

B9560 no 4; Witch 333E, Marguerite Morande, femme Jacot Jean Martin de Sainte Croix

4 June 1592; depositions

Quentin de Verpelliere, bourgeois de Sainte Croix, 50

Five or six years earlier she had come to his house before dawn, begging him to buy a meadow so that she and her husband would not have to leave. He agreed to pay 24 Lorraine florins. Gave her 15 francs then, and paid another 9 later; remaining 12 florins were supposed to settle her debt with viel Didier Jacot. Then found that she had sold it again to her nephew Claude, fils Cunin Pierrat de Raves of Sainte Croix, and yet again to Melchior Cublaire of the same place, so he demanded return of his money. Husband finally paid him 21 gros some nine months later. After this she said he would not have much profit from his cow, and about a year later, after drinking from a well near her house, it ran off wildly towards woods, then died within a week, which he suspected was her doing.

Didier Walley, masson et bourgeois de Sainte Croix, 50

About 6 years earlier his wife had gone harvesting with wife of Mengin Villemain, and accused said that she would have gone with them if she had known. Soon after she came to house on three Sundays when he was at church and prevented wife going, then came to ask for some yeast and flour, which his wife did not want to give her. Then came when he was baking and asked for a piece of tart; when he refused she broke some off and put rest back. Soon after his wife became ill with back bent, and when she went to mill accused laughed at her saying she had 'une belle allure' and would soon have another. Back became worse, and she was still ill, unable to work – suspected accused had been cause.

Claude Napnel de Staimbach, 40

About three years earlier the accused's sister Mengeatte had arranged to buy a pot of milk from his wife, and when she came to collect it Marguerite accompanied her and wanted some too. He told her they had no more, but she said his wife would have given it and that he would repent. Next morning a lamb was sick, and after it languished for 9 weeks he had it killed – suspected she was cause.

Marion femme Didier Walley, 40

Essentially repeated husband's story, with slight variations of detail.

Vallence veuve Demenge le Romain, 41

In autumn of 1590 was returning from cutting wood at bois de Lattaimbach when she heard a great noise at lower end, then saw Marguerite sitting in willows near reeds throwing arms about and saying 'c'est ainsy'; had red bonnet and hair falling down on both sides. Saw witness and called out that she should wait for her, then when asked what she was doing there said she was doing nothing. Witness made off as fast as possible, but noticed she had no bundle of wood; met one of her daughters on way, and made remark about mother's strange behaviour, to which she replied that she was often like this.

Marion femme George Mengeon Thiebault, 25

In time of late father they had a sow that was always getting into her garden; she made threats and it became sick, dying after 6 months. Other animals did not want to touch body, and her late father and mother suspected she was cause. Later her father found her animals in his meadow, but she met him leading them to town and told him he would repent; he sickened and finally died, saying during sickness 'les malles vaches qu'il avoit emmené a la ville'.

Mengeatte femme Mengin Villermin, 30

When there were flood previous winter she heard husband of accused cursing the officers because they had not made an end of his wife who was a witch, blaming the witches for the floods. Previous year they had quarrelled when a pear tree belonging to accused fell into her garden, and one of her daughters collected the fruit without allowing her a share – she then threw what the girl had collected to the ground, and accused said 'que si elle avoit aussi bien la puissance parmy eulx, qu'elle avoit la volonté que Dieu scache ce qu'elle feroit'. Six months later lost a goat, and did not know if she was cause or not.

Catherine femme Jean Bel Colas, 36

Her late father-in-law Jocquel Didier Venesson had found her animals in his meadow, and she told him he would repent for having fined her. Then story of how he sickened and died, saying that since taking these cows 'que jamais il n'avoit veu ses beaux jours.' Also story about pig as told by Marion (witness 6).

Jean Bel Colas, 40

Same story about pig – also described Venesson as father-in-law.

Laurent Menginaix, cousturier, 40

Day after arrival at Sainte Croix 18 years earlier was working for her sister Mengeatte, who told other women about how she had a cauldron that Marguerite wanted, and she had said that if necessary she would turn herself into a cat to take it. He asked Mengeatte whom she was talking about, then she replied that she was ashamed to say it was her sister. He had always told his late wife to take nothing from her, but one day she was in their house and gave each of them two pears. Wife was frightened he would be angry if she ate them, so took them outside and ate one, then became ill – told accused of this, then managed to get bread, salt and ashes from her house to make a soup. Recovered for a time, but about 4 months later his wife was washing sheets under bridge when accused passed and offered to help her wring them out; his wife said she could do without such help, then sickened again and died six months later; they both suspected that she was cause.

Demenge Willaume Rowier, 46

Three years earlier at next Saint Jean she had tried to push one of his daughters off the bridge, and although she could not do this she put hand on her head, after which she could not eat and became emaciated. A week or two later his

eldest son became ill after refusing her some cherries, and being told he would repent, which he suspected was her doing.

Mengeatte veuve Symon Moirewoye, 30

Story about pig and the cows in the meadow; dead man was her father.

(5 June 1592)

Jean le Revendeur, bourgeois de Sainte Croix, 60

In spring 6 years earlier she had come to his barn and sat there talking with him and his wife, then the ox tied to the place where she sat became ill and died within three or four days. Another also became ill and would have died if he had not taken quick measures – suspected she was cause. Asked if he had quarrelled with her, said that he had advised Jacot Jean Martin against marrying her.

Demenge Ferry, charpentier, bourgeois de Sainte Croix, 50

Nine or ten years earlier had sold her previous husband some oats, and had been asking for payment of last small sum that was due (9 gros or 6 sols); she was angry, then he became ill for a year, with hands and feet swollen. Advised to get bread, salt and ashes from her house, because he suspected her; also asked her three times in honour of God if she knew something to cure him, then was cured.

Catherine veuve Adem le Schreiner, 56

Six or seven years earlier accused had asked her for something after witness had done a wash, and she put her off with promises for later. Then lost seven animals – sheep, goats and piglets, then a daughter was ill for six weeks – suspected her over all this.

Anthoinette femme Hillaire de Girecourt, 28

At previous harvest had been taking 'estrain' to sell at Saint Marie, with one of her sons, when accused met them and took over son's load. When they stopped to rest she produced three apples from her pocket, and witness became ill after eating one she gave her. This lasted 12 weeks, and she was advised to get usual three things from her house, after which she was cured, but suspected she had been cause.

Claude Guyat, 36

Around last Chandeleur she had come to his house two or three times a day for a week, without his knowing why. He was keeping two thrushes 'pour aller a la chasses', and she said he had two fine birds, but after she touched them one died the same evening and the other three days later, so he suspected she was cause.

When her husband Jean Jacot Martin wanted to go to serve in army for duke, witness heard him say that he had asked his wife if she was a witch, and if she was he would take her far off so she would never be seen again – she replied that she had never harmed men or animals, apart from killing cock of Jean Graviere.

Had also heard husband say around Saint Martin in 1590, in presence of accused, that he had seen a black man go from their room into the poisie, but when

he wanted to investigate she told him to stay where he was because it was nothing, at which story her only reply was to laugh.

(13 June 1592)

Jehennon femme Demenge Ferry, 30

Some 9 years earlier she was alone with midwife after giving birth, when accused came running in, uncovered baby, and said it was a fine child. Went out and returned without saying a word before finally leaving. When she took child to be baptised next Sunday saw it was ill, and it died two days later – suspected her. Asked if they had quarrelled, repeated husband's story about oats, which he had sold them during great dearth; had sent servant to ask for final payment, then went herself.

Mengeatte femme Quentin de Verpelliere, 40

Her version of story was that husband had bought a pig and a cow from her husband, and forgot to send anything to her when they killed the pig; she was angry, and said 'que malle santé puissent il manger & mal prouffict puissent ilz avoir de ladite vache'. Followed by death of cow as described by husband.

13 June 1592; interrogation

Would confess nothing, but said that her husband was responsible for rumour that she was a witch. Was then questioned about individual charges; usually denied and said they were lies. Agreed that she did let her hair down in the woods while scratching her head and complaining about wrong her husband did her. Said that Demenge Villaume Rowier's wife had blamed illness of children on la Paroiatte. She had killed cock of Jean Graviere by throwing a stone at it.

1 July 1592; interrogation

Was prepared for torture and had hands tied, but then started to confess. Six years earlier, after being badly beaten by husband, went to woods in evening, when big man in black appeared, offering to give her plenty of money so that she would never want. Gave her money, which turned out to be pieces of glass, and had intercourse with her – was colder than other men and name was Persinet. Gave her powder 'comme du persin', which she used to kill a hen and a goat of her own. Had killed ox belonging to Jean le Revendeur, because he had told her husband off for marrying her. Had killed Jocquel Didier Wannesson, because he fined her over straying cows. Also killed pig of Jean Bel Colas after it damaged her garden.

Asked how often she had been to sabbat, and how she was carried there; said she had been to sabbat five times, Persin picked her up 'parmy les chemins', then returned her after they had 'faictz leurs jeux'. Asked if she had made hail to spoil the crops, said that one day in company of Helaine femme Estienne d'Eslois, Catherine femme Kristlin Klotz, and Prinson femme Villaume Francois they had beaten water to create a great cloud and rain. Asked how they did this, said master gave them sticks, and told them he would make the bad weather strike where they wished. [Interesting that these were the questions asked about sabbat]

Had killed wife of Laurent Menginax, putting powder on a pear; was angry because they could not agree price for clothes he had made for her children. Was

angry with le Rowier and struck his daughter on head, but she did not die. Had used another pear to kill daughter of Menginax for same reason as wife

3 July 1592; order that she be kept in prison until arrival of executioner.

7 July 1592; interrogation

Admitted again to causing death of Jocquel Didier Wannesson, although now changed story in detail. Had previously said that she had drawn finger with powder on it across his mouth as she passed him; now said that when she took the money to his house to pay for the damage she took a piece of bread with powder on it and put it in pot where his wife was making soup.

Would admit nothing further, so was racked; then told that she had previously said her seduction was six years earlier, yet she freely confessed to killing Jocquel who had died ten years earlier, so unless she told the truth they would have to rack her more severely. Now said that 25 years earlier had several children by previous husband and was finding it hard to feed them; met a woman who told her she would teach her 'de bonnes sciences', and took her to woods – then met Persin, and seduction scene essentially as before.

Asked what drink she had taken to wife of late Jacob Poinsat, which one named la Tixatte had made to cure her, and with what intention. Said that 'ladite Musniere' was ill and she told her she would make her a drink that would help her, then she and Tixatte got it from Persin intending to kill her, because her husband had not been willing to sell them some fallow land.

Asked how often she had helped to make bad weather, said seven or eight times. Her master made them do this 'affin de gaster les biens de la terre, mais qu'estant prié par aucune d'entre elles, ne faisoit faire tant de maulx comme son intention estoit.'

Asked if she had done great harm to Nicolas Urban, said no, but Helaine femme Estienne d'Eslois had said that she would impoverish him so that she could get his property; said more than seven times that he had not wanted to sell her his house, but would repent and make no profit from his animals.

Only identified Helaine and la Tixatte as accomplices; threatened with being racked, said she had killed one of Nicolas Urbain's cows because his wife refused her milk, and a pig that wanted to get into her garden. Asked how she killed cow, said that she and Helaine took form of dogs and went into stable, where Helaine attacked a horse and she dealt with the cow. Had been to stable four times with Helaine and Tixatte, once to kill a horse, the other times cows. She, la Paroiatte [presumably Helaine] and Tixatte 'avoient entrepris de mectre si bas ledit Nicolas qu'il n'auroit rien plus que ses cendres.' Previous winter had killed cow belonging to cleric juré because he had long threatened her that if he suffered any misfortune he would have her burned. Had killed three cows and a horse belonging to Bastien Riotte, because his wife would not sell her any cheeses and had dispute with her over a garden.

After being racked again named more accomplices; wife and daughter of cordonnier of Sainte Croix, la fille Quentin, the woman who lived in Stoffel Pleyer's house, Didielle the dyer's wife, la grosse Mongeatte de Musloch, la femme Hanneso, la grande Fleuratte, 'une bougognatte' married to young man of Sainte Marie, and one Mathiatte of Sainte Marie, la femme Loux and one named la grosse Teste of Liepvre, and Mongeatte la Praie of Saint Blaise.

10 July 1592; interrogation

Said 'que tous les maulx qu'elle auroit faict, l'avantdite Helaine luy avoit faict faire et qu'elle n'estoit que sa servande, et que par plusieurs fois l'avoit battu et tourmenté pour n'avoir voulu mectre a execution les maulx qu'elle avoit intention faire, et qu'icelle estoit la maictresse par dessus toutes les aultres, commandante a une chacune d'elles ce qu'elles feroient, et qu'elle estoit cause de ses malheurs.'

Added that Prison femme Vilaume Francois had killed several animals belonging to lieutenant of mayor because of some grudge.

Then sentenced to death by burning alive.