

his business – for his safety and the community’s. He eventually turned his business into a dry cleaner as well.

P. B. Swoopes is beloved by the community for more than being one of the first African American businessmen in the Shoals. Mr. Swoopes was a Boy



(Above) Portrait of Mr. P. B. Swoopes Taken By Ansel Adams’ Student Mariana Cook and Later Presented to the Sheffield Public Library (Matt McKean, *Times Daily*, April 24, 2018) (Below) 1910 Federal Census Excerpt Showing John Swoopes as a “Barber” with His “Own Shop” with 7-Year-Old Son, Paris (National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry.com)

**REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after February 17, 1897 and on or before December 31, 1921)**

<b>SERIAL NUMBER</b> T 495	<b>1. NAME (Print)</b> PARIS BAKER SWOOPES (First) (Middle) (Last)	<b>ORDER NUMBER</b> T 10652
<b>2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print)</b> 2404-13 1/2 AVE, SHEFFIELD, COLBERT, ALA. (Number and street) (Town, township, village, or city) (County) (State)		
[THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE GIVEN ON THE LINE ABOVE WILL DETERMINE LOCAL BOARD JURISDICTION; LINE 2 OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE WILL BE IDENTICAL]		
<b>3. MAILING ADDRESS</b> Same (Mailing address if other than place indicated on line 2. If same insert word same)		
<b>4. TELEPHONE</b> 6078 (Home) 9128 - Business	<b>5. AGE IN YEARS</b> 37 <b>DATE OF BIRTH</b> Feb 26 1904 (Mo.) (Day) (Yr.)	<b>6. PLACE OF BIRTH</b> Sheffield, Ala. (Town or county) (State or country)
<b>7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS</b> Wife, Mrs. Mary S. Swoopes, same as above		
<b>8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS</b> Own Business - 105 - Montgomery Ave. Sheffield, Ala.		
<b>9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS</b> 105 - Montgomery Ave. Sheffield Colbert Ala. (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)		
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE. P. B. Swoopes (Registrant's signature)		
D. S. S. Form 1 (Revised 1-1-42) (over) ☆ GPO 16-21630-1		

(Above) Paris Baker (P. B.) Swoopes World War II Registration Card (National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry.com)

Scout, a Mason, and a supporter of war bonds and the March of Dimes. He was a Worshipful Master of Unity for the masonic lodge and a trustee of the grand lodge. He headed the Tuskegee Alumni Club for the Shoals area and lead the March of Dimes campaign for at least 23 years. According to the *Times Daily*, “Swoopes was the first African American to sit on a Colbert County grand jury and as president of the Colbert County Voters League, was the first in the county to bring political candidates before a panel of

voters. Swoopes received a special award for his sale of war bonds during WWII.”

A portrait of Mr. P. B. Swoopes was taken in 1996 by Mariana Cook, a pupil of Ansel Adams. She recalled that Mr. Swoopes mentioned that he only ever made one suit for himself and it’s the one in the photograph as well as what he was buried in. Swoopes passed away in 2000 at the age of 98. He is buried in Oakwood Cemetery in Sheffield next to his wife, Mary G. Swoopes (1905-1986). Their daughter, Deloris Swoops Jones Nash became a teacher and wrote the local play “Determined, The Life of W. C. Handy,”

which has become a staple of the entertainment enjoyed annually at the Handy Festival in Florence.

The building on Montgomery Avenue is still standing, although it is dilapidated and neglected. The large glass windows remain on the store front, reminding those who can still recall Mr. P. B. Swoopes and his tailoring shop. In the window of the abandoned store rests a hand painted sign of “P. B. Swoopes Tailoring.”

### Thompson & Son Funeral Home

The Thompson & Son Funeral Home in Tuscumbia is located on the southwest corner of 8th and Washington streets. Originally called Thompson and Ricks Funeral Home, the business was first established about 1920 by Mr. Bruce Thompson and Mr. Tim Ricks. The entrepreneurs were very young, Thompson was born circa 1905 and Ricks in 1899. Timothy Ricks, Jr. and his wife, Mary, lived along the Southern Railroad on his parents’ farm in 1920. Timothy Ricks, Sr. was most likely born a slave sometime before 1865. By 1900, he and his wife, Sarah, owned a farm outside of Tuscumbia. Bruce Thompson was living with his mother and step-father in a house on 9th Street in Tuscumbia in 1920.

By 1922, Ricks departed the venture and the business than became solely Thompson Funeral Home. The 1930 census records Bruce Thompson, wife, Ella, son, Bruce, Jr., and widowed step-father, Frank Meredith, living in the house that Meredith owned on 9th Street. Thompson’s occupation is proprietor and undertaker. When Bruce, Jr. grew up, he received an education at Worsham College of Embalming outside of Chicago, becoming “the first

33	737	John Swoopes	Head	M	28	Feb 26 1904	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Barber	Own Shop	105 - Montgomery Ave. Sheffield Ala.	15-55X-1	33
34		Emma Swoopes	Wife	F	34	3/27/20	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	None				34
35		Fillian Swoopes	Daughter	F	18	1/18/20	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	None				35
36		Swannah Swoopes	Daughter	F	10	1/10/20	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	None				36
37		Paris Swoopes	Son	M	7	2/26/20	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	None				37
38		Kellan Swoopes	Daughter	F	5	1/5/20	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	None				38
39		Mrs. Mary Swoopes	Wife	F	20	1/20/20	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	None				39
40		Esther Swoopes	Daughter	F	7	1/7/20	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	None				40