he who had made daughter of Nicolas Chany ill. Her daughter had made Bastien's son ill after being put out of house. Master had told her that la Maillotte, wife of Nicolas Henry, was a witch.

Was then confronted with her daughter Claire; she persisted in her charges, which her daughter denied.

22 August 1608; confrontations

Withdrew accusation against Bastien Mengeot, saying she had accused him out of hatred, because he deposed against her. Also discharged Barbe Hanry, saying she had accused her because she heard she had said that she and her 2 daughters were witches.

Then suddenly said she and her daughter were not witches; her confession had been extorted by promise that she would be renvoyée if she confessed, and she had been told that her daughter had already confessed she was a witch.

28 August 1608; interrogation

Asked why she had retracted her confession, said it was because she had originally been told her daughter had accused her; when she discovered this was not true she had retracted. Was then shown 'bagatelles que sont dans un picotin aultres dans une petite layette ou sont plusieurs poudres et poil de porcq, et plusieurs bouteilles dans lesquelles y'a plusieurs choses liquides'. Said one of the bottles held 'l'eau de coupe rose' which she used for her eyes, but did not know what others were.

Then renewed earlier confessions, saying she had been seduced the year after Bouillon's army passed. Had only been to sabat once, and only person she had seen was her daughter Claire. Continued to deny several of the charges against her.

28 August 1608; additional depositions

(15) Didier Rouyer, 28

2 days before hail fell in ban de Vandevre 3 weeks before, Barbe's granddaughter and Demenge Collet were throwing water at one another at the spring. The girl told her mother (Claire) that Collet was calling her 'fille de genoixe', and mother tried to catch him but failed. Then said someone would be sorry; he suspected she was a witch, and knew she commonly called her children 'des enfans du diable'. Told of occasion when curé's servant had accused Claire of stealing 'joutte'; she said she would go to the devil if she was guilty, but then it was found she had taken it. She then said it was the devil who had made her take it. Believed Claire would not confess her maléfices because something she had about her prevented her doing so. When she was arrested had said to her children 'Je m'en va je seray bien desrompue mais j'en retourneray et sy aura quelques gens de bien que me donneront du pain, se presumant a ce moyen qu'elle ne diroit rien pour chose qu'on luy face.' (Illiterate)

(16) Barbe Caillet veuve Anthoine Petit Jean, 40

Said that both Barbe and Claire were reputed witches. Told of occasion when her husband had lawsuit against Claire, after which she said she would give someone 'des grandes michottes'. He fell same day and hurt his hand, which he could not use for 10 weeks, then had another illness from which he died, saying that Barbe and Claire were cause of his death. He had several times called them witches without redress being sought. One day had been working in vines with Claire and saw her change colour, eyes becoming black and face hideous; made sign of cross and said nothing in fear she might cause her some harm.

(17) Nicolle veuve Jean Piedmontoy, marchal, 60

A year earlier her son was very ill, and curé said he would die. Claire said he would not, and sent for pot from her house, telling them to cook some 'damas' in it. After eating these he recovered; thought she had given him the illness, then taken it off.

(18) Nicolas Thouvenin, 25

Barbe and Claire both reputed witches. One day Claire had been angry because Nicolas Parmentier's wife put some pastry on top of hers in the oven, and said she should watch out. Same day horse which her son was riding fell and broke its shoulder, having to be killed.

(19) Barbe femme Nicolas Hanry, 56

General reputation of Barbe and Claire. Asked whether since she had kept company with Barbe she had seen any harm in her, said she had not. Asked about remarks Barbe had made about recent hail, said she remarked she saw so little she did not know how much harm it had done. Asked why she had said to her after arrest 'qu'elle eust bonne bouche', and if this was to encourage her to keep quiet and not accuse her as an accomplice, said she could not remember saying such words to her.

(20) Dieudonnée femme Claudin Galbin, 40

Barbe's daughter Babon had said that daughter of witness was ill through Barbe's doing; at this witness went to house of Claire and told her about it. She said 'que cy ce n'estoit pour l'amour du pere je luy donnerois sy chaulde aux basselles que l'on a donnée a ma mere'.

(21) Lucye veuve Jean Galbin, vigneron, 50

Barbe and Claire both reputed witches. Her late husband had been to ask for payment after cutting wood for Barbe, then became ill and died after a year, claiming she was cause.

(22) Nicolas Parmentier, echevin en la justice de Vendeuvre, 34

Barbe and Claire both reputed witches. Story of dispute at oven and horse which broke shoulder (after passing before Barbe).

30 August 1608; interrogation and confrontations

Repeated previous confessions. Was then confronted with new witnesses; denied all their specific charges.

5 September 1608; PG asks for death sentence against Barbe

6 September 1608; formal death sentence from Change de Nancy