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Festivals, Owens Run start May 15

By Deangelo McDaniel
Managing Editor

The dedication of the Jesse Owens Memorial Museum is just one of the many events expected to attract tourist to Lawrence County next weekend.

Organizers of the 11th annual Indian Festival and 17th consecutive Jesse Owens Memorial Run are bracing for what they expect to be the largest crowds ever.

Last year, the Indian Festival moved to the Oakville Indian Mounds Park and Museum and was a huge success, according to Butch Walker, the director of the school system's nationally recognized Indian Education Program.

"We're expecting to have that same kind of success this year," Walker said.

In the memorial run, Memphis native Patrick Alexander, who is a distant relative of Jesse Owens, has been the top 10K finisher for seven straight years.

"We have been in contact with Patrick and he is expected to return this year," said DeWayne Key, who is director of the Owens Run.

The events in Lawrence County
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From Oakville to Germany



Museum tells the life story of Owens

By Deangelo McDaniel
Managing Editor

If you're going to the Jesse Owens Museum and you're looking for a story about how the Oakville myth of Aryan supremacy, you'll find it.

But if you're just expecting a story about the four gold medals Jesse Owens won at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, Germany, you're in for a treat.

"This museum is about more than the four gold medals Jesse Owens won at the Olympics," said Henry Buchanan, who is chairman of the Jesse Owens Park Board.

Yes, there is plenty of information about the medals. There is a 45-minute film narrated by Owens of his experience at the Olympics. Most of the footage was shot at Reich Field in Germany.

The film includes conversations with Owens and the son of Luz Long, who was the German athlete to beat Owens during the '36 Olympics.

The famous photo of Owens and Long lying in the grass is displayed several times in the museum.

"Luz Long showed compassion and grace when he needed it," Owens tells his son, Kyle, in the film. Long was killed during World War II.

The entrance of the museum (above) has a pictorial tribute to Jesse Owens. The passes of Jesse and his wife, Ruth, to the XXI Olympic games in Montreal, Canada are among the items in the museum donated by the family. (Staff photos by Deangelo McDaniel)



SEE MUSEUM PAGE A-2



The picture of Jesse Owens and German runner Luz Long (right) is one of the most recognized photographs in the world. The picture is at several locations in the museum. (Staff photo by Deangelo McDaniel)

Museum

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

James Pinion said future plans include contacting Kyle Long and inviting him to the annual Harmony Festival in the Owens Park.

Pinion has carefully listened to what Owens said in the film. He really glued his eyes and ears to the monitor when Owens told what he did with the oak trees he was awarded with each gold medal.

In the video, Owens said he planted one of the trees in his mother's back yard in Cleveland. Another went to his high school and Ohio State received the third. The fourth tree died.

When the museum is officially dedicated on May 16, Pinion said Owens' widow, Ruth, will plant an oak tree in the park.

"The tree will be just like the one Jesse won at the Olympics," he said.

According to Owens' widow, two of the trees are still living. The one at Owens' high school had to be removed when the facility was expanded.

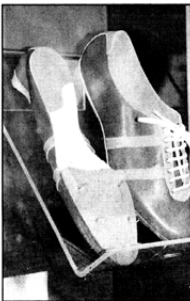
"There's something about Jesse and the word oak," Pinion said. "He was born in Oakville. He's buried in Oakwood Cemetery in Chicago, and he received four oak trees in Germany."

Many of the life-size photographs in the museum are of scenes in Germany. There are pictures showing his record-setting performances at Ohio State.

Perhaps the most impressive parts of the museum, however, are the sections which show Owens as a father, as a husband, as a humanitarian, as a man who believed in America, even when the four gold medals were not enough to overcome the grip of racism.

"It's really a shame what he had to do to make a living," said James Pinion, a charter member of the park board.

"Jesse traveled the world spreading goodwill," Pinion continued.



The replica of Owens' 1936 Olympic shoes were donated to the museum. (Staff photo by Deangelo McDaniel)

"Despite all his humanitarian work, he had a hard time making a living. After the Olympics, a lot of job offers fell through. He had to do odds and ends to make ends meet for his family. This wasn't right. This man was a hero for America."

If what Owens accomplished was measured by today's standards, Pinion said he would have been an instant millionaire.

The museum didn't cut out the humiliating part of Owens' life. There are photos of him racing against horses and of him racing against men riding buggies being pulled by horses.

But there are also the giant photos of Owens working with Boy Scout troops. Many of the pictures show him speaking to civic groups. It's evident that Owens enjoyed working with America's youth.

"He was very articulate," Buchanan said. "He used that talent to help young people. We wanted to show this side of him in the muse-

um. Most people think about the four gold medals. They were a big part of his life, but Jesse was so much more."

The museum talks about five stages of Owens' life. It starts with his days in Oakville, then journeys to Cleveland. After that, there is his tenure at Ohio State, followed by his record-setting performance at the Olympics. The fifth stage talks about Owens' life after the Olympics.

"There is no place you can learn more about Jesse Owens than in this museum," Buchanan said.

Some of the information in the museum reveals that Owens made \$30 per week as a playground instructor in 1936. In 1940, he used money from racing horses to resume his studies at Ohio State, according to another display.

"Look at this," Buchanan said while pointing to a large photo of Owens working with scouts. "This is what people don't know about this man. He spent his entire life helping others, even sometimes at the expense of his family. When we were putting the museum together, the one thing I learned about Jesse that sticks out is that he had a God-loving talent for youth."

The park board spent about two years collecting memorabilia for the museum. Many of the items, such as the uniforms Owens wore at the Olympics, at Ohio State and in high school, are replicas. Adidas made and donated a replica of the track shoes Owens used in Germany.

A lot of the items, however were donated by the family. The museum contains Olympic passes for Jesse and his wife, Ruth, to the XXI Olympic games in Montreal. The family also donated the 1936 Olympic program and a camera used by Owens at the games.

The International Olympic Committee denied the museum's

request to make replicas of the gold medals.

Three of the original medals and a replica of the fourth are housed in the archives at Ohio State. Pinion said the OSU archives contained thousands of personal items belonging to Owens, including a plaque from former Alabama governor George Wallace and a plaque from the citizens of Oakville.

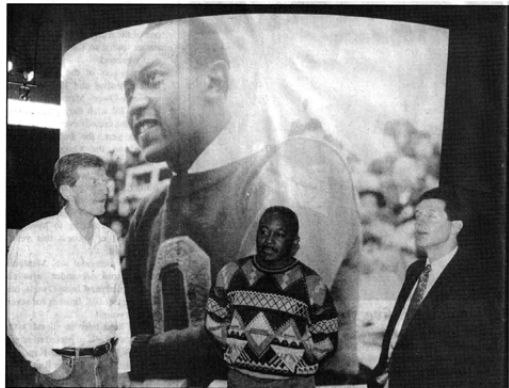
"We hope to have those in the museum one day," he said.

Pinion has no doubt that the world will always remember Jesse Owens.

"He's known worldwide and respected by a lot of people in Germany," he said. "I've talked to a lot of German people and they don't want to talk about Hitler. They want to talk about Jesse. I have yet to find one person who doesn't know Jesse Owens. That says something about his legacy."



The 1936 Olympic program and camera used by Jesse Owens at the games were donated by the family. The shoes are a replica. (Staff photo by Deangelo McDaniel)



From left: Owens Park Board members James Pinion, Henry Buchanan and Philip Reich stand in front of one of the large photos in the museum. (Staff photo by Deangelo McDaniel)