

B 8687 no 9; witch 207, Jean Grand Didier, de la Vacherie

19 November 1599; confronted with Jehenne veuve Jean Toussaint, of la Vacherie, who maintained her charges against him. He said they were made out of hatred, but gave no reason for his claim.

29 December 1600; confronted with Mengeon Claude Perrin of Brehimont, who maintained charges.

22 January 1601; informations preparatoires

(1) Marguritte veuve Claudon Claude Jean Mariatte, 70

Reputation only since accusation by Jehenne Michiel. Some years earlier her late husband had bought house which accused also wanted to buy, and he was very angry. After this lost numerous animals, and 3 years earlier husband died after strange illness which only lasted 3 days. She and her children had always suspected these misfortunes were his witchcraft. Soon after husband's death he had said 'qu'on l'avoit menné au diable en la cymetiere de St Michiel la charrogne qu'il estoit', and they had taken him to court where they obtained reparation, as well as a condemnation for some land he had tried to usurp. He was very angry about all this, and they subsequently lost numerous animals, which they blamed on his witchcraft.

(2) Mengeon Didier le Moullot, 60

Reputation several years, no personal suspicion. After arrest of Mengeon Claude Perrin heard him say that he knew he would soon be arrested as well.

(3) Colas Jean Mengenot, 65

Reputation several years, but no personal suspicion.

(4) Gratian Doridant, 26

6 years before had sought his daughter in marriage, but withdrew when he would not offer reasonable settlement. Went courting another, and would not renew suit despite several invitations, at which accused was very angry. Threatened him 'qu'il s'en repentiroit et qu'il l'auroit en ung autre lieu', after which he lost animal to value of 34 écus, which he had always blamed on his witchcraft. Reputation several years.

(5) Mengeon Claude Mariatte, jeune filz, 21

12 years before heard him quarrelling with his sister Catherine, who called him witch and said she was afraid he would be burned and bring shame on them. 18 months earlier Jehenne Michiel, when accused herself, said there were others who were greater witches than she, naming him and one of his daughters without specifying latter. Told witness she knew for certain that he had done him much harm. 3 years earlier he had been very angry because his father wanted to buy back a piece of meadow, and father fell ill suddenly 2 weeks later, dying in 2 or 3 days - suspected this was his witchcraft. 6 months later witness took him to court over

boundary dispute, and after case lasting a year he was victorious; was again very angry and threatened him, after which he lost several cattle, which he again imputed to his witchcraft.

(6) Colas Jean Mengenot le jeune, 30

Previous Sunday heard him speak of witches, saying 'qu'on leur faisoit beaucoup de maulx', adding that he was a good man, and they would do him great wrong to arrest him. No suspicion against him.

(7) Jean Claude Jean Mengenot, 80

3 years earlier one of his sons (Jean) was courting one of his daughters, but withdrew and arranged marriage with a girl named Mengeotte from la Bolle. Were about to leave for St Dié to buy provisions for marriage feast following Sunday when Jean fell ill and died in 5 days, saying there was a person in the house of the accused who was the cause of his death. Fiancée went to nurse him, and died herself a week later. If he was witch as reputed for several years, believed this might have been his doing.

(8) Jennon femme Laurent Jean Mengenot, 36

Had heard Jehenne Michiel say he was witch, just before her arrest; no personal suspicion.

(9) Didier Thiebault, 40

Reputation 12 years. Story of deaths of Jean Mongenot and his fiancée - latter had been servant to witness.

(10) Marguitte femme du precedent, 42

Reputation several years. Same story as husband; had heard Jean say that either he or his wife had given him his fatal illness.

(11) Colas Jean Ferry, 48

Reputation several years, no personal suspicion.

(12) Mengeon Moullat, de St Remy, 36

14 years earlier he and his brother Colas had quarrel with Jean at marriage feast of Colas Ferry at la Vacherie. Nearly came to a fight, but calmed down, and at end of evening Jean insisted that Colas have a drink in sign of reconciliation. After several refusals he agreed, but instantly felt a great pain in body when he drank, crying out that he was 'frappé a mort'. Died after illness lasting 3 days, saying that Jean had given him death, and they should open him after his death to find the poison. Did not do this because they lacked the means, but had always imputed death to his witchcraft.

(13) Demengeon Claude Girard, de Brehimont, 55

3 years earlier when reaping heard him quarrelling with Jehenne Michiel, and calling her witch. She replied 'bou, bou que tu es prent toy par le né toy mesme tu en as bien pres de ton feu'. Greatly suspected, but he had no personal suspicion. 14 years earlier the late Jean Arnoulx, monk at Moyenmoutier and curé of St Michiel, told him about death of Colas Moullot, and his suspicions that this was Jean's witchcraft.

(14) Demenge Mareschal, de Herbaville, 60

4 years before quarrelled with him over tithes, and he said he would go to places unknown to witness, to which he replied that if he wanted to go to the devil he did not want to follow. After this lost various animals, but could not say if he was cause - general reputation.

(15) Jennon femme Colas Moullot, 30

Had heard Colas Schanal say 2 weeks earlier that when he and his children slept in Jean's house some cats came at night and tried to strangle them. Reputation several years.

(16) Catherine femme Mengeon Jean Arnoulx, du Mesnil, 36

Told story of quarrel 14 years earlier and death of Colas Moullot (whose father she was then serving). Reputation several years.

25 January 1601; interrogation

Said he was laboureur, aged about 60, native of la Vacherie, where he had always lived. Knew he had been accused of witchcraft, but said he was innocent. Agreed that he and Jehenne Michiel had called one another witch. Denied charges vigorously, and when accused of killing Jean Mengenot and his fiancée said 'qu'il a faict mourrir le grand diable qui puisse emporter ceulx qui ont déposé telle chose, et que le chemin est bien faict en enfer pour eux.' Several other responses in this vein.

Remembered marriage feast 14 years before, because he gave 'coup de point' to a man who died a few days later, and he had to spend 700 francs to obtain pardon from duke. Admitted he had also quarrelled with Colas Moullot, although did not remember giving him drink. Had no powder with which to poison this, and perhaps someone else had poisoned it to cost him his goods. Said that he wished the devil would mark witches so that they could be easily identified, in which case they would see that he was a worthy man.

26 January 1601; confrontations

Urged again to confess, resisted strongly. Said that oaths given by witches were worthless, because they had already given themselves to the devil.

On confrontations, when Gratian Doridant reminded him of day and place he admitted he might have threatened him, but had done him no harm. No reproaches to any witness, and a few other minor concessions, but continued to deny everything of importance strongly.

27 January 1601; interrogation

Pressed again about death of Colas Moullot, he said 'que le Diable ayt part', asking why he had not been charged 14 years earlier, so that he might have been out of the world one way or another. Added 'qu'il mangera le diable s'il menge encore dadvantage puis que faisons instance de ce fait la, que pleut a dieu qu'il soit desja hors des peines de ce monde.' After long silence finally said he asked mercy for the death of Colas, but could not remember whether he had poisoned the wine or not. Saw he must die, and one only died once, but would say no more.

29 January 1601; Change de Nancy approves torture, with moderation appropriate to his age.

5 February 1601; interrogation under torture

Withstood thumbscrews, but confessed when racked. Had poisoned Colas Moullot with black powder given him by Persin. Seduced 25 years earlier, when angry with Jean Hanzo of la Vacherie over a lawsuit for property; Persin promised to make him win his suit, and give him money so that he would never want. Money was oak leaves; also gave him black powder. Tried this out on his own cat and a calf, which both died. Then killed horse belonging to Hanzo; also tried to cause him harm by sprinkling powder on path he would take on return from woods, but he was well protected by sign of cross, and took another way. After this did not use powder again for a long time.

Persin had come in as dog, and given him powder with which he killed Colas Moullot. Had also killed Jean fils Jean Claude Jean Mengenot, who called him witch and murderer, accusing him of killing Colas Moullot, with powder in an apple. Had not killed his fiancée, but some other witch might have done so. Had killed horse belonging to Gratian Doridant, and given Claudon Claude Jean Mariatte powder on some bread, after eating which he died.

Had been to sabat more times than he could remember, but gave Persin a hen each year to be excused from going more often. Sometimes carried in air by Persin, sometimes went on foot. Great numbers present, but most were masked. Had seen Jean Gelyat of Sauceray, and Mathieu Claude of la Bourgogne, both dead, who sat on either side of Persin and had most credit and authority. Also Jean Thierion and Mengeon Claude Perrin of Brehimont, and Jehenne Michiel. Barbeline and Marion veuve Demenge Arnoulx, of Sauceray - all these executed. Living were Marguittre femme Jean Thierion, of Brehimont, Marguittre femme Jean Jacquot and Melline femme Colas Mellinne alias Charpentier, both of la Vacherie, Catherine femme Jean Mandray, and Claudon Jean Arnoulx, both of Herbaville, and Henriat Mathieu of la Bourgogne.

At sabat passed before Persin to make reverence, ate unsalted meat, and danced back to back 'tout au rebours'. Had made hail on numerous occasions, which was then guised to chosen destination by Persin and those who had consented to plans.

Persin had met him a few days before arrest, telling him to confess nothing and promising to help him, but this had proved false. Had been on point of confessing at interrogation after confrontations, but suddenly decided otherwise; justice had proved stronger than his courage.

6 February 1601; interrogation

Added name of Claudon Jean Perrin of Brehimont to list of accomplices. Confirmed other confessions and charges. Asked if witches had power over anyone,

said it was only over those who failed to cross themselves and recommend themselves to God. Asked if he had ever confessed to curé, said he had often thought of this, but never dared do so. Begged for mercy for his poor wife and children.

7 February 1601; repeated confessions, and inhabitants handed him over to duke for sentence.

9 February 1601; death sentence from Change de Nancy

13 February 1601; execution at St Dié