

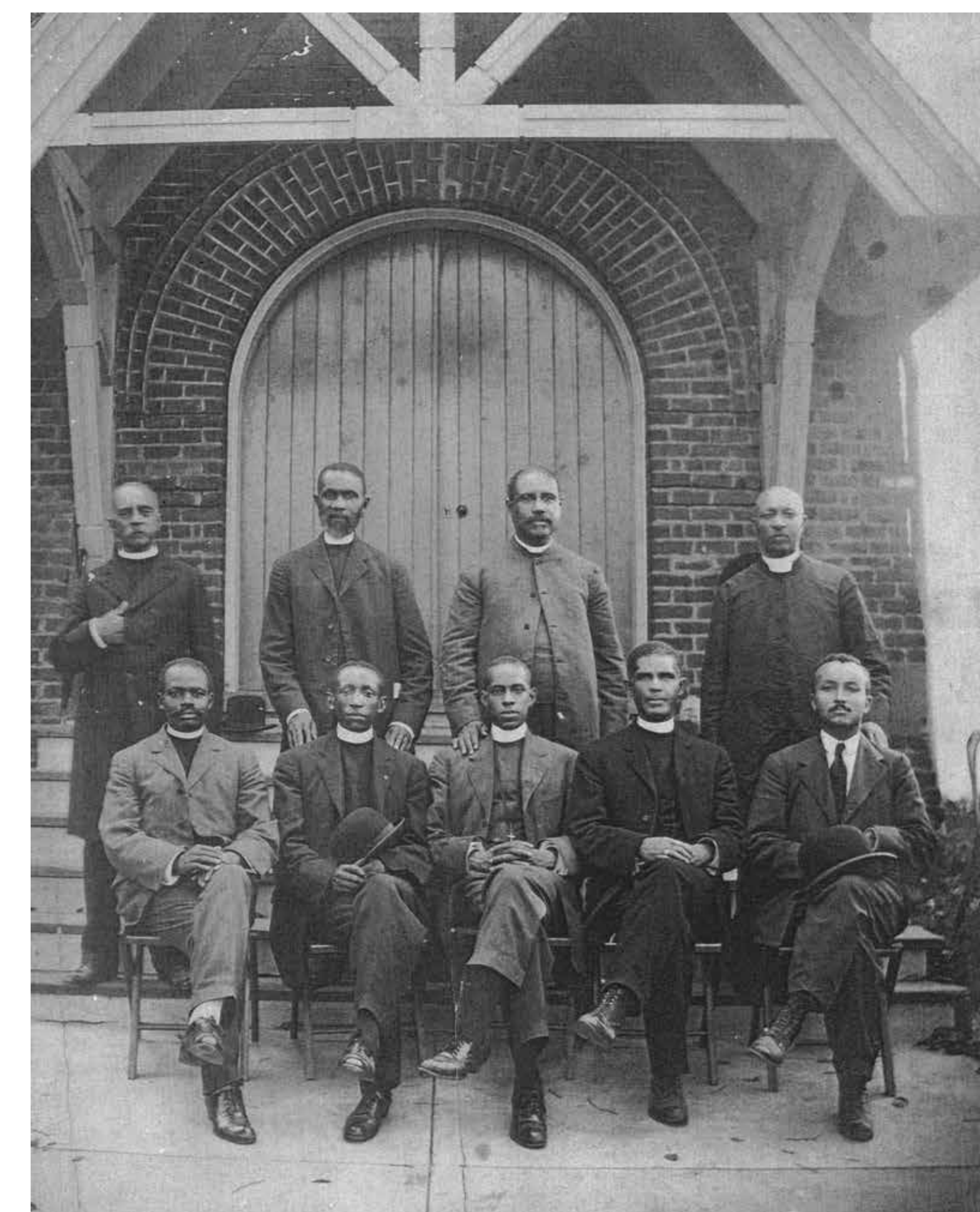
Telling Our Stories

Black Ministry in the Early Jim Crow Era 1890-1910

The 1890s saw passage of Jim Crow legislation and ruthless suppression of Black suffrage. By 1900, white political control was absolute and racially segregated facilities legally mandated. The Diocese of North Carolina attempted to maintain a semblance of unity and catholicity by retaining the right of Black clergy and congregations to seat, voice and vote in diocesan convention—something that was being denied elsewhere in the South.

But the impact of Jim Crow can be seen with the 1891 de facto segregation of Black ministry under the supervision of an archdeacon for work among colored people, and with the 1903 creation of a separate annual Convocation for Black clergy and lay leaders.

The first archdeacon, the Ven. William Walker, was a white priest who had been active in African American mission work in Pittsboro and Moore County. In his tenure of seven years, he helped to establish new congregations in Littleton, Louisburg and Warrenton, chiefly through enlisting and supporting Black leadership in those communities, including the future archdeacon, the Rev. Henry B. Delany.



Black clergy from the October 1910 edition of *The Church Advocate*

St. Augustine's Chapel



A procession outside of St. Augustine's Chapel

During the 1890s, St. Augustine's underwent a shift in its educational focus. At the instigation of The Episcopal Church, St. Augustine's gave up its theological department in 1894 and added a new faculty position in its collegiate department. From this point forward, young men preparing for the ministry would do their advanced work elsewhere. But St. Augustine's did proceed with the building of a campus chapel in 1895, where a new diocesan mission for students, faculty and the surrounding neighborhood was organized. The existing downtown Raleigh congregation was renamed St. Ambrose to eliminate confusion.

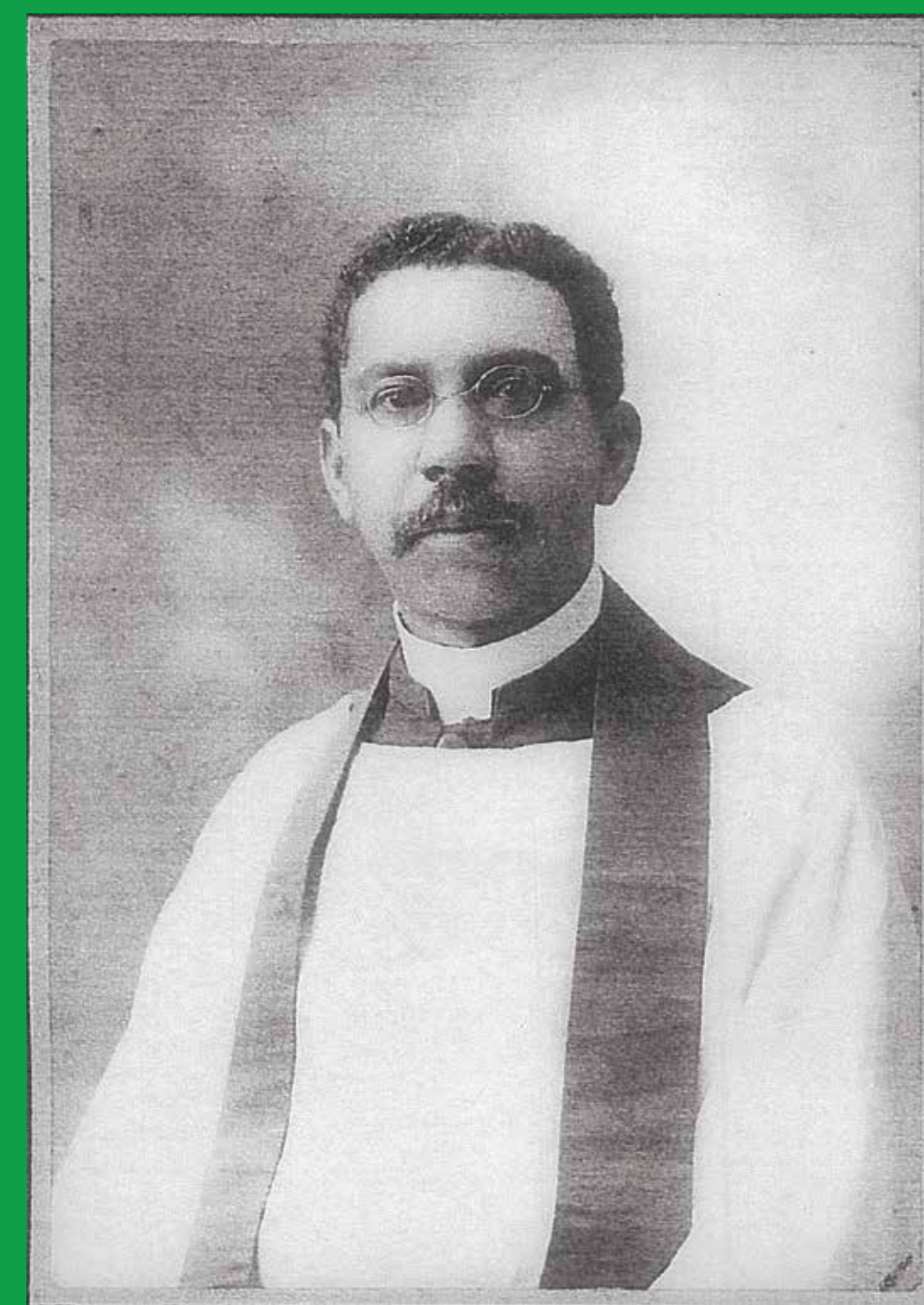
Archdeacon John H. M. Pollard (1855-1908)

The man Bishop Cheshire chose to succeed Walker was the Ven. John H. M. Pollard, one of the first Black priests ordained in Virginia.

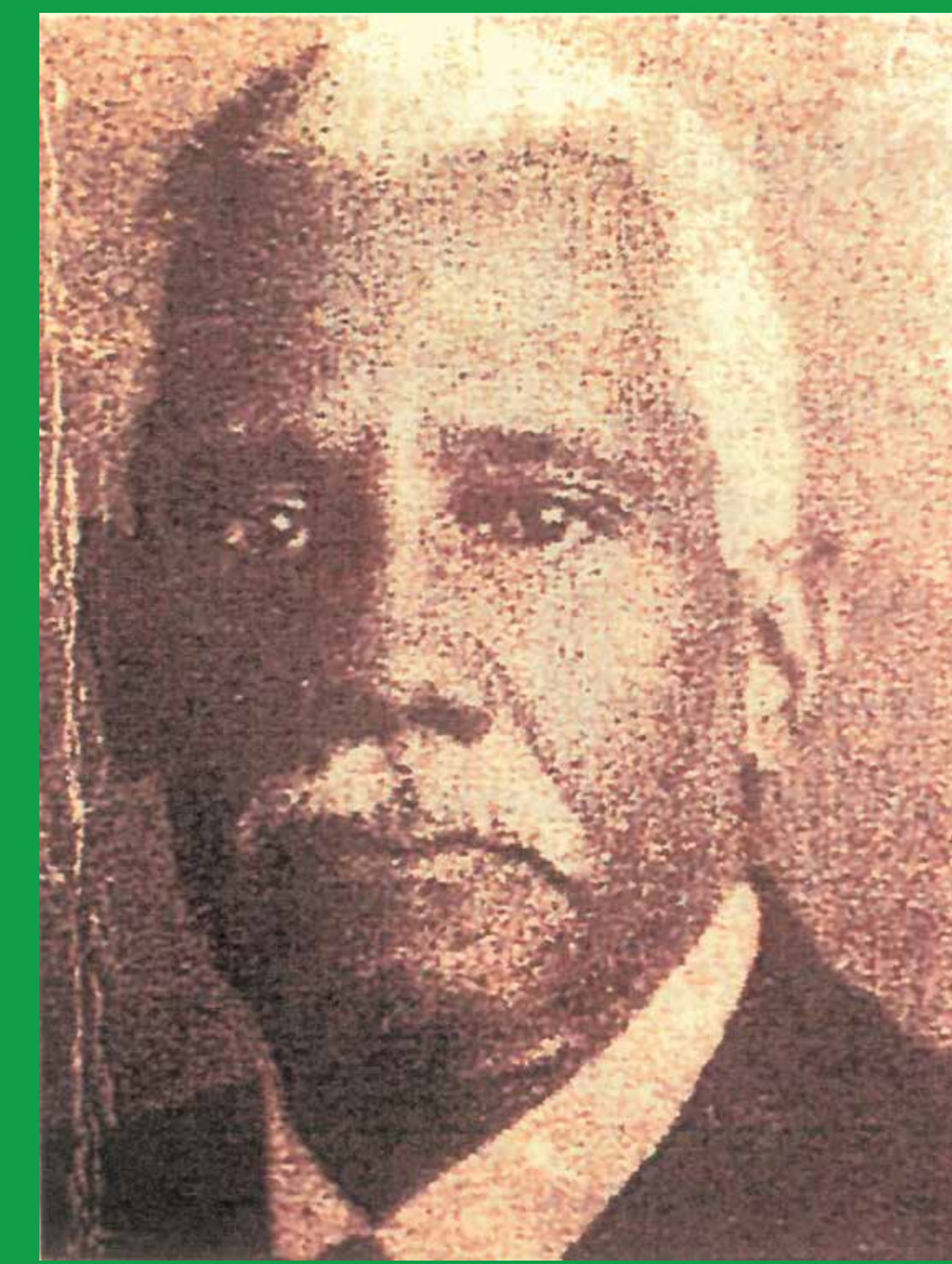
During Pollard's tenure as archdeacon, new congregations were organized in Oxford (St. Cyprian's, 1903) and Winston-Salem (St. Stephen's, 1907), but the centerpiece was his work in Littleton. With the assistance of an enterprising St. Augustine's graduate named Virgil Bond, Pollard purchased a 31-acre farm in 1901 and opened a training school to supplement the already flourishing parochial school Bond had established in 1893. Pollard even moved to Littleton to be more personally involved in this new venture.

Pollard was firmly committed to enabling rural Blacks to stay on the land and make a living from agriculture, but in 1906 a devastating fire destroyed the Littleton school buildings, and in 1908 he died unexpectedly.

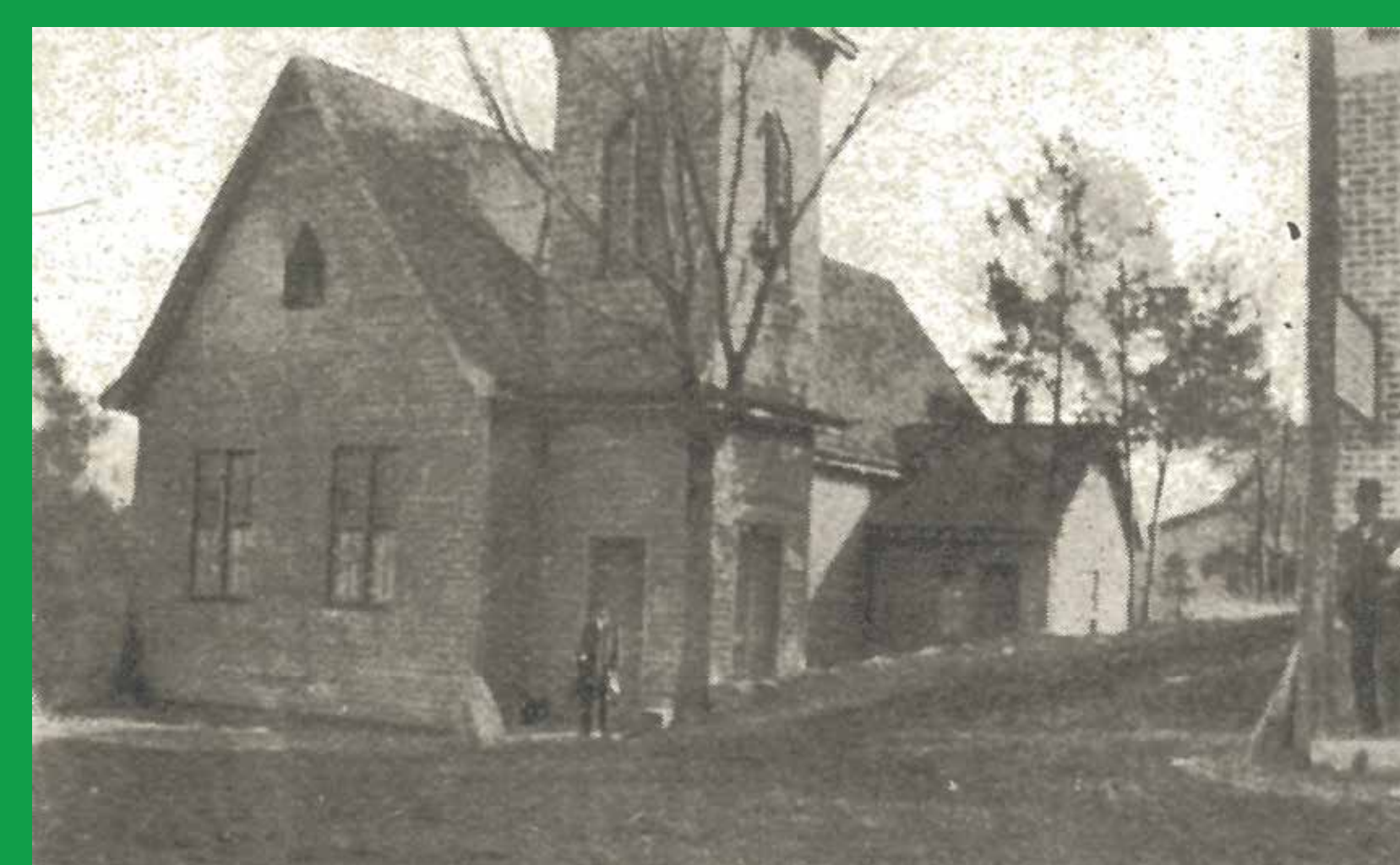
Pollard's legacy would live on through his son, George, who was appointed in 1901 as catechist, lay reader and schoolmaster for St. Matthias', Louisburg. For the next 48 years, George Pollard kept the parochial school open and even extended his lay reading to include Henderson as well. George Pollard and Virgil Bond deserve recognition for their steadfast commitment to educational and congregational leadership in Black churches that were only intermittently receiving the ministrations of the clergy.



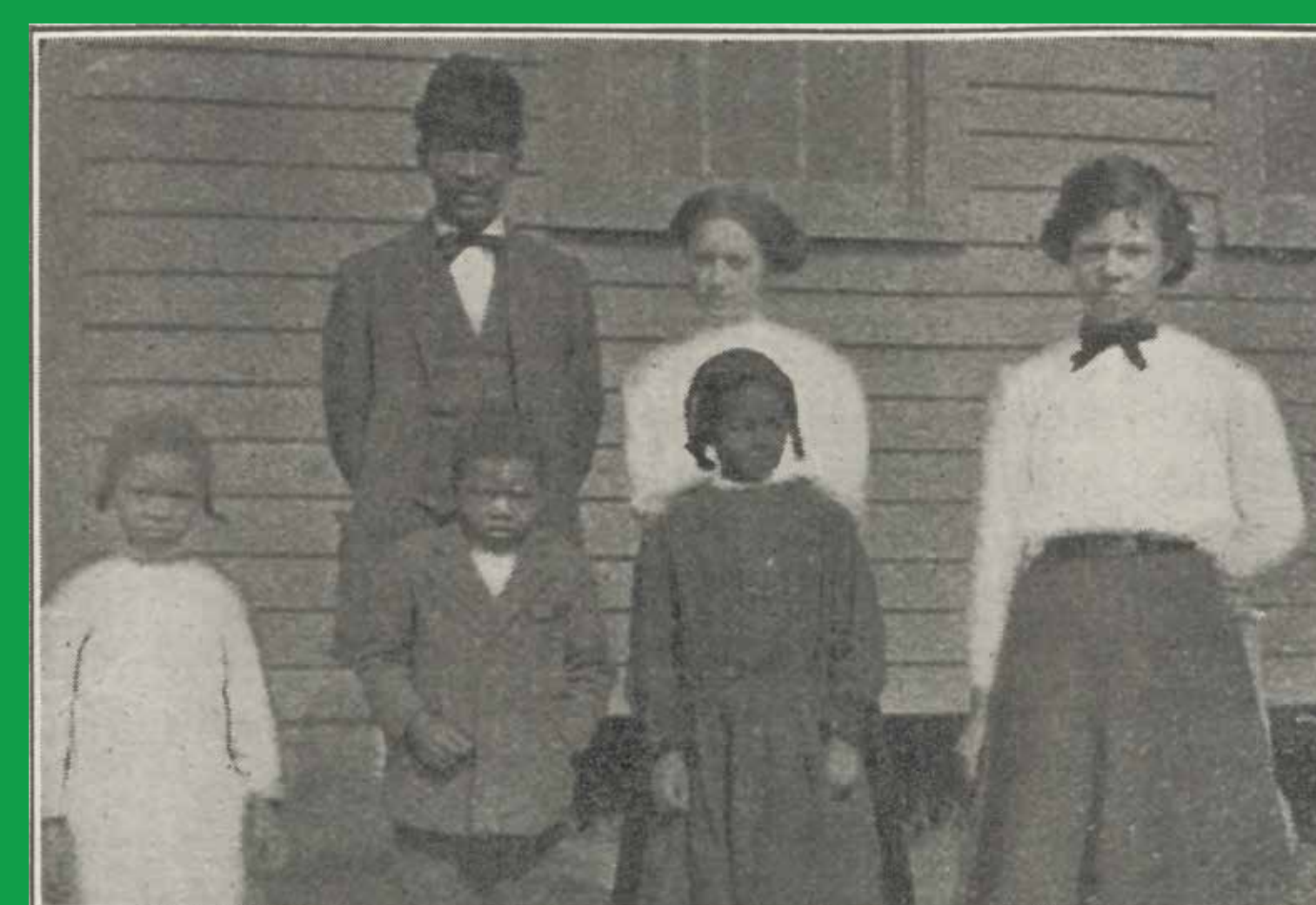
The Ven. John H. M. Pollard



George Pollard



St. Matthias', Louisburg



Virgil Bond with pupils outside of the St. Anna's schoolhouse in Littleton, circa 1912