For seventeen days this summer, all eyes were focused on London, England and the XXX Olympiad. This is the third time London has hosted the Olympics. At the 2012 Summer Olympics 10,490 athletes represented 205 countries with every region of the world represented except Antarctica. This is a huge difference from when London hosted the 1908 Summer Olympics, where only twenty-two countries were represented by 2,035 athletes. The London games of 1908 lasted six months, today the games can last no longer than sixteen days.

The first Olympic Games occurred in 776 B.C. and were celebrated every four years in Olympia, Greece. The games included running, jumping, discus throwing, wrestling, boxing, equestrian events and pankration, the lost sport of wrestling and boxing combined. These early games were closely tied to ancient Greek religion and were dedicated to Zeus, ruler of the Olympian gods. Any free Greek man was able to participate in the games. Women, slaves and men from other countries were unable to take part and married women were not allowed to watch the games. The ancient Olympic Games continued for nearly twelve centuries. The games gradually lost their popularity and in 393 A.D., the Roman Emperor Theodosius I abolished the games as he considered them pagan events.

The Olympic Games were forgotten until Pierre de Coubertin was inspired to revive the event. He created the International Olympic Committee in Paris, France on June 23, 1894. The first modern Olympic Games followed in 1896 hosted by Athens, Greece. The Olympics have changed over time and continue to evolve with new events added while others are discontinued. Women were banned from the ancient Olympics, they competed in the modern Olympic Games at Paris, France in 1900. Out of 997 athletes, twenty-two women competed in five events. In 1951, the International Olympic Committee voted to allow women to participate in all events. The first Olympic Village was established at the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics but was open only to men. Women would not be allowed to stay in the village until the 1956 Melbourne, Australia games.

The opening and closing ceremonies for the Olympic Games can be traced back to the ancient Olympics. The ancient ceremonies revolved around religion, today’s Olympic ceremonies are elaborate productions that showcase popular artists and musicians, special effects and choreographed stunts. After the Olympic flame was extinguished and the athletes returned home, the London 2012 medal count ended with the United States winning the most medals a total of 104, with 46 gold. The Olympic flag has been passed from London to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil for the 2016 Summer Olympic Games but we don’t have to wait that long, the 2014 Winter Olympics will be in Sochi, Russia.
Only eight cities in the United States have hosted the Olympics. Unfortunately none of these cities are in Illinois, but we have come close. Chicago made the “shortlist” to host the 2016 Olympic Games but lost out to Rio de Janeiro. In 1904, Illinois came even closer with Chicago winning the bid to host the III Olympic Games. How excited Chicago and all of Illinois were to receive this honor. Unfortunately it never happened. Although Chicago won the bid St. Louis got the games when organizers decided to combine the Olympics with the centennial celebration of the Louisiana Purchase being celebrated in Missouri. These were the first Olympics held in America, fair planners didn’t want Chicago’s 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition to distract from their international extravaganza. In the end it was insignificant, as the third Olympic Games attracted mostly local, Midwestern and East Coast university athletes. Very few international athletes competed and the Olympic Games were overshadowed by the Louisiana Purchase exposition.

The games lasted five months and primarily featured individual events including live pigeon shooting, tug of war and rogue-the American version of croquet. After the 1904 Olympics, all of these events were dropped. The only country to compete in the rogue event was the United States, since this game was virtually unknown throughout the rest of the world. These Olympic Games were where the gold, silver and bronze medals debuted as awards for first, second and third place. Because few international athletes participated, the United States medal count soared to a total of 239, of these 78 were gold, 82 silver and 79 bronze. A bizarre final occurred for the men’s marathon in St. Louis. In a scheme to win the gold, Fred Lorz covered much of the race by riding in a car and getting out just before crossing the finish line. He was disqualified and Thomas Hicks took home the gold.

What began as sports camps organized by Eunice Shriver Kennedy for individuals with special needs grew into the Special Olympics. Illinois was selected to host the first Special Olympics on July 20, 1968 at Soldiers Field. One thousand athletes from the United States and Canada participated in track and field and aquatic events. From that event other Special Olympic programs grew and it became an international program with over 180 countries and four million athletes participating. In Illinois, more than 21,000 athletes with intellectual disabilities train and compete. The Special Olympics give those with intellectual disabilities a chance to participate in sports, demonstrate courage and experience the joy of friendships with athletes, families and community.

**CONNECITNG TO ILLINOIS**

**Athlete, weight lifting, holding barbell, with two hands, at face level, 1904 Olympic Games.**

**Athlete, Leroy Samse, University of Indiana, pole vaulting, 1904 Olympic Games.**

**1904 Olympic Games trophy**

**Chicago won the bid but St. Louis got the games.**

**Athlete, James D. Lightbody, University of Chicago, receiving trophy from official, 1904 Olympic Games.**

**Moskva 1980 = Moscow 1980**

**Los Angeles 1984 Olympic Games**

**PLACES TO GO & PRIMARY SOURCES TO SEE**

**Booth Library-Olympic Posters** If you plan to study art or techniques used to persuade and share messages, this month’s Places To Go is for you. Booth Library on the campus of Eastern Illinois University is showcasing an exhibit of Olympic posters. Every modern Summer Olympic Game is represented. The exhibit is located at the University Archives and Reference section at the south entrance to the library. These colorful and artistic posters are not only used to advertise the Olympic Games they are also a collectors item. The colors and designs used to celebrate the city hosting the Olympics is unique. These posters show the artistic expression of the time period. This exhibit is on display for a limited time, for more information contact Booth Library. [http://www.library.eiu.edu/welcome.html](http://www.library.eiu.edu/welcome.html)
The sixth Olympiad was to be in Berlin, Germany but World War I prevented the games. In 1931, the International Olympic Committee awarded the games to Berlin showing Germany's return to the world wide community after being isolated post World War I. At this time, the International Olympic Committee allowed the country hosting the Olympiad to organize the Winter Games. The German National Olympic Committee seized the opportunity and announced Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany host of the Winter Olympic Games. In 1939, Germany was given another chance at the Olympic Games and Adolf Hitler would be the host.

By 1936, Germany was a Nazi state under a strict dictatorship. The persecution of Jews and “enemies of the state” had already begun. As the Olympics grew near, Germany organized a movement to improve their public image. All Nazi propaganda against Jews was removed and newspapers stopped printing anti-Semitic columns. Every Jew, Gypsy or “undesirable” was arrested to promote the illusion of a true Aryan nation. A new sports arena was built and posters showing a strong, athletic Aryan implied that Germans were the superior race. Hitler presented the world with a scenario that Germany was a wonderful, peaceful place to visit and that the German’s life was comfortable and happy.

There were worldwide reports of Jewish persecution in Nazi Germany and every country had to decide whether to boycott or attend the Olympic Games. Opponents to the boycott declared that the Olympics were about the athletes and sportsmanship not politics. Others believed going to the Berlin Olympics meant supporting a Nazi regime. In the end, forty-nine countries including the United States, competed in the 1936 Olympics. This was the highest number of teams participating in any other Olympic Games.

The 1936 Olympics introduced the torch relay. The Olympic flame was started in Olympia, Greece and this specific flame was used to light the Olympic torch. The torch was carried from Greece to Berlin by 3,422 torch bearers each running one kilometer. These were the first Olympic Games to be televised and Hitler opened the games with great fanfare. Germany postured with lavish ceremonies including fireworks, musical extravaganzas and celebrations. This was Hitler’s chance to show the world the grandeur of a “true Aryan race.”

Jews were not allowed to compete for the German team. Many believed Germany broke Olympic rules that forbid discrimination on the basis of race or religion. To dismiss these claims, Germany allowed Helene Mayer, a half-Jew, a half-Jew, to compete in the women’s fencing event. Mayer won a silver medal and while standing on the podium she gave the Nazi salute like all the other German athletes. Germany had more athletes competing than any other country, so Hitler was confident of many victories. This Olympics would belong to Jesse Owens. Owens was an African-American athlete who shattered the competition by bringing home four gold medals in track and field events. He also received the applause and admiration of the German audience.

At the end of the games, Hitler stood triumphant. Germany captured the most overall medals. The spectacular opening and closing ceremonies won over the athletes and crowds. The Nazi propaganda machine convinced businesses and the world of the wonderful prospects available in a new peaceful, tolerant Germany. This fueled Hitler’s plan of a true Aryan nation. After the Olympics, the persecution of the Jewish people returned with a vengeance and soon the world was entangled in another war. Because of World War II it would be twelve years before another Olympiad was celebrated and the host city was London. Germany would not host another Olympic Game until Munich in 1972, which were marred by Palestinian terrorist who broke into the Olympic Village, killing two members of the Israeli Olympic team and nine hostages. Germany has not hosted the Olympic Games since Munich.


American Memory provides free and open access through the Internet to written and spoken words, sound recordings, still and moving images, prints, maps, and sheet music that document the American experience. It is a digital record of American history and creativity. These materials, from the collections of the Library of Congress and other institutions, chronicle historical events, people, places and ideas that continue to shape America, serving the public as a resource for education and lifelong learning.

The Chicago Daily News, 1902-1933 http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpcoop/ichihtml/cdnhome.html This online collection consists of images of urban life captured on glass plate negatives between 1902 and 1933 by photographers employed by the Chicago Daily News, one of Chicago's leading newspapers. The approximately 55,000 images relate to an enormous variety of topics, but most of the photographs were taken in the same geographic area: Chicago, Illinois, or nearby towns, parks, or athletic fields. Many images of athletes who performed in the St. Louis 1904 Olympics are found in this collection.

The collection of the Prints and Photographs Division include photographs, fine and popular prints and drawings, posters, architectural and engineering drawings. http://www.loc.gov/pictures

Miscellaneous Items in High Demand http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/cph/ The "Miscellaneous Items" category consists of more than 80,000 descriptions of individual images from a variety of the Prints & Photographs Division's photographic, print, drawing, and architectural holdings. This collection holds an abundance of photographs from the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games.

Posters: Artist Posters http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/pos/ The online Artist Posters consist of a small but growing proportion of the more than 85,000 posters in the Artist Poster filing series. Posters from many of the Olympic Games are found in this collection.

The George Grantham Bain Collection represents the photographic files of one of America's earliest news picture agencies. The collection richly documents sports events, theater, celebrities, crime, strikes, disasters, political activities including the woman suffrage campaign, conventions and public celebrations. Here you will find images of some of the events of early modern Olympic Games.

More than 13,000 groups of photographs, prints, drawings, and other visual material offer access to 1.5 million items dating primarily from the 1800s through the present. The groups, called "LOTS," gather images related to one another by provenance, creator, subject, or format into manageable sets.

Hawaii: Even Royalty Surfs in Hawaii http://www.americaslibrary.gov/es/hi/es_hi_surf_1.html Find out which Olympic Gold medalist was born in Hawaii.

Jump Back in Time Take a trip to an era in American History http://www.americaslibrary.gov/jb/

May 28, 1888: World Class Athlete Jim Thorpe was Born http://www.americaslibrary.gov/jb/gilded/jb_gilded_thorpe_1.html This amazing athlete played baseball, football and basketball but what sport did he compete in at the 1912 Stockholm Olympics?

Chronicling America Search America's historic newspapers pages from 1836-1922 or use the U.S. Newspaper Directory to find information about American newspapers published between 1690-present. http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/

Today in History Each day an event from American history is illustrated by digitized items from the Library of Congress American Memory historic collections. http://www.loc.gov/ammem/today

May 28, 1888: Jim Thorpe http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/may28.html World-class athlete was born in a one-room cabin near Prague in Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, on May 28, 1888.

July 30, 1932: The 1932 Olympics http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/jul30.html United States Vice President Charles Curtis declared, “I proclaim open the Olympic Games of Los Angeles, celebrating the tenth Olympiad of the modern era.” A crowd of 100,000 spectators watched as some 1,332 athletes, representing 37 nations, paraded into the stadium. Vice President Curtis pressed a silver button to light the Olympic torch, the Olympic flag was raised, and 2,000 pigeons were released.

Places in the News Headline locations from the Library’s Map Collection http://www.loc.gov/today/placesinthenews/

United Kingdom http://www.loc.gov/today/placesinthenews/archive/2012arch/20120725_unitedkingdom.html The 2012 Summer Olympic Games were held throughout the United Kingdom, with the majority of the events held in London from July 27 to August 12, 2012. More than 10,000 athletes representing over 200 countries will compete in traditional summer sporting events.


Exhibitions Discover exhibitions that bring the world’s largest collection of knowledge, culture, and creativity to life through dynamic displays of artifacts enhanced by interactivity. http://www.loc.gov/exhibits


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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Jesse Owens with Lutz Long and Naoto Tajiia(?) salute during awards ceremony for the broad jumping event at the 1936 Olympics in Germany</td>
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<tr>
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</tbody>
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