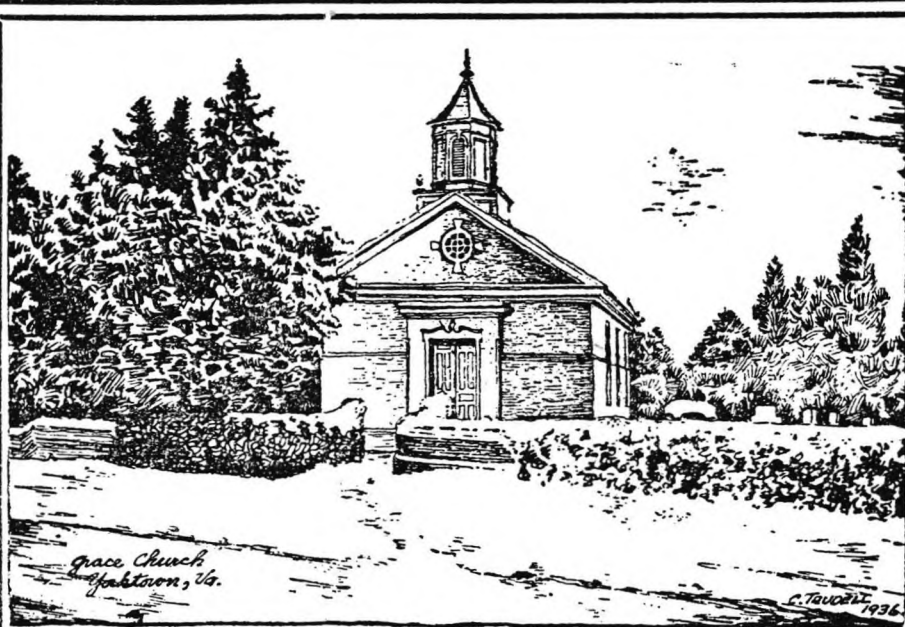


COLO-164  
CRBIB# 402098



# Grace Church

## York-Hampton Parish

*in the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia*

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**T**HIS ANCIENT PARISH, *throughout the years, has borne witness to the Faith in the Triune GOD which was the Foundation of the Lives and noble works of our Fathers. It continues today to witness to the same TRUTH supporting us.*

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*Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.*

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**YORKTOWN  
VIRGINIA**

The Cover from the Church's  
Weekly Bulletin

y  
95'

GRACE (YORK) CHURCH  
1697-1957

A Brief Account  
of its History

By: Charles E. Hatch, Jr.  
Colonial National Historical Park  
July 15, 1958

(1)  
GRACE (YORK) CHURCH

Grace Church stands today, as it has for more than two and a half centuries, on the high bluff in the heart of historic Yorktown with which it has always been closely associated in times of peace as well as in times of war. For all of this time it has been playing a valuable role in helping to meet the religious needs of town, community and parish. The comments of the visitor to Yorktown about 1840, as reported in the Southern Literary Messenger, are perhaps as timely now as when originally penned although he saw the church when it stood strictly in ruin.

The site of the Church is superb, immediately on the lofty bank of the sparkling cerulean waters of the majestic York. The spot is consecrated by the ashes of the illustrious dead, the charms of nature, its antique recollections and the classic associations of the Siege and Surrender.

(2)

The construction of a new York Parish Church was undertaken in Yorktown just a few years after the town was laid out in 1691. The date of its construction, though not specifically given in the records, is normally accepted as 1697 chiefly from an entry made in the county Order Book under date of October 26, 1696 in which Governor Francis Nicholson pledged "to give...twenty pounds sterling if within two years they build a brick church at the same town [Yorktown]" to which he, also, agreed to give 5£ towards a courthouse. Presumably this condition was met, at least there is clear reference, although incidental reference, to "the new Church" in 1701.

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1. Grace Church, in the Diocese of Southern Virginia, serves York-Hampton Parish, including Yorktown and the surrounding area. The Church and its churchyard occupies Lots 35 and 41 in the Town of York. In February, 1957, the Church had about 137 communicants and was ministering to some 276 persons.
  2. Volume X, p. 41. (January, 1844)



The Exterior of York Church as it May  
Have Appeared in the Eighteenth Century.  
This is a Study Sketch by J. Everett  
Fisher, Jr., Done in 1947

In 1713 town Lot No. 41, adjacent to "the Land whereon the Church standeth", was added to the Parish holdings presumably as an extension to the "burying ground". Churchwardens Peter Goodwin and Robert Peters acquired it from one David Condon for the sum of five pounds, ten shillings. (1)

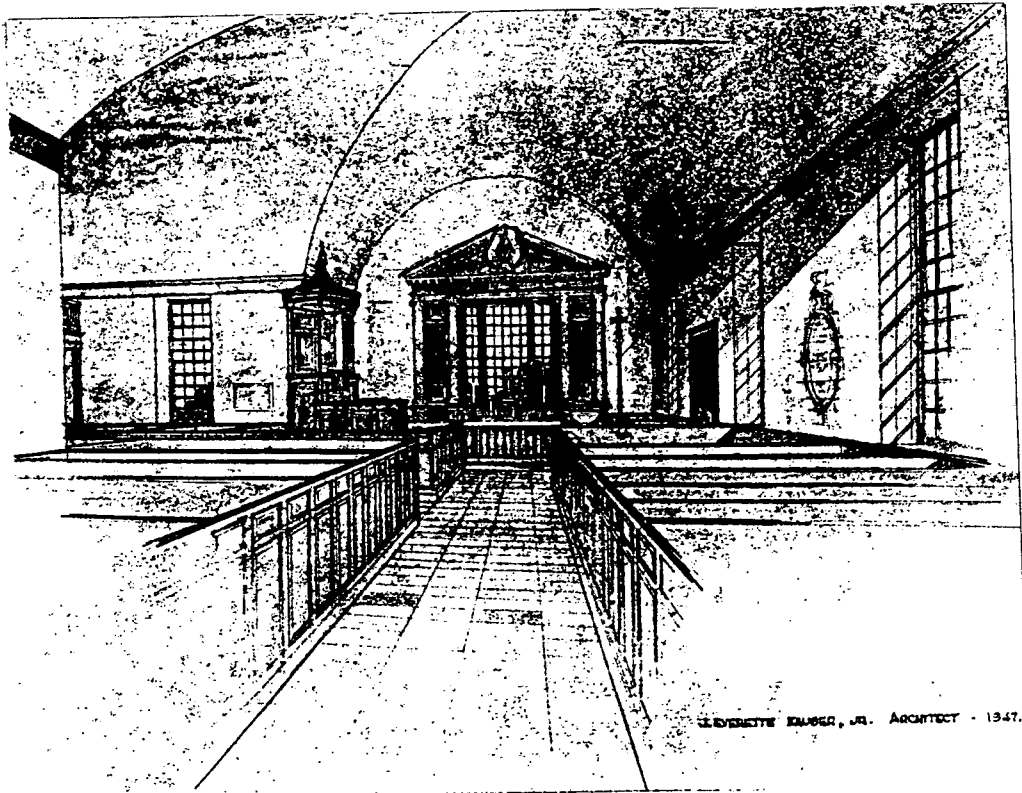
Thus, the religious seat for York Parish, which extended above and below Yorktown, was moved to the new center being established on the York directly across the river from Gloucester Point. The first two York Parish churches had been located some two miles down stream near the mouth of Wormley Creek where there was an earlier "York" settlement.

The new York Church was heir to more than sixty years of continuous church history in the area which was first known as Charles River Parish. The York River section, one of the first Virginian frontier zones, was opened to settlement in the 1630's and the accustomed English religious beliefs and the usual church organization came with the settlers. York Parish came into being in 1632 and seemingly had taken definite form as early as 1638, for in that year it had an inducted minister. Its neighboring parish to the north was Chiskiack (a name later changed to Hampton) which is known to have had a minister in 1635 and to have been formally declared a parish in 1640. Martin's Hundred Parish bordering it to the west had been formed, at least generally, even earlier, perhaps, soon after the establishment of this plantation on the James about 1618.

In 1706 York and Hampton Parishes were combined to form York-Hampton Parish which was further enlarged in 1712 by the official addition of

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1. This Lot, No. 41, continues in Church ownership although for much of the period 1784 to 1880 it seemingly was listed as private property even when noted as "Church burying ground". (York County Records, Land Books for 1858, 1866, 1870, 1873 and 1880; Deed Book No. 6, p. 223, and, Deeds and Bonds No. 2, p. 408.)



*Interior Restoration - York-Hampton Church - York, Va. - 17th Century*

The Interior of York Church as it May  
Have Appeared in the Eighteenth Century.  
This is a Study Sketch by J. Everette  
Faubor, Jr., done in 1947

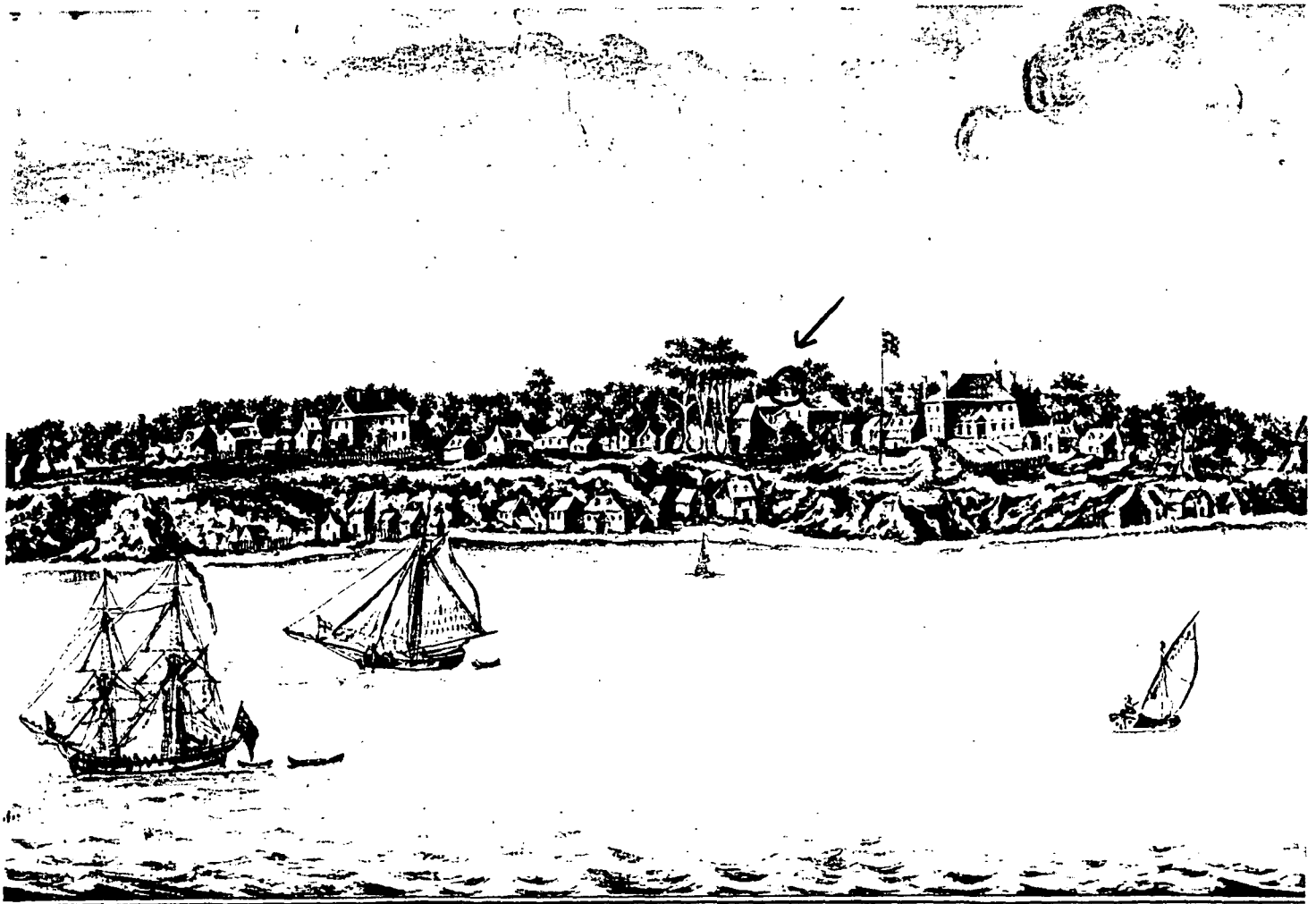
"Merchant's hundred" (Martin's Hundred) Parish to the west. Thus it was that in the eighteenth century the Yorktown Church, as reported in 1724, was the religious hub of a geographical area some twenty miles long and about four miles wide (nine square miles.) There were about 200 families and two churches in the parish. In his church at Yorktown, Reverend Francis Fontaine had some "three score communicants," the other church, some eight miles away, had "about twenty."

It was elected in 1697 not to build the Yorktown Church of brick despite the Governor's encouragement. Perhaps he was not disappointed, however, for they did build of durable material. Blocks of native marl<sup>(1)</sup> were cut from the York River cliffs and these were laid up in masonry form. These hardened almost to the consistency of stone and the walls remain today despite many vicissitudes. As originally constructed the Church was in the shape of a rectangle, lying east and west on the long axis and measuring 28' x 55' with the main entrance at the west end and the altar, as was customary, to the east. It would appear that ecclesiastical law was followed scrupulously in regard to the location and arrangement of the Church even though it required placing the building angularly on its lot which was No. 35 on the town plan.

As Yorktown and its Church grew and became prosperous, it seemingly

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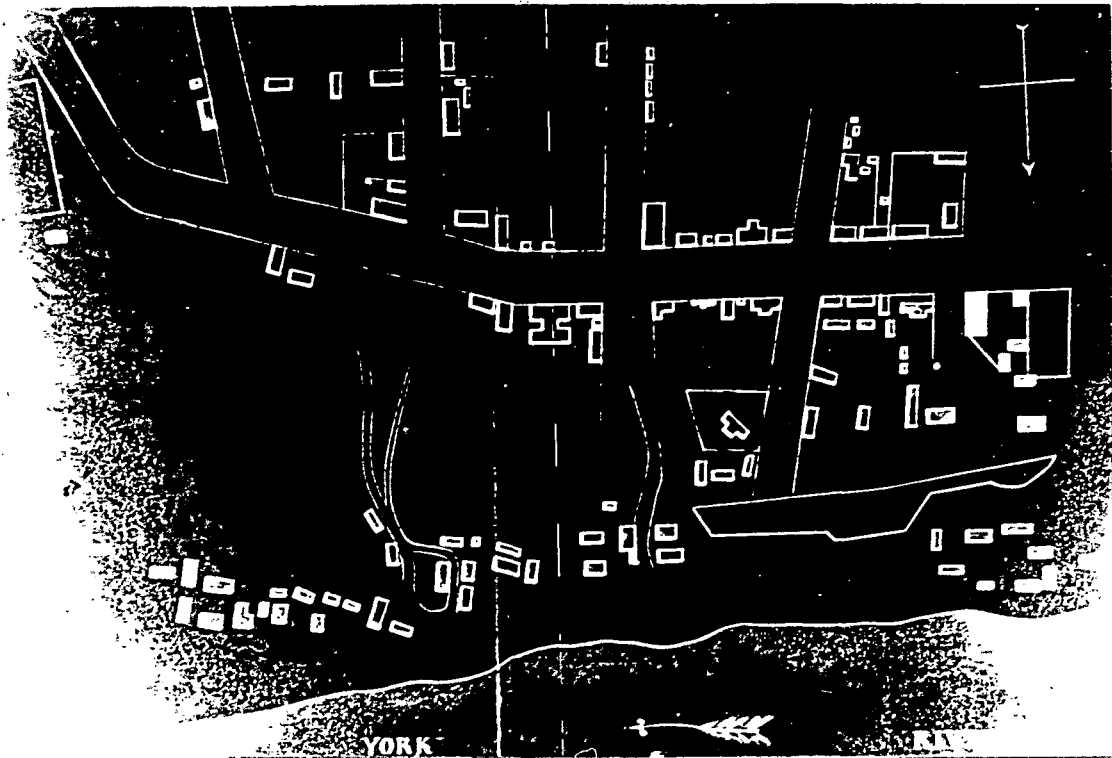
1. This was composed of deposits of shells of various types mixed with muck and clay of the once ocean bottom. The lime in the decomposing shells in composition with the clay has produced "a dense rocky substance known as marl." While wet, or under water, it is soft but sun and air exposure cause the lime to crystallize and sets up the mass in "stonelike hardness."



*A View of the Town of York VIRGINIA, from the RIVER*

John Galtwater of the HMS Swallow in 1790  
observed Yorktown from the River and is  
believed to have drawn the engraver's design  
(the last here in ink). The original sketch  
is in the Harleian Manuscripts.





Alexandre Berthier on his Billeting Plan  
of Yorktown in 1781 was careful to show  
the shape of the Church and its Angular  
Position on its Lot (circled here in ink).  
The Original Drawing is in Princeton  
University Library.

because too small and required an addition. This took the form of a wing (28' x 29') with walls 27 inches thick, converting the building into the form of a "T". This building shape is shown on a French billeting plan of Yorktown drawn in 1781. There appears to have been a steeple, too, as such is shown on British General John Graves Simcoe's water color of Yorktown sketched in 1781, as well as on a sketch of Yorktown done by a naval officer in 1755. Unfortunately no description of the church interior as it existed in the eighteenth century is known.

Grace Church still has the ancient communion service of Hampton Parish which remains in use. It consists of a chalice and flagon of hammered silver made in London in 1649, and may well be the oldest church silver in regular use in Virginia. Each piece carries the inscription: "HAMPTON PARISH IN YORK COUNTY IN VIRGINIA." It seems not of record whether the "Fifty Pounds Current Money" left by Philip Lightfoot in his will, in 1748, actually went to the purchase of another "handsom Flaggon and Challice" to be engraved with his arms, for "the Use of York Church" in "the Parish of Yorkhampton," as he instructed. (1)

The Church's bell, inscribed "York Virginia 1725" (2) is another of

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1. York County Records, Wills and Inventories, 1746-1759, p. 105. In the same will Lightfoot left forty pounds current, "in Goods," for "the Poor of Yorkhampton Parish."
  2. It also has a cross resembling the Avellon (but with the bottom leg split and its halves splayed) at each end of this inscription. Also there are these words: "Recast, Philadelphia 1882: By Hooks Smelting Company."



**Ancient Yorktown Church Silver**

(as pictured in The Old Silver of American Churches by E. Alfred Foxe. Privately Printed, 1911, Page 210 and Plate Opposite.)

The Chalice is 7  $\frac{3}{4}$ " high, the diameter of the mouth 4  $\frac{1}{4}$ " and the base 4  $\frac{3}{8}$ ". It has the London date-letter of 1649-1650 and the inscription "TRINITY PARISH IN YORK COUNTY IN VIRGINIA." The plain topped and scrolled handled flagon is 10" high. It has a 5" diameter base and a 4" diameter mouth. The London date-letter is 1649-1650 and there is a maker's mark, a T.O., with pellets above and below in a beaded circle. The inscription reads: "TRINITY PARISH IN YORK COUNTY IN VIRGINIA."

the parish's prized possessions. Its broken fragments were found in Philadelphia in 1882 where they were recast to be restored to duty in 1889. It appears now that the bell was probably not given to the Church by good Queen Anne who died in 1714. Rather it would seem that this bell now in use in the Church cupola may have been initially procured for use by York County in its courthouse steeple. At least the County made an allowance for such a bell in 1720.

The burial ground now surrounds the church and occupies much of Lot 35 on which it stands. Seemingly it has been long in use and has received many burials, very probably many more than are now marked. Evidently it was in use as early as September, 1701, for about the 15th of that month Captain Nevill, of the worship Lincoln, was buried here after a service in the church which Governor Nicholson attended. Eventually the area was enclosed for in 1784 there was specific mention of the "Church Wall," a part of which was said to stand actually on an adjacent lot.

It is of record that the York Parish Church at the turn of the seventeenth century was, perhaps, a poor church, at least in financial terms. It was for this reason that it was consolidated with Hampton Parish and again with "Merchant's hundred." By 1724 the economics of the situation had materially changed. York-Hampton Parish now supported the Reverend Mr. Fontaine, a man of Huguenot descent, rather nicely with the annual payment of 20,000 pounds of sweet-scented tobacco a year in addition to the regular fees. The glebe embraced 180 acres of land and a house which

the Parish maintained. Even though there were no public schools, a number of small schools were already established, "to teach children to read and write where a convenient number of scholars can be found." In this period it, according to Bishop Meade, was "one of the most desirable [Parishes] in the State." The Reverend Bartholomew Yates of Middlesex County, for example, would have exchanged his position for it if his salary had not been raised from 16,000 pounds to 20,000 pounds of tobacco and his glebe-house repaired and enlarged.

The Yorktown Church, like those in other localities, very probably was a social center such as that described for Virginia churches in general by G. McLaren Brydon and Mary Goodwin:

The Church with its regular weekly services occupied...a much larger place in the social life of the community. There was a time set during the service for official notices, the reading of the Governor's proclamation, new laws requiring to be brought quickly to the knowledge of the people, and other matters of importance. It was the one regular opportunity for scattered neighbors to meet and discuss neighborhood affairs and business, and, when need arose, the wider aspects of Colonial affairs and problems. (1)

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1. "The Colonial Churches in Virginia," a booklet published through the courtesy of the Joseph W. Bliley Funeral Home, Richmond, Virginia, in cooperation with the Virginia Autumn Travelogue, sponsored by the Virginia State Chamber of Commerce. n. p., n. d.

Some of Bishop William Meade's comments seem very appropriate here: "...before and for some time after the Revolution there was [In Yorktown] one of the most delightful societies anywhere to be found, consisting of Amblers, Archers, Gibbons, Jamiesons, Macauleys, Nicholsons, Griffins, Nelsons, Diggeses, Smiths, Popes, Sheilds, Fouches, &c. All of these, with the other families of the place, and from the country around, filled the Episcopal Church in York, and found a happy, undivided society."<sup>(1)</sup>

This improvement in the Parish's condition very likely was due to the quick rise of Yorktown as a key trade center. It could very well have been at this time that it became necessary to increase the size of York Church through the construction of its north wing. About 1750-1760 Yorktown alone probably had a population in excess of 2,000. A growing and active congregation plus better than average financial support of its clergy made Yorktown and York-Hampton Parish attractive. This was aided, too, by the proximity of the new college, William and Mary. The result of these various factors was the attraction of able ministers, a number of whom served, too, on the faculty at William and Mary. There was the Reverend Francis Fontaine who ministered to the Parish for twenty-seven years, as well as serving as Professor of Oriental Languages at the College for twenty of these years. Perhaps

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1. Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia (Philadelphia, c. 1857), I, 226.

the most noted was the Reverend John Camm who took over York Parish in 1749 and about the same time became Professor of Divinity at the College.

Camm took up the fight against the famous "Two Penny Act" passed by the Virginia Assembly in 1758. This Act allowed the payment of clergymen in Virginia currency at the rate of 2 pence per pound of tobacco. This meant that in lean tobacco years, as in 1758, when the price of tobacco rose, that the clergymen, when paid in currency instead of tobacco, could not profit in the increase. His opposition to the "Act" temporarily cost Camm his professorship at the College. He went to England to seek its invalidation and, for a time, succeeded in the eighteen months that he was there. He then returned to the Colony to lead the clergy in their fight in the courts, even publishing in 1763 his "Single and Distinct View of the Act vulgarly called the Two Penny Act." In Camm's own action against his vestry, two of his parishioners (Secretary Thomas Nelson and President William Nelson) refused to sit on the case since their relationship was too close to the principal. The clergy's essentially unsuccessful fight became a prolonged legal battle that did much to bring into prominence Patrick Henry, whose eloquence was instrumental in defeating a suit for damages brought by a minister in Hanover County. This controversy which blazed for a while was one of the embers that led to the growth of revolutionary sentiment in Virginia.

Camm was reinstated in his Professorship in 1763 and, in 1771, was elected to the Presidency of the College. A staunch Tory, he was removed in 1777 and it may be that he was removed as Minister of York-Hampton Parish at the same time.

Such was the political climate on the eve of the Revolution and during the early war years. It seems clear that Yorktown and York-Hampton Parish were loyal to the American cause despite Carr and others of his leanings. Many of the worshippers at York Church proved good patriots and loyal leaders, none better known than Thomas Nelson, Jr., signer of the Declaration of Independence, a war governor of Virginia, and Commander of the State Militia Forces at the Siege of Yorktown. When he died in 1788 his remains were placed in the Nelson family plot adjacent to the Church where they still rest, near those of his father, William Nelson, who long served as President of Virginia's Council, and occasionally as Acting Governor of Virginia. President Nelson, it is said, was "constant in his attendance at the ordinary service of God and the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and exhibiting unaffected and fervent devotion."<sup>(1)</sup> It is regrettable that no colonial vestry books survive to tell more of the leaders of the parish, the operation of the church, and the nature of church facilities.

The Revolutionary War brought many changes to Yorktown and the Church as well. During the war those who could fled and many did not return. As time passed, others followed suit. Agriculture grew worse, trade fell off, land values dropped and depressed conditions resulted. This, plus the loss of popularity for the Episcopal Church in general had serious meaning for

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1. Meade, Old Churches, I, 208.



the York-Hampton Parish Church. This was despite the leadership of clergymen such as the Reverend Mr. Sheild "an intelligent and pious man" who was a bit of "a Methodist" who could preach with vigor of "hell, damnation, and death."

York ceased to be the desirable parish that it had been for several generations and numbers of people in the area associated themselves with the newer denominations. It was in this period that many Episcopal churches "mouldered away" with ministers bereft, congregations small, parish lands gone, financial support negligible and prejudice rife against the Church as an English institution.

York Church, however, continued active and did not lapse in the post-war years. This was due, perhaps, to the personal piety of some of its faithful adherents, particularly to members of the Nelson family. Bishop William Meade, writing a half-century later, attributes Colonel Hugh Nelson, son of President William Nelson, with being "a kind of lay preacher" to the Episcopal families of York. He read the service and gave the sermon on alternate Sundays in the absence of a minister (every Sunday when there was no minister) and instructed as the occasion warranted.

One such occasion was the preparation of candidates for confirmation at Yorktown soon after the return of Bishop Madison from his consecration in London on September 19, 1790. On the morning of the service, Nelson assembled the group prior to going to church and lectured on the nature of the rite. This was the first such service in Yorktown, in Virginia, and

perhaps, in America. George Carrington Mason, former historiographer of the Diocese of Southern Virginia, has concluded that: "Since the rite of confirmation can only be performed by a bishop and the English Church in the colonies had been headed by the Bishop of London, who never came to this country during the colonial period, this was almost certainly the first Anglican confirmation service in America, as is stated in the memorial tablet on this [Church] building ... [which] is believed to be the third oldest church building in Virginia, being exceeded in age only by Merchant's Hope Church in Prince George County and by the Old Brick Church in Isle of Wight County ..."(1)

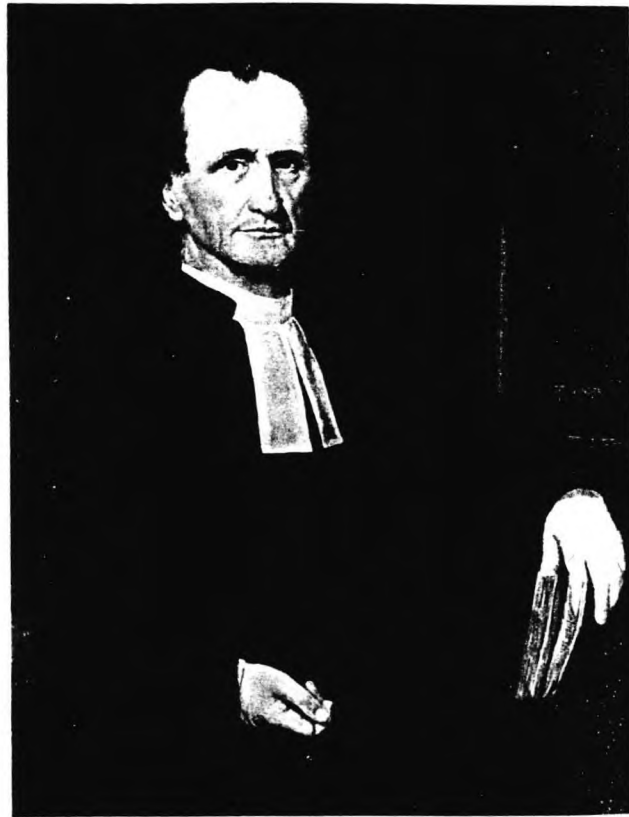
Physically, York Church suffered severely from the damages of war during the Siege of Yorktown in 1781. Cornwallis found it useful as a magazine and "the pews & windows of the Church [were] all broke and destroyed" to the extent of 150%. (2) The Church seems to have escaped the full destructive force of allied gunners during the bombardment from October 9 to October 17. Later, however, in 1814, it was consumed by fire as a general conflagration began, accidentally, on the waterfront below and swept up into the town area above the hill. The Church along with other structures in the vicinity, suffered heavily. Only its massive, durable marl walls were left.

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1. From an address given by Mr. Mason at Grace Church in Yorktown, Va., on October 19, 1947, entitled "Early History of Grace Church and York-Hampton Parish, Virginia." Transcript in files of Colonial National Historical Park.
  2. York County Records, "Claims for Losses of York County Citizens in British Invasion of 1781", p. 79.

Although services continued from time to time in Yorktown, often in the courthouse but also in the Nelson House and elsewhere, the Church building appears not to have been rebuilt for some 35 years. Only its outer walls stood stark and silent. In 1841 there was a subscription begun "to have the shell of this ancient building once more used as a place of worship." A part of this effort, not destined to succeed, was to make it a "place of worship free for Christians of all denominations."

It was not until 1848 that rebuilding would be achieved. In that year a new subscription had reached \$500 but another thousand, it was estimated, was needed. The contract when let called for "the Church to be built on its former site and partly on the old walls." Evidently it was decided to forego the north wing and to rebuild in the original form. It is thought, too, that the present stucco exterior finish may have been added at this time, some say to obliterate the ugly scars and stains of the 1814 fire.

The work was completed by the fall and in September "the new church at York" was consecrated by Bishop William Meade. Evidently the energetic young rector, The Rev. Charles Minnegerode, had done a good job in getting financial aid and in seeing the work completed. It would appear that the new Grace Church came into use at this time, its first known application being in a Diocesan report in 1849. Earlier the most likely designation appears to have been York Church, although Yorkhampton (York-Hampton) Church, or the Church at Yorktown are also likely candidates as well.



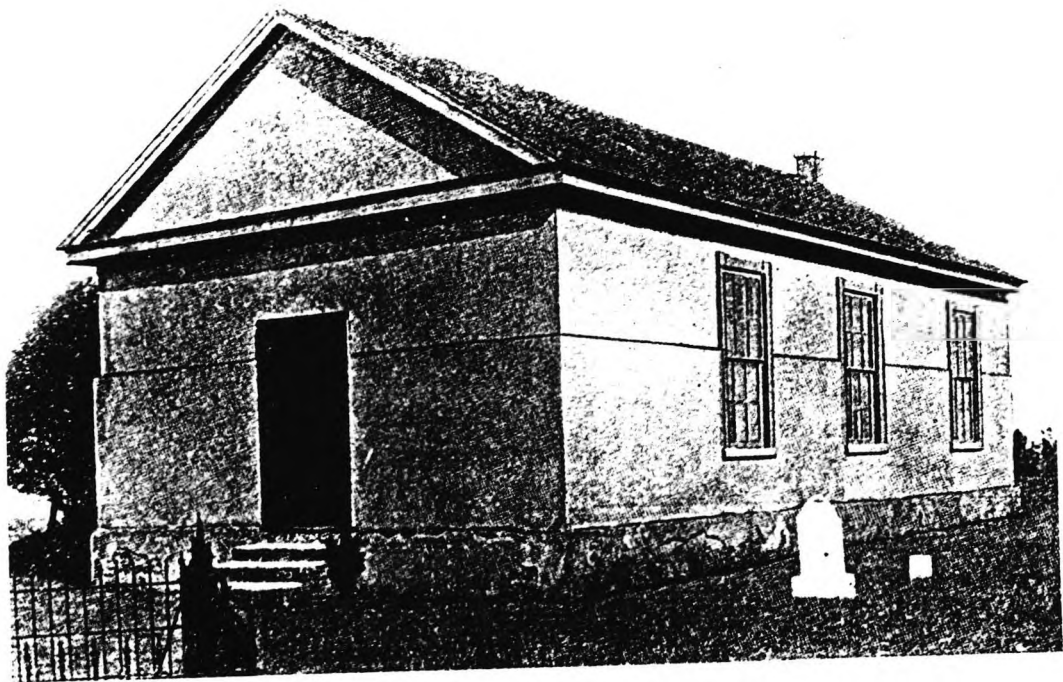
The Rev. Charles Minnigrode was a Key Figure in the Rebuilding of Grace Church and in its Restoration to Active Service in 1844. (From the Fort Monroe Casemate Museum After a Photograph loaned by Miss Elizabeth Wright Weddell (Richmond, Va.))

During the Federal occupation of Yorktown in the Civil War the church was again used for military purposes. A signal tower was erected on its roof, the building was partly dismantled and the grounds robbed of its colonial churchyard wall. These damages were not as wholly devastating as earlier ones, however, and seemingly the church was soon back in service. It was reported in 1907 that: "After the [Civil] war the late Dr. [L. B.] Wharton was very much interested in the restoration of the church and worked hard to keep the building from falling into the hands of some other denomination which would gladly have paid for repairing it for the sake of possessing a historical church."<sup>(1)</sup>

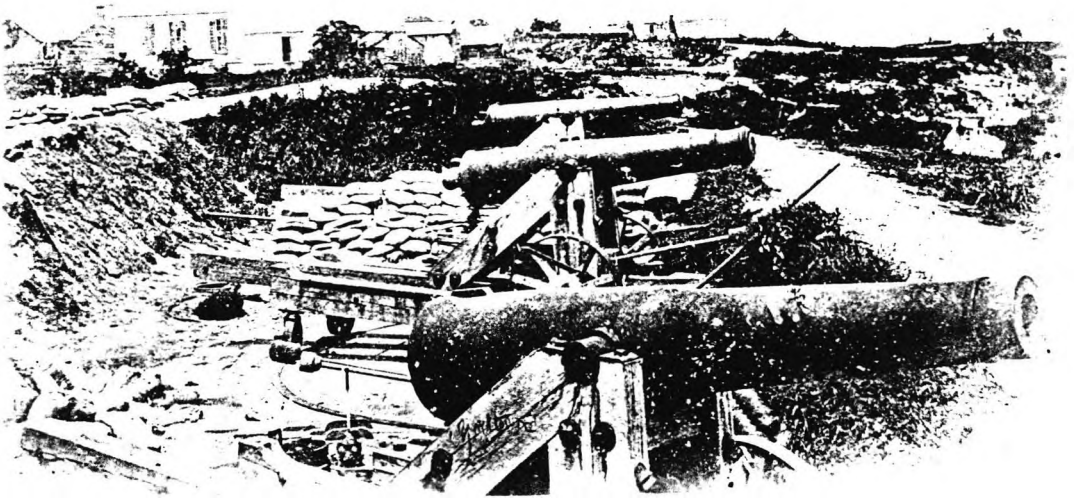
The York-Hampton parishoners, though small in number, remained loyal and persistent and kept their parish church. Very slowly the Grace Church congregation developed strength and all the while the church was active. Eventually this manifested itself in improvements in the building. In the 1920's, there were changes culminating in considerable work which included a belfry, a doorway and a small rose window. Five years later the churchyard wall was rebuilt in colonial style on its original alignment. Alterations on the interior were designed to improve its attractiveness, although most changes were not made in the manner of strict eighteenth-century restoration. In this period, too, and a little later, some repairs to

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1. Mary D. Micou, "The Colonial Churches of York County, Virginia" in W. M. Clark (ed.) Colonial Churches, A Series of Sketches of Churches in the Original Colony of Virginia. (Richmond, 1907), pp. 245-246.



Grace Church as it appeared  
about 1900



The Cannon at Fort St. Michael, Mich.  
Photograph



From a Feature Picture Story, "Les Fetes Du  
Centenaire de l'Independence De Etats-Unis,"  
in which the Church is Given as "L'eglise,"  
in the French Periodical L'Illustration,  
November 12, 1891.



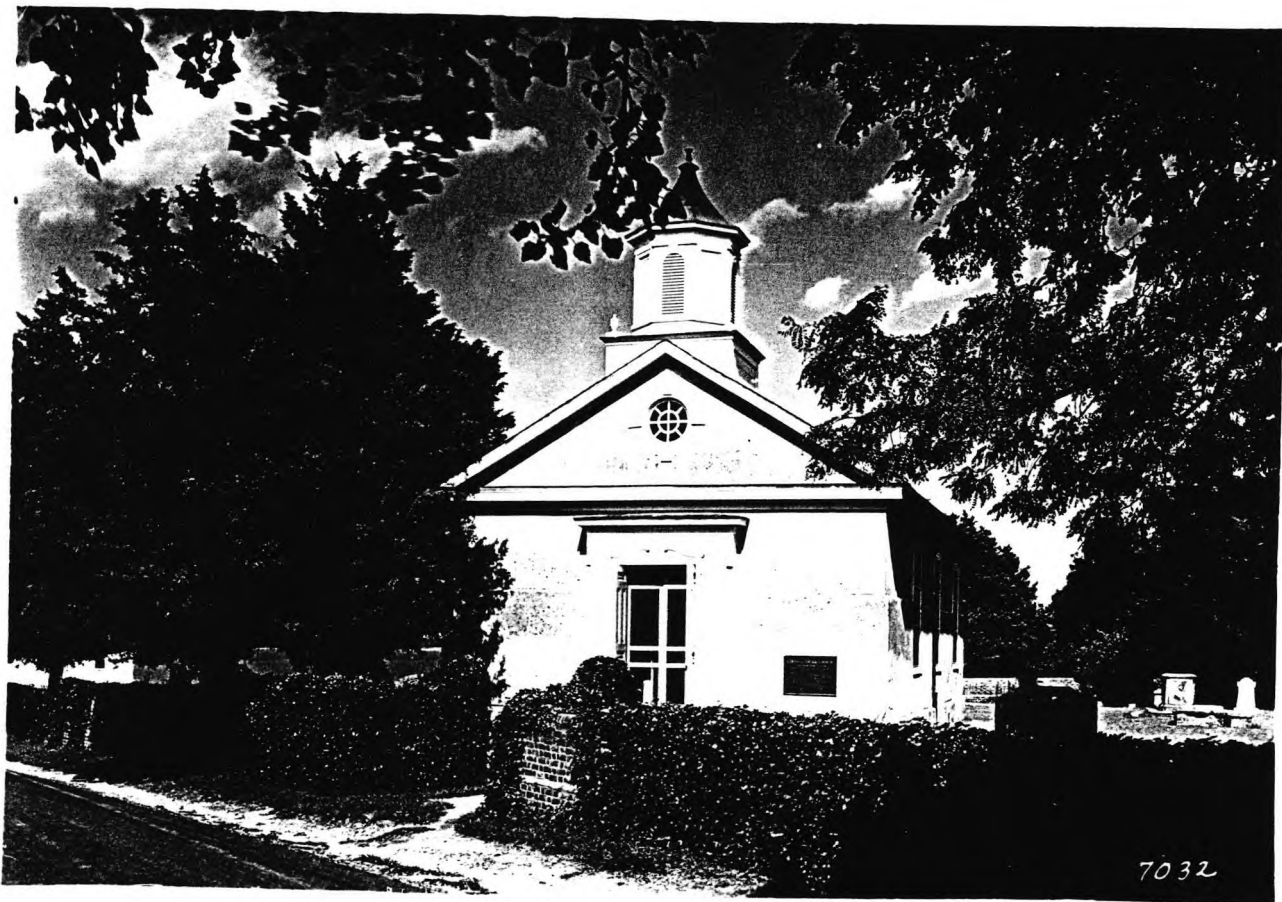
(1)

churchyard tombs were made and the gravestones of Elizabeth and George Read were moved here from the old cemetery on Buckner Street, found when the street was being regraded. Colonel George Read had married Elizabeth, the daughter of Nicolas Martiau, the first to live on the Yorktown site. Their son, Benjamin Read, sold 50 acres of his grandfather's patent to allow the survey of Yorktown in 1691.

It was not until 1947 that a serious and detailed study of the colonial appearance of Grace Church was launched and this was largely the result of funds made available for the purpose by Mrs. Arthur Kelly Evans, a friend of the church. The Vestry then designated a restoration committee. Research got underway, the counsel of the National Park Service staff in Yorktown was sought and the services of an architect were secured in the person of J. Everette Fauber, Jr., of Lynchburg, Virginia.

Systematic archeological exploration was undertaken by the Church in April and May, 1947, under the supervision of National Park Service Regional Archeologist J. C. Harrington. This led to some very important conclusions. At the end of the project, it was clear that the present church rests on, and includes much, original work and retains the initial measurements of the building. It was clear from the findings that the north wing, the foundations of which continue visible above

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1. About 1857, Bishop Meade reported that the only legible tombs, among the many in the churchyard, were those of Scotch Tom Nelson, President William Nelson (1772), Abraham Archer (1752), Susannah Reignolds (1768) and Jane Frank (1753). Old Churches, I, 215.



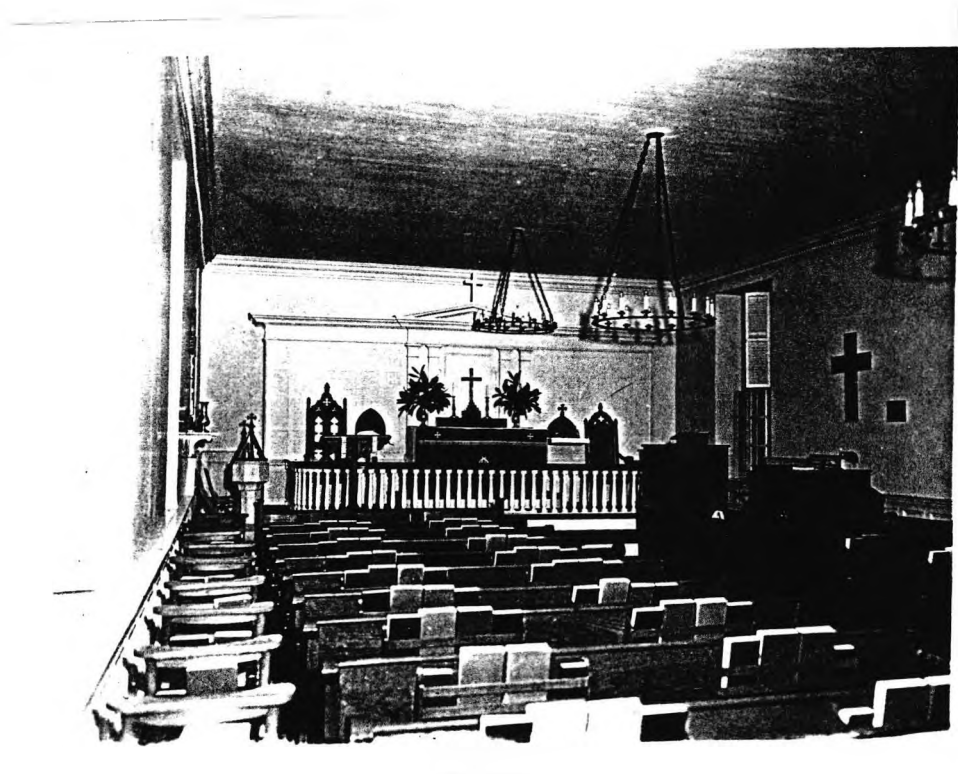
The Church as it Appeared  
in the 1930's and as it  
Looks Today From the Front

(the)

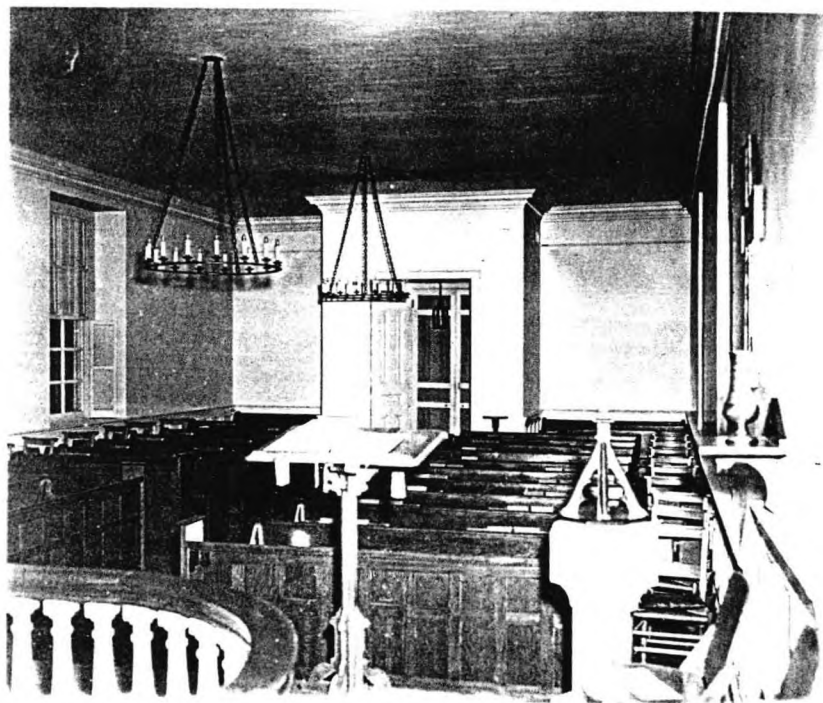
ground, was an eighteenth-century addition which was not rebuilt, as was the main body of the church, in the mid-nineteenth century. It became equally clear that there had been no additions to the structure except this north wing. There was archeological evidence, too, regarding the north wing entrance, floor elevation, plastered walls, and such. Helpful objects included window glass, iron nails, plaster and wooden nailing blocks at the north entrance. There was evidence, as would be expected, of inside burials in the wing but these were not investigated.

Architect Fauber at the same time launched an investigation of other sources that might aid in the accumulation of descriptive data. In this he was aided by members of the staff of Colonial National Historical Park and especially by Mr. George Carrington Mason. At an early stage, areas of the relatively new stucco cover over the exterior of the church were stripped away in search of architectural detail. There were rewards. Mr. Fauber could report hopefully in May 1947 that:

" ... we have, obviously, definitely located the original south doorway and the original large window in the east end of the building. I feel, too, that we have essentially established the fact that whatever the size and shape of the original windows, they were, doubtless, located in the area now occupied by the modern large windows. Wherever we have not found any definite and concrete evidence to bear this out, I still feel fairly certain



The Interior of Grace Church  
Looking Toward the Altar



The Interior of Grace Church  
-- A View Toward the Entrance

that the original Church had a gallery in the west end. I believe that we have even further substantiated the fact that the north wing was not a part of the original structure by removing stucco at the junction of the north wing walls and the main building."<sup>(1)</sup>

The project was advanced to the point that Mr. Fauber prepared preliminary plans for the reconstruction project. These included a rendered elevation of the exterior as well as an interior view to show how the building may have looked in the eighteenth century at the point of its maximum size. These preliminary interpretive sketches included all of the data seen in the existing structure, all archeological findings, and all detail from documentary source materials plus customary practices and usages known to Colonial Virginia. These were a part of the architect's report made on June 30, 1947. Mr. Fauber felt then that "If further research is as lucrative as has been the research up to this point, we will be very fortunate and will be able to, perhaps, very accurately restore this unusual building to its former beauty and glory, and so arrange the building that it may continue to be useful as the active Parish Church of

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1. Letter to Superintendent W. A. Mummel, Colonial National Historical Park, dated the 28th, in Park file 740-02.3, Research: Grace Church.



The Walls of the North Wing of the Church,  
Normally Visible on the Ground were Fully  
exposed During a Study of the Building in  
1947.



During an Architectural Study of the Church in 1947 Strips of the Modern Stone were Removed From the Old Wall Walls. Evidence of a Former Doorway was Found Here on the South Side Between the Windows on the Right.





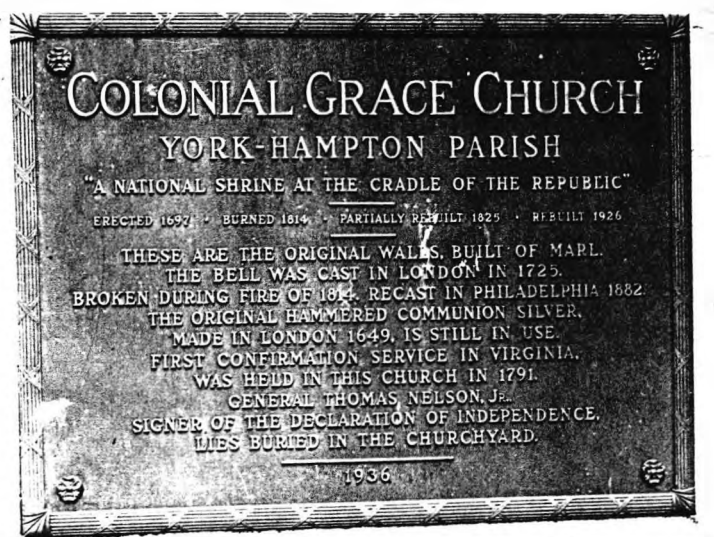
Grace Church as Viewed from the Rear Looking  
Toward the Northwest. Three Generations of  
Belmont Family Tomb are in the Foreground --  
"Brook Hill," President William and Governor  
Thomas Belmont. The latter was a signer of  
The Declaration of Independence and Commanded  
Virginia Militia Troops During the Siege of  
Yorktown in 1781.

York-Hampton Parish."<sup>(1)</sup> The restoration project lapsed here and did not go beyond the study and estimates stage.

The most recent change in the physical appearance of Grace Church was the addition of a "Utility Wing" carried out much in the manner succinctly given in a press notice of June 23, 1951 dateline: "The vestry of Grace Church, Yorktown will let contracts soon to add a utility wing to the historic colonial church. Included in the wing will be two Sunday School rooms, a vestry room and wardrobe and a heating plant for the entire building. The outward structure will be finished to match the old church and will adjoin the rear wall in order not to change the architectural appearance of the much-admired building."<sup>(2)</sup>

In this form and with an increased number of parishoners, today Grace Church continues to serve its parish and the community at large. It adds immeasurably, too, to the historic scene of which it is an integral part. To the end that this role will continue, the Church Trustees, acting on behalf of the Vestry, on May 28, 1958, consummated an agreement granting the United States of America "a right of use or easement" with mutually agreed control for "the preservation of the edifice and grounds of the said Grace Episcopal Church in their historical character". In the deed it is related that "it is in the public interest to preserve for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States this landmark which is recognized as possessing national significance through its close association with the founding and growth of our Country, as well as its role in two great wars." It is assured, however, "that the said Church and its grounds designated as Yorktown Lots 35 and 41" shall continue to be used "for divine worship, for the conduct of religious ceremonies, and for other activities usually incident to the conduct of church affairs, and for the burial of the dead."<sup>(3)</sup>

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1. "Periodic Research Report (To June 30, 1947) Restoration of York-Hampton Church, Yorktown, Virginia," p. 20. There is a copy in the files of Colonial National Historical Park.
  2. Newport News, Va., Daily Press, Sunday, June 24, 1951.
  3. This agreement was a part of a deed effecting property exchange between the Church and the United States. This involved the transfer of Yorktown Lot No. 72 from the Church to the United States and the transfer of "part of Lots 34 and 40" from the United States to the Church. (York County Records, Deed Book, No. 124, pp. 119 ff.)



This Tablet is Affixed to the Front Wall of the Church where it was Placed in 1936. More Recent Research Seem to Establish that the Church was not Partially Rebuilt in 1825, but that this Came a Generation Later.

APPENDIX I:

Ministers of York-Hampton Church  
and Parish (A Partial List)

Fouace, Stephen	(1691-1702)
Slaughter, Mr.	(1701- )
Goodwin,	(1714- )
Fontaine, Francis	(1722-1749)
Cann, John	(1749-1777)
Shield, Samuel	(c. 1786-1789)
Henderson, James	(1793- )
Scott,	( )
Brockenbough,	( )
Andrews, Robert	( )
Minnegerode, Charles E.	(1847-1849)
Withers, Edward	(1849- )
Ambler, Thomas	( )
Burch, F. M.	( )
Hundley, A. Y.	( )
Wharton, Dr. L. B.	( )
Lee, William B.	(1877-1899)
Kurtz, Floyd	(1899-1901)
Lee, William B.	(1902-1912)
Jones, E. Ruffin	(1913-1922)
Goodwin, W. A. R.	(1923-1927)
Bentley, John B.	(1927-1930)
Laird, William	(1930-1932)

Purden, Col. Alfred A.	(1933-1936)
Shewell, John Letcher	(1937-1940)
Craighill, Francis H.	(1940-1952)
LaBarr, George P.	(1940-1942 Vicar)
Alley, Alfred L.	(1943-1946 Vicar)
Whittman, Robert. S. S.	(1946-1949 Vicar)
Barton III, George L.	(1949-1950 Lay Vicar)
Zabriskie, C. A.	(1951-1952 Lay Vicar)
Zabriskie, C. A.	(1953-1956)
Davis, Gordon B.	(1957- )

APPENDIX II:

YORK-HAMPTON PARISH - 1724

It is fortunate that at least one parish report written in Colonial days has been preserved. This, by The Reverend Francis Fontaine, "Minister of York-Hampton Parish," is dated May 14, 1724. He reported that he had come to Virginia in May 1721 and until November, 1722, when he moved to the York-Hampton "cure," he had served at St. Margaret's Parish in King William County. He was a duly ordained minister having been licensed by "Dr. Robinson, late Lord Bishop of London, to officiate as a missionary in the Government of Virginia." He had been minister in the parish, where he resided, for a year and seven months "without induction."

He described his parish as 20 miles long and four miles broad, about nine square miles. It included about 200 families and two churches "one in York Town" and the other about eight miles from it. At "York Town" there were some 60 communicants and about 20 at the other church. Some "two thirds of my parishioners ...were commonly present at Divine Service." His annual income was £150 growing out of 20,000 pounds of "Sweet Scented Tobacco" and a "few perquisites." The latter included five shillings for each marriage for which the "Banns" were published, 20 shillings for "a marriage by license" and 40 shillings for "a funeral Sermon." He had "a Glebe House and a Glebe" of some 180 acres. He lived in the house, which had "been lately repaired, at the expense of the Parish," and occupied the

land himself. There were no public schools in the Parish and no parochial library. However "here and there small schools ...had been set up, to teach children to read and write, where a number of scholars ...could be found."

In regard to service, he read prayers and preached every Sunday - "in the morning at one of my Churches and in the afternoon at the other, as also on Christmas Day and Good Friday." The "Sacrament of the Lord's Supper" was administered eight times in the year, four times (Easter, Whitsunday, Michaelmas and Christmas) at each church. He set aside every Sunday afternoon in Lent as well as 10 other Sundays "in the afternoon immediately after Evening prayer for the public catechising the youth, servants and slaves in my Parish." He felt that there were no "Infidels" in his Parish "except Slaves." "I exhort their Master to send them to me, to be instructed...in order to their conversion I have set apart every Saturday in the afternoon and catechise them at my Globe House." He felt that all things were duly "disposed and provided" in both his churches "for the decent and orderly performance of divine service" except "surplices are wanting." "But the Vestry will soon provide them."

Drawn from "Queries to be answered by every Minister, 1724" in the Papers Relating to the History of the Church in Virginia, 1650-1776 edited by William Stevens Perry. Privately printed, 1870. Pages 201-3.

APPENDIX III:

An Attempt at Rebuilding--1841

Although the attempt to rebuild the York Town Church in 1841 ended in failure the material that follows is of interest. It is taken from papers in the hands of Mrs. John J. Ballentine (Dogue, Virginia). These same papers also reveal that on June 18, 1832 William Harkins and Thomas G. Tinsley were authorized "to find church Plate of York Hampton Parish and dispose of same to the best advantage." A decade earlier (July 27, 1822) John R. West had been "appointed to look after the vestry books of York Hampton Parish."

"An Appeal to the Liberal and the Pious!

(Noted as from the [Richmond] Enquirer of May 26, 1841 [?])

"Our attention has been called by a respectable correspondent to the following communication and we in turn call the attention of our readers to the proposition it conveys. Our own scrip is almost empty and the might we would contribute to the object is too small to be counted, but there are others in the land, to whom a gracious Providence has awarded so many of the good things of this life, who might give from their garners enough to advance the object which is proposed. To them this appeal, we hope, may not be made in vain.

Communicated

"Old York Town

"The inhabitants of York Town in Virginia, since the great conflagration which took place there in March, 1814 during the late war, and by which among many other buildings including its Court house, the ancient Episcopal Church



was consumed, having been without a convenient house for religious purposes, are desirous, and indeed are making efforts among themselves, to rebuild upon the venerable but delapidated walls which remain standing, a suitable place for that purpose. The small number of residents, and their comparative poverty limiting their means, an invitation is hereby given to the public at large to make contributions.

"It is the wish and design of the citizens of the town, and contributions are solicited upon the condition, that when the building may be completed, the doors of the church shall be thrown open to all Ministers of the Gospel of good and irreproachable character, without any distinction whatever being manifested in favour of any particular sect or denomination.

"When the Church at York Town was first about to be built, nearly one hundred and fifty years ago, the Hon. Francis Nicholson, the Governor of Maryland, contributed the liberal sum of twenty pounds sterling in aid of the object--and who now, particularly among Virginians, will withhold his one or his ten, or, among the more affluent, even his hundred dollars, for a similar purpose? Especially, too, when he reflects, that the bones of his ancestors, in many instances without his knowledge, may be buried within the broken down walls of the present graveyard, now nearly grown over with weeds!

Contributions, and remittances by mail, may be made to Samuel Sheild, clerk of the Court residing at York Town, or to Robert Anderson of Williamsburg, one of the Overseers of the Poor."

A Subscription:

"The old church in York Town

"The undersigned, anxious to have the Shell of this Ancient building  
Once more reared as a place of worship free for Christians of all  
denominations hereby agree to pay to Baker P. Lee (on order) who is  
Treasurer and who with William Nelson, William Henry Sheild and Nathaniel  
Taylor are made Trustees to let out, manage and Superintend the work, the  
Sum affixed to each of our names On or before the first day of December  
next. And the said Trustees, or a Majority of them, are hereby authorized to  
...[grant?]

preferences to applicants to preach, avoiding as well as they can any  
chasing &c. And if the Subscriptions will justify it the Said Trustees  
are desired to have the building so constructed as to afford a School Room  
or rooms in the upper Story. Giving power to the Trustees to Supply any  
Vacancy in Office of Treasurer or Trustee. 3rd April 1841"

Subscriptions, at one point, totalled \$585.00 and some 42 subscribers  
are known by name:

"York Church. S. Sheild's list":

Samuel Sheild	\$20.00	Robert H. Armistead	\$ 5.00
William Nelson	50.00	John M. Gregory	5.00
Nathaniel Taylor	5.00	John M. King	5.00
William C. Powell	5.00	Richard R. Garrett	20.00
Thomas Newman	20.00	Allen Chapman	20.00
Baker P. Lee	20.00	F. B. Power	5.00

Warner Williams (in work)	\$ 3.00	William M. Pettitt	\$20.00
Cary Wilkinson	5.00	Robert Anderson	50.00
John R. West	5.00	William Rowelle	5.00
Garvin L. C. Salter	20.00	William Howard	10.00
I. R. Nottingham	5.00	Thomas C. Russell	20.00
Charles Piatt [or Platt]	5.00	Thomas P. Chisman	5.00
Richard Hewill	5.00	John I. Jones	10.00
William S. Malecote	5.00	Robert McCandish	30.00
Lewis Hogg, Sr.	5.00	George W. Southall	20.00
William H. Sheild	20.00	Moreau Bowers	10.00
Bailey T. Elliott	2.00	P. P. Hays	5.00
Thomas Wynne	20.00	John B. Hunt	10.00
- -	5.00	Robert F. Waller	30.00
			<u>\$510.00</u>

Additional "Subscriptions for Rebuilding the Old Church at York Town, Virginia," which were "to be paid in the course of the year, or when hereafter called for," included:

L. F. Bright	\$20.00	William Tabb	\$ 5.00
James H. Sheild	5.00	W. Macfarland	10.00 (paid)
L. I. Bowden	5.00	"In a letter by mail.	
		Anonymous"	30.00
			<u>\$75.00</u>