



**(Above)** Excerpt of Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Sheffield, Colbert County, Alabama, 1921. Showing “1st Baptist Church (Colored)” and “Graded School (Colored).” (University of Alabama, Historical Map Collection, Online)

School (Colored)” was at the corner of 20th Street and Atlanta Avenue in 1921. This school was likely one of the incarnations of Sheffield Colored School before it was finally located on 19th Street between 10th and 11th avenues. The school later became Sterling High School in 1942 and 19th Street became Sterling Boulevard. The large high school for African American students was closed in 1968 and demolished a decade later.

**(Below)** 1940 Federal Census Excerpt Showing Paris B. Swoopes as “Proprietor” of Tailoring (National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry.com) **(Right)** Swoopes Dry Cleaners as it Stands Today (Google Street View, June 2014)

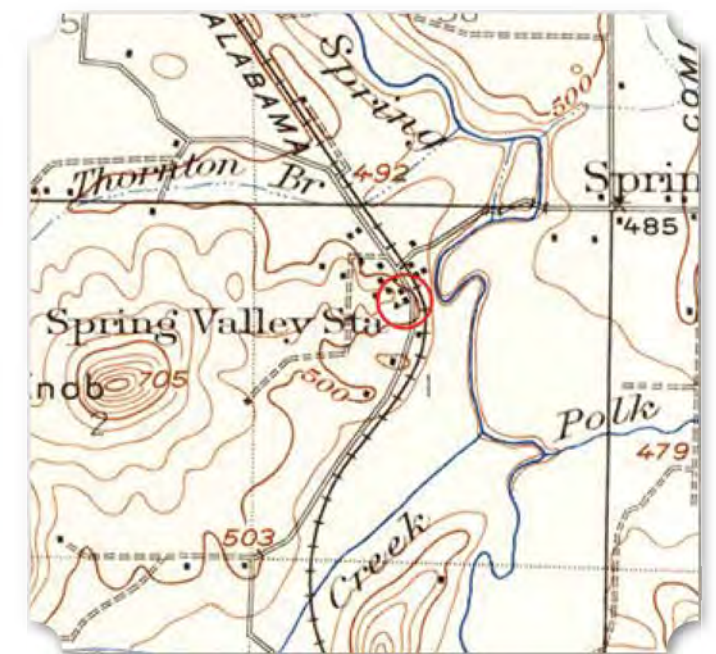


### P.B. Swoopes Tailor and Dry Cleaner

Located in downtown Sheffield at 105 Montgomery Avenue is the P. B. Swoopes Tailor and Dry Cleaner. Paris B. Swoopes (c.1900-2000) was one of the first successful African American entrepreneurs and businessmen. A graduate of Sheffield Colored School and Tuskegee Institute, Swoopes was the only tailor in Sheffield. He served both African American and white clients in a shop that he opened in 1927. This unusual crossing of the color line in the early 20th century could have been dangerous for Swoopes. He was known for fitting clients in the front window of his shop in clear view of the street – for his own protection against unsubstantiated racial violence. Large store windows can still be viewed at the location on Montgomery. Swoopes moved his business to this location in 1942. The rundown storefront still bears a hand-painted sign of “Swoopes Tailoring.”

one is to the east of Spring Valley along the north side of Spring Valley Road next to a church; the other is to the west of Spring Valley where Spring Valley Lane and Cook Lane come together. They are both marked on the 1936 USGS/TVA topographic map, however, neither one is explicitly labeled as Spring Valley School. The eastern location is most likely a school for white children as the building is indicated as a large school on the 1952 USGS topographic map. Also, the church adjacent to that school – Spring Valley Church of Christ – is a church servicing the white community. The location to the west of Spring Valley is more likely to have been the Rosenwald school because the school is no longer depicted on the 1971 USGS topographic map, as by that time integration had closed most small, rural schools for African American children. Furthermore, the western

**(Below)** 1924 USGS Topographic Map of Spring Valley, Tuscumbia, Alabama Quadrangle



## 35 ■ Spring Valley School (Rosenwald)\*

One of eight Rosenwald schools constructed in Colbert County, the Spring Valley School was a one-room, one-teacher type schoolhouse built in 1926. It cost a total of \$1,700 with contributions of \$750 from the African American community, \$100 from the white community, \$450 from public funds, and \$400 from the Rosenwald Fund. The school was insured for \$1,125 according to the Rosenwald-Fisk database.

The community of Spring Valley is located about seven miles southeast of Tuscumbia near the community of Ricks. The exact location of the Spring Valley School is unclear, though there are two possible locations:

2304	1000	no	Swoopes, Paris B	Head	M	Aug	36	M	no	04	7	Alabama	Some Home	700	-	-	-	-	66	Proprietor Tailoring	6	52	300	62
			Mary	Wife	F	Aug	32	M	no	02		Alabama	Some Home	120	no	no	no	H				0	300	63
			Paris B Jr	Son	M	Aug	11	S	no	04		Alabama	Some Home											64
			Deloris	Daughter	F	Aug	9	S	no	03		Alabama	Some Home											65
			Hellon	Daughter	F	Aug	6	S	no	01		Alabama	Some Home											66
			Robert	Son	M	Aug	3	S	no	00		Alabama	Some Home											67

### KEY

- COMMUNITIES
- CEMETERIES
- CHURCHES
- PLANTATIONS
- SCHOOLS
- OTHER

\* Indicates a Historical - Non-Extant Resource