VLR-6/2/70 NRHP-9/15/70

Form 10-36 1 (July 15-2) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

STATE:	
Virginia	
COUNTY:	
York	
FOR NPS USE ON	ILY
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

Grace Church  AND/OR HISTORIC: York - Hampton Parish Church  LOCATION  STREET AND NUMBER: St side of Rt. 1003, NE side of intersection with Main St.  CITY OR TOWN: Yorktown  STATE CODE COUNTY: CODE Virginia 45 York  199	(Type all entr	ies — complete applicable sectio	ons)	<del></del>
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The present Grace Church, originally called York-Hampton Parish Church, is thought to be the third parish church of York Parish, created about 1638. The first two churches, erected about 1642 and 1667, respectively, were located two miles below Yorktown at the old York settlement. In 1706 York Parish merged with Hampton Parish (formerly called Chiskiack Parish) to form York-Hampton Parish. Built about 1697, Grace Church was the only church to serve York-Hampton Parish. Evidence for its date of erection is Governor Francis Nicholson's pledge recorded in the county order book, November 26, 1696, of twenty pounds sterling toward the building of a brick church, provided the church be built within two years. Instead the church was built of marl slabs from the cliffs above the York River.

During the Revolution when the church was used as a magazine by Lord Cornwallis, it lost its windows and pews. In 1814 it was accidentally burned. The church remained in ruins until 1848 when it was rebuilt, this time without the original north wing, and stuccoed. It was at this time that the name was changed from York-Hampton Parish Church to Grace Church. During the War between the States, Federal troops erected a signal tower on the roof. The interior, which was used as a hospital, suffered extensive damage, and the colonial churchyard wall was demolished. The church was returned to use about 1870.

The bell, still in use, is inscribed "County of York, Virginia, 1725."

The bell probably hung originally in the court house, but it is known to have rung from the church's belfry during colonial times. It is uncertain when the bell broke, but its fragments were carried off during the War between the States. The pieces were found in Philadelphia in 1882, the bell was recast and returned to Grace Church in 1889.

Grace Church also has the second oldest set of communion silver in Virginia. The chalice and flagon of 1649-50 are inscribed to Hampton Parish in York County. The flagon is thought to be the earliest English silver flagon in an American church.

Prominent parishioners of the York-Hampton Parish Church included the Nelson family, three of whom lie buried in the churchyard - Thomas Nelson (1677-1745), William Nelson (1711-72), and General Thomas Nelson (1738-89), a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

