

Common Mystics Podcast

Season 2 Episode 4: Voices of the Enslaved in Kaskaskia, IL

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00:01:10 On this episode of Common Mystics, we find ourselves led to Illinois' Mississippi valley, which in the 1740s was almost exclusively home to French settlers, African-Americans and natives. And it was here that victims of injustice called out to us from beyond the grave. I'm Jennifer James. I'm Jill Stanley. We're psychics. We're sisters. We are Common Mystics. We find extraordinary stories in ordinary places. And we have another one for you out of Kaskaskia, Illinois.

00:01:43 Well, Jennifer, I got to say that this story is kind of depressing. Most of our stories are kind of depressing. I know, but this one really hit me hard. I know. This is a tough one for a lot of reasons. And she old. She is an old one. Yeah, I think this story is definitely the oldest one that we've ever gotten.

00:02:07 So I'm super excited about it. Do you want to get right into it? Well, actually, I just wanted to say one thing. What? I know that this is actually our fourth episode of Season two. However, really the first two stories out of Shelbyville and Isadore, Michigan... They were kind of warming up for the series that's coming. That's fair. Yeah. No, because, um, it's, it's a road trip series to Kansas and back.

00:02:32 It's true. It's true. So I'm super excited for what's to come. And this was our first stop on our epic road trip to Kansas. That's right. And we were, as you said before, on our epic first time ever Common Mystics road trip, where we spent a week in the car using our Spidey's driving around the country. Yeah. It was a lot of sister time. You loved it. So our intention, set our intention for us, Jen.

00:03:06 We, set out to find a verifiable story. And most importantly, to give voice to the voiceless, a story that we had no idea about. No idea. Okay. So we're driving and we're headed west towards St. Louis. And as we were in the car, I was like, we can't pass Old Miss. We need to say on this side of the Mississippi River, which is the east side of Mississippi, which would be, um, the Illinois Mississippi valley.

00:03:37 And I, for some reason, was stuck on Cahokia. That's right. I felt like we needed to go to Cahokia. What else were you feeling with that? I had this image in my head of a white feather, like a long quill type of white feather, not one of those little ones that pops out of your pillow. You know what I mean? Right, right. No, for sure. So I don't know. Yeah. I wouldn't know what that meant, but it seems significant. I was seeing Native Americans. And I was seeing, like, Native American blankets. It felt like a native community.

00:04:15 Interesting, interesting. So we, like you said, we drove to Cahokia. Jen, will you please give the listeners a kind of brief history of the area of the Illinois Mississippi valley?

00:04:26 Totally. Right. It's so interesting, Jill. The French controlled this entire area. At one time, the French had holdings in Canada, territories in Canada, and they had come down to this area, mostly fur traders, missionaries, and colonists. And they really had a strong impact on the culture of the area and the Illinois native peoples who lived there from the 1600s to the early 1700s. Now, do you remember Marquette and Joliet from history class? I do. So they explored the area in 1673 and they became the first Europeans in recorded history to explore the upper Mississippi river. Isn't that cool?

00:05:08 That's very cool. And you live near the town of Joliet, Illinois, which I think is named after Joliet. I believe you are right. Now by 1714, the principal European non-native inhabitants of the area were Canadian fur traders, missionaries, and soldiers. The soldiers were there to deal with the Native Americans. Soldiers of what country? Well, we're talking about France, right? So all of these peoples are French speaking people. Gotcha. Okay. Now the main French settlements in the area were established at Kaskaskia, Cahokia (where we said we were going) and St. Genevieve, which is in Missouri on the other side of the river. Gotcha. Okay. So Kaskaskia and Cahokia are two sister cities that were both important French settlements at the time. And they're not very far from each other either. One thing about this... I just want to give some historical context here because honestly it blows my mind. Okay. At the time of our story, which we're going to get to in a minute, in the late 1740s, the United States did not exist. The continent had territories that England, Spain and France claimed. Right. This is before the English colonies would gain their independence from Britain in 1776. And it was before... do you remember the Louisiana Purchase from history class? That didn't happen until... Jackson? No, Jefferson. Wow. So close. Yeah. And that's an F. Sorry, you failed that test. Anyway... 1803. It wasn't until 1803 when Jefferson would purchase this huge expanse of land for the United States...

00:06:57 Lewis and Clark! Yes. Oh my God! Yes. He commissioned Lewis and Clark to go and explore the territory that he had purchased in 1803. Yes. So we are going way, way before that. So honestly, just a little bit of context, because this blows my mind that we have a story that's this old. Anyway, so the French were there. Right, right. And there were also Native American people living there. Right. Right. Interesting enough, the name "Illinois," "the land of Illinois," came from the French because the French named it after the Illinois Confederation of native people.

00:07:38 Ah, I didn't realize native Americans had a Confederation. What does that mean exactly? Just a group. I guess they banded together and formed a group. Okay. Okay. Similar to the Native Americans that banded together in the Trail of Death episode, out of Marshall county? In season one? Like that?

00:08:01 The one episode nobody listened to. Maybe, maybe we should all go back... No one liked that one. Well, three people listened: like, you, me and my mother-in-law. (Hi, Donna!) Other than that....

00:08:21 Okay. So, um, anyway, so the French are there in this area, the Native Americans are there, and of course not all is peaceful as frequently as the case when someone moves onto your homeland and calls it theirs. Right? So there's, there are these wars, these Fox Wars that go on between the French and the Native Americans. But here's the thing. Because the French aren't stupid and actually different tribal peoples didn't all get along. So the French people who were there made allies of some and enemies of others and so effectively they were pitting the peoples against each other. Right. Really exploiting the conflicts that already existed.

00:09:05 The enemy of my enemies are my friends. Basically. Very opportunistic. Yes. Yes. And it's in this kind of environment that you see native women being like sold into marriage or slavery for political reasons. Right. Like to seal an alliance between French and their tribe. Sure. We've seen that throughout history with arranged marriages. Absolutely. You sure have. Yeah. So you have this kind of merging of cultures, but it's not just the French and the natives who are living in this area.

00:09:38 Who else? Well, the French settlers were bringing African enslaved people into the Illinois country from as early as 1720. Oh my gosh. So the Illinois country was part of the French Empire at that time, and they have a Code Noir, which is a law that was issued to regulate the interaction of whites and blacks in colonial Louisiana. Blacks, just let me just clarify, I'm saying "blacks," because, literally, it was literally "black" or "Noir." right. Code Noir. I was just going to mention that, that the name was the Black Code.

00:10:22 Right? Yes. Yes, exactly. So, um, that kind of sucks. There was one article that I think is particularly relevant to our story. One article of the Code Noir. Tell. It was Article Nine and I'm going to read it verbatim. It said "Children issued from the marriage of slaves shall follow the condition of their parents and shall belong to the master of the wife and not of the husband if the husband and the wife have different masters." And there's also another one that indicates that no matter who the father is, a woman's child will have the master of the mother. Right?

00:11:02 So basically the implications of that is that if a woman is impregnated in any way, by any means, the child would be the property of the master, whether it be out of, um, love, rape, et cetera, didn't matter. It didn't matter. Heavy. Very heavy so far. But that is the historical context that we find ourselves in as we travel to Cahokia. Yeah. Right. So we get to Cahokia and it lies, like you said, along the east side of the Mississippi River opposite St. Louis, which is on the west side. Cahokia is old, Jill. It was founded in 1699 by Quebec missionaries. Told you she old. She looks good for her age. For her age, she sure does. The Quebec missionaries named Cahokia after a tribe of the Illinois Confederation, which was called the Cahokia tribe. And that means Wild Geese. Isn't it kind of cute? Geese are mean here.

00:12:13 Yeah. Geese aren't the nicest, but the babies... They're cute. That's true. Not only that, this is super cool. You're not even going to believe this. Tell me everything. Cahokia happens to be not only the first European settlement in Illinois, but the first permanent settlement of the entire Mississippi Valley. Wow. Yeah. And I already said it became the center of French influence in the upper Mississippi. So, like, that's something. So we stumbled upon the first permanent European settlement of the entire Mississippi Valley and we are driving around Cahokia, feeling out our Spidey's, and we end up at the Cahokia Courthouse. Do you remember?

00:13:04 I totally remember. Well, it's a weird looking building in some ways. It's very unique, very unique. Tell me about it. When you think of log cabins, you think of the logs lying horizontally, right? Like Lincoln logs. Absolutely. But not this courthouse. This one was built around 1740 in the French Canadian style of architecture. So the logs go up and down vertically. So it stands out. It also has a very cool wraparound porch, very quaint. It was so unusually well built that in 1793, the people of Cahokia decided to make this structure, that was built as a log cabin, into a courthouse. And so it turned into the judiciary center of the area. Right? Really the community center of the area, because it's where you would vote, where you would get together and discuss whether or not laws have been broken, to create laws... It's really the center of the community. Businesses would be formed here, get licenses, land titles, but there were also criminal cases heard here.

00:14:14 Mm mm mm. Mm. So when we were on the property, I think the first thing that you were getting... tell me about your impressions, Jen. Getting out of the car and walking towards that building, I felt heavy legged. Mm. I was feeling as if I was apprehensive to approach. I was feeling as if I knew consequences were waiting for me beyond the porch. Like as soon as I

walked through into that courtroom, I just knew something was coming at me. Hmm. What else? We were both feeling, if you recall, that the land and the building was really thick with spirits, it was like a fog. Oh my gosh. Yes. It felt like a crowd.

00:15:04 It did. It felt like we were in the middle of a crowd. It did. It absolutely did. What were you feeling? Natives, Native Americans. I was feeling that pretty heavily. What else? I was feeling a woman on trial. You know, it's funny, we had a conversation about how we were feeling as if the party that was being tried or questioned in a criminal matter was vulnerable, but also really combative. It was like this weird dichotomy between feeling like, oh, I'm totally screwed here and, and being angry about it.

00:15:46 Right. And you mentioned a burial. Can you talk to me a little bit about what you were feeling? Yeah. You know, it felt as if there were bones or body parts on the land, it wasn't buried properly. It felt as if, um, they were just kind of scattered. Do you remember what we were smelling? Do you remember that smell in the air? It was a phantom stench of (no joke) farm animals. Yes. And we were like in a city. Yeah. It felt like we were standing in a pigsty. It literally smelled like we were standing in a pigsty.

00:16:28 Right. So weird. So that was Cahokia. Yeah. It's worth the trip honestly, that, um, courthouse really has a lot of energy to it, but let's get into our research. Let's do it. So we found a story. Yes. Our story takes place during the summer of 1748 in the French Illinois Mississippi valley, specifically a place called Kaskaskia. Now there was a man named Jerome Matis and apparently he was looking for someone to help him out, like some labor, some cheap labor. Okay. So he goes to a slave owner named Marie Vincennes and he's like, Hey, can I get some help for lease? And he leases himself an enslaved woman named Marie Jeanne. Now, Marie Jeanne is originally from Louisiana down south and she speaks Creole and French. She's also about 20 years old. So what did he want with her? I don't understand. Did he have land? What was he doing with this 20 year old?

00:17:42 Interesting question. He did not have a farm. He was actually a boarder at the residence of Mr and Dame Braseau. And so he and Marie Jeanne both resided there with the Braseau's. I imagine that he did work for them and he needed Marie Jeanne's help to get the work done. And then he would be paid double. Right. Because Marie Jeanne wouldn't have been paid. Uh, so he was doing it for profit. Yes. I would assume so. Who else was living at the Braseau's?

00:18:19 Also living there was a ten-year-old Native American child who was also enslaved and her name was Lisette and she belonged to Madam Braseau. So remember how I was talking about some of the dynamic between the tribal peoples and the French? One would presume that this Native American ten-year-old enslaved child was given to her for some political reason or maybe even economic reason. Who knows? Well, I got a plot twist. Talk. There was another residence on the way. What? Tell me about Marie Jeanne.

00:19:01 Yeah. This is where it gets a little interesting because she was with child. Wow. Wow. Well, wow. I'm, like, he leased out a pregnant 20 year old. That doesn't make sense to me, but whatever, you do you. You do you. Nobody knows when she became pregnant. If it was before the lease or during the lease. Okay. But, obviously, it became, yeah, it became noticeable, which is terrible. Poor Marie. Like just take a moment. She's an enslaved, she's an enslaved person who is impregnated. She's leased out. And now she's in a stranger's house in a crowded

place. Apparently with all these people in a not big cabin. It just sounds like the worst, the worst predicament to be in. How can this get any worse?

00:19:52 Well, well... first of all, we don't know the circumstances under which she became pregnant, whether or not it was consensual or not. So that's fair. That is a whole lot worse. It's a lot worse. She doesn't have a husband or a boyfriend out there. Okay. Right. So anyway, it becomes noticeable, as you said. And apparently this sparks a conversation between herself and Madam Braseau.

00:20:18 Sure. She's curious. Oh, I would say so. And according to court records, they had a conversation and Marie Jeanne said that she had been pregnant before and she knows the signs and she didn't feel any movement. So she was worried. Now Madam told Marie Jean that her pregnancy was probably a mole pregnancy. M O L E. Have you ever heard that before? No. What is that? I had to look it up. Wikipedia is my friend. A molar pregnancy is a non-cancerous tumor that develops in the uterus as a result of a non-viable pregnancy. Oh my gosh. Poor Marie Jeanne. So this is so sad.

00:21:05 So although it's an, it was never disputed that Marie Jeanne's pregnancy seemed to have been doomed. Right? They have this conversation and court records acknowledge this. Everyone's on board. This baby is not, if it's a baby, it's not going to be a viable life. And yet within weeks she would be accused of killing her baby. And the young slave would be jailed and tried for the crime. How did we get here, Jen?

00:21:35 You're not going to believe this. This story is just bananas. This, this is, are you ready? Because this is just bananas. So it's July, 1748. So it's hot. Okay. And she goes into labor. The nature of the delivery and the subsequent events would be hotly disputed in court. Now here's what Dame Braseau reported. Are you ready? I'm ready. Dame Braseau is leaving her place of residence, her house, quote unquote, shortly after Marie Jeanne's labor. She's leaving her house in the early morning. And she sees on her doorstep, the arm of a newborn, from shoulder to hand, which was all in one piece, she said. And also, a piece of the skull, which seemed to be of the same child as the arm. Wow. She's pretty good at identifying baby body parts. My God. I know. Like really.

00:22:42 Oh my God. ...which was three or four steps from her door where the pigs were digging. Thinking immediately that it was the child of Marie Jeanne. She brought the matter to Jerome Matis. It's very weird. Well, if you found like, like this outside your door, would you be like, aha Marie! No. I would be like, what in the name of the Lord?

00:23:08 I mean, if Marie-Jeanne was the only pregnant person in her household, I guess it would be a logical assumption to me. I don't know. I think that's a struggle. Anyway, she goes to Jerome Matis and Matis investigates the property. He looks around the structure. He looks in the pigsty. He looks around. He's, he's looking for bodily debris and he assumes just like everyone else in the household at this point that Marie Jeanne has delivered and then discarded her child. Okay. So now that, that was the immediate assumption. What he finds is a shallow hole in the ground and a lot of blood, um, supposedly from the arms being torn apart by the dogs, as they dragged the bones to the door...

00:23:51 Gosh, I'm crossing myself right now. It was then that Dame Braseau confronted Marie Jean with her apparent crime, a crime, which by the way, Marie Jeanne denied and would continue to deny throughout her arrest and trial. Okay. Stop. I'm having an issue. So I just want to recap. So this young enslaved woman is pregnant one July day, there are body parts, and

immediately after knowing that apparently this pregnancy was in trouble, how could she, and I say, air quotes, "give birth" to a child that far along, that would have a fully developed arm? It just doesn't make sense to me. And then to have that, that same young enslaved girl on trial for that, it seemed pretty clear that this pregnancy was doomed. How did we get here? I just don't understand. Yeah. Well, interestingly enough, there was an eyewitness to the entire event. Oh, who? Remember Lisette the Native American enslaved girl that was owned by Dame Briseau? Oh, the ten-year-old? Yes. The ten-year-old who could not speak French or Creole by the way.

00:25:15 Okay. Wait a second. So the ten-year-old saw Marie Jeanne give birth there and then discard the child? Yes. And she communicated this via gestures to Dame Briseau, according to the testimony. Okay. Let's break this down because she couldn't speak French.

00:25:34 I don't know. Tell me what Lisette said, because I don't at this point, I don't believe anything that's going on. It feels very contradictory. And then here comes Lisette who's seen the whole thing. Go on. Tell me what happened. Well, yeah. Lisette said, well, I say "said," she signed. Lisette was the native slave girl owned by Dame Briseau. Right? She was around nine or 10 years old, but she could not speak French or Creole. So she communicated entirely via gestures. And according to Lisette and to Madam Briseau, Lisette witnessed the labor, birth and murder of the child. Okay. First of all, there isn't, like, sign language back then. So she had to do a lot of gesturing to bring someone to that conclusion. So, I know that's pretty, pretty specific. She must have been great at charades or something. She may have drawn pictures, like with a stick in the grass, like, or dirt, there's no way. Okay, go on. Right.

00:26:33 She would testify at trial. And an interpreter was given to her, unlike African enslaved people, a small number of Native American enslaved people were able to testify at trial. So the fact that Lisette was Native American and not African American actually meant that due to the Code Noir, her testimony held more weight than that of Marie-Jeanne. Oh, wow. How do you like that? I don't like that at all. I know that really sucks. Tell me a little bit about why Lisette would say that. Did she have a relationship with Marie Jeanne? Was it something, do you feel like it was coerced? Tell me why. I mean, it doesn't seem plausible. So tell me why she would, she would gesture such things.

00:27:20 Well, Marie, Jeanne and Lisette worked together. They were both enslaved and they worked together at Dame Briseau's home and in the stables. And it doesn't appear as if Marie Jeanne liked Lisette from accounts in the testimonies. What do you mean? Give me an example of that. Well, Marie Jeanne didn't like that Lisette couldn't speak French or Creole and, um, she would yell at her a lot and she called her stupid. There's actually, she actually uses those kind of terms, derogatory terms about Lisette. Yeah. Well, okay. And Lisette, as a child, Marie Jeanne was the older of the two enslaved people. So she would have been responsible for Lisette and Lisette getting her work done. So Lisette would have had to answer to Marie Jeanne.

00:28:11 In all fairness to Marie Jeanne, the gesturing would get really tired quick. And she's a child, nine or 10. There's not a lot she can do. So Marie Jeanne would probably have to either teach her a lot or motivate her a lot. You know what I mean? Or pick up on some of her work. I think that the two resented each other and because Lisette absolutely resented the fact that she had to report to another enslaved person because she's not in charge of her. Right. She belongs to the boss or the landlady Dame Briseau. Mm mm. So, interesting dynamic there. And certainly I think there's a motive perhaps to tell a lie that would get Marie Jeanne in trouble and maybe out of the household.

00:28:58 Can you tell me, or give me excerpts of the trial that would stand out to you to demonstrate what you just described? Yes. Okay. So I'm going to read some information from the actual court records. Okay. So this is about Lisette and her testimony: "On this day Lisette, Indian Slave belonging to Dame Braseau residing within this of Kaskaskia Parish of the Immaculate Conception ages nine to ten years old, who is of the Ottawa nation, not speaking French, where upon we have ordered that the information that she gives us will be explained to us by Joseph Petit" (who would have been her translator at trial). "Joseph Petit has explained that Lisette said she has seen Marie Jeanne in the stable, near the house, Lisette being outside at the breach. She saw Marie Jeanne with child in her hands. The child was crying. Marie Jeanne held the baby by the throat and strangled it. Lisette begged her not to kill the child. Marie however told her to go away or she would beat her. Lisette then saw Marie Jeanne tear her child into pieces and quartered it. She then put the little body into a hole in the stable where the two pigs were." Now, due to Lisette's testimony, charges of infanticide were brought against the enslaved African woman, Marie Jeanne, just 12 days, just 12 days after having given labor.

00:30:30 Oh my gosh. Was it Marie Jeanne questioned? She was. Marie Jeanne, the records say, she said the following: "I do not know if I had given birth to a child. Lots of stuff came out of my body. But having fainted did not know what had happened since then. Having come there was much stuff that had come from my body. I had asked Lisette the little Savage of Mr. Braseau to warn her mistress. The little native girl did not. I gathered into my apron, all that was around me and went to the house as best I could." This is horrifying. What she's saying is that she fainted and she woke up in a bloody mess and that she asked Lisette to go get help and Lisette wouldn't. Wow. That's what Marie Jeanne said happened. Oh my gosh. So obviously Marie Jeanne is saying she did not give birth to a live baby.

00:31:29 Right. And obviously again, based on prior testimony and the determination of Dame Braseau, this pregnancy wouldn't have yielded a child. This pregnancy would not have yielded a child. So I don't understand why Lisette would say that. And it seems based on Marie Jeanne's testimony that the young Lisette didn't go warn Dame Braseau, but maybe she did. Maybe she did tell Dame Braseau and that's when Dame Braseau came up with the arm situation. Right?

00:32:03 I mean, the Dame Braseau's story coincides with Lisette's story, but Lisette's story doesn't make any sense. Right? So she was in court. She was tried, she was, she was tried in Kaskaskia for this. So based on my research, the justices couldn't come to a decision. Even with all that evidence. They're like, You know what? She could have, she could have ripped the baby apart. That's fine. So they waited a year. And then later that year they took Marie Jeanne to the Supreme Council of Louisiana at New Orleans.

00:32:36 Okay. So this is like the Supreme Court. And at that time she was with child in New Orleans. So they brought Marie Jeanne down there when she was there in court for a second trial. When she was in court, she was said to be pregnant again upon arrival. Wow. Yes. So after this incident she became pregnant again and that's within a year. So it had to have happened fast after. Oh God. God. So definitely, definitely, the father is someone in this household.

00:33:10 Definitely it's someone in the Braseau's house. Right. We weren't sure before, but for this pregnancy, daddy lives there. Exactly. Can you tell me what happened when she was on trial for the second time in New Orleans? So the judgment was something called "More Amply Informed". And apparently what this means is that the facts weren't clear or it was deemed that there wasn't enough proof to convict. Now this is not an absolution. It doesn't mean she's

innocent. I mean, this is French law. Wait, this is not like English law, right? This is French law. So she's like in a limbo now. So the court decides they're going to gather more evidence. You still could die. We could still, you know, you could still be guilty. Um, but you are not innocent. So what could happen to her? Well, that's just the thing, Jill, nobody knows what happened to her. What were her options? They weren't up to her. Her master could have sold her down south, near New Orleans. She could have come back to Illinois country. She could have been mandated to prison. She could have been in a prison cell. Exactly. But nobody knows what happened to her. What do you mean? There are no further records of Marie-Jeanne after the court issued its verdict, which wasn't really a verdict after all. I am completely shattered by the story. What do you think?

00:34:41 Well, I call bullshit. She did not murder her child. There's no way. There's no way. I believe Marie Jeanne a hundred percent and Lisette was a little too happy to finally get her voice heard on trial. Like, she was very descriptive and she's like, "and she said she was going to beat me" I don't know. She was very boisterous about it. Right? "She's mean to me!" Exactly. She said these fantastical things, but basically she was like, "this girl's mean to me and she's a monster" and she describes what a monster would, do ripping apart a baby. You are exactly right. Wow. How? Wow. Hmm, Hmm. Wow.

00:35:20 I think, I think you're absolutely right. Oh my gosh. But now this is interesting. We have already established that Lisette wouldn't have liked Marie Jeanne, right? And Marie Jeanne didn't like Lisette, but she, Lisette, might not have been the only person who would want Marie Jeanne out of the household.

00:35:37 Why? What are you...? Okay. Stop. Who else? Well, let's remember one key point here. This all didn't come to light because Lisette sounded an alarm over what she saw. This came to light because Dame Braseau said she walked out of her house and saw baby parts. That's what sounded the alarm.

00:35:58 Oh my God. You're right. Aha. Oh my God. Um, let's not forget that Marie Jeanne got pregnant in Dame Braseau's household at the very least. Uh huh. So Dame Braseau wants this hussey out of her house. Oh, that's terrible. And it's not like Marie Jeanne has any means to even consent to sex. She's looked at as property. I can't. So you're right. It gives Dame Braseau a straight up motive and Lisette's story is just not plausible. It's just it's just not, not.

00:36:40 Could Dame Braseau completely make up the story and coerce Lisette to go along with it? I mean, she wouldn't have had to coerce her. She's her master. Yeah. She'd be like, this is what you need to say. Good point. It's not like Lisette would have had a choice. Oh, absolutely. Right. Oh my gosh. Oh, for sure. For sure.

00:36:58 Uh, do we have any evidence to support our psychic impressions? Okay. So do you remember, um, when you said that Dame Braseau found the baby arm and the skull by her doorstep? Well, what I didn't tell you at that time was that she picked it up and she reburied it somewhere safe. Oh. And then...

00:37:24 So she got rid of the evidence. That's what she said. She said that she buried it. So now, um, June of 1749 comes around. It's the second trial down in New Orleans and the court is like, what evidence do you have? Right. I mean, a reasonable question. Yeah. So Dame Braseau said that she went back to the place where she safely buried the arm and the baby skull and it was gone. Oh my God. The baby arm was gone. The one that she said was intact from shoulder to wrist was completely gone, but there was still a piece of the skull. So she

brought the piece of the skull to the court and it was examined. Oh good. What happened? Are you sitting down? I've been sitting. Five surgeons were enlisted to examine the skull. And in the end they declared not only was it not that of a newborn, but it was that of a child that was a few months old. And it had been buried underground for some time. Yeah. I knew that was some bullshit. As soon as I heard it, I was like, none of that could have happened. Knew it. I knew it.

00:38:31 That woman! Who did she dig up? Oh my God. I, I can't even, oh my God, what did she do? Oh my God. I didn't even think of that. She dug up somebody's baby. She's a monster. She is a monster. So she's obviously a liar. Oh yeah. She obviously had something to do with it. Oh my God. So tell me, you told me that Marie Jeanne was lost in the records, but is there any record of vindication?

00:38:59 No, Jill. Marie Jeanne and Lisette are not mentioned again in any of the records. Not in Louisiana, not in Illinois. They're just gone from history. Disappeared. Poof. We don't know what happened to Marie Jeanne.

00:39:16 What a crazy horrible story. And I just want to say one thing. I want to say that I, when we look at this and we look at the testimony and why this was an important trial, it wasn't because a enslaved child was killed. It was because an enslaved woman destroyed the property of her master. And that's why this went to trial. And that's why they were taking it seriously. Not because a child's life didn't come to fruition. That's true. I'm really sad inside. But Marie Jeanne, we got you girl. Yes, we got you girl. We know what happened. We had the opportunity to bring this story to light and to talk about it and to say, yeah, no, you are completely completely innocent.

00:40:15 We know you didn't do this. So let's go through our hits and how we are able to draw that conclusion. Hit me, Jen. Oh my gosh. Well, the fact that we ended up in Cahokia is nuts. Hm. Why? Because not only was it, um, a major French settlement, but it was the first European, the first permanent European settlement in the entire Mississippi valley. Yeah. And kind of the sister city to Kaskaskia. And while we were there, you were feeling that heavy legged feeling. Yeah. And of course the woman on trial. I mean, that's obvious for sure. The vulnerability and combativeness... that completely makes sense now. That would have been what Marie Jeanne was feeling. And then the burial on the property. This gets me That would have been a reference, I think, to Marie Jeanne's birth, you know, she did bury it. She put it in the ground near the pigsty. The Phantom smells! Oh my gosh. I know! The Phantom smells! That's insane. Let's remember Jill, let's be completely honest. We were never in Kaskaskia. We did not go there. I know, but legit, when we were going through this and we found reference to this historical event, we bought a book that referenced it and had transcripts of the trial and in the book, as an example of life and times and context, they had a picture of the courthouse where we were at. OUR courthouse where we were standing. OUR courthouse. I take that as validation. That is validation, my God. For sure. That's a big ass breadcrumb.

00:42:02 I have to ask you a question though. Please do. The white feather? Oh my gosh. Okay. I have a theory about why spirit was showing me a white feather. Tell me. Obviously we're giving Marie-Jeanne a voice. We already said that. Oh my God, she's our voiceless for sure. But you know who else I think needs a voice, Jill? I think Lisette. I think Lisette is sorry. And I think that white feather is a symbol of an apology from her.

00:42:27 You know what? That it's too soon for me. You know, I'm just, I'm not there yet. I'm kind of still upset about this. That's fair. That's fair. Maybe we can talk later, but no, I, I know she

was 10, but it's like, come on. She was a child and she was probably told by her master what to say and really she would have had no choice. That's true. She was nine or 10. So let's be fair to Lisette. Well, it's depressing, but another great story.

00:42:56 It was a surprising story. I really liked the story. It's just, when you, when you really think about those circumstances, it's just a gut punch, man. It is not cool. Well, hopefully the next one will be a little more upbeat. And when you say the next one, you're talking about the next one from our Common Mystics road trip, our Common Mystics Kansas road trip 2021. All right, Jill, tell the people where they can find us until then. You can check us out at our website, commonmystics.net. Find us on Facebook and Instagram. Listen in on Amazon Music, Tuned In, Spotify, Stitcher, Google Podcast, Apple Podcast, where you can leave us a positive review so other people can find us. Thank you.

00:43:36 Thank you. Good night. Night.