JACOB WYTCH,

Boot and Shoemaker.

Dostairs over W. F. Price's Stora

French Calf and Kip Skins, on hand,

And the BEST BRAND of Louisville

Onld Leather, and Bullalo Slaughter Sole Leather; and will make work in first-class style, as cheap as any first-class workman in my line. I will-gurantee the my work to give perfect satisfaction.

IEPAIRING meatly done: 1876 me a trial.

An Invitation

J. W. WYTCH

Cordially invites all of his friends and acquaintances to call upon him at his

Newly Opened Grocery Store on Court st., Next door to Jones & Smith,

And to inspect his stock of fresh, new Groceries.

Court street, next door to Jones' & Smith.

other accomplishments included serving as trustee of St. Paul AME Church and the Florence District School for Negroes.

Boot and Shoemakers

Boot and shoemaking would have been an important occupation before the industrial and commercial manufacture of footwear. Florence had several businessmen of color that operated shops for making boots and shoes, repairing them, and offering bootblacks, or shoe shiners. Two such shoemakers have very similar biographies, Reuben Patterson (c. 1836-1928) and George Washington "Wash" Seawright (c. 1848-1931).

(Top Left) Ad for Jacob Wytch's Boot and Shoemaking (Lauderdale News, Wednesday, May 12, 1880 via Florence-Lauderdale Public Library) (Middle Left) Ad for J. W. Wytch's Grocery (Florence Herald, Thursday, January 27,1898 via Florence-Lauderdale Public Library) (Bottom) 1910 Census Record for Jacob W. Wytch (National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry.com) (Below) Excerpt of 1913 Florence City Directory for Mr. Wytch – Denoted as a Person of Color by * (Ancestry.com, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995) (Below Middle) Excerpt of 1926 Florence City Directory for Mr. Wytch – Denoted as a Person of Color by * (Ancestry.com, U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995)

Wylie W Thomas, farmer, b 511 Stanton av *Wytch Jacob W (m), grocer 108 E Mobile, h 204 S Pine

Wylie & Staggs (J T Wylie L D Staggs) meats 1412 Huntsville rd

Wytch Jacob W (Charlotte) shoe repr h255 Spring rd Yarbrough Alton (Florence) mill hd h605 Ironside Reuben Patterson was a former slave, loyal to the Patterson family. He was a body servant for Col. Josiah Patterson of the 5th Alabama Cavalry, CSA and son of his master. Col. Patterson and Reuben, originally of Morgan County, relocated to Florence after the war. His loyalty to the Confederacy earned him the moniker of the "most unreconstructed 'rebel' in this section of the South," Reuben Patterson went on to work as a cook in hotels and for the Muscle Shoals Canal. The 1913 Florence City Directory lists his occupation as cook living in a house at 315 South Poplar Street. In 1915, the United Daughters of the Confederacy gave him his own bootblack stand on the corner of Mobile and Court streets. He later moved into a building on Tennessee and Seminary streets. The 1920 Florence city directory confirms his change in occupation. Mr. Patterson passed away in 1928 and is buried in the Florence City Cemetery.

(Left) Photograph of Reuben Patterson (Florence-Lauderdale Public Library)

George Washington "Wash" Seawright was also born a slave in Gainesville, Sumter County, Alabama. He was owned by George Seawright, who moved to Lauderdale County in 1859. Wash Seawright accompanied Mitchell Malone (Co. K, 7th Alabama Infantry, CSA and Co. F, Roddey's 4th Calvary, CSA) as a body servant. By 1884, Mr. Seawright had opened a boot and shoemaking shop somewhere in Florence "in

a room recently occupied by Mr. Fink over the store

of Mr. Jacobs." By 1980, his shop was on the Stafford Block of East Mobile Street. The following year, the entire block was destroyed by fire and Seawright relocated to the back of Young & Simpson's Shoe Store. An ad