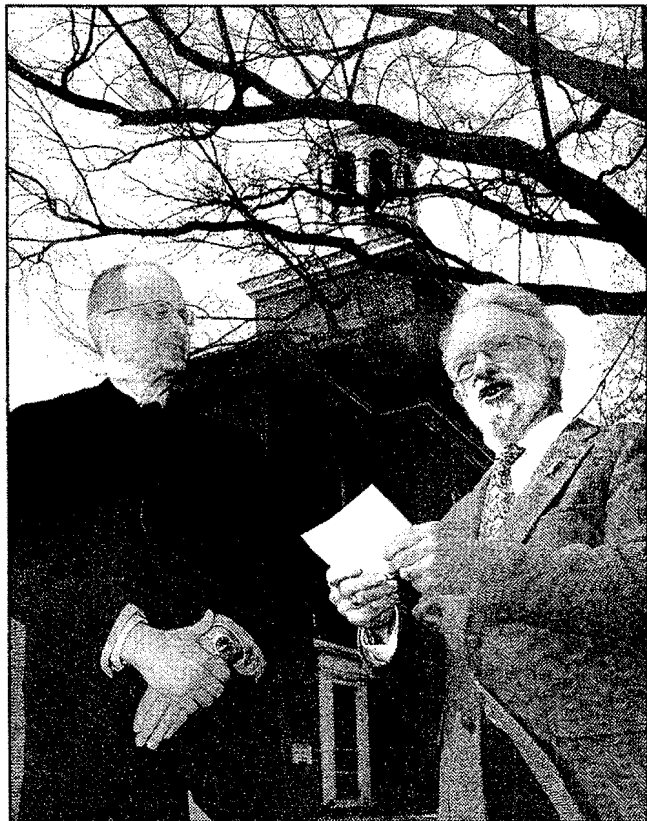




Delaware State News/Daniel Korup

Historic marker

Above, the Delaware Public Archives dedicated a historical marker at the site of Kent County's first Presbyterian Church Thursday on South Governors Avenue in Dover. From left, are Sen. John C. Still III, R-Dover, the legislative sponsor for the marker; C. Russell McCabe, director of the Public Archives; and David Holland, a parishioner of Presbyterian Church of Dover. At left, the Rev. Dr. David Brumbaugh, left, listens to Mr. Holland read the history of the church. For most of the 18th century, a Presbyterian Society was organized and worshiped in a log church on the site of this marker. The present church was built in 1791 and served the congregation until 1924 when a new church on State and Reed streets was dedicated.



Marker to honor First Presbyterian Church

DOVER — A dedication ceremony will be held for the unveiling of a Delaware State Historical Marker at 1 p.m. today which documents the history of the site of Kent County's First Presbyterian Church, on 54 S. State Street in Dover. The legislative sponsor for this marker is Sen. John Still.

For most of the 18th century, a Presbyterian Society was organized and worshiped in a log church on the site of this marker. The present church was built in 1791 and served the congregation until 1924 when a new church on State and Reed streets was dedicated.

All interested persons are encouraged to attend the ceremony celebrating the rich history of this church. For further information contact Karen Donovan, Delaware Public Archives at 744-5048.

Historic marker to be dedicated at Presbyterian church

By Jeff Brown

Staff writer

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Behind every great plan is someone with a dream.

That dream will come true for David R. Holland this Thursday, March 9, as the state of Delaware dedicates a new historical marker at the Old Presbyterian Church in Dover.

A self-confessed man of many interests, it was his love of history that drew the 78-year-old Holland to a project that that has consumed much of the past seven years: a history of the cemetery associated with the first Presbyterian church on Kent County.

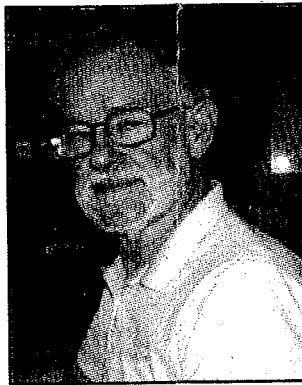
The project started in 1999, when Holland was asked to analyze the need for more burial plots in the centuries-old cemetery.

"In doing that, I tried to get a handle on who's buried there and if we had a history of them," he said. "I got interested in who some of the people were. I discovered the place was historically rich."

"With most cemeteries, you stand outside and look in," Holland continued. "I wanted to take these people and look outside. I took them and put them in the social settings of the times."

First church built in 1705

This approach gave Holland a sense of how the congregation grew over the years and how intertwined the church



David R. Holland

was in the lives of those who worshipped there. With almost no records to speak of, Holland set about coordinating the lives of those buried in the cemetery with known historical events.

His research indicates the first church in the area was a log cabin, built around 1705 near what is now Dover Air Force Base, and used by Dover's Episcopalians and Presbyterians.

Records show another cabin, also used as a place of worship, was in place by 1708 at what is now the corner of South Governors Avenue and Bank Lane. The first confirmed burial in the cemetery was in 1773, although Holland notes other burials certainly had occurred before then.

The cornerstone for the current brick church was laid in 1790, and the Presbyterians used that building, as well as a chapel built to the north in 1880, until 1924, when the congregation moved to its current location at South State and Reed streets.

Although the old church and chapel now

If you go...

What: Dedication of historic marker

Where: Old Presbyterian Church, corner of South Governors Avenue and West North Street, Dover

When: 1 p.m. Thursday, March 9

house the Delaware Archaeology Museum and the Museum of Small Town Life, the cemetery still is used as a burial ground for members of the church. The entire site was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972.

A 'detailed research effort'

With much of his work complete, Holland approached Delaware state archivist Russ McCabe about putting up a historic marker, a project that quickly gained the support of state Sen. John C. Still III, R-Dover North, who set aside the necessary \$2,000 funding.

McCabe said he was astonished at the breadth and depth of Holland's work.

"With every one of

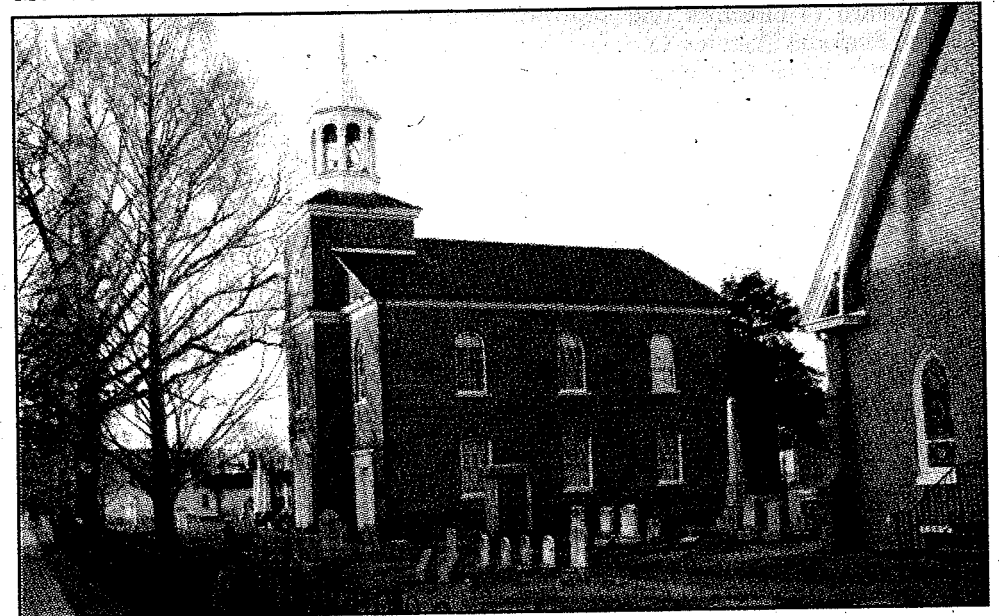
these projects, there's normally an individual we rely on for information. Mr. Holland did that times two," McCabe said.

"He took it upon himself to do a very detailed research effort," McCabe added. "It's great to have someone like him who was willing to dig so deeply into the historic records. He went above and beyond the call of duty."

As for Holland, he sums up his feelings with a quotation

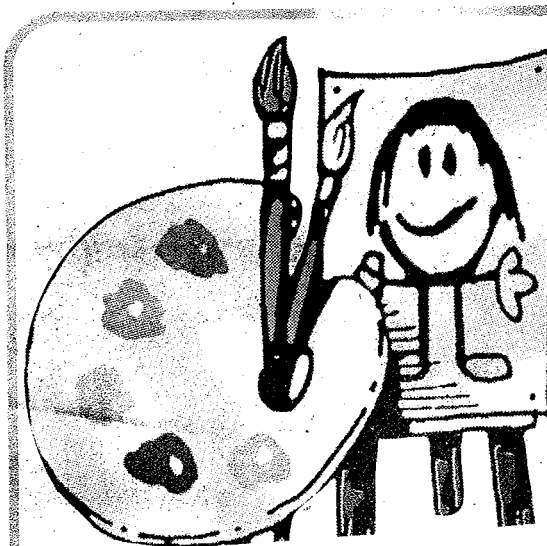
included with his research: "A cemetery may be defined by the historical biographies of the people buried in it."

"This cemetery is fully alive in its own extraordinary history with its distinguishing characteristic being the high level of civic consciousness attained by those buried in it."



Jeff Brown photo

THE OLD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH on South State Street is now part of the Delaware Museums. It was built in 1790.



You are invited to
**The Little School
 Art Show**
 "the works of young children"
Monday, March 20th