

Pollard, John Henry Mingo ^[1]

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by Lawrence F. London, 1994

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10 Feb. 1855–2 Aug. 1908

John Henry Mingo Pollard, Episcopal clergyman, was born in Lunenburg County, Va. He read for orders in Petersburg, Va., under the direction of the Reverend Giles B. Cooke, John D. Keiley, and the Reverend Thomas Spencer. On 28 June 1878 Pollard was ordained deacon by Bishop F. M. Whittle in the chapel of the Theological Seminary of Virginia. Eight years later, on 14 Dec. 1886, Bishop Whittle ordained him priest in St. Paul's Church, Norfolk, Va.

Pollard's first assignment was as deacon in charge of the black congregation attached to Christ Church, Alexandria. In 1880 he became assistant minister at St. Stephen's Church, Petersburg, where he remained for three years. The next four years he spent as deacon in charge of the mission of Holy Innocents, Norfolk. In 1887 Pollard moved to the Diocese of South Carolina to be assistant minister of St. Mark's Church, Charleston; the next year he became rector. Pollard went to South Carolina at the height of a controversy that had divided that diocese since 1875: the right of the black clergy and laity to have a seat and a vote in the diocesan conventions. Pollard maintained that since his parish had fulfilled all of the canonical requirements for full membership in the diocesan convention, he and his parish were entitled to all rights and privileges of the convention. He was supported in his stand by his Bishop, William B. W. Howe, who had held this position from the first. The question was settled in 1889 by a compromise that admitted St. Mark's Church into union with the convention but put all other black churches and missions in a separate convocation under the bishop. In 1890 Bishop Howe placed Pollard in charge of all black missions in the Charleston district.

After eleven years in South Carolina, Pollard was called to the [Diocese of North Carolina](#) ^[5] on 1 Feb. 1898 to be "Archdeacon for Work Among Colored People." One of the significant contributions he made as archdeacon was in the field of education. In his opinion, a most effective means of improving the work among blacks was through parochial schools. Pollard believed that "neither the State nor the Church can be safe in the hands of ignorant people." It was the duty of the church "to remove the cloud of ignorance now hanging over this large class of our population." In addition to promoting existing parochial schools, he established in 1900 a "Farming and Training School" in connection with St. Anna's Mission at Littleton. Pollard's work received recognition outside the Diocese of North Carolina in 1903, when he addressed the Missionary Council of the Episcopal church in Washington on his church's work for southern blacks. In 1907 he was appointed field secretary for a year to the Board of Missions.

Pollard married Julia May Evans, by whom he had two daughters and six sons. One of his sons, George C., distinguished himself as a lay missionary and teacher in Louisburg. He was principal of St. Matthias's parochial school from 1902 until it ceased to operate in the late 1930s. Following the archdeacon's death, Bishop Joseph B. Cheshire characterized him as "a man of real ability, of sound judgment, of tact, of a singularly well-balanced character; a good preacher, and one who commanded the respect of all." Pollard was buried in [Mount Hope Cemetery](#) ^[6], [Raleigh](#) ^[7].

References:

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Journals of the Diocese of North Carolina (1898–1909)

Lloyd's Clerical Directory for 1905 (1905)

Albert Sidney Thomas, *A Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, 1820–1957* (1957)

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Journal of the annual convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of North Carolina
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