

One other Florence native had several professions before settling in Decatur, Alabama as the owner and proprietor of a pharmacy. Arthur Oscar (A.O.) Sheffey (1881-1940) was born in Maysville, outside of Huntsville, in Madison County to farmers Arthur Rison and Laura Sheffey.

Buys Interest In Magnolia Drug Co

A. O. Sheffey, for the past eight years a resident of Florence, has returned to Decatur and purchased an interest in the Magnolia Drug Co., 310 Bank street, from Dr. Willis E. Sterrs. The pharmacy will make a number of improvements and will go out for additional trade.

Sometime in the early 1900s, Sheffey moved to Florence. By 1913, he had opened a "moving picture show for the benefit of colored people" on Royal Avenue where the old Airdome movies was. That same year, Sheffey is listed in the Florence City Directory as the district manager for the Union Mutual Aid Association of Mobile, an insurance company that served people of color. Their offices were located at 120 1/2 North Court Street. Sheffey lived at 421 East Alabama Street.

By 1918, A.O. Sheffey had moved to Decatur, Morgan County, Alabama. The *Albany-Decatur Daily* reported on April 18, 1918, that Sheffey had "purchased an interest in the Magnolia Drug Co., 310 Bank Street, from Dr. Willis E. Sterrs. The Pharmacy will make a number of improvements and will go out for additional trade." The 1920 census confirms that Sheffey was living in the predominately African American and affluent part of Decatur, next door to lawyer H.V. Cashins. Sheffey is listed as a proprietor of a drug store and his wife, Daisy, is listed as a "saleslady" at Magnolia Drug Store. Sheffey continued to operate in Decatur and

(Left) Newspaper Clipping about A. O. Sheffey (*Albany-Decatur Daily*, April 18 1918 via Newspapers.com) (Below) 1920 Census Record for A. O. Sheffey in Decatur, Morgan County, Alabama (National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry.com) (Bottom) 1930 Census Record for A. O. Sheffey in Decatur, Morgan County, Alabama (National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry.com)

is listed as such in 1930. He passed away before the 1940 census was completed and was buried in the exclusively African American cemetery, Magnolia-Sykes Cemetery outside Decatur.

Grocers

Several other professionals of color were known to work in Florence from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century. For the majority of them, little is known beyond a name in the city directory, newspaper, or census record. With more research, more information may be found on these businessmen, most of whom worked in what would be considered blue-collar jobs today. The majority of people of color worked in service positions, and few had the means to secure the education needed to be middle-class professionals such as dentists, doctors, or barbers. These gentlemen were shoemakers, bootblacks, painters, carpenters, bricklayers, and blacksmiths. Some were the proprietors of businesses like grocery stores, billiard halls, restaurants, and livery stables.

The growth of the grocery market and the rapid urbanization of Florence go hand-in-hand. As more people moved to the city for industrial jobs such as the construction of Wilson Dam, more grocers set up shop to provide easy access to food and common goods. The 1913 Florence City

29	577 297 314	Sheffey A.O.	Head	0	70	70	24	21		yes	yes	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Proprietor	Drug Store	310	29
30		Daisy	Wife		F	35	21			yes	yes	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Saleslady	Magnolia Drug	310	30
31		Louise	Daughter		F	18	2		no	yes	yes	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama				31
32		Cynthia	Daughter		F	16	2		no	yes	yes	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama				32
33		Arthur	Son		M	14	2		no	yes	yes	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama				33
34		Samuel	Son		M	12	2		no	yes	yes	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama				34
35	577 297 315	Cashins H.V.	Head	0	70	64	21		yes	yes	Georgia	Ireland	England	Georgia	Proprietor			35
36		Minnie V	Wife		F	38	21		yes	yes	Alabama	Georgia	Georgia	Alabama				36
37		Lillian	Daughter		F	30	2		yes	yes	Alabama	Georgia	Alabama	Alabama				37
38		John S	Son		M	21	2		yes	yes	Alabama	Pennsylvania	Alabama	Alabama	Teacher	Public School		38

6	577 297 314	Sheffey Arthur O	Head	0	600	N	M	44	M	21	no	yes	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Proprietor	Drug Store	310	6
7		Daisy	Wife		F	45	M	17	no	yes	yes	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama				7	
8		Arthur O Jr	Son		M	24	S	no	yes	yes	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama			Clk	Drug Store	310	8
9		Thompson D S	Servant		M	20	S	no	no	no	no	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama			None		9