

# Black Entrepreneurs of the 18th and 19th Centuries

## Museum Exhibit PDF

The Federal Reserve and the Afro Museum in Boston have collaborated to produce an exhibition guide featuring examples of the entrepreneurial ingenuity of people of color. The exhibit is titled Black Entrepreneurs of the 18th and 19th Centuries.

## Reference

Economic Adventure.org

<http://tinyurl.com/mdltgng>

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**Aptitudes of the Rich and Famous: Leno, Clooney, Boitano, Seymour**



**Did You Know** – The following celebrities very likely share a particular aptitude that many people don't have. Can you guess what the common aptitude in question may be? \*Comedian Jay Leno \*George Clooney \*Olympic skating champion, Brian Boitano \*TV's Dr. Quinn: Medicine Woman, Jane Seymour

- What successful playwright wrote 5 novels, but publishers wouldn't buy them?

### *Answers*

- **Structural Visualization:** the ability to imagine solid objects in 3-D.- Leno has mechanical ability exhibited when he tinkers with his classic cars. Clooney appears to have the aptitude when he refers to his ability to see scenes play out when he's directing a movie, recently recounted on a PBS interview with *Charlie Rose*, Seymour is a successful painter and sculptress and Boitano's design and architectural project in restoring his ancestral family's home also points the evidence of the same inane ability.

- George Bernard Shaw: take away lesson here is that different genres of writing have different aptitudes.
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# Changes in the American Education System

## **The New School:**

### **How the Information Age Will Save American Education from Itself**

I have a strong suspicion that the author of this book Professor Glenn Reynolds will not be the keynote speaker anytime soon at any of the national teacher conventions.

And if you take a history class in the Italian Renaissance, you might discover as I did that even back then there was student unrest within organized education as tremendous changes took place.

The professor gives an irreverent and humor-laced 40-minute real-world talk about the dollars and sense of education in the 21st century. It's a presentation that will leave many with the impression that rethinking and careful planning with respect to the economics of their educational plans will be key.

I did not agree with everything stated, for instance, while it is true not everyone belongs in college, trade may not necessarily be the automatic alternate option.

But the New School book reflects on the trends and changes and money pit consumers will face now and in the future in the educational marketplace.

## **References**

BookTV.org

The New School

<http://tinyurl.com/m9p6zry>

Amazon.com

<http://tinyurl.com/pupm6bl>

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# Floyd Norman: Walt Disney's First African American Animator

*Aptitudes, Skill And Knowledge*



Floyd Norman admits he was very fortunate to have grown up in the community of Santa Barbara, California in the era before the second World War where he had access to all the cultural amenities that allowed him to learn and hone his craft as an artist.

If you saw Mr. Norman's recent PBS appearance on Tavis Smiley, you'll know that the artist not only has the ability to sketch, but he can create images in his mind in 3-D, an essential aptitude for artists. But the animator understood early the importance of learning his craft and getting the knowledge and training required to succeed.

Floyd Norman is not only an artist but an entrepreneur who decided to leave the Disney Studio to become his own boss and create the ethnic films he wanted to produce.

His official blog Mr. Fun is an insightful historical account of business and culture from his view as he took part in the making of iconic films for Walt Disney.

## References

Tavis Smiley Interview

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/tavissmiley/interviews/floyd-norman/>

Floyd Norman's official blog

Mr.Fun's

<http://floydnormancom.squarespace.com/>

Autobiography

*Animated Life: A lifetime of tips, tricks, techniques and stories from an Animation Legend*

<http://www.amazon.com/Floyd-Norman/e/B007AAV4H0>

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# Dee Adams' Online Class

## Money, Race & Critical Thinking

Which famous athlete is credited with integrating sports yet found it difficult to make a living because of racism?

- A. Muhammad Ali
- B. Satchel Page
- C. Frank Robinson
- D. None of the Above Answer at the end of this post



### **Jesse Owens: A Biography Part 1**

Why would an American athlete, winner of four gold medals who had gained the adoration of a coliseum full of German people decide to open a dry cleaning establishment at the height of his career? To many outsiders, it might seem a puzzling choice.

Imagine if you can, Olympic icons Michael Phelps or Shaun White after winning their first gold medals deciding to open a business that would essentially put the athletes behind a desk.

Winning the gold at the Olympics leads to lucrative contracts for athletes. But not so in the 1930's U.S. for an African American. And it would take 40 years before Jesse Owens would be awarded his due.

When KQED PBS recently rebroadcast the story of Olympic legend Jesse Owens, I wondered how the decision to start-up a dry cleaning establishment was reached. Entrepreneurship is one path that some athletes take but why that particular venture was chosen wasn't explained and I wanted to know more.

Maybe he had taken over a family business, I mused, because operating a cleaning establishment didn't appear to be a good fit for the personality and level of activity enjoyed by the athlete profiled. I began searching online and found *Jesse Owens: A Biography* on Google Books authored by Jacqueline Edmondson. And I found an explanation about the origin of the start-up, which not only had a ring of truth,

but, unfortunately, is one of the ways ill-conceived ideas are chosen.

Approached by others with the idea, the plan was to capitalize on the success at the Olympics by starting a chain of dry cleaning stores using the famous athlete's name. An idea which ultimately did not work out well, to say the least (Edmondson).

## **Part 2**

With a family to support, Mr. Owens hoped to take advantage of endorsements that had initially flooded in after his wins, and he had returned to the U.S. declining to participate in further Olympic Games, a move that angered officials and resulted in a sanction (American Experience).

But according to the Jesse Owens Foundation, some of the information reported in American Experience surrounding the circumstances that led to the USOC sanction and Mr. Owens' loss of his amateur standing were inaccurate. First, after 1936, there were no games until 1948. So Jesse Owens did not refuse to return to another Olympic game.

It was with the support of his coach in 1936 that the athlete, exhausted and homesick decided to return home and not continue a European Exhibition tour. A decision that angered Olympic president, Avery Brundage. Jesse Owens was stripped of his amateur athletic standing, If there had been an Olympic game in the 1940's, Owens would not have been allowed to participate.

That racism played a role in the lack of employment opportunities for Mr. Owens after the Olympics was not only discussed in the PBS special The American Experience, but is outlined in Jacqueline Edmondson's well-documented biography. Owens experienced racism his entire life.

As a college student, the athlete was not allowed to live on campus; he received no scholarships, and was not allowed to

eat with his teammates when they traveled.

And he did not receive the same level of nutrition as his teammates during training at Ohio State University, a circumstance that likely contributed to undernourishment. His coach would have him come to his home for Sunday dinners (Edmondson).

And it is debatable whether Owens actually violated his Olympic contract, which was the explanation offered for the AAU's sanction after his multi-medal wins, states Edmondson, a vice-president and associate dean at Penn State and the author of several biographies on famous sports and music figures.

Debates occurred then, as they do now, over what an "amateur" athlete is. Mr. Owens gradually discovered that lucrative endorsements were not forthcoming...unable to return to The Ohio State University (Edmondson), he took work wherever he could find positions.

Documented economic realities confronted the gold medal winner in the 1930's and in the years that followed. But, search Google Books further and you'll find a second book on the athlete's life with a somewhat ironic subtitle ...*Revised Edition* and with a different point of view.

For instance, to paraphrase, the author states that Jesse Owens had plenty of money, but poor spending habits caused much of his financial struggles... Glancing through the book, published by a sport publisher, questionable content is apparent. And the content is contrary to the PBS special, or Jacqueline Edmondson's biography.

### **Now I extended the why's further**

Did the author of the sports bio fail to fact check?

Or did bias override critical thinking practices?

Could an argument be made that the statements in the sports bio illustrate what U.C. Berkeley, Professor David Wellman has defined as subtle racism and the unwillingness of many to



acknowledge the historical nature of the issue?

Perhaps best summarized in the textbook *Psychology & the Law*  
“Some researchers say...barriers for minorities have lessened visibly, but are no less substantial...”

Ironically, the issue affects people of all races. Understanding that history reflects past and present trends, behaviors and attitudes in society and the cultural experiences of all people are key. Distorting personal histories or facts hinders the ability to gain an accurate viewpoint of society.

**Which critical thinking steps will you take to fact-check information from seemingly factual accounts?**

### **References**

PBS American Experience

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/owens/>

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<http://tinyurl.com/ncetn7w>

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<http://articles.latimes.com/2001/jan/11/news/mn-11039>

David Wellman Ph.D

Amazon.com

<http://www.amazon.com/Portraits-White-Racism-David-Wellman/dp/0521>

Psychology & the Law

<http://www.amazon.com/Psychology-Law-State-Discipline-Perspect>

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Answer: D

Jesse Owens