

JESSE OWENS

*“Awards become corroded, friends
gather no dust.”*

– Jesse Owens

Teacher : Prof. Indu Bora

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Unit : III

JESSE OWENS
JAMES CLEVELAND OWENS



Early Years

- The son of a sharecropper and the grandson of slaves.
- Born on September 12, 1913 in Danville, Alabama.
- A frail child, Owens was often sick . Suffered from chronic bronchial congestion and pneumonia.
- At the age of seven he picked up to 100 pounds of cotton a day.
- At age nine Owens moved with his family to Cleveland
- Bigger school & strict teachers
- Owens earned the nickname Jesse when one of his instructors, unable to decipher his thick southern accent, believed he said his name was Jesse instead of J.C.

Rising Star

- At East Technical High School - a nationally recognized sprinter, setting records in 100 ,200-yard dashes and long jump.
- After graduating, Owens enrolled at Ohio State University where he continued to flourish as an athlete.
- Known as "Buckeye Bullet,"
- In 1935 Big Ten Championships, he overcame a severe tailbone injury and created world record in 100 , 220-yard dash , 220-yard low hurdles.
- Set a long jump record that stood for 25 years.
- Dominated at the Big Ten games that year.
- Owens competed in 42 events that year and won them all.

The 1936 Olympic Games

- For Adolph Hitler and the Nazis, the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games was expected to be a German showcase and a statement for Aryan supremacy.
- African Americans dominated .
- In all U.S. won 11 gold medals, six of them by black athletes.
- Owens was the most dominant athlete to compete.
- He captured four gold medals (the 100-meter, the long jump, the 200-meter, and the 400-meter relay race) and broke two Olympic records along the way.
- After Owens won the 100-meter event, a furious Hitler stormed out of the stadium.

- In spite of grand success he did not receive any recognition.
- President Franklin D. Roosevelt failed to meet and congratulate Owens.
- Properly recognized by President Gerald Ford in 1976, who awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom.
- The mild mannered Owens seemed not the least bit surprised by his home country's hypocrisy.
- "*When I came back to my native country, after all the stories about Hitler, I couldn't ride in the front of the bus," he said. "I had to go to the back door. I couldn't live where I wanted. I wasn't invited to shake hands with Hitler, but I wasn't invited to the White House to shake hands with the President, either."*

Later Years

- After 1936 Olympic Games, Owens retired from amateur athletics and started to earn money from his physical talents.
- He raced against cars and horses.
- Owens gave lectures in conventions and gatherings.
- Set up a business for himself in Chicago and travelled frequently around the country giving lectures.
- Owens, who smoked up to a pack of cigarettes a day died of lung cancer in Tucson, Arizona on March 31, 1980.