

DATA SHEET

PH0698610

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

FEB 5 1979

DATE ENTERED

MAR 28 1979

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Grace Episcopal Church

AND/OR COMMON

Grace Church

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 510 Ferdinand Street

CITY, TOWN

St. Francisville

VICINITY OF

8th - Gillis Long

STATE

Louisiana

CODE
22

--NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

COUNTY
West FelicianaCODE
125**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Grace Episcopal Church

STREET & NUMBER

510 Ferdinand Street

CITY, TOWN

St. Francisville

VICINITY OF

STATE

Louisiana

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE, WEST FELICIANA PARISH COURTHOUSE
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

St. Francisville

STATE

Louisiana

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Louisiana Historic Sites Survey

DATE

1978

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

State Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN

Baton Rouge

STATE

Louisiana

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Grace Episcopal Church is set back from Ferdinand Street on a large lot generously planted with large live oak trees on the outskirts of St. Francisville. The neighborhood has an open low-scale character with a number of residences and the parish courthouse. The visual relationship between the town and the church is essentially one of isolation because the church is set well back from the street and surrounded by live oak trees. The boundaries of the nominated area were chosen to encompass the land that the church has held since its construction, this acreage remaining intact.

The building itself has a 5-bay, open hall plan (free of columns), with a central entrance vestibule and a small transept. A square tower occurs at the west end of the transept. At the east end is a small wing which contains ranks of organ pipes. Beyond the transept is the chancel, which has a small sacristy off to the side.

The church is constructed of red brick laid up in common bond, with buttresses which are doubled to support in two directions at most of the corners. The buttresses at the corners of the entrance vestibule are exceptions to this, being diagonally set. All windows and doors are set within lancets. There are no vaults in the building. The roofs are supported by wood trusses.

The exterior of the church is characterized by a handsome and pronounced rhythm, made up of buttresses which protrude sharply above the cornice line, and heavy hood molded lancet openings. This is true of the entire church except for the entrance facade, where a much greater proportional area of brick wall gives a comparatively blank appearance. The two buttresses on the entrance vestibule do not protrude above the cornice line the way the rest of the buttresses on the building do. This makes the entrance facade seem less visually active than the rest of the building. This lack of unity between the facade and the rest of the exterior suggests the work of a builder rather than a trained architect.

Moreover, there is not a great deal of unity between the exterior and the interior. The exterior resembles an English Gothic parish church with elements such as battlements, pinnacled buttresses, lancet windows connected by string courses, a rose window and a side tower. Although the interior has 3-part pointed arches leading to the chancel, the ceiling of the nave is treated in a non-gothic way, with four large panels and Rococo Revival medallions.

A noteworthy feature is the church's fine stained glass windows. The church is encompassed on three sides by graveyards which are enclosed by cast iron fences. The only intrusion on the property is a small parking lot on the site of the old parsonage.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES Built 1858-1860

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Charles Nevitt Gibbons, Builder

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

There are certainly no more than a dozen examples of mid-nineteenth century Gothic Revival church architecture in Louisiana. Of these, Grace Episcopal Church is one of the largest and one of the finest. This can be seen in its graceful combination of lancets and buttresses, in its well proportioned side tower, and in its fine stained-glass windows. Grace Church is probably unique in the state in having the tower appended to a transept arm instead of the front. Unlike a number of other examples, Grace Church continues to stand in its original naturalistic setting. This is due to visual isolation by trees from the growth and change in the surrounding neighborhood.

The Parish of Grace Church, St. Francisville, is the second oldest parish in the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana. In March 1827, a parish was organized at St. Francisville and an Act of Incorporation from the Legislature of the State of Louisiana was applied for in behalf of the Vestrymen, their successors, and all other individuals who should subscribe to the church. A building committee signed a contract to construct a church building.^{1,2,3} The original plot of ground, three hundred feet square, was acquired in 1827.⁴

In February 1828 or 1829 the Charter granted by the Legislature was promulgated. The official title was "The Rector, Church Wardens, and Vestrymen of Grace Church of the Parish of West Feliciana in Communion with the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America."^{5,6,7} The first church building was consecrated by Bishop Kemper on February 15, 1838, and this Parish was one of three uniting in the Convention of April 28, 1838 that organized the Diocese of Louisiana.^{8,9}

In 1838, 1852, 1856, and 1858 the Parish acquired property for a larger churchyard. In 1855, the church grounds were enclosed and improved at an expense of \$6,000.^{10,11,12,13,14} It is said that the live oak trees were planted at this time, and the first sections of an iron fence of adequate strength and great beauty were installed.¹⁵ In 1858, many handsome memorials to the dead were placed on these grounds, noted already for their great natural beauty.^{16,17}

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Carter, Hodding, and Carter, Betty Werlein, So Great A Good, Sewanee, Tennessee University Press, 1955.

Duncan, Herman Cope, Diocese of Louisiana: Some of Its History 1838-1888, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1888.

Grace Church, St. Francisville, Louisiana Record, January 1, 1862, and that started started in 1885, located in the Church Office, St. Francisville, Louisiana.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 9 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 5	6, 5, 4, 3, 4, 5	34, 0, 5, 6, 7, 5	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries encompass a rectangle fronting onto Ferdinand Street 300 ft. wide and 550 ft. deep.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Margaret Plettinger and Florence Wright

ORGANIZATION

DATE

August 1978

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

(504) 635-3311 ext. 224

CITY OR TOWN

St. Francisville

STATE

Louisiana

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

SIGNATURE

[Handwritten Signature]

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

1-9-79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

[Handwritten Signature]

DATE 3-20-79

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

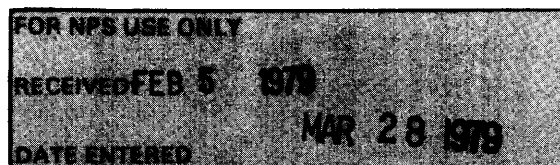
[Handwritten Signature]

DATE 3-27-79

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**



Grace Episcopal Church

CONTINUATION SHEET 1

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

8. Significance (cont'd)

And, in 1858, it was determined to erect a new church building of enlarged dimensions and in a chaste and beautiful style. The building committee and enigneer were fully satisfied and well pleased with the architecture and building of the church by a Mr. Charles N. Gibbons. Work on this, the present church building, was commenced in 1858. On June 9, 1858, Bishop Leonidas K. Polk, first Episcopal Bishop of the Diocese of Louisiana, laid the cornerstone of the new church near the place where the first church building stood.^{18,19,20,21}

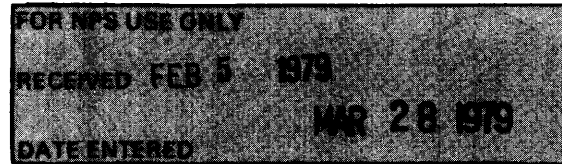
According to tradition, the beautiful stained glass altar window and rose window over the entrance door are European and the stained and painted glass side windows represent this country's early attempts at glass-making. But there is no documentation for this.

The church building was completed in 1860 and the first services in the building were held on Sunday, April 29, 1860.²² The funds for building the church were raised by a subscription among the congregation, and while it is not known what the building cost, one parishioner subscribed \$5,000 toward the building.²³ After the completion of the church building in 1860, presents were made to the church including the Pilcher two-manual tracker action pipe organ and the chandelier.²⁴

Then came the Civil War. It was in this church building that in May, 1861, the Diocesan Convention voted that the Diocese of Louisiana was no longer part of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States.²⁵ But it is also in this churchyard that a young officer in charge of the Federal steamer Albatross was buried in 1863. The officer had asked that he be buried on shore with Masonic ceremonies, so under a flag of truce a group of men from the Albatross made contact with a past master of Feliciana Lodge, and Masonic ceremonies were held over the grave which was prepared in Grace Church cemetery.^{26,27} This grave is marked with a flat marble slab with the Masonic emblem engraved into it.

When the Federal troops seized Baton Rouge, they made it a center from which their gunboats ranged north and south. Guerillas at Bayou Sara sniped at the boats from the banks, and in retaliation Bayou Sara and St. Francisville were bombarded. The new Grace Church building was sighted and bombarded. One shell entering at the front corner of the building dislodged large masses of brickwork and landed in the chancel, but failed to detonate. Had this shell exploded, it would have all but destroyed the church. Another shell passed through the organ. After this incident, services in the church were impossible.^{28,29}

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Grace Episcopal Church

CONTINUATION SHEET 2

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 3

8. Significance (cont'd)

On Easter Day in 1866, the church building having been partially restored, services in it were resumed.^{30,31}

In 1880, the outside of the church was put in thorough repair.^{32,33} It is said that the Bohemian glass door leading outside at the rear of the church was given by a remorseful gunner from one of the Federal gunboats which shelled the church during the Civil War.

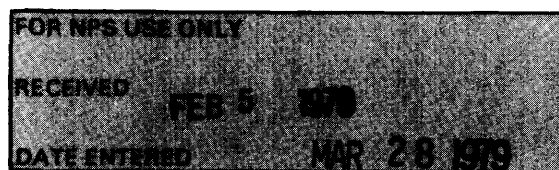
In 1883, a bequest of \$12,000 for restoration of the church was received.³⁴ As this money became available, restoration on the church edifice continued, and the building was restored to its original condition.³⁵ In 1886 and 1887, the organ was rebuilt; money was given for the completion of the iron fence around the churchyard; the church was furnished with a pair of gothic chairs for the chancel; and a marble altar cross (now located at the baptismal font) was given.^{36,37,38}

On May 11, 1893, the church building having been put in complete repair and all debts paid, the consecration of the building took place. This had been originally set for the year 1861 and thus was delayed thirty-two years by the destruction and disaster due to the Civil War.³⁹

In 1905, electric lights were put in the building and in 1932, the churchyard was enlarged to its present boundaries and fenced by relocating some sections of the iron fence.⁴⁰ The chancel was altered by installation of choir stalls in 1933. The present altar was a gift in 1949, and the brass seven branch candle sticks on either side together with the brass cross on the altar are among the many memorials given over the years.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**



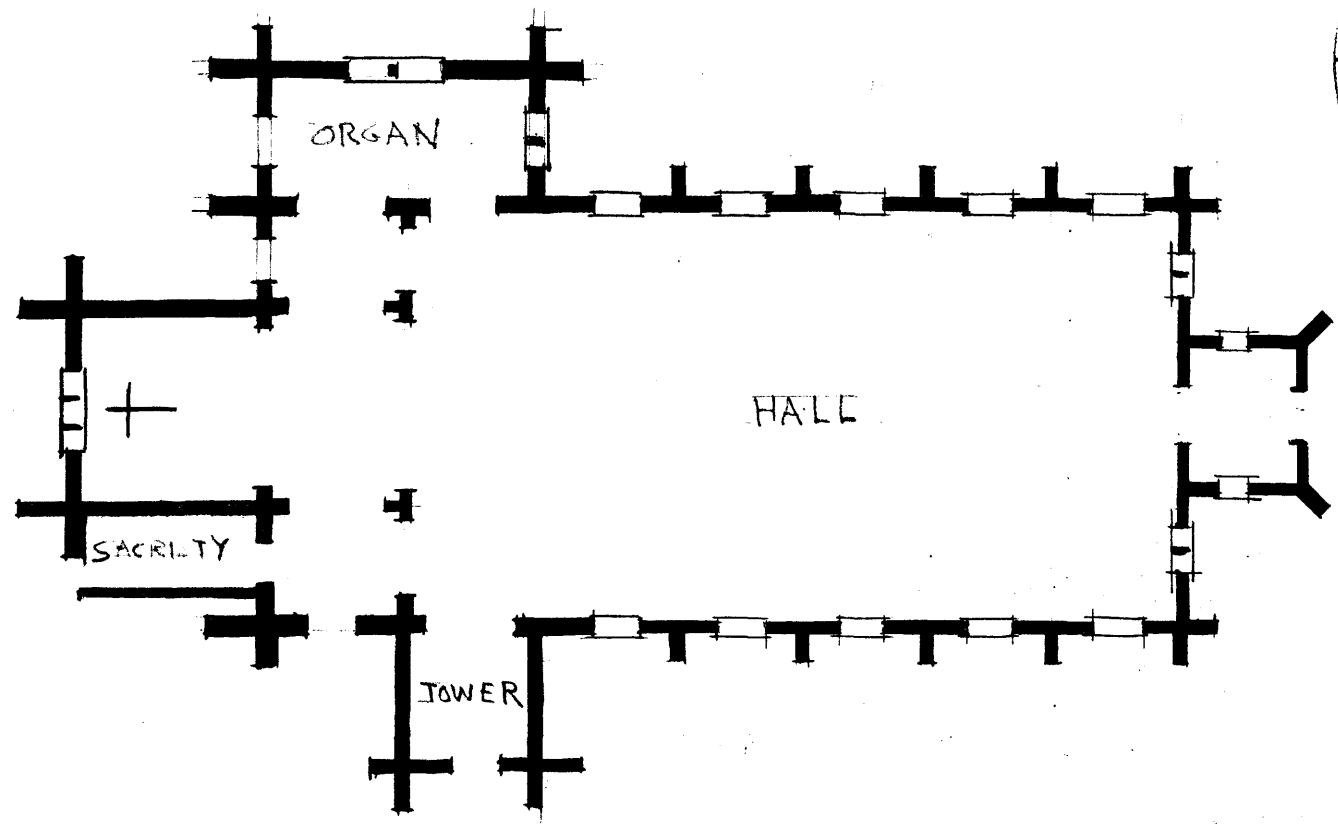
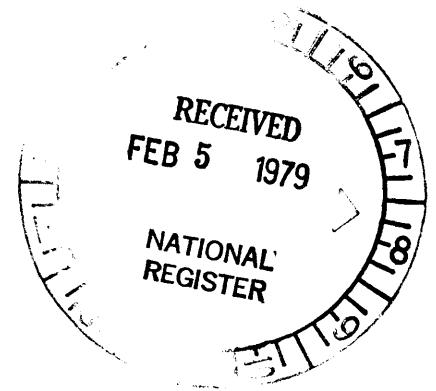
CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 4

NOTES

1. Carter, Hodding and Carter, Betty Werlein, So Great A Good, (hereinafter referred to as Carter, pp. 24,25.
2. Duncan, Herman Cope, Diocese of Louisiana: Some of Its History, 1838-1888, (hereinafter referred to as Duncan, p. 68.
3. Grace Church, St. Francisville, Louisiana Record, January 1, 1862, (hereinafter referred to as Church Record No. 1, p. 6.
4. West Feliciana Parish Conveyance Record C, p. 26.
5. Carter, p. 25.
6. Duncan, p. 69, and Church Record No. 1, p. 9.
7. Grace Church, St. Francisville, Louisiana Record started 1885, (hereinafter referred to as Church Record No. 2., p. 6.
8. Duncan, p. 70.
9. Church Record No. 1, p. 11; Church Record No. 2, p. 6.
10. West Feliciana Parish Conveyance Record F, pp. 359, 360.
11. West Feliciana Parish Conveyance Record K, p. 527.
12. West Feliciana Parish Conveyance Record M, p. 109.
13. West Feliciana Parish Donation Record A, p. 69.
14. Duncan, p. 71.
15. Duncan, p. 71.
16. Duncan, p. 71.
17. Church Record No. 2, p. 7.
18. Duncan, p. 71.
19. Church Record No. 1, p. 16,17.
20. Church Record No. 2, p. 7.
21. Louisiana 1850 Census, 8/27/1850, shows Ch. N. Gibbons, age 45, Male, Carpenter, Place of Birth - Dist. Columbia.
22. Church Record No. 1, p. 17.
23. Church Record No. 1, p. 17.
24. Church Record No. 1, p. 17.
25. Carter, pp. 125, 126, 127, 128.
26. Carter, p. 147.
27. Department of the Navy Log of Albatross, Office of Naval Records and History.
28. Carter, p. 141.
29. Church Record No. 2, p. 7.
30. Duncan, p. 71.
31. Church Record No. 2, p. 7.
32. Duncan, p. 72.
33. Church Record No. 2, p. 8.
34. Duncan, p. 72.
35. Church Record No. 1, p. 19.
36. Duncan, p. 72.
37. Church Record No. 1, p. 19.
38. Church Record No. 2, p. 8.
39. Church Record No. 2, p. 8.
40. Church Record No. 2, p. 9.

NORTH



ENTRANCE

CEMETERY →

CEMETERY ↓

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH (NOT TO SCALE)