

Christ Episcopal Church Cemetery Inventory

State and Water Streets, Dover DE 19903

Walking Tour #8

Lot Number: 300 Space: G 85 A

Find A Grave # 11922276

Name: **Ridgely, Mabel Lloyd Fisher**



Birth date: April 13, 1872 Death date: January 11, 1962 Burial Date: January 13, 1962 Age: 89
b. District of Columbia

Spouse: Jurist Henry Ridgely Jr. (1869-1940) m. May 30, 1893 in Christ Episcopal Church by Rev. Lewis W. Gibson

Children: Philippa Elizabeth *Ridgely* Horsey (1894-1893)

Parents: Hon. Charles George Fisher (1850-1912) and Philippa Young *Lloyd* Fisher (1850-1917)

Siblings: Fenwick Fisher (1871-1871) 9 months old

Residence: Dover, DE

Cause of death/Burial/Obituary: See next pages

Service/occupation information: "Historian, Suffragette and founder of Old Dover Days. She was instrumental in saving the old State House from demolition and founding the Delaware State Archives." – from Walking Tour guide

Officiate: Rev. G. P. Mellick Belshaw

Lot Owner: Ridgely

Inscription:

In Memory of
Mabel Lloyd (Ridgely)
Daughter of Philippa Lloyd
and
Charles G. Fisher
Wife of
Henry Ridgely
April 13, 1872 – January 11, 1962
She brought the past to life.



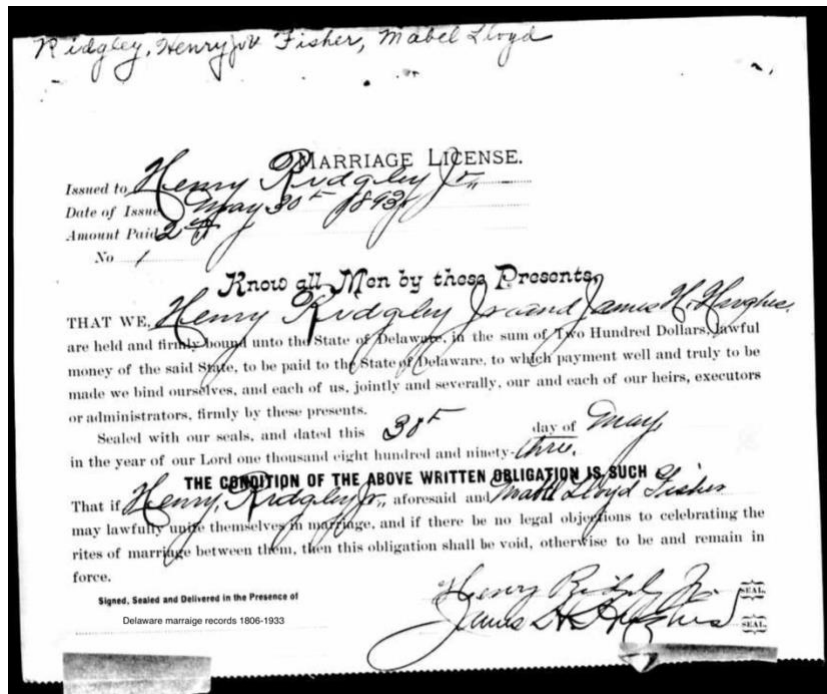
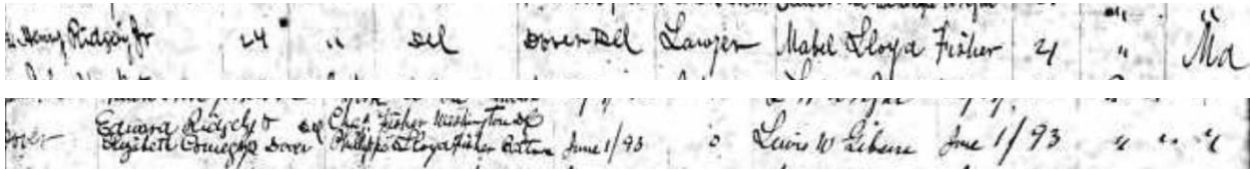
DIMENSIONS: H 72" x W 36" x D 12"

STYLE: ledger

Repairs: cleaned 2023

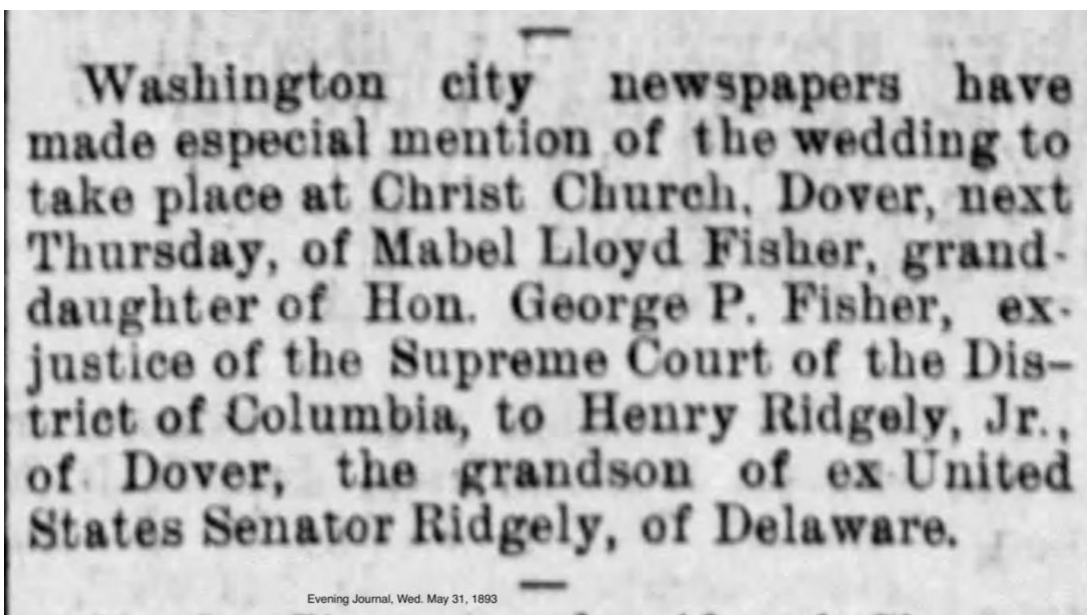


Inventory date: May 1, 2019 Recorder: Nancy Quinn



The Wilmington, DE, Wednesday, May 31, 1893

Evening Journal,





The News Journal, Wilmington, DE December 9, 1987 article about Mabel:

Wednesday, Dec. 9, 1987 • • • The News-Journal papers • • • A19

A valiant leader and a great lady

“PRAISE God from Whom all blessings flow for having allowed so many of us to have become born again Delawareans — residents of the First State in the greatest nation in the world — and the Best State on the 200th anniversary of when our tri-county Small Wonder pointed the way to national unity.”

This was the prayer I murmured any number of times on Monday, as I moved through our state’s capital, Dover, witnessing a most elaborate, unrehearsed celebration.

I experienced the wonderful flow of events in front of Legislative Hall and then wandered on up to the Dover Green to see the old State House and the restored Golden Fleece Tavern, where on Dec. 7, 1787, a delegation of 30 Delawareans signed a document, ratifying the brand new Constitution. As I sat there, marveling at the vast number of men, women and yes, little children from all parts of Delaware, I realized we were all missing the living presence of a wonderful Delaware lady who would have been crowned queen of it all, had she been with us in the land of the living — Mabel Lloyd Ridgely.

Mrs. Ridgely had reigned in the ancient and venerable house on the

Bill Frank

Dover Green, next to the Golden Fleece Tavern of French and Elizabeth Battell, in the late 19th century. She devoted her life to the preservation of Delaware history, landmarks and tradition.

In the 1920s she was a valiant leader in the cause of women’s suffrage. She also struggled successfully to preserve the old State House on the Green from destruction and was one of the farsighted few who finally created the State Department of Archives.

Lady Mabel Loyd Ridgely died in 1963 as she approached age 90. Several years before that, when I asked her what she thought her epitaph should be, she replied, “Yes, I have decided on my epitaph. It is brief and I also believe it is truthful. ‘She died of the Eighteenth Century.’”

Yes, of course. She devoted a great deal of her life to the preservation of the 18th century in Delaware. Many columns have been written about her interest in Delaware, but one of the best came from Charles Lee Reese, former president of the News-Journal papers in his book, “The Horse on Rodney Square.”

“Mabel Lloyd Ridgely was



Mrs. Ridgely: Lady Delaware

diminutive but strong in purpose and effective far beyond her size. Her old home on the Green in Dover remains one of the loveliest in Delaware. Perhaps because her front windows looked out on the original Colonial Delaware State House — the oldest original in the nation still, then in active use — she fought mightily and successfully to see it preserved.

“As one of the most effective members of the State Archives Commission, she joined the struggle to preserve the John Dickinson mansion near Dover, the early home of the state’s most distinguished Revolutionary patriots.”

In thinking of Mrs. Ridgely and how she might have fitted into Monday’s celebration, I was pleased to note that Ridgely descendants still

occupy the ancient home and participated in the celebrations.

Other impressions of the programs in Dover:

- Even though Gov. Castle did not declare Dec. 7 a state holiday, thousands of Delawareans, filled the gap and declared Dec. 7 their holiday.
- The school bands and other school marchers were most impressive, particularly the second and third graders from Dover area schools.
- It was a wonderful relief to hear the Bicentennial Chorus sing the state’s anthem “Our Delaware.” We rarely even hear bands play it.
- The speeches, particularly the one by Burger, were wonderful. The benediction by Rabbi Herbert Drooz of Congregation Beth Emeth, was most moving as it wrapped up the feelings all of us in the audience must have had when the chief event of the day ended.

Walking through the crowd but generally not recognized was Dr. Claudia Bushman, executive director the Delaware Heritage Commission, who had arranged the day-long activities. She and the commission itself, deserve the Golden Constitutional Bicentennial Pen Award.

See you all in the Tricentennial Celebration, Dec. 7, 2087. Well, may be.

News Journal, Tuesday, April 29, 2008

As Old Dover Days turns 75, hats off to Mabel Lloyd Ridgely

Few Delawareans know the name of Mabel Lloyd Ridgely. But few have done as much as she did for Dover, where her legacy has entertained generations. She started Old Dover Days, which marks its 75th year this weekend.

An artist and historic preservationist, she founded Friends of Old Dover and led Old Dover Days until her death in 1962, says the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs. She made the maypole the event symbol and the spring ribbon dance endures.

More than 15,000 people attend the festivities hosted by the city, and Kent County and Greater Dover Convention and Visitors Bureau. It involves scores of sites and groups in the historic area.

Friday has a 4-8 p.m. Loockerman Street block party, lantern tours of The Green (\$5, \$2 kids, 739-9194) and Children's Theatre of Dover's 7 p.m. free show, "In Days Gone By," at Presbyterian Church of Dover, 54 S. State St.

A Civil War camp, artisans fair and activities fill The Green on Saturday. A 9:30 a.m. parade runs from Hazel Street to The Green, where opening ceremonies are at 10:30 a.m.

Art imitates life imitating history at the Old State House, 25 The Green. A display shows Orville Peets' portrait of Ridgely in a Colonial-style dress she wore for Old Dover Days - and the dress itself. Event history is shown at the adjoining Delaware State Visitor Center and Galleries. Those sites are open 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 1:30-4:30 p.m. Sunday. For free World War II Heroes tours of Lakeside

Cemetery at 11:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. Saturday, call 399-3635.

Archaeology Festival at Old Dover Days is 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday at Museum Square. Its Delaware Archaeology Museum has 17th century artifacts, kids' animal-track activities, Mariah Romaninsky of the Delaware Museum of Natural History discussing wetlands and animal tales by Bruce "Little Drummer" Moon, 1-2 p.m.

The Museum of Small Town Life has photos, "Governor's Avenue: A Look at the Past" and Johnson Victrola Museum has Patricia Burke Western making purses from records, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Saturday is the event debut of "The American Revolution: Delaware Leads the Way" exhibit and showing of the state's Bill of Rights copy at the public archives, 121 Duke of York St., 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Friends of Old Dover exhibit is 9 a.m. 3 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. 3 p.m. Sunday at the Golden Fleece Tavern site, 323 S. State St.

Gov. Ruth Ann Minner hosts a free, public tea 2 to 4 p.m. Saturday at Woodburn, 151 Kings Highway, with free tours there and adjoining Hall House, noon to 4 p.m. Other free tours: City Hall, Christ Church.

The Grand Ball on The Green and State House offers period food/attire, 6:45-10 p.m. Saturday (\$30, \$50 couples, 734-4888). And Sun-

ONLINE EXTRAS

At www.delawareonline.com/backstory:

- * See Old Dover Days' full schedule
- * Get links to learn more
- * Check the blog at <http://www.delawareonline.com/blogs/backstory.html>



Photo courtesy of the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

Old Dover Days' founder, the late Mabel Lloyd Ridgely, may be seen in a display at the weekend of activities, along with the dress she always wore to the event.

day has the Home & Garden Tour and Tea Party on The Green with seatings at 11 a.m., 1 and 3 p.m. (\$15 each event, \$25 for both, 734-4888).

That's a taste of the 75th annual event Minner calls "a great opportunity to enjoy the city of Dover and learn about Delaware's Colonial history."

Old Dover Days surely shows the city at its old-fashioned finest. Thanks to Mabel Lloyd Ridgely.

MRS. LILA STODDARD SHERWOOD.

145147

Born in Hartford, Conn.
Wife of Charles Havens Sherwood.
Descendant of Ensign Jonathan Stoddard, as follows:

1. John Roswell Stoddard (b. 1855) m. 1878 Lila Marguerite Steele (b. 1854).
2. John Gaylord Stoddard (1827-1913) m. 1854 Caroline Sarah Rice (1825-1904).
3. Hiram Edwards Stoddard (1796-1883) m. 1826 Fanny Filley (1797-1877).
4. Jonathan Stoddard, Jr. (1772-1840), m. 1793 Candace Peck (1770-1820).
5. Jonathan Stoddard m. 1766 Sabra Andrus (1739-77).

Jonathan Stoddard (1738-1811) responded to the Lexington Alarm in Capt. John Chester's company and, in 1776, served as ensign in Capt. Chester Wells' company, Colonel Chester's regiment. He was born and died in Wethersfield, Conn.

Also No. 136273.

MRS. MABEL L. FISHER RIDGELY.

145148

Born in Washington, D. C.
Wife of Henry Ridgely.
Descendant of Thomas Fisher, as follows:

1. Charles G. Fisher m. Philippa Y. C. Lloyd.
2. George F. Fisher m. Eliza A. McCauley.
3. Thomas Fisher m. 3d Nancy Owens Ricards.

Thomas Fisher served as private in Capt. David Hall's company, Col. John Hazlet's regiment, Delaware militia. He was born in Worcester County, Md.; died, 1835, in Mill Square, Del.

MRS. ELIZABETH KATHARINE BEERS WILSON.

145149

Born in Dover, Del.
Wife of Ralph Carmalt Wilson.
Descendant of John Hart, as follows:

1. Henry Irving Beers m. May Hart Anderson.
2. Edwin S. Anderson m. Elizabeth King Smith.
3. George W. Smith m. Mary Eleanor Hart.
4. John Hart m. Mary Schreeves.
5. John Hart (b. 1748) m. Catherine Knowles (b. 1749).
6. John Hart m. Deborah Scudder (1721-76).

See No. 145089.

MRS. ELIZABETH DAVIDSON HOPPIN.

145150

Born in St. Louis, Mo.
Wife of Curtis B. Hoppin.
Descendant of John Chapman Hunter, as follows:

Saved Old State House

Morning News, Fri. January 12, 1962

Mrs. Mabel Ridgely Dies

By **WILLIAM P. FRANK**
Mrs. Mabel Lloyd Ridgely of Dover died yesterday in the Kent General Hospital. She would have been 90 on April 13.

Years ago, Mrs. Ridgely, single handedly, saved the old State House on the Dover Green

from neglect. Several months ago, she began a crusade to have it removed from everyday use as a public office building and restored as a state shrine.

SHE WAS ONE of the founders of the State Archives Com-

mission in 1905 and an officer of this commission since its beginning.

Zealously, she preserved the heritage of the Ridgely family of Dover and published hundreds of Ridgely family letters that tell a great deal about life here for almost 200 years.

On the annual Dover Days, she was always the gracious hostess in colonial costume in the Ridgely home and garden on the Green.

SEVERAL YEARS ago, she wrote her own epitaph. In the foreword of her book, "The Ridgelys of Delaware: What Them Befell," she wrote:

"I have decided on my epitaph. It is brief and I believe it is also truthful: 'She died of the Eighteenth Century.' Before that happens, I want to share some of my excursions into earlier times with others."

But though she considered herself of the 18th Century, Mrs. Ridgely was as modern as most 1962 American women. She was a world traveler and doted upon Venice which she visited during each spring and summer for 20 years. Her last visit was in the summer of 1961.

SHE WORKED for women's suffrage and was the president of the Delaware Women's Suffrage Association when women got the right to vote in 1920.

She became the first president of the Delaware League of Women Voters in 1921.

She was one of the first supporters of the public library movement in southern Delaware. During World War I she was chairman of the Women's Library Loan Committee of Delaware. She succeeded her husband, the late Henry Ridgely, as a member of the board of trustees of the University of Delaware in 1941. The university gave her an honorary degree in humane letters in 1957.

DEVOTED AS SHE was to the colonial tradition of Dover, Mrs. Ridgely was the one who whipped up opposition to an attempt by the State Board of Health to build a modernistic building in the midst of the other state buildings of Georgian architecture.

Yesterday, Gov. Elbert N. Carvel, issued a statement:

"The whole state of Delaware

See DEATH—Page 3, Col. 3



"OF THE 18TH CENTURY" — Mrs. Mabel Lloyd Ridgely as a Dover Day hostess poses at an ancient spinnet in her home on Dover Green.

continued next page

Death—

Continued From First Page

mourns the passing of Mrs. Mabel Ridgely, a great citizen who was beloved and admired by all who had the good fortune to know her.

"As a charter member of the Delaware Public Archives Commission, she served her state superbly and continuously until the day of her death. She also served her community, state and nation in many other distinguished capacities during her long career.

"HER MANY outstanding contributions to our cultural life provide a rich heritage to Delaware and its posterity.

"Truly, Mrs. Ridgely was one of Delaware's great citizens and I am certain it is the hope of her many devoted friends that our great state historic projects to which she was so dedicated will achieve successful fruition in memory of her inspired leadership."

Mrs. Ridgely was born in Washington, D.C., the daughter of Charles Fisher and Philippa (Lloyd) and the granddaughter of George P. Fisher of Kent County. She was educated in private schools in Baltimore and New York; later she attended the art school of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and studied architecture under Arthur Lyman Tuckerman of the Beaux Arts, Paris.

She married Henry Ridgely of Dover in 1893. He was later to become one of the prominent citizens of Delaware — lawyer, civic leader, and president of the Farmers Bank.

HE DIED in 1940. Mrs. Ridgely continued living in the old Ridgely house on the Dover Green—one of the oldest in the state and a landmark in Delaware history.

Her membership in societies was never perfunctory but always reflected her personal and intense interest in their programs: The Colonial Dames, the Wilmington Society of the Fine Arts, the Friends of the John Dickinson Mansion, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Dover Century Club and the Friends of Old Dover, of which she was a founder and an officer for a long time.

She was also a member of the Delaware State Portrait Commission since 1937 and its president most of the time.

AS ONE OF the founders of the State Archives Commission she was responsible for the saving of thousands of public documents that might very well have been lost. She was its president for many years.

Living as she did within "shouting distance" of the old State House on the Dover Green, she not only promoted the cause of having it restored from mid-Victorian facade to the Georgian style but she also literally watched over the work done so that nothing would go wrong.

This was almost 50 years ago and she refused to allow the workmen to rip off the mansard roof of the State House until she was sure every scrap of public document was out of the attic and preserved.

HER INTEREST in the old State House was chiefly because it was there, she said, when the Delaware convention of 1787 ratified the federal Constitution and so made Delaware the first state of the union.

Almost up until the time of her death, she was actively planning a campaign to have the building taken from everyday office use and put in the care of the State Archives as a state shrine.

It was in this cause that she recently appeared before the Dover Century Club last November and appealed for its help in the State House project.

MRS. RIDGELY is survived by a daughter, Mrs. Harold W. Horsey of Dover; two grandchildren, Henry R. Ridgely of

Wilmington, and Mrs. Jack E. Scheller of Eden Farm Hill, Dover; and six great grandchildren.

Funeral rites will be held tomorrow at 2 o'clock in Christ Episcopal Church, Dover, of which she was a member. The family has requested that flowers be omitted.

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The Morning News, Wilmington, DE Saturday, January 13, 1962

Morning News, Sat. January 13, 1962

A Little, Great Lady of Dover

A little, great lady was Mabel Lloyd Ridgely. How tall was she? Surely not much over five feet. Better for Delaware people to ask themselves what was the true stature of this person who has died at nearly 90.

How can an obituary editorial about Mrs. Henry Ridgely help sounding a little like a love letter made public? For that matter, why shouldn't it? Delawareans who regard their little state with respect and affection have felt much the same way about her and her decades of labor in public fields where pride of heritage is concerned.

Just consider. At the turn of the century there was still no central repository for public documents. Valuable papers were being scattered, lost, even burned. Mrs. Ridgely was one of the few who, understanding what history is, took action. In large measure the State Archives

Commission (founded in 1905) is a monument to her.

Her youthful interest in architecture developed in ways that made her a power in the conservation of early-American buildings in Delaware—and in establishing the classic style for new structures in Dover and at the University of Delaware of which she was long a trustee. For the trustees and other friends of the university she will always be Dr. Mabel Ridgely. She richly deserved the honorary degree of doctor of humane letters conferred on her in 1957.

In her charming 18th-century house on Dover Green she was recognized widely as the epitome of graciousness. Her wit sparkled like her old silver. She could strike sparks, too, from those who disagreed with her—as many persons can testify. She has left her bright and enduring mark on the scene, the life, and the culture of her city and state.

Newport, with full-size 122-inch wheelbase, sits on a road like it costs a thousand or so corners. Its big F 265 horsepower or

