

JESSE OWENS

Jesse (James Cleveland) Owens was born on September 12, 1913, in Danville, Alabama. After graduating from high school in Cleveland, Ohio, he went to Ohio State University, where he entered in track and field competition. On May 25, 1935, he broke world records in the 220-yard dash, the 220-yard low hurdles, and the running broad jump, and he tied the world record for the hundred-yard dash -- all in one day. He went on to win four gold medals in the 1936 Olympics, in Berlin, setting the world and Olympic records in the sprints and the running broad jump, and he ran anchor on the world record breaking 400-meter relay team. In 1937 he graduated from Ohio State and ventured into business. He served for a time as secretary to the Illinois Athletic Commission and in 1955 he embarked upon a goodwill tour of India for the State Department. He later established regional annual track and field competition for young boys and girls, called the "Jesse Owens Games," and he has authored three books on his experiences as an athlete and a black.