

"New Arms"



This is what is called the 'New Arms,' granted to the lone survivor of the Black Death (1347 to 1350) which plague had destroyed every other member of the Heiberg family. This survivor, symbolized by the white ptarmigan (winter grouse) was a woman and not, under the law of heraldry, entitled to 'bear arms.' But, being the last representative of the clan she was given this 'female arms' -- pictorial rather than warlike: of two oval (Viking) shields, one painted with the grim reminder of the Black Plague, the other showing her as the progenitor of the new race.

She was allowed to retain the helmet, with its crest of horns, and the open visor, signifying an earl, and to carry on the name, Heiberg.

This was drawn from the wax impression of an old seal ring in the Heiberg museum in Ablegaard (I am not sure of the spelling of that town in northern Norway), sent to your great-uncle Elvin by a cousin, curator of this museum.

(signed) Anna Howell Dodge Heiberg, May 1951

Submitted by Kieth Heiberg