

# [Jesse owens essay](https://assignbuster.com/jesse-owens-essay/)

Owens was able to cross social and philosophical boundaries as he rose from poverty to national fame after winning a record breaking four gold deals in the 1936 Berlin Olympics. The fact that he did this in a time where Africanize Ricans were considered inferior to whites in every way made his story more inspiring .

Along with his success, his charm and personality attracted his fans and followers AR mound the world to follow in his footsteps. Owens impacted the lives of many people are undo the world as he crossed social and philosophical borders and made himself the m important person in helping Fragmentariness become fully integrated into so city. “ Jesse Owens: An American Life” by William J.

Baker is a biography of Jesse Owens’ life. It talks about how Owens, the tenth child of Alabama sharecrops errs, rose from poverty to become one of the most influential Africanizing athletes of all time. It tells the tale of his rise to fame after he won four gold medals at the 1 936 Berlin Olympics and the many peaks and valleys in his life afterwards. While describe Eng his very abandon life, the book stresses that the one thing that remained cons tan was that Owens remained a popularizing figure to the end of his days. In the en d, it explains how his life impacted and inspired the lives of many others. Owens had to overcome many social borders throughout his whole life to come the world renown man he became.

Born on September 12, 1913 in O Seville, Alabama, Owens had a rough childhood. He had many illnesses like pneumonia Nina and had abnormal growths on legs and chests that had to be removed by his mot her with a knife (Baker peg. 7). When Owens was 10, his family moved to Cleveland hoping g for a better opportunity (Baker peg. 16). However, this was not the case as he lived ghetto that even ASK members steered away from (Baker peg. 18).

Growing up Alabama and Cleveland, Owens had to deal with racist attitudes from the begin inning. Lucky for him, he went to an integrated junior high and high school that welcome deed all ethnicities. It was during his junior high days that he met his mentor, Charles Riley. Riley, the school’s white track coach, was the first person to take Owens under arm.

Riley would often bring Owens breakfast and bring Owens home to eat with his family. Their relationship was warm and respectful, and it was from this relate unships that Owens truly began to grow up into a man and learned to deal with people e of all races (Baker peg. 22). When asked about Riley, Owens said, “ He was the first w white man really knew, and without even tying, he proved to me beyond all proof that a white man could love a [black man]. He trained me to become a man as well a s an athlete. ” (Baker peg. 23) As a senior in high school, Owens finally burst into the national spotlight as he broke numerous world records. As one reporter put it, “ He pool razzed fans not only with his amazing athletic ability, but with his demeanor; He work deed quietly and hard without any showboating.

(Baker 31) With this attitude, it WA s hard for whites and blacks alike to hate him. However, when he reached college, it was a different Story. Owens was forced to live in an officious apartment instead 0 f a dorm because all the dorms at Ohio State were reserved for whites. When he got a j b inning an elevator, he was only allowed to run the freight elevator out of gig HTH from the normal elevator where his white teammates, who were paved much more than him, helped take other white people up and down the elevator (Baker peg. 8) . Even when Owens and the rest of the track team traveled to meets, him and his fell owe black teammates were forced to stay in the car while his white teammates ate. Some times, the store owners would not even let the white teammates bring food back to t he car for the rest of the team because they didn’t want “ to feed no [black men]” (Baker peg. 67).

Despite this segregation, he didn’t once fight back. After “ defeating’ Hitler and Nazi Germany in the Berlin Olympics, the discrimination still continued. Owens ret urine to a heroes welcome and received a few endorsements that gave him money, but he was never offered a permanganate.

“ After I came home from the 1936 Olympics w tit my four gold medals, it became increasingly apparent that everyone was going to slap me on the back, want to shake my hand or have me up to their suite. But no one was going to offer me a job. ” (Baker peg. 150) He left Nazi Germany for racist Aimer where he had to go back to sitting at the back of the bus and struggle to find a secure job that fit his skill set. Despite his inability to hold down a job, Owens was still charm the world as he spoke out on political and social issues and traveled AR mound the country to speak to young Fragmentariness to influence and inspire the m. Owens was able to cross all of these social borders as he overcame a rough childhood d to become a prominent, influential and inspirational figure in society. Owens also dealt with many philosophical border crossings throughout his life In 1 933, he became the first person in his family to graduate.

At a time where many people dropped out of high school to support their family, like his siblings ha , Owens did not only become one of the few Fragmentariness that graduated high SC hollow, but one of the even fewer that went on to college. Less than 15% of the overall pop population pursued college degrees and the percentage of Fragmentariness to do so WA s much smaller (Baker peg. 33). Along with being considered dumb, Africanizing a athletes were said to be inferior and subhuman. Owens and his fellow black teammate disproved this myth as they dominated in track and field at the 1936 Olympics .

The magnitude Of their accomplishments was exhibited when Owens received the warmest ovation of his life from the Germans at the 1936 Olympics because his athletic achievement transcended any racial prejudices (Baker peg. 92). Later, In the 19 ass’s, when Africanizing athletes were rebelling and SSH inning America, Owens spoke out and said how he would not have been able to rise into the figure he became without America and proclaimed that he was “ an American first and a black m an second. ” (Baker 206) Hearing the complaints of the younger generation Of Fragmentariness who always complained of being treated unfairly, Owens gar angry. He spoke out about the tremendous progress that had been made by lacks in society since he was a kid, even though there still was some prejudices and in fervor schooling.

Even with these prejudices, he went on to say, “ If the [black man] d soonest succeed in today’s America, it is because he has chosen to fail. ” (Baker 213) O went crossed philosophical borders as he was able to prove Fragmentariness cool d make it through school and thrive in sports as well as advocating for America to unit e as one instead of having people off different colors to go around blaming each other for the way things were. Owens became an inspirational figure and inspired many people of the young enervation to strive to be their best. One person he inspired was a fellow tract k star Carl Lewis. Owens had a simple but effective message as he spoke to Lewis at middle school track meet when Lewis was still smaller than everyone else and before he started to become a stand out. Owens said, “ You’re a little kid, but you can beat the big guys if you work hard. ” (Dyer par. 3) This became the motto for Lewis as h e came to be known as a hardware.

In the 1 984 Olympics, Lewis one a gold medal I n the same four events Owens did in 1 936: the 1 00 meter, the 200 meter, the xx meter relay and the lumping (Dyer par. ). Owens spoke to other athletes and buss news groups as well, preaching motivation and values, religion, patriotism and hard work (Baker peg. 217). He also, traveled a lot to talk to boys and girl’s clubs to talk a bout hard work and encourage them to overcome being raised in a disadvantaged situation. In all these speeches, Owens had a presence that few other speaker s had. One reporter observed, “ When he enters a room, he doesn’t so much take it o ever as envelop it; he is friendly to all, outgoing and gracious. ” (Baker peg.

21 8) Owens able to become an inspirational figure who traveled around and inspired ma y people, young and old, to work hard and be the best they can be. Owens crossed many social and philosophical borders on his way to becoming the most important person in helping Fragmentariness become integrated in to society.