

Jesse and Luz – A century since their birth – Is their legend still stronger than the truth?*

By Volker Kluge



The Long family:
Heinrich (1920–1940),
father Carl Hermann
(1875–1945), Elfriede
(1910–1986), mother
Johanna (1885–1976),
Charlotte (1911–2010),
Carl Ludwig (1913–
1943) in the uniform
of the Scouts, and
Sebastian (1914–1966).

Photo: Exhibition "Der weite Sprung" 27 April – 24 July 2013, Sportmuseum Leipzig / Maria Schwartz

The year 1913 has entered the great historical panorama of last century as the last year of innocence. Even though two consecutive wars raged in the Balkans, the Americans and the Germans considered the world to be reasonably "in order". In New York one of the most famous railway stations in the world, the Grand Central Terminal was officially opened on 1st February. A month later Woodrow Wilson became the 28th President of the USA, and on 3rd July the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg was commemorated. It is considered one of the turning points of the American Civil War. A week later a temperature of 56.7 degrees Celsius was measured in Death Valley – an American record.

In Germany Kaiser Wilhelm II celebrated his silver jubilee. Among the celebratory events at which he was present was the opening of the "Deutsches Stadion" in Charlottenburg near Berlin, where the Olympic Games were due to be held in 1916. In the autumn, a huge monument was unveiled in Leipzig to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the "Battle of the Nations" when the allied and Prussian forces defeated Napoleon. Some 91 m high, it had been some 15 years in the making. The spirit of 1813, the victory over France in the war of 1870–71 and the foundation of the Reich which followed all contributed to an atmosphere of

swaggering nationalism. Without these events the year 1914 cannot be understood.

Not far from the Battle of the Nations Memorial, at No. 23 Reitzenhainer Street in Leipzig-Reudnitz¹, a boy called Hermann Carl Ludwig Long was born on 27th April 1913. Later when he joined the Leipzig Sport-Club (LSC) he became known as "Luz".² Long's father Carl Hermann was the proprietor of the "Schwanen-Apotheke". According to family legend the great-great grandfather was still called Roßian Lange, which was changed by the "Grande Armée", in which he had served as a trumpeter in the Strasbourg garrison, into the French "Long".

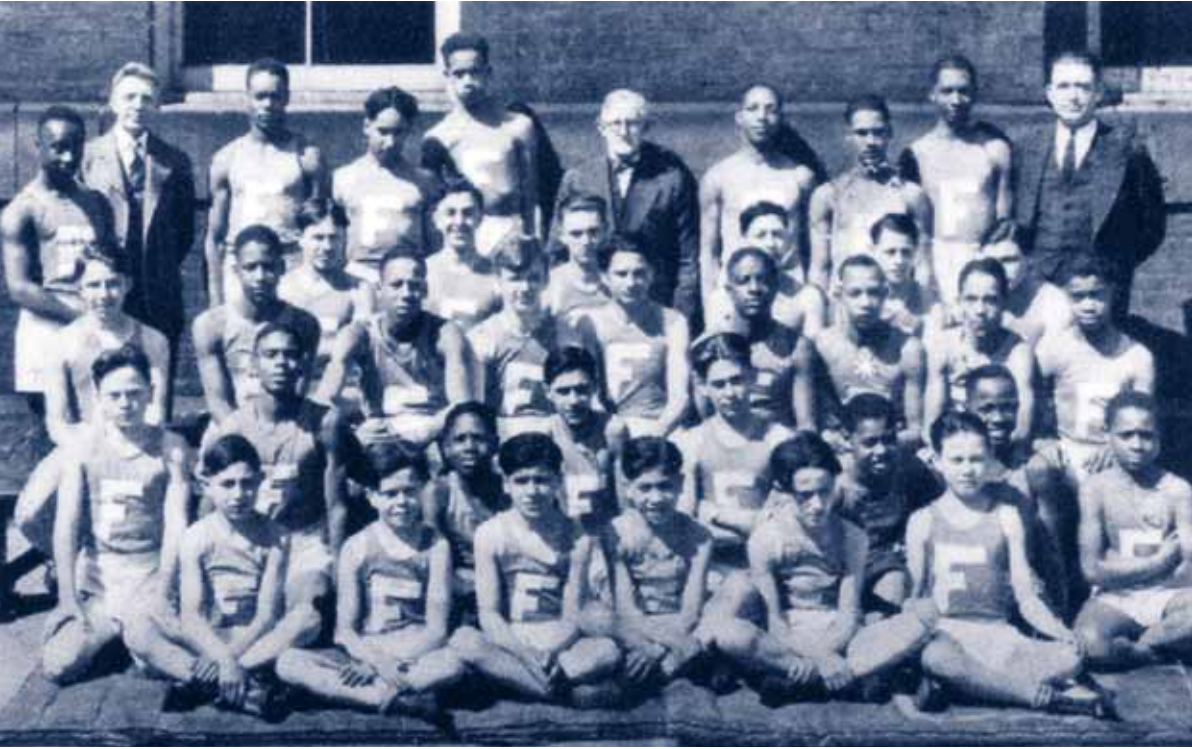
On his mother's side of the family tree, a well-known chemistry professor can be found. Justus von Liebig (1803–1873) – the great-great grandfather of Luz Long, who had the good fortune to grow up in a well-placed family in the prosperous trade fair city of Leipzig. The family were able to afford a 14,000 m² plot on the former battlefield and there to build, in the year the First World War began, a summer house that was lived in permanently by the family from 1922 onwards.³

What a contrast to the miserable hut in which a certain James Cleveland Owens came into the world on 12th September 1913, some four and a half months after Long. The tenth child of Mary Emma and Henry Owens, he was a skinny and sickly child. His parents earned their living like thousands of other black families as farmers. In addition they cultivated some land as share croppers in a small community called Oakville in the south-eastern corner of Lawrence County, Alabama. This was a piece of land from which they harvested a modest amount, half of which was needed to pay the rent.⁴ But when one year weevils destroyed their entire harvest and the family was close to starvation, they sold their wretched property and left the segregated South. They were part of the first great migration which lasted from 1910 to around 1930. It saw the movement of some 1.6 million Afro-Americans. The Owens family moved to Cleveland, Ohio, where one of their three daughters – Lillie – already lived. There the father found work in the ore-mining industry.

"J.C.", as the young Owens was called by his parents, brothers and sisters, began to attend the Bolton Elementary School. When a teacher asked his first name and he spoke these initials, she misheard this as

The Fairmount's championship indoor track team 1928. Jesse Owens sits in the third row (third from right).

Photo: The Ohio State University Archives



"Jesse". This misunderstanding gave him the nickname that would become famous around the world.

From 1927 Owens attended the Fairmount Junior High School, where Charles Riley⁵ became his gym teacher and recognised his sporting potential. He took the quick-witted young man into his own family and became like a second father to him. It was thanks to him that Owens was able to attend school during the Great Depression.

Under Riley's guidance, Owens ran the 100 yards under 11 seconds for the first time – a new Junior High School record, followed by records in the high jump (1.83 m) and the long jump (7.02 m). When Owens transferred to Cleveland's East Technical School in 1930, he remained with Riley, whom the new head coach, who had little experience of athletics, had asked for support. After a further two years under Riley's tutelage, Owens took part in the Midwest tryout in Chicago for the 1932 US Olympic team. But in that competition the 18 year old was up against stars like Eddie Tolan and Ralph Metcalfe and he was outclassed. To his great disappointment he did not manage to qualify for the final tryouts in Palo Alto. His head was elsewhere. His girlfriend Minnie Ruth Salomon, two years younger than him, was eighth months pregnant. Gloria, the first of their eventual three daughters, was born during the Olympic Games – on 8th August 1932 – and it was two years before a marriage took place.⁶ Owens however proved that he had not forgotten how to run. In a post-Olympic competition in Cleveland, he beat the German Erich Borchmeyer, who had reached the semi-final of the 100 m in Los Angeles. The pair would see one another again four years later in the Berlin Olympic final.

High Jump or Long Jump?

While Owens could only initially attend a village school with a single class, Long spent his first four years of schooling at a private institution. In 1923 he joined the Scouts and transferred to the venerable Leipzig Nikolai-Gymnasium, where Richard Wagner had been taught music. Long's parents set great store by the musical education of their son. He took piano lessons, and after he had acquired the basics of harmony, he began to compose and to experiment with fashionable jazz.

His sporting career began in 1924 when he became a member of the Verein für Bewegungsspiele⁷ (VfB) Leipzig, where he joined the football section, which had a glorious history: in 1903 the VfB had won the first German championship, to which were added two further titles in 1906 and 1913. But this hard proletarian game was obviously not for him in the long run. He was a lanky, long-legged blond lad. In 1928 he took to the water. His name appears in the lists of the "Sturmvogel" Rowing Club at his school.

"A sports enthusiast from childhood, I built myself a jumping pit at the age of ten." With these words Long began a brief summary of his career, published in 1937 in the *Reichssportblatt*. It continued: "Practised all sports until my 16th year, I joined the Leipzig Sport-Club. At 18 I high-jumped 1.80 m and long-jumped 6.50 m. My sports teacher Georg Richter decided that my special event would be the long jump."⁸

As a photo shows, he had laid out a long jump run-up and pit in his parents' garden near the hen run. His first recorded performance was however in

Luz Long built his first long jump pit in his parents' garden near the chicken run .



the high jump. On 2nd July 1929 Long, now 16 years old won his age-group at the Leipzig Sport-Club (LSC) championships with 1.55 m.⁹ Six days later he became an official member of the LSC, where the gymnastics and sports teacher Georg Richter became his coach. Richter had been part of football championship victory in 1913 with VfB.¹⁰

Like Owens, Long took a long time to decide if he should opt for high or long jump. The performance level was about the same: in 1932 he leapt over seven metres for the first time (7.06 m on 19th June 1932 in Halle/Saale), thus placing himself 13th on the German annual ranking list. In the high jump he was 31st with a clearance of 1.805 m. Had he been so inclined he would surely have excelled in that event as well. He was now 1.84 m tall and weighed 72 kg. Even his few excursions in the decathlon were promising.¹¹ However with a 100 m best of 10.8 s (1935) he was nowhere near as fast as Owens, who by 1933 had already equalled the 100 yards world record of 9.4 s, which equated to a 100 m time of 10.3 s.¹²

In comparison to him Long's development was a bit slower. There was a reason for this restraint: as he grew older he could not cope with the elite atmosphere of his high school. In 1932 he transferred for that reason to the Friedrich-List-Realgymnasium, where he took his leaving certificate exams almost two years later than normal but this made sure of his university place. Until he matriculated in the Faculty of Law of Leipzig University for the autumn semester, he worked as an intern at the Hammer & Schmidt Bank.¹³

"The blacks must be excluded!"

At the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam the US team, consisting exclusively of white athletes, had won no medals in the 100 and 200 m. Even more painful to the Americans was that the German boxer Max Schmeling had defeated Jack Sharkey for the world heavyweight title two years later in the Yankee Stadium in New York, this being regarded as the most significant sporting title. With Schmeling, 177,000 dollars crossed the Atlantic.

Certainly Sharkey took the World Championship belt off him two years later, but lost it in 1933 to the Italian

Primo Carnera, so that more large sums of money went off to Europe.

For America boxing seemed to have reached a low point. It took some time for it to dawn on promoters that the prostrate business would only get on its feet again when they dropped the "Color Line". They had drawn that line themselves twenty years before, after the giant Jack Johnson had defeated their idol Jim Jeffries in Reno in 1910. This which was regarded by many white Americans as a humiliation.

In this respect the universities in the American North were already farther on. When the black athlete Eddie Tolan, only 1.70 m tall, won the National Inter-scholastic Championships in 1927 over 100 and 220 yards, he received no fewer than seven offers, whereupon he decided on the University of Michigan. He did not qualify for the Olympic team in 1928, but excelled himself four years later when he won the 100 and 200 m gold medals in Los Angeles, whereupon the *Völkischer Beobachter* asked the "race question". In the propaganda newspaper cum battle organ of the National Socialists, who were reaching out for power in Germany, under the provocative headline "Negros have no place at the Olympics" was written:

*While in the past only free Hellenes were permitted to compete, one can today experience that free men often has to compete for the laurels of victory with unfree blacks, with negros. That is an incomparable disgrace and degradation of the Olympic Idea, and the ancient Greeks would turn in their graves if they knew what modern people had done with their sacred national Games ... The next Olympic Games take place in 1936 in Berlin. It is to be hoped that the responsible men know what their duty is. The blacks must be excluded. We expect it.*¹⁴

Less than six months later Adolf Hitler became Reich Chancellor. He decided to support the 1936 Olympic Games. These had been awarded to Berlin before he came to power. The President of the Organising Committee, Theodor Lewald, had in a lecture given Hitler a taste of "the enormous propaganda effect for Germany" of the Games.¹⁵

That year Owens matriculated at Ohio State University, where he was given a coach in the person of Larry Snyder¹⁶, who prepared him and the high jumper David Albritton for 1936.

The admission to the university on account of his sporting talent, which was not a formality – of 10,000 students only about 100 were blacks. As study was not yet associated with a scholarship, he initially had to keep his head above water with various jobs – as a salesman or lift operative. Four decades later Owens spoke in an interview about his motivation to train daily from then on:



Luz Long in the vest of the Leipzig Sport-Club, around 1934.

Photos: Exhibition "Der weite Sprung" 27 April – 24 July 2013, Sportmuseum Leipzig/Maria Schwartz

*I was born on a farm in Alabama, a sharecropper's son. I didn't want the life my father lived. I looked forward to having a family, to educating my family and I had some ability. That was the ability to run. Let me use that ability to achieve what I want.*¹⁷

There was soon little doubt that Owens' would be the big Olympic favourite going into Berlin. Certainly this was so from the 25th May 1935, when Owens set six world records inside 45 minutes at the Big Ten Championships in Ann Arbor, Michigan.¹⁸ Even the *Reichssportblatt* which appeared in Berlin was convinced that there would be "no one to match for Owens' speed". The prophecy for 1936 was: "Owens will do in Berlin what his fellow negro did in Los Angeles; he will take both sprints, the 100 and 200 metres."¹⁹ Only his prospects in the long jump remained uncertain. With just one attempt Owens reached 8.13 m, but as the 21 year old had never appeared outside the USA, it was thought that "he could win only without strong opposition".²⁰

It would be going too far at this point to examine the American boycott movement more closely. It came in response to the Nazi race ideology which denied the Jews a right to exist and declared the black population to be second-class human beings. Even after his 1936 victory in the high jump the American Cornelius Johnson was described in the same terms as a beast of prey, to which the writer attributed a "animal-like, pantherish perfection", an animal which acted only instinctively, while the "white race" was accustomed to achieve its performances by using its intelligence.²¹

What is remarkable in this connection is that only a few black athletes spoke up in the boycott discussion. They had experienced their own discrimination in the USA every day, so it might have expected that they would have sympathy for the fate of the German Jews. The statement by Owens made on the WLW radio station "if there is discrimination against minorities in Germany then the Olympics must be withdrawn", is an exception. However when the American Youth Congress wanted to invite him as a speaker, Snyder forbade him from taking part with the justification that "Owens is at the top of the world now, but if he speaks at your meeting, he will find himself at the bottom of the ash can. He will be the forgotten man."²²

In order to thwart the threatened American boycott, the German propaganda machine, directed by Joseph Goebbels, had switched direction from 1933, so that hate-filled articles as in the *Völkischer Beobachter* no longer appeared in the press. This was of course only a temporary measure. However the basic position of the Nazis remained unchanged. This assumed the existence of a "master race", which all others had to serve. And so Alfred Rosenberg, who presented himself as the "philosopher of the movement", described in

his shoddy book "Myth of the 20th Century", of which more than a million copies were printed, the "basis of equality of all races and religions" as "nonsensical" and recommended that the Americans solve the "nigger question" by "starting to repatriate the blacks to Africa".²³

In the estate of Luz Long, who had been raised by his parents to be a cultivated citizen, there is no evidence that he adopted such misanthropic theories. However



they certainly did not pass him by, for they were to be found in publications that were part of the obligatory literature that formed the world view of German Olympic candidates. Besides the slanderous writings of Bruno Malitz²⁴, other important material in this context included the "Deutschkunde" of "Reichsdietwart" Kurt Münch²⁵ as well as pseudo-scientific works like "Volk und Rasse" and "Sport und Rasse"²⁶, which tried to prove a general superiority of the "Aryans".

In respect of objective sporting results such contentions were on shaky ground, so that all sorts of political "spin" was necessary to prepare the Germans for the expected Olympic successes of Afro-American athletes. Reichstrainer Josef Waitzer writing in the *Reichssportblatt* addressed the question "Why do the negroes run so fast?" by referring to their "more favourable anatomical structure" as the consequence of a "life primarily as warriors and hunters".²⁷

High jump or long jump? Owens trains in the Columbus Ohio Stadium, opened in 1922. Right, coach Larry Snyder. In 2001 the Jesse Owens Memorial Stadium in the neighbourhood was inaugurated.

Photo: The Ohio State University Archives

Directly before the Olympic Games Goebbels received an unexpected boost from Max Schmeling's K.O. victory against the "Brown Bomber" Joe Louis. This came after the Reich propaganda minister, in anticipation of a defeat, had previously indicated to the media to abandon the idea of a "confrontation between representatives of the white and black races" and instead to "restrict themselves to an appreciation of the sporting aspect".²⁸ With the arrival of the first teams a general prohibition came into force:

*The racial point of view should on no account be used in discussion of the sporting results; especially the negroes should not be offended as regards their sensibilities ... Negroes are American citizens and must be treated accordingly. That does not exclude us from mentioning as an aside that a negro is the winner.*²⁹

In the next few days the National Socialist press received several warnings not to report on the Games "with racist points of view" and to tone down the rejoicing over German successes.³⁰ Not until the second week of the Games, when their success was assured, did the editors return to the racist repertoire, to denigrate the dominance of the US athletes:

*However, if they had not had their black auxiliaries at their disposal, then it would have ... not looked so good for them. Then the blond German Long would have won the long jump and the gallant Italian Lanzi the 800 m. But the negroes were unbeatable.*³¹

The staging of the "friendship experience"

Long had first participated in the German Championships in 1932 in Hannover, but with a leap of 6.60 m, he missed the qualifying distance for the long jump final by ten centimetres. A year later came the breakthrough. To general surprise the 20 year old won the title in Cologne, and in his first attempt he set a European record with 7.65 m. This eclipsed a mark of 7.61 m set by the Irishman Peter O'Connor which had stood since 1901. Long was

at the top of the world rankings in front of Jesse Owens and the Japanese Olympic triple jump champion of 1932, Chuhei Nambu, who had both leapt 7.60 m.

In 1934 Long repeated his championship success. He also won at the "Deutsche Kampfspiele" in Nuremberg, which had been founded as a "replacement Olympics" in 1922. He was beaten by fellow-countryman Wilhelm Leichum, who tore the European record from his grasp with 7.65 m during an international match against Sweden.³² A week later at the inaugural European Championships in Turin, where he won the bronze medal behind Leichum and the Norwegian Otto Berg.

Leichum, was a professional soldier in the new Wehrmacht and was able to train under almost professional conditions at the Army Sports School at Wünsdorf. In 1935 he was the unchallenged national number one with two European records (7.69 and 7.73 m). For the first time, Long had the chance to get used to the non-European competition. At the University World Championships in Budapest he came second to the Japanese Naoto Tajima, who was to win bronze in the long jump and gold in the triple jump in the 1936 Olympics.

At the request of his university, Owens began the Olympic year without an indoor season. Not until March, when he was back to training each day ("never more than 45 minutes"³³), did he run the 50 yards in Cleveland – and lost to Eulace Peacock. Peacock, younger by a year, who had beaten him in seven times in ten races in 1935. He also lost to him at the AAU Championships in the long jump as well, so Peacock seemed to be the only one who might present a threat be a danger to Owens at the Olympic Games. But the duel did not happen, as Peacock injured himself in the spring.

Long had also given up a winter semester in his studies and not taken part in indoor competitions, so as to be able to concentrate completely on Olympic participation. On 7th June 1936 he achieved a personal best of 7.72 m in Jena, but lost to Leichum, who again set a European record, by four centimetres. A week later Long reversed the sequence. At the Leipzig City Championships he took back the European record with 7.81 m; next he improved it at the German Championships on 11th July 1936 in the Berlin Mommsen Stadium to 7.82 m. That same day Owens won at the US trials at the Randell's Island Stadium with the same distance.

Before the Games Owens led with 7.996 m, with which he had won the AAU Championship on 7th July in Princeton, followed by his compatriot Robert Clark (7.91 m), Long (7.82 m) and Leichum (7.76 m). Thus Owens was clearly the favourite for Berlin. Since he had also qualified for the two short sprints, there were doubts as to whether after four races over 100 m and two over 200 m he would have sufficient strength for an exceptional jumping performance.³⁴



2.8. (Sunday)	10.00	100 m heat
	15.00	100 m 2 nd round
3.8. (Monday)	15.00	100 m semifinal
	17.00	100 m final
4.8. (Tuesday)	10.30	200 m heat
		long jump qualification
	15.30	200 m 2 nd round
5.8. (Wednesday)	16.30	long jump final
	15.00	200 m semifinal
8.8. (Saturday)	18.00	200 m final
	15.00	4x100 m heat
9.8. (Sunday)	15.15	4x100 m final



An organisational mess-up: the men's high jump on the first day was interrupted by twelve victory ceremonies for the Olympic Art Competitions. Then the Berlin Olympic Stadium emptied save for a few spectators. Not until 20.00 was it possible to continue with the jump-off for the silver medal. In the photo: victory ceremony in the category of Lyrical Works. The second-placed Italian Bruno Fattori had initially not even travelled to Berlin.

Photo: Hans Helmut Stoiber Archives

After an eight day crossing on the "S.S. Manhattan" the US Olympic team arrived on 24th July 1936 in Hamburg. They went to Berlin in two special trains; in the late afternoon the more than 300 competitors and officials moved into their 13 houses in the Olympic Village on Sachsenweg. Owens, who on arrival had already been marvelled at as a "weird animal", shared a room with Cornelius Johnson in the "Haus Bautzen"³⁵. Because of the cool and often rainy weather of the first days he hid away mostly in his lodgings, where he frittered away the time with his black teammates playing poker. When he then did his first training session on the sports ground, the whole Olympic Village had gathered to see this "sensation".³⁶

Since 1936, much has been written of Hitler's alleged refusal to shake hands with Owens after his 100 m victory, so much so that the episode can be passed over here. By now just about everyone should know that Owens did not win his gold medal until the second day of competition, by which time IOC President Henry de Baillet-Latour had already forbidden Hitler to pose with the medal winners in front of the cameras.

Since then the criticism has concentrated on the fact that Hitler and his entourage left the tribune of honour prematurely on the first evening, which is taken to be an affront to the two Afro-Americans Johnson and Albritton, who were both trying to win medals in the high jump. However a glance at the programme shows that the contest, that had begun at 17.30 with eleven athletes, was interrupted after an hour by the victory ceremonies for the shot put and 10,000 m, followed by no fewer than twelve victory ceremonies in the Olympic Art Competitions³⁷ – an unparalleled organisational

error. When the high jump did finally resume at eight o'clock in the evening with the jump-off for the silver medal, not only Hitler's box but almost the whole stadium was empty.³⁸

Even the "Führer's" pronouncements on the black athletes are not recorded, it is surely reasonable to assume that his views can hardly have been much different from the diary entries of his propaganda minister, who noted after the second day of competition: "We Germans achieve one gold medal, the Americans three, two of them being negroes. That is a disgrace. White humanity should be ashamed of itself."³⁹ There was no mention of the name of Jesse Owens, who had won the long jump that day.

It was a mammoth programme that Owens had undertaken. After the 100 m, there followed the next morning (10.30 am) the long jump qualification, for which he appeared late, because it coincided with the 200 m heats. In contrast Long, who had been drawn in the same group, was rested. On the Saturday after the Opening Ceremony he had gone back to his home town and only returned to Berlin on the Monday, where he spent the night, not in the Olympic Village but in a hotel.

For Owens it was thus not a favourable situation, as Long described a few days later in a newspaper article he had authorised:

Owens appears. He has just had the 200 m heats, so comes late to the long jump, briefly measures his run-up, gets ready to start rather casually, runs in a tracksuit – through the pit. Poor Jesse, don't you know that are no practice jumps? The fantastically exact judging panel will not be moved. The first jump is over. Rather embittered, Jesse Owens takes his second



Ein Ozean liegt zwischen den Welten, in denen die beiden Kämpfer zu Hause sind – aber olympische Sportkameradschaft verbindet sie. Luz Long und Jesse Owens nach dem großen Kampf in Weitsprung.
Foto: Rübel

Ein Ozean liegt zwischen den Welten, in denen die beiden Kämpfer zu Hause sind – aber olympische Sportkameradschaft verbindet sie. Luz Long und Jesse Owens nach dem großen Kampf in Weitsprung.
Foto: Rübel

A mighty ocean separates the homes of these two broad jumpers, Luz Long and Jesse Owens but the Olympic spirit brings them together

Un océan sépare les deux continents où demeurent ces deux athlètes, mais l'amitié sportive les rapproche. L. Long (All.) et Jesse Owens (E.-U.) après leur lutte serrée dans le saut en longueur

According to the trilingual caption the photo shows Jesse Owens and Luz Long "after the great contest in the long jump". In fact the "friendship photos" were posed for in a break between the first rounds and the final.

Photo: Reichssportblatt / Lothar Rübel

jump – a foul! I hardly dare to think that there might be a sensation and Owens would be thrown out after a third failure? No! Owens' nerves are not that bad. He safely jumps around 7.60 m. Now I know there will a bitter struggle in the afternoon.⁴⁰

Long's account differs however from a report in the specialist magazine *Der Leichtathlet*. According to that, both reached the required distance of 7.15 m in the second round, a distance that was clearly marked and the achievement of which was marked by the judges only by the raising of a white flag.⁴¹

The final, for which 16 athletes had qualified, began at 16.30, by which time Owens already had another race – the 200 m second round races were held an hour earlier – in his legs. As in the morning, the first jumps were held on the opposite straights, on which a gusty cold wind was blowing. Owens, third to jump, reached 7.74 on his first jump, while Long was satisfied with a typical safety jump of 7.54 m. In the second round Owens improved to 7.87 m, announced over the stadium loudspeaker as a new Olympic record, although all the results were helped by a following wind that was too strong. Next Long achieved 7.74 m, and in his third jump of 7.84 m got within three centimetres of Owens.

The final jump-off of the best six⁴² took place in the arena on the finishing straight side, where in the meantime Hitler, as on the preceding days, had taken his seat on the tribune of honour. With his fourth jump Long reached 7.73 m, while Owens' leap of eight metres was ruled a foul. The gold medal was within Long's grasp, when in his fifth jump he drew level with the American on 7.87 m. But the illusion dissolved a few

minutes later when Owens replied with 7.94 m. Even without that improvement Long would not have led, although he had a better second jump. In the rules at the time it stated: "In the case of equal performances, a jump-off of a single attempt decides the result."⁴³ Such consideration became superfluous when Long ran through the pit in the last round and Owens landed at 8.06 m.

In Leni Riefenstahl's first Olympia film the long jump occupies a significant place along with the marathon, the final event.⁴⁴ As in other sequences the competition is shortened, changed and dramatised. The film commentary runs as follows:

*In the long jump the struggle for a decision between the German Lutz [sic!] Long and the fastest runner in the world Jesse Owens has sharpened up 7.54 m Jesse Owens 7.74 m – 20 cm further than Long, and now again Long 7.84 m – the German leads. Owens 7.87 m – another 3 cm further – Lutz Long 7.87 m, as far as Jesse Owens! – new European record! And once again Jesse Owens 8.06 m! New world record – gold medal for America!*⁴⁵

What the film does not show are "scenes of friendship" which were posed after the early rounds on the edge of the northern part of the site – an absolutely unusual photo-shoot, for nobody knows who arranged it, nor could its purpose be inferred at first glance. The shots that were taken, which exist in various versions, show Owens and Long lying relaxed on the grass and smiling at each other in a friendly way.⁴⁶ In the *Reichssportblatt*, which published one of the photos, the trilingual caption ran: "A mighty ocean separates the homes of these two broadjumpers, Luz Long and Jesse Owens, but the Olympic spirit brings them together."⁴⁷

Why Riefenstahl did not use these pictures, although they fulfilled her intention to show Germany as a hospitable country, can only be guessed at. As the film was not premiered until one and a half years later, on 20 April 1938 – Hitler's 49th birthday – the NS regime, whose brutality had long been exposed, no longer needed such symbolic pictures, and indeed these photos could only confuse the "Volksgenossen" ["national citizens"] to whom the separation of races was constantly preached. Also there is a hint in Long's mother's memories with the remark that her son, who had spontaneously congratulated Owens after the competition and linked arms with him after the victory ceremony, was instructed by Hitler's deputy Rudolf Heß "never again to embrace a negro".⁴⁸

It is in particular those photos that contributed to the legend that Owens and Long in this competition had become friends for life. In Long's page-long report for a newspaper there is no mention of this. On the contrary,

he comes across as downright conformist with the regime:

A glance towards the Führer, he sits tense, is completely under the spell of this struggle, it's all about Germany, it's about the struggle between "White", "Black" and "Yellow", that is obvious! ... A glance at the public, who are unwilling to calm down, then a glance at the Führer's box, what? The whole box in uproar? The Führer applauds enthusiastically, next to him Minister Dr. Frick, Reichssportführer von Tschammer und Osten. I go and stand under the box, thankfully greeting my Führer. And I can scarcely believe it, he stands up, greets me from above with his kind, fatherly smile, in his eyes the only wish he has, that I might be victorious.⁴⁹

Certainly we cannot exclude the possibility that Long received some official "help" in writing this article. It does seem likely that he was the author because it contains honest praise to his conqueror:

I can do nothing else, I run to him, I am the first to embrace him with congratulations, he answers me: "You forced me to give my best!" It is for me the highest recognition of a sportsman to have forced him to give his utmost.⁵⁰

Fifteen years later Owens came back for the first time to a divided Berlin. He accompanied the Harlem Globetrotters, who put on a display match on 22nd August 1951 in the Olympic Stadium. Invitations had gone out from the American High Commission, which was trying to gain German sympathy in the middle of the Korean War. To the applause of 60,000 spectators Owens ran a lap of honour and then spoke in memory of Luz Long, who had been killed in the Second World War. Owens had met Long's widow, now re-married and his son Kai previously in Hamburg.

At this point there was still no talk of a true friendship. Rather the central point of discussion was the statement by West Berlin Mayor Walter Schreiber that "Berlin and the whole of Germany thought in 1936 that it was a national disgrace that Hitler had not shaken hands with Jesse Owens as he did with all the other champions".⁵¹

It was not until the mid 1960s that a change of paradigm occurred.⁵² The American film producer Bud Greenspan had a part in that. In June 1964, Greenspan was filming the documentary film "Jesse Owens returns to Berlin" in the Olympic Stadium and had engaged Kai Long to take part. To his astonishment Owens recounted on camera:

And your father came to my assistance. And he helped me measure a foot back of the takeoff board – and then I came down and I hit between these two marks. And there I qualified. And that led to the victory in the running broad jump.⁵³

The next day Owens repeated this story, which was supposed to have happened during the qualification, in more or less identical words to the press:

Now everything hung on a silk thread, on a single jump. Then Luz came to me, laid his hand on my shoulder and said: "Stay calm, Jesse. We'll manage it." And he drew my attention to a mistake in my run-up, he took the tape in his hand to measure everything exactly for me. "That's OK now", he said. "Run up as you always do and you'll hit the board just right." And that's the way it was. I had overcome the hardest hurdle. Thank you, Luz!⁵⁴

A further four years later a legend had definitively built up, when a so-called autobiography with the title "Blackthink. My Life as Black Man and White Man" appeared to which the children's author Paul Neimark had made a significant contribution.⁵⁵ The Olympic happenings are described in a chapter entitled "Open Letter to a Young Negro", which however is strewn with inaccuracies, so that the German publisher took twelve pages to insert no less than 14 footnotes, the first of which ran as follows: "The following account however contains some factual errors which must be corrected on the basis of official documents. Obviously Jesse Owens could no longer for understandable reasons no longer recall these details exactly. The factual corrections change nothing in the central part of the narrative – the experience of friendship with Luz Long."⁵⁶

In the chapter with which Owens obviously intended to have a mediating effect of the rebellious black young people of the 1960s, he came to speak about the qualification and the problems associated with it:

But I felt I had to make a showing right then. I measured off my steps from the takeoff board and got ready. Suddenly an American newspaperman came up to me. "Is this true, Jesse?" He said.

"Is what true?" I answered.

"That Hitler walked out on you? That he wouldn't watch you jump?"



1951 Jesse Owens returns to the Olympic Stadium in Berlin for the the first time since his great Olympic triumph.

Photo: picture-alliance



A man who had it made: with four Olympic gold medals in his luggage Jesse Owens took the train in August 1936 from Waterloo Station to Southampton to board the "Queen Mary" to New York. Hitler, with his hands in his pockets, could only look on (below).

Photo: The Ohio State University Archives

Cartoon: Willard Mullin, New York World-Telegram and Sun

I looked over at where the German ruler had been sitting. No one was in his box. A minute ago he had been there.⁵⁷

The German footnote at this place reads: "Hitler did not enter the stadium that day until 15.30. He never visited the Olympic Stadium in the mornings."⁵⁸

Were one to believe the book, Owens was gripped by panic that morning in the park: Hitler run away, hundreds of thousands of roaring Germans, unfair officials who said his jumps were invalid – but then everything became all right:

Suddenly I felt a firm hand on my arm. I turned and looked into the sky-blue eyes of my worst enemy.

"Hello, Jesse Owens," he said. "I am Luz Long."

I nodded. I couldn't speak.

"Look," he said. "There is no time to waste with manners. What has taken your goat?"

I had to smile a little in spite of myself—hearing his mixed-up American idiom.

"Aww, nothing," I said. "You know how it is."

He was silent for a few seconds. "Yes," he said finally, "I know how it is. But I also know you are a better jumper than this. Now, what has taken your goat?"

I laughed out loud this time. But I couldn't tell him, him above all. I glanced over at the broad jump pit. I was about to be called.

Luz didn't waste words, even if he wasn't sure of which ones to use.

"Is it what Reichskanzler Hitler did?" he asked.

I was thunderstruck that he'd say it. "I"—"I started to answer. But I didn't know what to say.

"I see," he said. "Look, we talk about that later. Now you must jump. And you must qualify."

"But how?" I shot back ...

Luz talked quickly. "Then you do both things, Jesse. You remeasure your steps. You take off six inches behind the foul board. You jump as hard as you can. But you need not fear to foul."

All at one the panic emptied out of me like a cloud-burst.

Of course!⁵⁹

In this case it is harder to distinguish in the reports of witnesses between fiction and truth. Thus the bronze medallist in the women's high jump, Elfried Kaun, reported to me in an interview for a documentary film about the Olympic Village: "I got to know Jesse Owens through Luz Long. The two of them were friends ... With them we occasionally went through the Berlin bars when everything was finished and we had free time."⁶⁰

A later factual check established however that Owens had to compete between the 2nd and 9th August except on the 6th and 7th (see table p. 30), and Luz Long – a fact hitherto barely noticed – took part in the triple jump

on 6th August, finishing 10th. Taking account of the victory ceremonies and the necessary travelling times to the Olympic Village, 14 km away from the stadium, it becomes clear that the "pub crawl" mentioned by Elfriede Kaun can hardly have taken place. That is all the more probable, since her own competition fell on the last day of athletics, and Owens, who had on the same day won his fourth gold medal in the 4x100 m relay, travelled the next morning to Cologne to take part in the ASV post-Olympic sports meeting and lost to his compatriot Ralph Metcalfe over 100 m. Two days later, on 13th August, he ran in Bochum, where with a long jump of 7.02 m he had to accept a second defeat at the hands of the Olympic fourth placer Wilhelm Leichum (7.25 m).

On 15th August 1936 Owens competed for the last time in London in the match between the British Empire and the USA. Since he refused to take part in the Scandinavia tour that was to follow and instead travelled back on the "Queen Mary" to the USA, where a professional contract worth 25,000 dollars was awaiting him, the President of the American Olympic Committee, Avery Brundage, used the final day of the Olympic Games for a press conference, at which he announced Owens' suspension for life.⁶¹

Despite the problems at the end, Owens however brought back only positive impressions from Germany. He described Long as a "great athlete" and said "that German food is good". He contradicted the reports in American newspapers, according to which Hitler had snubbed him after the 100 m:

"Mr. Hitler had to leave the stadium early, but after winning I hurried up to the radio booth. When I passed near the Chancellor he arose, waved his hand at me and I waved back at him. I think the writers showed bad taste in criticizing the man of the hour in Germany," Owens declared. "There was absolutely no





In the prologue of the first Olympic film, an independent work by Willy Zielke, Luz Long can be seen for three seconds as a shot-putter. As a discus-thrower he was obviously not athletic enough, which is why the choice fell on the decathlete Erwin Huber. The film was made in the Curonian Spit, today on Russian territory (Oblast Kaliningrad) and in Lithuania. Although the photos bear the imprint "Leni Riefenstahl" they were in fact taken by Zielke or Walter Frenzt.

Photos: Willy Zielke, Exhibition "Der weite Sprung" 27 April – 24 July 2013, Sportmuseum Leipzig/Walter Frenzt

*discrimination at all. Everyone was friendly and kind to me and our athletes were accorded the greatest ovation."*⁶²

A correspondence that does not exist

In the subsequent period Owens ran against horses, motor cycles and trucks: he also toured with a light entertainment orchestra through the USA. Such money as he earned was soon lost in a business venture. A cleaning company in Cleveland to which he had lent his name subsequently failed. At the start of 1938 he therefore asked J. Lyman Bingham, the assistant to the AAU President, to support the lifting of his suspension, so that he could take part in the 1940 Olympic Games in the US team.⁶³

Meanwhile Long had continued his sporting career. At the first ISTAF meeting in the Berlin Olympic Stadium on 1st August 1937 he improved his European record to 7.90 m and became world student champion the same year in the Stade de Colombes. He won at all the international matches except that with the USA (1938) and against Italy (1939). Only at the European Championships in 1938 did he again have to accept bronze behind Leichum and the Italian Arturo Maffei. He also made progress professionally: in January 1938 he passed the examination to become an articled clerk, which was followed by an internship in the local court in the small town of Zwenkau south of Leipzig. In June 1939 he sat the legal degree exam, shortly afterwards – on 21st July 1939 – he received his doctorate from the University of Leipzig for a dissertation on "Management and Oversight of Sport by the State".⁶⁴

It is not difficult to prove National Socialist thought in Long's dissertation. One would however have to be

very naive to think that anyone could have been able to begin a legal career in the Germany of 1939 without an acknowledgement towards Hitler. But the real evidence is his membership of the Nazi party (NSDAP), which he requested in the midst of a severe life crisis – on 21st January 1940 – when he had to be operated on because of a very dangerous kidney abscess.⁶⁵

Long's critics further pointed to his affiliation to the paramilitary Sturm-Abteilung (SA), to which he belonged from 1938. It is however overlooked that the SA, whose leadership had been brutally liquidated four years earlier (erroneously known as the "Röhm-Putsch"), at that time was no longer comparable to the gang of thugs of 1933. After they had lost the struggle for power against the SS and the German Wehrmacht and been directed by Hitler towards defensive sports, their new leaders discovered high performance sport, of which after the Olympic Games the other parts of the NSDAP also had their share.

The National Socialist "Kampfspiele" were introduced by order of Hitler through a "Führer-Erlass"⁶⁶, which instructed the annual holding of these games during the Nuremberg "Reichsparteitage" from 1937 onwards. There began a real race to recruit the best male athletes, who at this annual climax had to compete not for their clubs but in the vests of their NS unit. Hardly any well-known German sportsman was able to escape this change in the regulations, which was bound up with the presentation of an "Ehrendolch" [dagger of honour], especially as the athletes were thus absolved from the otherwise obligatory period of national service.⁶⁷ Long can hardly have covered himself in glory as a member of the SA, for he only achieved the rank of "Rottenführer", the equivalent of a corporal.



The East West confrontation helped ensure that from the fifties onwards, Owens received the social recognition that he deserved in the USA. For the reporting of the Olympic Games – in the photo in Mexico City in 1968 – he was engaged as co-commentator. In 1972 he was one of the sportsmen invited to Munich by the Organising Committee of the Games as guests of honour.

Photo: Volker Kluge Archives

Long and Owens, according to the latter's account, had promised when they said goodbye in Berlin to write to each other: "For three years we corresponded regularly, though the letters weren't always as happy as our talks at the Olympics had been."⁶⁸ However such letters or postcards cannot be found either in Long's former possessions or in the extensive Jesse Owens Collection of Ohio State University, to which obviously frequent requests with such a question are directed.⁶⁹

Allegedly Owens received the last letter in 1939 shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, and in it describes Long as writing:

*"Things become more difficult," he said, "and I am afraid, Jesse. Not just the thought of dying. It is that I may die for the wrong thing. But whatever might become of me, I hope only that my wife and son will stay alive. I am asking you who are my only friend outside of Germany, to someday visit them if you are able, to tell them about why I had to do this, and how good times between us were. Luz."*⁷⁰

Even if one considers that Long already saw in his Hamburg girlfriend Gisela Behrens, whom he was to marry on 4th January 1941, his future wife, the question remains as to how he could already know at that time that she would give him a son on 13th November 1941?

It can therefore be assumed with reasonable certainty that this correspondence did not exist, and it is almost quixotic to accept that Dr. Carl Ludwig Long, posted after his recovery to the Heavy Flak [anti-aircraft] on 1st May 1941, could have sent letters to the USA from his stations abroad.⁷¹ The "Deutsche Feldpost", which Long had to use, was exclusively responsible for "postal communication between the armed forces and Germany as well as within our armed forces". Postal contact with "hostile countries abroad", which included the USA from December 1941, was forbidden.⁷²

Even if Bombardier Long used his three competitions abroad – in 1941 he took part in army sports meetings in Brussels (3rd August), Paris (17th August) and Luxembourg (12th October) – to send Owens illegal mail, he would have run a very high risk. For at the same time Owens, who after his bankruptcy had taken refuge in American civil defence and after that with the Ford Motor Company, was considered "persona non grata", about whose social descent real horror stories were reported. "That's the way they ended up, those who tried to exchange the gold of fame for the gold of commerce, who demeaned the god to the idol, and thus became poor in their purse and sick at heart", wrote the *Reichssportblatt*.⁷³ In the same publication in late 1942, when Stalingrad became the turning point of the war, one could read:

He hit the bottle, sank into poverty and misery, became a dishwasher and a car cleaner and was in

*the end happy to be allowed to serve cheap alcohol in obscure subterranean pubs. In the meantime the war has allowed this characterless figure to come up to the surface again. Yes, as a so-called foreman in the American armaments industry Jesse Owens recently was permitted to deliver a racy speech, which culminated in the seething oath: "We will produce so much armament that we will make the Germans run in a way that will break all my records."*⁷⁴

At that time Long had already lost his privileged position as a member of the Luftwaffen Sport Club (LSV) Berlin and as a Army sports teacher. At the 3rd German War Championships in the Berlin Olympic Stadium on 26th July 1942, he jumped 7.28 m, which was only enough for second place behind Gerd Wagemanns a man seven years his junior. He then announced his retirement from competition.⁷⁵

Whether this decision was purely voluntary may be doubted, for at the same time the "Wehrkreiskommandos" were repeatedly searching everywhere for men able to serve as soldiers, to fill the gaps that had been created by the bitter battles on the eastern front. "Holding back top sportsmen from the front so that sports events can be held is totally unacceptable and of course in no case caused by us", announced the Reichssportführer, whose motto was that Germany's best sportsmen should also be her best soldiers.⁷⁶ Goebbels removed the last restrictions on 18th February 1943. In his speech in the Berlin Sports Palace, under the title "Total War – Shortest War!", he announced drastic measures to mobilise the last reserves, which also applied to sport:

*Reserved occupations are completely meaningless in the field of sport. The task of sport is to make physical strength like steel, but with the main purpose of making use of this in the worst emergency.*⁷⁷

Long, whose brother Heinrich had been killed on 24th May 1940 in Flanders and who had until then himself been spared military service, went through over the following months a short training period on the Baltic. In early May 1943 he was sent to Sicily with the Parachute-Panzer-Division "Hermann Göring", where the German command was expecting an invasion by the western allies in the summer in view of the collapsing eastern front. It went into history under the name of "Operation Husky" and cost Long his life.

His last days were documented impressively seven decades later in the exhibition "Der weite Sprung", put together by Leipzig Sportmuseum⁷⁸, for which Long's family had supplied a series of unique items. From these it could be learned that his last contact was a letter to his wife of 29th May 1943, in which he wrote about "a lovely flower meadow, surrounded

by mountains, completely peaceful", and that his unit had camped there in tents. One day later his second son Wolfgang Matthias came into the world, but the infant survived only nine months and died of meningitis.

At first Long was listed only as missing. On the official "List of Losses" there was a note about a wound on the left thigh and that he was "in enemy territory", so that his family could still hope that he might be alive. A letter from his battery commander to Gisela Long did not exclude that possibility. His disappearance was given as in the morning of 14th July 1943, when his unit had attacked American armoured scout cars on the airfield of St. Pietro.⁷⁹ With the exception of the fact "that Luz was very seriously wounded" and that he was for that reason left behind, no other fellow-soldier could report anything more detailed.⁸⁰

The uncertainty about Long's fate continued, and went on even after the end of the war. Occasionally someone would report having seen him as a prisoner of war, so that the family still hoped that he would come back one day. Coach Georg Richter, by now living in Switzerland because of his poor health and looking after the Swiss alpine ski team, said he had found out from a nurse that his charge had been taken prisoner and "was under Gaullist control". The French had put him in an "African work camp", from which he had successfully escaped and made his way to Canada.⁸¹

All the speculation came to an end when Long's mother, almost seven years after the death of her son, finally received the official notification that he had been buried in the German section of the American military cemetery in Gela on the south coast of Sicily.⁸² The death of his son was given as 14th July 1943. As the burial took place in an American military cemetery, it is probable that he had become a prisoner of war and there succumbed to his wounds.⁸³

Two apolitical people who had a political effect

The story of Jesse and Luz is part of the basic knowledge about the Olympic Games, and again and again stimulates the imagination of those who combine with it the ideals of understanding between nations and fair play. But anyone who looks at the real events will quickly establish that not all parts of the jigsaw fit. Perhaps such a person even believes he has found in the German a concealed "Nazi" and in the American a "teller of fairy tales".

Owens was confronted with this even when he was alive. When the writer Tom Ecker asked him in 1965 why he would never recount the episode with Luz Long as it had really been, Owens is said to have replied: "Those stories are what people like to hear."⁸⁴ And was he not right?



"It's the tobacco inside that counts," says Jesse Owens



Why White Owl cigar is special. It's the tobacco inside that counts. The research goes into tobacco.

That's why White Owl is so special. It's the tobacco inside that counts. The research goes into tobacco.

White Owl

Luz Long was certainly a model sportsman for the Nazis, and his exemplary performances and stylish appearance were convincing. Like other prominent Germans he let himself be misused to give Hitler respectability. They were also part of his survival strategy. In the end he paid a heavy price.

In my estimation Long and Owens were probably rather apolitical athletes who were good people. To that extent they had a political effect through their fair behaviour during the Olympic Games.

While Owens, who with his towering success had in effect caricatured the theory of a "master race", dramatised the 1936 Games in retrospect, he suffered as evidenced by his own statements more from the lack of interest shown by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, for whose congratulations he waited in vain. Not until the 1950s did he receive the social recognition that he deserved. In 1955 President Dwight D. Eisenhower appointed Owens as a Goodwill Ambassador and sent him round the world at government expense to promote the "American Way of Life". On the search for allies in the struggle against communism the notion of friendship was just right.

The documentary film "An American Experience"⁸⁵, for which I gave an interview in 2011, shows this change very convincingly. Finally the producer Laurens Grant asked me if Jesse, after all the discrimination he had experienced in the USA, had not simply had to believe he had found a real friend in Luz?

Bingo! I had never thought of that. ■

Jesse Owens as a black advertising icon: an advert from May 1960 for White Owl Cigars. Nicotine proved his downfall: a lifetime smoker, Owens was diagnosed with lung cancer in December 1979 and passed away in his home in Tucson, Arizona, on March 31, 1980. Four years after his death – 1984 – the Stadionallee at the Berlin Olympic Stadium was renamed "Jesse-Owens-Allee" in the presence of his widow Ruth and IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch.

Photo: Ebony Magazine

A road junction south of the Olympic Stadium in Berlin: Jesse Owens Avenue / Flatow Avenue

Photo: Volker Kluge Archives



- 1 Today Prager Straße.
- 2 Estate of Charlotte Hahn. The handwritten memoirs of Long's second sister are in the ownership of her daughter Maria Schwartz (Leipzig). The Leipzig Sportmuseum has access to copies.
- 3 The house in the Leipzig district of Probstheida is No. 138 Russenstraße (then 24). The name recalls the Russian army, once allied with Prussia, which had to lament 22,000 dead and wounded. To commemorate the 100th birthday of Luz Long a memorial plaque was attached to the building.
- 4 Cf. www.jesseowensmuseum.org
- 5 Charles Riley (1878–1960) was a former mine and mill worker. Later he attended Temple University in Philadelphia, whereby he also qualified for the job of teacher and athletics coach at Fairmount Junior High School. In 1943 he retired and went to Florida, breaking off contact with Owens. Not until shortly before his death, in 1960, was he prepared to accept an invitation to the TV programme "This is Your Life".
- 6 Jeremy Schaap, TRIUMPH. The untold Story of Jesse Owens and Hitler's Olympics, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, New York 2007, p. 28.
- 7 Club for movement games.
- 8 Reichssportblatt, Vol. 4, No. 43, 26 October 1937, p. 1366.
- 9 DGLD-Bulletin, Vol. 23, No. 65, 1 March 2013, p. 7.
- 10 Georg Richter (1888–1977), who was born in the mountain named Osterzgebirge, had studied from 1909 to 1916 History and Ancient Languages at the University of Leipzig. As a member of the VfB Leipzig he was not only an active footballer but also an athlete, hockey and tennis player. After his two year military service during the First World War he was active as a gymnastics and sports instructor at the University of Freiburg. Later he was employed by the Leipzig Sport Club as coach for athletics and hockey. He was substantially involved in the Olympic successes of the German hockey team – 1928 bronze and 1936 silver.
- 11 In his two attempts Long achieved at the end of the 1933 season 6474.910 points and in 1934 (though only in an unofficial competition) 6648.24 points.
- 12 Ekkehard zur Megede, Richard Hymans (Ed.), Progression of World Best Performances and Official IAAF World Records, International Athletic Foundation 1991, p. 34. Owens achieved this time at the National Interscholastic Championships in Chicago on 17th June 1933. The IAAF only officially recognised his performance achieved at the Big Ten Championships on 25th May 1935 at Ann Arbor.
- 13 Exhibition "Der weite Sprung" [The long jump], 27 April – 14 July 2013, Sportmuseum Leipzig, Foyer der Leipziger Verlags- und Druckereigesellschaft. The record book exhibited there, owned by the family, begins on 2nd May 1934 and ends on 13th September 1937. The person most responsible for the exhibition was museum director Dr. Gerlinde Rohr, who for more than 20 years has been researching the life story of Luz Long.
- 14 Völkischer Beobachter, 19th August 1932.
- 15 Bundesarchiv (Barch) R 43 II 729, Letter from Lewald to the Chef der Reichskanzlei Hans Heinrich Lammers, 16th March 1933.
- 16 Larry Snyder (1896–1982), who in the First World War had been a pilot instructor and flew some stunts in the 1920s, became chief athletics coach in 1932. In his career, which lasted till 1965, he trained as well as Owens and Albritton such outstanding athletes as Olympic champion Melvin Whitfield (400 and 800 m 1948 and 1952) and Glenn Davis (1956 and 1960 400 m hurdles). In 1936 he was part of the enlarged training staff of the US Olympic team, in 1952 he acted as assistant coach, in 1960 in Rome he was head coach.
- 17 Jesse Owens, T&F Interview by Jon Hendershott, in: Track & Field News, Vol. 27, No. 14, 8 September 1974.
- 18 The Day of Days, in: Track & Field News, June 1975, pp. 56–57. Owens achieved the following performances: 15.15 100 yards in 9.4 s, 15.25 long jump 8.13 m, 15.45 220 y/200 m (straight track) 20.3, 16.00 220 y/200 m hurdles 22.6 s.
- 19 Hans Borowik, Sie kommen, in: Reichssportblatt, Vol. 2, No. 25, 22 June 1935, pp. 684–685.
- 20 Olympia-Zeitung, No. 16, 5 August 1936, p. 287.
- 21 Manfred Hausmann, "Der Panthersprung", in: Olympia-Zeitung, No. 15, 4 August 1936, p. 258.
- 22 Daily Worker, 11 November 1935. Cp. Arnd Krüger, Die Olympischen Spiele 1936 und die Weltmeinung. Ihre außenpolitische Bedeutung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der USA, Verlag Bartels & Wernitz, Berlin 1972, p. 148.
- 23 Alfred Rosenberg, Der Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts, Hoheneichen-Verlag, München 1930, pp. 668–669.
- 24 Bruno Malitz, Die Leibesübungen in der nationalsozialistischen Idee, Nationalsozialistische Bibliothek, Heft 46, Eher-Verlag, München 1933, p. 23. The former Berlin sprinter, who at the end of the war was the last NSDAP Kreisleiter (district leader) of the town of Görlitz, was executed in 1948.
- 25 Kurt Münch, Deutschkunde für Volk, Staat, Leibesübungen, Hilfsbuch für die politische Erziehung in den Vereinen des deutschen Reichsbundes für Leibesübungen, Limpert-Verlag, Berlin 1935. The Dietwart (Diet = people) was introduced in German sports clubs in August 1934. Among its tasks was to control and examine the "völkisch", i.e. National Socialist behaviour of the members.
- 26 Martin Staemmler, Volk und Rasse, Verlag für soziale Ethik und Kunstpflege, Berlin 1935; Lothar Tirala, Sport und Rasse, H. Bechhold Verlagsbuchhandlung, Frankfurt am Main 1936.
- 27 Reichssportblatt, Vol. 3, No. 28, 8 July 1936, pp. 912–913.
- 28 Barch Zsg. 101/71389/No. 591, 18 June 1936. After the unexpected success of Schmeling Goebbels had a one hour long film produced within a few days, the title of which he came up with himself: "Max Schmeling's victory – A German victory". Cp. Volker Kluge, Max Schmeling. Eine Biographie in 15 Runden, Aufbau-Verlag, Berlin 2004, pp. 256–257.
- 29 Ibid, No. 790, 3 August 1936.
- 30 Ibid, No. 808, 6 August 1936, No. 795, 4 August 1936.
- 31 Reichssportblatt, Vol. 3, No. 33, 11 August 1936, p. 1188.
- 32 It is still uncertain whether the distance was reached with acceptable following wind. Cp. Klaus Amrhein, biographisches Handbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen Leichtathletik 1898–2013, DVD.
- 33 "Der Mann, der Jesse Owens machte. Unterhaltung mit Larry Snyder", in: Leipziger Neueste Nachrichten, 31 July 1936.
- 34 Der Leichtathlet, Amtliches Organ des Fachamtes Leichtathletik im DRL, No. 30, 28 July 1936, p. 10.
- 35 Olympia-Zeitung, No. 12, 1 August 1936, p. 196. The remains of the Olympic Village, in which after the Games the Infanterie-Lehrregiment and from 1945 to 1993 units of the Soviet Army were stationed, have since 2005 been in the ownership of the DKB Foundation for Social Engagement. Among the 20 preserved team houses (of which ten were lived in by the US team) is the "Jesse-Owens-Haus" (formerly "Haus Meißen", restored from 2006 to 2009. However Owens lived in reality in the neighbouring, still unrestored "Haus Bautzen".
- 36 Völkischer Beobachter, 27 July 1936.
- 37 XI. Olympische Spiele Berlin 1936, Tages-Programm, 2 August 1936, p. 1.
- 38 The photographic proof was given by the Austrian Dr. Hans Helmut Stoiber, who as a 17 year old gymnast was awarded the bronze medal in the category Lyrical Works in an almost empty Olympic Stadium. To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the 1936 Olympic Games in 2011 Stoiber visited the Olympic Village in which he had once lived.
- 39 Elke Fröhlich (Ed.), Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels. Sämtliche Fragmente, Vol. 2, KG Saur, München 1987, p. 655. The entry for the 5th August 1936 refers to the athletics finals of the previous day, on which the Americans with Helen Stephens (100 m), Owens (long jump) and John Woodruff (800 m) won three gold medals. The German success was down to Gisela Mauermayer (discus).



Ten years after his death – in 1990 – the US post office issued the first special stamp for Jesse Owens, in the "Olympian" series. A second stamp showing him as a hurdler followed in 1998. In 1968 the Mongolian post office had already dedicated a special stamp to Owens.

40 Luz Long, "Mein Kampf mit Owens", in: *Neue Leipziger Zeitung* (NLZ), 11 August 1936, p. 11.

41 *Der Leichtathlet*, No. 33, 5 August 1936, p. 2. Long's first attempt was a no jump. Jumps which were not good enough received a red flag. There was no measurement in the qualification.

42 Qualified were Owens (7.87 m), Long (7.84), Tajima (7.74), the Italian Maffei (7.73), the American Clark (7.60) and Leichum (7.52), who jumped in the reverse order.

43 Tages-Programm, 4 August 1936, p. 8.

44 OLYMPIA. I. Film von den Olympischen Spielen Berlin 1936 "Fest der Völker", Gesamtleitung und künstlerische Leitung: Leni Riefenstahl, 3429 m, 1938. The representation of the long jump lasts 2:26 min.

45 Reichspropagandaleitung der NSDAP (Ed.), OLYMPIA, Staatspolitische Filme, Heft 8/9, Berlin 1938, p. 9. This booklet was intended to prepare above all for "State-political film shows in schools".

46 Like most authors David Clay Large presents in his book "Nazi Games. The Olympics of 1936", W. W. Norden & Company, New York, London 2007, p. 239, the mistaken view that both athletes lay in the grass while awaiting the victory ceremony.

47 *Reichssportblatt*, 11 August 1936, p. 1184. The trilingual caption in the *Olympia-Zeitung*, 6 August 1936, p. 316, reads: "Well done, both!". The *Völkischer Beobachter* on the other hand refused to print such a photo.

48 Exhibition "Der weite Sprung", Sportmuseum Leipzig, memories of Johanna Long, undated entry.

49 NLZ, 11 August 1936, p. 11.

50 Ibid.

51 *Der Tagesspiegel*, 23 August 1951.

52 *Die Zeit*, 21 November 1956. Author Michael Davie had met Owens at the Olympic Games in Melbourne, where Owens talked of his friendship with Long: "Long risked a lot of rage from Hitler at that time by being the first to congratulate Owens. Later the two sportsmen wrote each other letters until they lost contact because of the war. When Owens met Long's wife and son years after the war in a Hamburg café and learned from them that Long had been killed in Africa [sic!], he transferred his friendship to Long's son, with whom he corresponds today."

53 Jesse Owens Returns to Berlin, written and produced by Bud Greenspan, Cappy Patrash, 1964.

54 "Eine Goldmedaille mit Luz Longs Hilfe" in: *Der Tagesspiegel*, 10 June 1964.

55 Jesse Owens and Paul G. Neimark, *Blackthink. My Life as Black Man and White Man*, William Morrow, New York 1970.

56 Jesse Owens und Paul G. Neimark, *Schwarze Gedanken*, Schropp Verlag, Dortmund 1972, p. 227.

57 *Blackthink*, p. 185.

58 *Schwarze Gedanken*, p. 229.

59 *Blackthink*, pp. 188-189.

60 *Das Olympische Dorf*, Buch und Regie Volker Kluge, DKB Stiftung für gesellschaftliches Engagement 2007, DVD.

61 *Völkischer Beobachter*, 19 August 1936.

62 *New York Times*, 24 August 1936.

63 "Owens asking standing back", in: *Prescott Evening Courier*, 6 January 1938.

64 *Die Leitung und Aufsicht des Sports durch den Staat. Eine Entwicklungsgeschichtliche Darstellung*, eingereicht von Carl Ludwig Long, Inaugural Dissertation, Juristische Fakultät, Universität Leipzig, 101 p., A. Edelmann, Leipzig 1939.

65 Barch, ehem. BDC. Enrolment under the membership number 8 051 702 took place on 1 April 1940.

66 Barch, NS 26/v. 439. With the "Kampfspiel-Erlass" of 30th November 1936 (the exact date is uncertain) Hitler had entrusted the preparation and organisation of the NS Kampfspiele. The supervision was down to Reichssportführer Hans von Tschammer und Osten, whose Reichsbund für Leibesübungen (DRL/later NSRL) lost much of its significance thereby.

67 *Reichssportblatt*, Vol. 2, No. 21, 25 May 1935, p. 588, Verordnung der Obersten SA-Führung und des Reichsführers-SS from 13 May 1935.

68 *Blackthink*, p. 192.

69 The Ohio State University, Library, Jesse Owens Collection, Series I: Correspondence 1936-1980. On the website it is to be read: "There is no correspondence between Owens and Lutz Long ..."

70 *Blackthink*, p. 192.



With four gold medals Jesse Owens was the most successful participant in 1936. In the photo he can be seen with three small oak trees for his successes in the individual events (his roommate in the Olympic Village, Cornelius Johnson, is holding one of them). The fourth oak tree for the 4x100 m relay was retained by the last leg runner Frank Wykoff, who was also part of the winning teams in 1928 and 1932. When the gold medals won by Owens were stolen from an exhibition in the USA in 1960, the USOC Executive Director J. Lyman Bingham came to the German IOC Member Karl Ritter von Halt with a request for replacements. Halt got into contact with the Pforzheim Kunst-präganstalt, which had provided the medals in 1936. The NOC for Germany paid the bill.

Photo: Volker Kluge Archives/
Hans Bayer

71 Ibid, p. 192: "His letters began to bear strange postmarks."

72 Amtsblatt des Reichspostministeriums, Verordnung über den Nachrichtenverkehr, 9 April 1940. Mail to "non-hostile countries abroad" were handled via foreign letter checkpoints. News about the military, economic or political situation were forbidden in accordance with § 5.

73 *Reichssportblatt*, Vol. 8, No. 33, 19 August 1941, p. 724.

74 Ibid, Vol. 9, No. 51, 22 December 1942.

75 *Donau-Zeitung*, 1 August 1942.

76 "Sport im Kriege ..." in: *Box-Sport*, Nr. 17, 24 August 1942.

77 *Völkischer Beobachter*, 19 February 1943. U.K.-Stellung means "reserved position".

78 Exhibition "Der weite Sprung".

79 Exhibition, Long estate: Letter from Second Lieutenant Entleutner to Gisela Long, 30 July 1943. Lance Corporal Long, recognition number 113, belonged to the Heavy Flak Reserve Division 60. This and other letters from Long's estate are in the possession of Kai Long (Hamburg).

80 Ibid: Letter from Lance Corporal Herbert Weinmann to Gisela Long, Amsterdam, 28 January 1944.

81 Ibid: Letter from Georg Richter to the former LSC athlete Inge Messerschmidt, ca. 1945.

82 Ibid: Letter from Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge to Johanna Long, 13 March 1950.

83 Volker Kluge Archives: Letter from German Red Cross, General Secretariat for Searches, 14 October 2010. Long was later re-buried and rests today in the war cemetery Motta St. Anastasia, Lair 2, Row 5, Plaque E, Sarkophagus 51.

84 "Was Jesse Owens' 1936 Long-Jump Story A Myth?", *www.wburg.org*, 14 August 2009.

85 *An American Experience*, produced by Firelight Films in association with WDR, directed by Laurens Grant, written by Stanley Nelson. The film, for which also ISOH President David Wallechinsky gave an interview, was first shown on 1 May 2012 on the US programme PBS. The premiere of the German version under the title "Jesse Owens. Der schnellste Mann der Welt" followed on 16 July 2012 Erstes Deutsches Fernsehen (ARD).