

President	James E. Carter Jr.
Chronological Order	39
Life Span	1924-2024
Home State	Georgia
Elected	1976
Political Party	Democratic
Vice President	Walter F. Mondale
First Lady	Rosalynn Smith Carter
Children	3 sons, 1 daughter
Physical Attributes	5'9" tall, sandy brown hair, blue eyes
Undergraduate Education	U.S. Naval Academy (Engineering)
Military Service	Naval Officer 1946-1953
Profession	Naval Officer, Peanut Farmer
Other Political Offices	Governor
Nickname	Jimmy
Family Lineage	English, Scots-Irish, French
Religious Affiliation	Baptist



Biographical Notes

1. Jimmy Carter sought to run the country the way he had run his farm – with unassuming austerity. This would not be an "imperial presidency" like Johnson's and Nixon's.
Carter came from an unusual Southern political culture. While most Democratic politicians were adept at deal-making with the folks at the county courthouse or the hierarchy of an urban political machine, Carter came from the Wilsonian tradition, which was far different. He was a reformer and progressive who put his faith in science and technology to advance the human condition, even as he retained his moral values from his deep religious faith. Carter thought political leadership should function for the common good, not to please a set of organized constituencies. Like Wilson, he intended to lead people by setting a good example. Over and over again, he chose to do what he perceived to be "the right thing to do," regardless of the political ramifications.
2. Carter had three significant successes in foreign policy: the Camp David Accords, the Panama Canal Treaties, and the normalization of relations with China. He had two crucial domestic policy successes: (a) he signed fourteen important environmental bills that gave the government the muscle to curb industrial pollution of many types for the first time, and (b) he created the Department of Energy to regulate existing energy supplies and fund research on new sources of energy, particularly sustainable (wind and solar power) and ecologically sound sources. He also substantially enhanced the roles of the vice president and first lady.
But, in the eyes of the American people, his two significant failures outweighed his successes. First, he inherited a troubled economy and was unable to fix it. Second, he caused the Iran hostage crisis and then failed, both diplomatically and militarily, to free the American hostages until the day of his successor's inauguration. In addition, his embargo of American grain shipments to the U.S.S.R. – in retaliation for its invasion of Afghanistan – had no effect on that country and hurt American farmers.
3. Thomas Carter emigrated from England to Virginia in 1637. His descendant, Kindred Carter – Jimmy Carter's great-great-great-great-grandfather – came to Georgia in the 1790s. Kindred's brother James fought with the Georgia militia during the Revolutionary War. Wiley Carter, Jimmy's great-great-grandfather, was a wealthy landowner who owned forty-three slaves when he died in 1864. During the Civil War, Wiley's son

Littleberry, Jimmy's great-grandfather, served in the Sumter County (GA) Flying Artillery Corps of the Confederate States of America Army under the command of General Jeb Stuart. Littleberry and his two brothers laid down part of the artillery barrage to cover Pickett's Charge during the Battle of Gettysburg. All three brothers survived the war. After the war, the Carter family slaves were freed and their Confederate money was worthless. All they had left was their land.

4. Jimmy Carter was born in 1924 in Plains, Georgia, a small town (population 479) 120 miles south of Atlanta and nine miles west of Americus, the seat of Sumter County. When he was four, the family moved to a 350-acre farm in the tiny rural community of Archery, three miles west of Plains. His parents, Earl and Lillian, established the Carter "home place" there, which included their house, five smaller houses for the Black families that worked on the farm, a commissary store (run by his father), a windmill to pump water, a barn, blacksmith and carpentry shops, a pecan grove, a menagerie of farm animals, and, of course, the fields where they grew their crops. They mainly grew peanuts, cotton, and corn. Earl also owned land in nearby Webster County, which eight Black tenant families farmed. There was no electricity in Archery until 1938.

Since the nearest farm was far away, as a boy, Jimmy played almost exclusively with the Black children of the families that worked on the Carter farm. His two sisters did not participate, and his brother Billy had not been born yet. He became very attached to the Black foreman of the farm, Jack Clark, and his wife, Rachel. Jimmy would tag along with Jack as he went about his duties, and since Jack liked to provide a running commentary on what he was doing, Jimmy learned much about farming from him. Jack also taught Jimmy how to hunt with dogs. When Jimmy's parents were out of town, he would stay in the Clark's one-bedroom cabin at the Carter home place, sleeping on a pallet in the main room. Later in life, Carter said:

Rachel was the one who taught me how to fish in the creeks that drained our land, and on our long walks together, sometimes as much as five miles from our home, she would tell me about the flora and fauna around us and let me know that God expected us to take good care of his creation. Much more than my parents, she talked to me about the religious and moral values that shape a person's life, and I listened with acute attention. Without seeming to preach, she taught me how I should behave.

On the way home from their fishing expeditions, Rachel would often drop some of the fish she caught into Jimmy's sack to make it seem like he had caught more. He later said, "These might have been the best days of my life."

5. Carter's father was a shrewd businessman and encouraged Jimmy to earn money when he was not working on the farm. When he was five, Jimmy began harvesting peanuts – on his own – processing them and placing them into half-pound bags. Jimmy carried the bags into Plains in his wagon, either walking or riding his bike, and sold twenty per day (forty on Saturday) to the townspeople.

At age eight, when the price of cotton was at an all-time low (five cents a pound), Jimmy used the profits from his peanut sales to buy five bales (500 lbs. each) of cotton from a warehouse. He then stored it in a shed on the Carter home place. When he was a teenager, Jimmy sold his cotton for eighteen cents a pound and bought five tenant houses from the estate of a recently deceased undertaker. He rented out the houses by the month: two for \$2 each, one for \$2.50, and two for \$5. Jimmy couldn't pay much for upkeep, but he gave the tenants new boards and furnished windowpanes when needed so that they could make their own repairs. He rode his bike around to the houses each month to collect the rent and continued doing this until he left home for college.

6. Carter had a complicated relationship with his father, Earl, who nicknamed him "Hot Shot" at a young age. In his book *An Hour before Sunrise: Memories of a Rural Boyhood*, which was a finalist for the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for Biography, Jimmy said:

I had strongly mixed feelings about him: of love, admiration, and pride, but also at least a retrospective concern about his aloofness from me. I never remember him saying, "Good job, Hot," or thanking me when I had done my best to fulfill one of his quiet suggestions that had the impact of orders. The individual punishments he administered remained vivid in my memory. I used to hunger for one of his all-to-rare demonstrations of affection. Also, even though he was proud of how well I did in the Navy, I had a lingering question about why he never encouraged me to stay in Plains with him, even during the thirteen years before he had another son. Sometimes, I thought about how he carried me along as the only child on an adult hunting or fishing adventure, but I remembered that it was usually Rachel or Jack

Clark who taught me the intricacies of fishing and hunting with a dog.

Jimmy's mother was highly regarded throughout Sumter County for her nursing. "Miss Lillian" was initially a nurse in the operating room at the Plains hospital. Once her children started to arrive, she no longer took regular shifts at the hospital; she would be "on call" and available to go to people's homes. Unlike Earl, Miss Lillian often disregarded the unwritten segregation rules of the time. "She was the first white lady I've seen come into a Black people's home," remarked an African American neighbor. Her unusual practice of tending to Black patients in their homes and delivering their babies – in exchange for nothing more than two dozen eggs or a basket of blackberries – was viewed with indulgence and grudging respect by Sumter County's white citizens. For white patients, she received \$6 for a twenty-hour nursing shift – good pay during the Depression – though she sometimes waived those fees, too. Earl was proud of her nursing work and paid for all her medical supplies. He sometimes teased her by calling her Eleanor (as in Roosevelt) for the way she was always making sure everything was going well in the Black houses.

Jimmy's post-presidential interest in global health issues owed much to his mother, who treated her family and others in the area for ground itch, boils, sties, abrasions, and other common afflictions of rural life. Among the worst was ringworm, which, left untreated, could consume all the vital nutrients in a person's body. Miss Lillian put medicine between her children's toes, which prevented the parasites from migrating to the small intestine. Carter noticed that poor families were not so lucky. This experience informed his post-presidential efforts to combat guinea worm, river blindness, and other diseases in Africa, the Amazon, and the Indian subcontinent.

Carter had two sisters and a brother: Gloria (two years younger than Jimmy), Ruth (five years younger), and Billy (thirteen years younger).

7. Jimmy was an excellent student at all-white Plains High School and played on the basketball team, despite being only five foot four. He preferred baseball but could not play it because he had to help Earl on the farm after school in springtime. While in high school, Jimmy decided he would like to attend the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, and he and Earl decided the best way to achieve that was to get an appointment from their congressman, Steve Pace. Earl made a point of getting to know Pace and telling him about Jimmy's accomplishments. He also supported Pace strongly in every election and contributed what he could to the congressman's campaign fund.

When Jimmy graduated from Plains High School in 1941, Pace did not give him the appointment; instead, he suggested Jimmy attend Georgia Southwestern College in Americus and check back with him in a year. After a year, Pace disappointed Earl and Jimmy again but told them, "I'll give Jimmy an appointment next year, and he won't have to take the full entrance examination if he can make good grades in college." Jimmy spent the next year studying engineering at Georgia Tech in Atlanta and got his appointment to Annapolis.

8. Carter graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1946 and married Rosalynn Smith, a Plains native, shortly after. He qualified for the prestigious nuclear submarine program in 1952 and was assigned to work on the design of a high-capacity prototype nuclear reactor for the USS *Seawolf*, the nation's second nuclear-powered submarine. As the two senior officers working on the *Seawolf* prototype, Carter and his colleague worked with General Electric engineers at the Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory near Schenectady, New York, and taught math, physics, and reactor technology to noncommissioned officers and the enlisted men serving under them. They also took graduate classes in reactor technology and theoretical nuclear physics at nearby Union College.

During Carter's work at the Knolls Lab, the world's first serious nuclear accident occurred in a reactor at Chalk River, 108 miles north of Ottawa, Canada, in December 1952. The reactor's uranium fuel rods melted down due to operator error, and a subsequent hydrogen gas explosion further damaged the reactor core. The Atomic Energy Commission sent cleanup crews to help, including a twenty-four-man Navy team led by Carter. The radioactivity inside the reactor core building was intense – just ninety seconds of exposure would subject a man to the maximum amount of radiation considered safe to absorb in a year, even when wearing protective suits and masks. Jimmy split his crew into eight groups of three, each with a different assignment. After practicing on a mock-up, the cleanup crew members entered the reactor core, quickly performed their assigned task, and exited after at most ninety seconds. Slowly and methodically, the crews dismantled the damaged core, and two years later, the reactor was brought back online. As a result of his experience at Chalk River, President Carter was uniquely qualified to deal with the Three Mile Island disaster – the partial meltdown of a nuclear reactor core – near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in March 1979.

Earl Carter died of pancreatic cancer in 1953. At the time, the farm was not doing well; Billy was only

sixteen years old, and Miss Lillian was not up to running the farm. She asked Jimmy to come home and run the farm, and he decided to resign from the Navy and return to Plains. He decided without consulting Rosalynn, and she was furious when he told her. "I argued," she wrote later. "I cried. I even screamed at him. I loved our life in the Navy and the independence I had finally achieved. ... Plains had too many ghosts for me." Jimmy said later, "She almost quit me."

9. In the mid-1950s, the civil rights movement began in the South, opposing segregation. An organization called the White Citizens' Council (WCC) was formed to help maintain the segregated status quo, and its membership blossomed across the region, including in Plains.

One summer day in 1955, a dozen of Carter's peanut warehouse customers visited him and suggested he join the Plains chapter of the WCC. When he politely declined, they offered to pay the \$5 annual membership fee on his behalf. Carter angrily took out a \$5 bill from his wallet and announced that he'd sooner "flush it down the toilet" than give it to the WCC. That evening, he mentioned the incident to Rosalynn, who winced. As bookkeeper for the warehouse, she worried about their cash flow and a possible boycott. She later told a reporter, "I was really worried. But I was very proud of Jimmy. Those people were ugly. They were all wrapped up in small, mean things, and I was proud that he had stood up to them." Later, someone placed a handwritten sign on the Carter Peanut Warehouse reading, "Coons and Carter go together." Jimmy was the only prominent white man in Plains who refused to join the WCC. The council members boycotted the Carter warehouse, but Jimmy stubbornly held out, and the boycott fizzled.

10. Willis Wright was the first Black tenant farmer to purchase his Webster County land from Earl Carter. He was widely respected, and when voting rights became an issue during the civil rights era, the Black community chose him to be the first Black person to attempt to register to vote in Webster County. Shortly after, he went to see Jimmy.

"Mr. Jimmy," he said, "I need your advice on something that's important to me and some of the other folks in Webster County. We had a meeting in our church, and there was a man there from the Justice Department. He told us that the law now guarantees that Black people can vote and that some have registered in other counties in Georgia.

"Well, I was chosen to be the first one, so early this morning, I went over to the courthouse to the registrar's office and found that it was closed. I waited until almost dinnertime, and he finally unlocked his office, and I followed him in. He asked me what I wanted, and I said that I wanted to register to vote. He told me to wait a few moments and walked down the hall. When he came back, he brought some papers and said I would have to answer some questions about citizenship."

Carter interrupted, "I'm familiar with those questions, and I couldn't answer them myself. There are thirty of them, and they're used to keep Negroes from voting."

"Yes, sir," Willis agreed. "We discussed this at the church, and the man from Washington said that we no longer have to answer them to vote. I told the registrar this, and he pulled a pistol out of a drawer and laid it on the counter. He said, 'Nigger, you better think this over for a few more days, then let me know what you decide.'"

Carter asked, "What did you do then?"

Willis smiled and said, "That's when I decided to come here and talk to you. We know you've had a boycott against your business and might be familiar with the problem." Carter offered to accompany him to the registrar's office, but Willis responded, "No, sir. It wouldn't mean nothing if you was there with me."

Carter advised Willis to tell the registrar that he and Carter had discussed the matter and that Jimmy had told him to return and register. He did so and had no problem.

11. Carter ran for the Georgia Senate in 1962. On the day of the Democratic primary, he received reports from friends that a politician in Quitman County had rigged the vote there. When the results were announced, Carter lost by 139 votes. In one precinct in Quitman County, he lost 360 to 136, even though there were only 333 registered voters.

Jimmy decided to contest the results in court, which led to Miss Lillian saying, "Jimmy is so naïve, so naïve." His cousin referred him to Charles Kirbo, a slow-talking, good-old-boy Atlanta attorney who was a devastatingly effective courtroom lawyer. Kirbo drove to Quitman County, found the Georgetown precinct ballot box, and had it delivered to Superior Court Judge Carl E. Crow. When they opened the box, they found loose ballots and a batch of more than a hundred ballots neatly folded and bound by a rubber band. The required list of people who had voted was missing. Kirbo reminded Judge Crow that Georgia politicians had stolen past elections "just like chicken thieves dragging a bush behind them to wipe out their tracks" and argued that was what was happening here by omitting the list of voters.

After formal arguments, as everyone was walking out of the courtroom, Kirbo sidled up to Judge Crow and said, "I know your normal practice, to just go by the count."

"Absolutely right," responded Crow.

"But I never knew you to tolerate fraud, though," replied Kirbo.

"That bothers me," replied the judge.

"Ask your wife what she thinks," suggested Kirbo.

A few days later, Judge Crow ruled that the Georgetown precinct ballot box votes would not be counted. The ruling tipped the balance; Jimmy won by 65 votes. For the rest of Carter's life, Kirbo, who reminded people of Atticus Finch from the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, was a valued advisor because he had common sense and understood people. Kirbo loved to tell the following story about mules:

Now, I regard the mule as a unique specimen. I don't mean in the biological sense. I mean in the sense that a mule is not fixin' to do anything he hasn't decided is the thing he ought to do. It's not like a lot of folks, you know. Folks tend to do things – and then think about whether they ought to or not – and folks, as you know, tend to get into trouble sometimes. But you take a mule now. He very seldom gets into trouble.

12. Carter was re-elected to the Georgia Senate in 1964. In 1966, he ran for governor but lost to Lester Mattox, a segregationist.

Carter ran again for governor in 1970, and, based on his experience in 1966, he felt that he would have to capture white voters who were uneasy about integration to win. Therefore, he campaigned on a platform that called for an end to bussing to overcome segregation in public schools. He minimized his appearance before African American groups and sought the endorsement of several avowed segregationists, including Lester Maddox (who was term limited). Carter ran as a populist against the "Atlanta establishment," meaning "the big shots that own Atlanta newspapers" and the city's corporate elite. The strategy worked – he won. Jimmy spent approximately \$200,000 of his own money – a significant portion of his net worth – on the campaign.

13. In his gubernatorial inaugural address, Carter proclaimed:

I say to you quite frankly that the time for racial segregation is over. Our people have already made the major and difficult decision. No poor, rural, weak, or Black person should ever have to bear the additional burden of being deprived of an education, a job, or simple justice.

This statement shocked people – because of how he had campaigned – and garnered national attention, including an article on the front page of the *New York Times*. By and large, Carter governed as a progressive and a reformer. He doubled the number of African Americans on the state payroll and appointed fifty-three Blacks to various state committees, including parole boards.

Two factors affected the way that Carter governed Georgia. First, a Georgia governor cannot serve consecutive terms, so he was not concerned about his re-election prospects. Second, the state legislature convened for no more than 45 days in alternating years, so the Georgia governor – unlike a U.S. president – possessed nearly unfettered executive powers. Carter took full advantage of this authority, often ignoring the legislature. Carter gained a deserved reputation as an arrogant governor with a "holier than thou" attitude that isolated him from politicians who might otherwise have become his political allies. His major accomplishment was reorganizing the state's three-hundred agencies into twenty-two. He also put forward sound environmental policies, e.g., he ensured that several free-flowing rivers were not dammed to generate power and make money for utilities companies.

14. In 1973, Governor Carter was invited to join the David Rockefeller's Trilateral Commission, a non-governmental collection of political, business, and academic leaders from North America, Western Europe, and Japan who met biannually to discuss global issues. The half dozen meetings he attended in the next three years – for which he prepared assiduously – helped deepen his understanding of the foreign policy and macroeconomic questions he would face as president. The commission also introduced him to seven people who would fill crucial roles in his administration: Walter Mondale (vice president), Cyrus Vance (secretary of state), H. Michael Blumenthal (secretary of the treasury), Harold Brown (secretary of defense), Zbigniew Brzezinski (national security adviser), Paul Warnke (chief arms control negotiator), and Paul Volcker (chairman of the Federal Reserve). The Trilateral Commission issued short policy papers on international issues, and

Carter “studied those things like a Bible.”

15. Carter was not adept at giving prepared speeches. He hated using a Teleprompter or reading from a text – even the pitch of his voice sounded higher in those situations. But he was excellent at giving speeches extemporaneously.

On the morning of May 4, 1974, Senator Ted Kennedy gave the keynote speech at the University of Georgia’s “Law Day” event. Governor Carter was scheduled to give the luncheon talk at the same gathering. As he listened to Kennedy’s speech, Carter realized it was very similar to the talk he had planned, so he pulled out a yellow legal pad and hastily jotted down some notes for a new speech. In his speech, Carter vented his disgust with the inequities of the legal system. He recounted the story of a poor, illiterate Black woman who was swindled out of her land on the Georgia coast by a corrupt sheriff. Seeking justice, she hired a lawyer, only to learn that the man failed to file the necessary claims by the legal deadline – so she lost her rights to her only property. Carter told the story with unaccustomed passion. At one point, he told the room full of lawyers and law students, “I don’t know, it may be that poor people are the only ones who commit crimes, but I do know that they are the only ones who serve prison sentences.”

Carter explained that, not being a lawyer, he had nevertheless learned a bit about the law and society by reading theologian Reinhold Niebuhr and listening to songwriter Bob Dylan. “I grew up a landowner’s son,” he said, “But I never realized the proper relationship between the landowner and those who worked on the farm until I heard Dylan’s record “I Ain’t Gonna Work on Maggie’s Farm No More.” The talk electrified the audience, including the famous journalist Hunter S. Thompson of *Rolling Stone* magazine. Afterward, Thompson asked Carter for a transcript of the speech. Carter said, “There is no transcript,” and showed the journalist his page and a half of handwritten notes.

“Jesus Christ,” Thompson exclaimed. “That was one of the damndest things I’ve ever heard. You mean you just winged it all the way through?”

Carter replied, “I guess I was a little surprised at how it came out.” Two years later, Thompson wrote about the speech in a cover story for *Rolling Stone* in which he endorsed Jimmy for president.

16. Carter took his first step on the road to the White House in 1972 by becoming chair of the Democratic Governor's Campaign Committee and then his second step by getting himself named the Democratic National Committee’s campaign chairman for the 1974 congressional and gubernatorial elections. The latter position gave him access to key Democrats nationwide, and the significant Democratic gains in the midterm elections of 1974 added to his reputation.

17. Carter’s campaign for president began to come together in October 1975, but it needed money. To get it, Phil Walden, president of Capricorn Records and Jimmy’s friend from Georgia, put on a series of concerts for Carter. The first, by the Marshall Tucker Band, was held in Atlanta. Soon, Carter would raise money with shows featuring Charlie Daniels, Willie Nelson, Lynyrd Skynyrd, John Denver, Jerry Jeff Walker, Jimmy Buffett, and the Allman Brothers. Also, the Allmans, James Brown, and Johnny Cash (all from the South) donated significantly to the campaign. At the time of Gregg Allman’s death in 2017, Carter said, “If it hadn’t been for Gregg Allman, I never would have been president.”

Carter never worried about being associated with the drug culture of rock and roll music. His admiration for the long-haired musicians was genuine and reciprocated. And the fundraising advantage offered by rock concerts was significant. Each stub was used as a receipt to show a contribution that could be used later for matching federal funds. Some of the concerts had voter registration tables at the entrances.

And Carter knew what to do when he was onstage. “I’m gonna say four things,” he said at the start of a concert in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1975. “First of all, I’m running for president. Secondly, I’m gonna be elected. Third, this is very important, would you help me? Fourth, I want to introduce you to my friends and your friends, the great Allman Brothers!” This introduction was followed by thunderous applause. Any politician who knew better than to make a speech at a rock concert was guaranteed to win the votes of thousands of grateful fans.

Many of Jimmy’s music friends visited him in the White House and performed there. And when Carter flew a plane filled with family and friends to Oslo, Norway, to see him receive the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize, he brought Willie Nelson with him. Willie performed at an event in Oslo, serenading Carter with “Georgia on My Mind.”

18. Nine other Democrats were seeking the nomination in 1976, most of them better known than Carter. He portrayed himself as an outsider who could “clean up the mess in Washington” in the wake of Watergate. During the Democratic primaries, Carter outthrust the competition. Instead of entering selective primaries,

he recognized that under the new Democratic rules, he could gather some delegates even in states where he did not come in first. And so, he ran everywhere, often using his three sons and his wife as surrogates. One by one, the other candidates dropped out, and Carter won the nomination on the first ballot at the Democratic National Convention with seventy-four percent of the delegates. He won over many voters by promising that – unlike Richard Nixon – “I’ll never lie to you.”

19. Carter’s opponent in the 1976 general election was President Gerald Ford. The extremely close election was strongly affected by three Ford mistakes. First, Ford’s pardon of Richard Nixon was a political mistake because it alienated many Americans. Second, Ford dropped his sitting vice president, moderate Nelson Rockefeller, from the ticket and replaced him with conservative Bob Dole. He did this to appease the right-wing of the party, and it hurt him in two ways: (a) Ford lost Rockefeller’s home state of New York (41 electoral votes) by four percentage points and (b) Ford did poorly amongst Rockefeller-supporting African American voters.

Ford’s third mistake occurred during the second debate with Carter on foreign policy, a topic on which a sitting president should outshine a one-term Southern governor. In answer to a question about the Helsinki Accords with the Soviet Union, Ford stated that “there is no Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, and there will never be under a Ford administration.”

Knowledgeable viewers realized immediately that this was incorrect. The questioner assumed that Ford had simply misspoken and gave him a chance to clarify his answer by pointing out that the Soviet Union was “occupying most of the countries there.” But Ford dug himself in deeper, saying, “I don’t believe, Mr. Frankel, the Yugoslavians consider themselves dominated by the Soviet Union. I don’t believe the Romanians consider themselves dominated by the Soviet Union. I don’t believe the Poles consider themselves dominated by the Soviet Union.” This gaffe won the debate for Carter.

On Election Day, Carter carried the popular vote 40.8 million to 39.1 million and the Electoral College 297 to 240. Eleven states were decided by less than two percentage points, and if Ford had won New York, he would have won the election. Alternatively, Ford would have won with a combined change of 19,000 votes in Ohio and Hawaii. Carter won every state in the Old Confederacy except Virginia and every border state. Carter was the first president from the Deep South since Zachary Taylor in 1848. He was the first evangelical Christian president and the first president since Woodrow Wilson with no Washington experience.

20. Carter did two memorable things at his inauguration. First, he began his inaugural address by thanking, “my predecessor for all he has done to heal our land.” This was a gracious gesture to President Ford, who pardoned Richard Nixon to avoid further strife in the country, despite the fact that it was going to cost him politically. Carter then walked over to Ford, who was seated nearby, and the two men shook hands.

Second, after the inaugural address was completed, instead of riding from the Capitol to the White House in the presidential limousine, Jimmy, Rosalynn, and their nine-year-old daughter Amy got out and walked the mile and a half. Carter felt that “the symbolism of our leaving the armored car” would convey “a reduction in the imperial status of the president and his family.” The crowd loved it. In the decades since every newly inaugurated president except Reagan has walked at least part of the way to the White House. But Carter was the only modern president to walk the whole way, and – for post-9/11 security reasons – it will probably never be allowed again.

21. One of Carter’s first actions as president was to grant an unconditional pardon to those who evaded the Vietnam War draft between 1964 and 1973. The amnesty wiped their criminal records clean and allowed them to return to the country. The government had no record of how many draft dodgers had fled to Canada and other countries, but estimates put the number at around seventy thousand. Carter’s amnesty did not apply to active-duty personnel who went AWOL.

Carter did it to heal the country after a long and grueling war. Max Cleland, the double-amputee Vietnam vet who became Carter’s choice to head the Veterans Administration, approved the action and thought the decision was rooted in Carter’s “sense of Christian forgiveness.” But Cleland warned him that “there is growing opposition among members of the Senate to your plan.” Carter replied, “I don’t care if all one hundred of them are against me. It’s the right thing to do.”

22. Before the Carter administration, vice presidents had no power and very little to do other than preside over the Senate. There is a famous story about a woman with two sons; one was lost at sea, and the other became vice president. Neither was ever heard from again.

Carter revolutionized the American vice presidency. He had promised Walter (“Fritz”) Mondale a

significant role and needed his Washington experience. However, there was also a psychological component involved: Carter was very self-confident; he lacked the insecurity of many other presidents. This allowed him to break with tradition and treat Mondale as what he later called his “assistant president.” He explicitly told his staff, “If you get an order from Fritz, it’s as if it’s an order from me,” and he passed the word that anyone who undercut the vice president would be gone. When Mondale gave Carter an eleven-page memo requesting specific responsibilities, he was expecting to have to negotiate some items, but Carter approved them all.

After taking office, one of Carter’s first executive orders placed the VP in the military chain of command. Before that, if the president became incapacitated, the military could make life-or-death decisions for the fate of the planet on its own authority. “Boy, did that change the attitude of the DOD,” Mondale remembered.

Even the VP’s daily life would differ dramatically from those of previous vice presidents. Until Carter, vice presidents were not granted a West Wing office; they were stuck across the driveway in the Executive Office Building. It was Carter’s idea to give Mondale a large suite just down the hall from the Oval Office – something emulated by all his successors. Fritz had full access to all classified documents and permission to sit in on any meeting he wanted to. Where previous presidents could sometimes go weeks without seeing their VPs, Carter brought Mondale in on all the important decisions. Carter also began a tradition for future VPs: the weekly private lunch with the president. In fact, Carter and Mondale often had two weekly private lunches: one on domestic issues and one on national security.

This radical shift in the role of the VP would be one of Carter’s enduring legacies. It was the most significant strengthening of the American constitutional system in the second half of the twentieth century.

23. After Carter revolutionized the vice presidency, he and Rosalynn did the same for the role of the first lady. Jimmy and Rosalynn had worked as a team running the farm and continued their partnership in the White House. Rosalynn went to work every day at her office in the East Wing of the White House, except for days when she traveled. She was the first first lady to have her own professional policy staff. She was the first first lady to attend Cabinet meetings regularly. Every Tuesday, the Carters had a working lunch where they discussed personnel, her projects, political strategy, foreign policy, and other substantive matters. Anything personal or family-related was left for supper and after hours.

Rosalynn’s area of focus was on children’s health. At the suggestion of Betty Bumpers, the former first lady of Arkansas, the two women embarked on a state-by-state campaign promoting preschool immunizations. Rosalynn scrounged the seed money from the administration’s budget. The two women eventually convinced thirty-three states to enact bills mandating proof of vaccination before children entered kindergarten or first grade. Before long, early childhood vaccination rates soared past ninety percent, an impressive feat in a country that even then was beset by outlandish conspiracy theories about vaccinations.

The program was a stunning success. Within three years, the CDC reported that the incidence of mumps, measles, rubella, and other communicable diseases among school-age children was “at or near record low levels.” A decade later, after a deadly measles outbreak, Rosalynn and Betty teamed up again to encourage immunizations by age two, and Rosalynn eventually took her crusade abroad. She helped prevent tens of millions of children from getting sick and saved tens of thousands of lives worldwide.

24. One area in which Carter did not do well was his relationship with Congress, and the dysfunction began early on. One day during the transition period, Speaker of the House Tip O’Neill (D-MA) came by to suggest the appointment of an experienced Hill staffer to serve as the assistant to the president for congressional liaison. Carter had already decided to fill the post with Georgian Frank Moore, who had served him well as liaison to the Georgia legislature when he was governor. So, it’s understandable that he did not accept Tip’s suggestion. However, instead of taking the opportunity to build a relationship with O’Neill by giving him something else, Carter was annoyed that he had even been asked. This behavior became a pattern for Carter. He had little patience for bargaining with Congress, even the Democrats, and was overly reliant on his “Georgia Mafia,” which included Moore, chief of staff Hamilton Jordan, deputy chief of staff Landon Butler, press secretary Jody Powell, budget director Bert Lance, communications director Gerald Rafshoon, domestic policy director Stu Eizenstat, attorney general Griffin Bell, and White House counsel Robert Lipshutz.

House Majority Leader Jim Wright (D-TX) observed, “The problem is that Jimmy Carter wants to be Mr. Clean. He will not indulge in quid pro quo. He thinks it’s tarnished and sordid. ... I think deep down, he has categorized patronage as being something corrupt.”

25. Carter came into office with a huge majority in the House (292 to 143) and a filibuster-proof majority in the Senate (62 to 38). The corresponding margins after the 1974 midterm elections were 277 to 157 and 58

to 41. But during Carter's presidency, Congress was much more independent than it would be in the early twenty-first century. There were few party line votes because the Democrats were divided between old-fashioned New Deal-Great Society liberals, southern conservatives who might as well be Republicans, and rambunctious young Watergate Babies who disliked the stuffy emphasis on seniority and took orders from no one. All the factions had pent-up expectations that Carter could not possibly meet.

Carter was also hampered by having no distinct political ideology; he was progressive on some issues but conservative on others. Reagan, Bush, Clinton, Obama, and Trump supporters in Congress might differ from the party's president on a few votes, but they always played for the same side. In contrast, Carter wasn't the quarterback of any particular team; he assembled a new front line on every issue with no inherited party game plan or ideological playbook to fall back on.

26. Carter was sympathetic to consumer rights. He wanted to pare down or eliminate federal airline, trucking, and railroad regulations – as long as safety regulations were preserved. Pro-business lobbyists fought Carter's deregulation initiatives because they were perceived as a part of a pro-consumer agenda. The airline industry was a case in point. Historically, the Civilian Aeronautics Board (CAB) controlled fares and routing decisions. However, the relationship between the CAB and the airlines had gotten so cozy that the major airlines were not really competing against each other. The CAB guaranteed them a twelve percent profit margin and awarded monopoly routes. Consumers had little choice – and fares were so high that few middle-class Americans flew.

Carter decided to change all this. In early 1978, he introduced the Airline Deregulation Act, which revolutionized the industry by removing federal control over fares, routes, and the entry of new airlines. Average fares quickly declined by one-third, and millions of middle-class Americans began to fly for the first time. In addition, airfreight companies like FedEx started to thrive.

The administration also passed the Motor Carrier Act of 1980, which partially deregulated the trucking industry. Deregulation dramatically increased the number of trucking companies, and shipping costs for businesses plummeted. But so too did the wages of truck drivers, many of whom began working for non-unionized, independent, or family-owned carriers. Consumers benefitted, but unionized truck drivers suffered, which enraged the powerful Teamsters Union. The same could be said of the labor unions in the airline industry. There were always trade-offs, but Carter's political instinct was to favor consumers over trade unions. He had little empathy for class politics, epitomized, he believed, by labor's demands. This attitude sowed unrest inside a traditional constituency of the Democratic Party.

The Staggers Rail Act of 1980 continued the deregulation of the railroad industry that had begun during the Ford administration.

27. Bert Lance, a Georgia banker, was Carter's closest confidant in Washington, except for Rosalynn. He had nearly unfettered access to Jimmy, met with him every Tuesday afternoon in the Oval Office, and usually had lunch with him on Thursdays. He was one of three people – Charlie Kirbo and Rosalynn being the others – who could tell Carter frankly that he was making a mistake. Unlike Kirbo, who stayed in Georgia to avoid Beltway scrutiny and infighting, Lance came to Washington to be Carter's budget director, which required Senate confirmation.

The Lance scandal had two origins. The first was that Carter's Georgia Mafia never got along socially or philosophically with the capital's "Georgetown crowd" of power brokers and influencers. Hence, they were delighted to see Bert having problems. The instigator of the scandal was Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal. Lance believed interest rates should be low to promote small-business growth; Blumenthal and the New York financial community wanted them high. Moreover, Blumenthal believed that Lance wanted to either replace him as treasury secretary or become chairman of the Federal Reserve.

Blumenthal began leaking derogatory information about Lance's Georgia banking practices to the *New York Times* conservative columnist William Safire to keep those things from happening and to keep the interest rates high. Safire had previously served as Richard Nixon's publicist and speechwriter for twenty-five years.

Lance had done nothing illegal, but his sloppy handling of loans and collaterals was harped on, implying unscrupulous behavior during Senate hearings. Later, it was discovered that one witness against Lance perjured himself. Eventually, Carter and the rest of the Georgia Mafia concluded that Bert should resign, and he did. The Georgians were infuriated that the Washington establishment had brought down one of their own. More importantly, Jimmy had lost an invaluable advisor.

28. In 1977, Carter negotiated two treaties regarding the Panama Canal, which the Senate then ratified. The terms of *The Panama Canal Treaty* were that beginning in 2000, Panama assumed complete control of canal

operations and became primarily responsible for its defense. The terms of *The Neutrality Treaty* were that the U.S. retains the permanent right to defend the canal from any threat that might interfere with its continued neutral service to ships of all nations.

The passage of the treaties was a significant accomplishment in foreign affairs since it solved problems with our relationship with Panama, problems that had been festering since 1964. The passage almost certainly prevented a long and bloody guerilla war against the United States in Central America. Each treaty was ratified by a narrow margin, 68 to 32, just one vote more than the required two-thirds. Carter and his team were negotiating with senators right up to the times of the votes.

Ronald Reagan was an outspoken critic of the Panama Canal treaties when he ran for president against Carter in 1980. His stated opinion regarding the Panama Canal was: "We built it, we paid for it, and we are going to keep it." However, upon taking office, Reagan did not touch the treaties he had railed against. He privately considered them a "success story" that required no modification, much less abrogation. But publicly, Reagan refused to admit that he had been wrong.

29. On the environment, Carter presided over the second great public health revolution in American history. The first, at the turn of the twentieth century, was sanitation: the control of human sewage. The second was Carter's quiet, piecemeal revolution to control industrial waste. He signed fourteen important environmental bills that gave the government the muscle to curb pollution of all kinds for the first time.

By 1977, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established by Nixon in 1970 hadn't done much to end the smog that clung to major American cities and industrial areas. It was not until the 1977 Clean Air Act Amendments – pushed hard by Carter – that the air quality in the United States began to show an astonishing improvement. The administration also won a landmark court ruling that forced U.S. Steel to sharply reduce its pollution of the air, leading the entire steel industry to follow suit.

In addition, for the first time, Carter's EPA required companies to list all the toxic substances in their products – a considerable advance for public health that Americans soon took for granted. The agency moved aggressively to save the Earth's ozone layer by banning chlorofluorocarbons in aerosols. It also banned lead paint, which poisoned thousands of children annually. The EPA's development of market-based emissions trading (a.k.a. cap and trade) eventually eliminated acid rain in the United States and much of Canada. It is now used in many countries to fight climate change. The Clean Water Act of 1977 helped end an era where American rivers caught fire. Carter was pro-coal, but he signed legislation that heavily regulated coal mines and the first bill funding the reclamation of strip-mined lands.

30. The most significant foreign policy success of Carter's presidency was the signing of the Camp David Accords. After the 1973 Yom Kippur War between Israel and its opponents, Egypt and Syria, the Israelis had gradually disengaged their forces and moved a distance back in the Sinai Peninsula. However, they were still occupying Egyptian territory, and there was no peace between these two adversaries.

In the fall of 1978, Carter invited Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egypt's President Anwar Sadat to meet with him at Camp David, the presidential retreat 62 miles north-northwest of Washington. The meeting lasted thirteen days. During the first three days, it became evident that Begin and Sadat did not get along well personally – they argued too much. So, over the last ten days, they did not meet. Instead, Carter shuttled back and forth between the two delegations and hammered out the terms for peace.

Carter's patience and persistence produced two "framework" accords. The second of these frameworks (*A Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel*) led directly to the 1979 Egypt–Israel Peace Treaty. This treaty, which Carter also negotiated, is the most important and durable peace treaty anywhere in the world since the end of World War II. Not since Theodore Roosevelt's efforts to end the Russo-Japanese War had a president so effectively mediated a dispute between two other nations. The first framework (*A Framework for Peace in the Middle East*), which dealt with the Palestinian territories, was written without the participation of the Palestinians. It did not produce peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis.

Before the accords were signed, one issue not addressed in them bothered Carter: the lack of any agreement about halting the illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank. Begin promised Carter a signed letter, as a supplement to the accords, in which Israel would agree to halt all new settlements in the West Bank until the peace treaty could be negotiated. (The issue of future Israeli settlements was to be decided and agreed upon by the parties negotiating the peace treaty.) Begin reneged on this agreement by not giving Carter the agreed upon letter. Within weeks of signing the Camp David Accords, Begin announced that his government intended to build eighteen to twenty new settlements in the West Bank over the next five years, which infuriated Carter. Over time, more and more Israeli settlements have been built in the West Bank; they

are an important part of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict today.

Begin and Sadat jointly received the 1978 Nobel Peace Prize for the Camp David Accords. Carter did not because he did not arrange to be nominated.

31. As a Southerner, Carter understood race but had a blind spot when it came to the (mostly Northern) culture of trade unions. He considered the unions just another special interest group, and, according to Stu Eizenstat, "They did not have a special call on his heartstrings." In particular, Carter had a fractious relationship with George Meany, president of the AFL-CIO.

During the first quarter of 1978, there was a nationwide coal miners' strike, and the United Mine Workers of America negotiated a tentative agreement with the mine owners to settle it. But the union members voted two to one against ratification. A frustrated Carter invoked the dreaded Taft-Hartly Act the next day, ordering the miners back to work. Many workers ignored the presidential order – and Carter declined to use federal troops to enforce it. Some called the president weak for not doing so, but the strike ended two weeks later without the use of federal forces.

32. As a boy, Jimmy sent a nickel every week to Baptist missionaries building hospitals and schools in China. As an officer aboard a submarine celebrating his twenty-fifth birthday, he glimpsed the campfires of the Chinese Communists on the brink of victory in their 1949 revolution. Now, as president, Carter saw a chance to build on Richard Nixon's historic opening to the People's Republic of China by normalizing relations with the most populous nation on earth. This, he said later, turned out to be the most historically significant decision of his presidency. It allowed China's entrance into the global economy and helped ignite the most rapid and extensive modernization in the history of the world.

Specifically, Carter granted the People's Republic of China formal diplomatic recognition on January 1, 1979. To do so required severing diplomatic ties with and withdrawal of recognition from non-communist Taiwan (a.k.a. the Republic of China). Moreover, Carter unilaterally revoked the 1955 Mutual Defense Treaty with the Republic of China, effective January 1, 1980. Carter's recognition of the People's Republic of China significantly reduced tensions in East Asia. In China, pragmatic politicians who were more interested in economic growth than in military confrontations replaced hard-liners. Subsequently, the People's Republic of China and the United States established beneficial trade relations. Recently, as China has grown stronger economically and militarily, tensions with the United States have increased.

Under Carter, the U.S. established quasi-diplomatic relations with Taiwan. In fact, the U.S. continued to supply arms to Taiwan so that it could defend itself from the mainland, a step that kept some friction in America's relationship with the People's Republic of China.

33. Carter inherited an economic mess, primarily due to the Arab oil embargo, and was unable to fix it. In response to the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Arab members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) imposed a ban on oil exports to the U.S. and other countries that supported Israel. The oil embargo sent the inflation rate into double digits, and unemployment and interest rates soared.

By the spring of 1979, Carter had little choice but to decontrol domestic oil prices while OPEC continued to slash production, further jacking up prices at the pump and leaving Americans fuming in hours-long gas lines. Over the July 4 weekend, half the gas stations shut down in many states for lack of anything to sell. (In New York City, it was 90 percent.) Carter did not create this "energy crisis," but he caught the blame for it.

34. On July 15, 1979, Carter delivered a nationally televised speech in which he discussed energy policy and told Americans they faced a crisis of confidence: "It is a crisis that strikes at the very heart and soul and spirit of our national will. ... The erosion of our confidence in the future is threatening to destroy the social and political fabric of America." Two days later, he asked five cabinet members to resign, which *did* erode public confidence. The speech, which became known as the "malaise speech," angered many who, with hindsight, considered it an attempt by Carter to blame the country for his failures in managing the economy. Consequently, Carter's poll numbers reached new lows.

35. One of Carter's signature domestic accomplishments was in energy policy. He created the Department of Energy to regulate existing energy supplies and fund research on new sources of energy, particularly sustainable (wind and solar power) and ecologically sound sources. He also developed new conservation measures. However, Carter was given little credit for these accomplishments because what the American public saw were the shortages and high gasoline prices. He also created the Department of Education and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

36. Carter appointed 262 federal judges, by far the most of any president until then and more than any of his successors in four years. His choices were diverse. Carter named 55 Blacks, Hispanics, and other minorities to the federal bench – three times the number serving at the time. Among the new judges were forty women, five times as many as appointed by all earlier presidents. The best-known was Ruth Bader Ginsberg, a brilliant law professor from Columbia Law School. Years after she became a Supreme Court justice, she said, “People often ask me, ‘Well, did you always want to be a judge?’ My answer is that it just wasn’t in the realm of the possible until Jimmy Carter became president and was determined to draw on the talent of all the people, not just some of them.”

37. When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in late 1979, Carter retaliated in two ways. Both turned out to be ill-advised. First, he imposed an embargo on American grain shipments to the Soviet Union. The embargo hurt American farmers but not the Soviet Union, which simply bought the grain from other countries. Carter’s 1980 grain embargo ceded U.S. dominance in a huge export market, a dominance that American farmers would never get back. They held this against Carter and the Democratic Party in the election of 1980, and they continue to do so. In the 1970s, some Congressional districts in the rural Midwest voted Democrat. Now, they are almost all solidly Republican. Carter’s grain embargo did for the rural Midwest what LBJ’s Civil Rights Act of 1964 did for the South: it turned it Republican.

Second, Carter ordered an American boycott of Moscow’s 1980 Summer Olympic Games. The American public considered this more punitive toward American athletes than Soviet leaders, and the boycott made him look petulant and weak.

38. The kill shot to Carter’s presidency was the Iran hostage crisis: he caused it and was unable to rescue the American hostages.

The Shah of Iran, emboldened by American support over the years, became increasingly authoritarian toward his people. He outlawed rival political factions and deployed one of the world’s most feared secret police agencies. By the time of Carter’s presidency, discontent with the Shah was widespread in Iran, and so was civil disorder. By early 1979, an Islamic fundamentalist group headed by Ayatollah Khomeini had seized power and forced the Shah to flee to Mexico.

Three powerful men outside the U.S. government – David Rockefeller (the Shah’s banker), John J. McCloy (Rockefeller’s lawyer), and Henry Kissinger (the Shah’s friend) – commenced a high-pressure campaign to convince Carter to grant the Shah asylum in the U.S. They told Carter that the Shah urgently needed medical care that could only be found in the U.S., which was false. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carter’s National Security Advisor, also strongly supported allowing the Shah to come to the U.S.

Eventually, Carter caved to the pressure despite strong misgivings. Allowing the Shah to come to America enraged Muslim fundamentalists in Iran, and in November 1979, Islamic student militants loyal to Khomeini overran the American embassy in Tehran. They seized sixty-six Americans and held them hostage, demanding (a) the return of the Shah to stand trial, (b) the money and property the Shah had stashed outside of Iran, and (c) an apology from America.

After months of fruitless negotiation, Carter authorized a secret military mission to free the hostages in April 1980. Unfortunately, two of the eight helicopters carrying the assault force developed mechanical problems, and the pilot of a third became disoriented in a sandstorm and turned back. Since six helicopters were needed to be successful, the mission was aborted. After the failure, Iran dispersed the hostages to hideouts throughout the country, making their rescue impossible. The public blamed Carter for the mission’s failure, and his popularity plummeted to record lows in polls taken just months before the 1980 election. Carter worked out a deal for the release of the hostages in the final days of his presidency. They were released on January 21, 1981, minutes after Ronald Reagan’s inauguration.

39. Three days after the embassy takeover in Iran, Sen. Edward Kennedy announced his candidacy for the Democratic presidential nomination. Carter clinched the nomination before the Democratic National Convention by winning the requisite number of primaries, but Kennedy refused to concede. His team hoped to change the convention rules to allow an “open convention” that could nominate him, but that did not happen. Kennedy reluctantly went up on stage after Carter’s acceptance speech at the convention but was not magnanimous – he did not raise Carter’s hand as is traditionally done to show solidarity. Meanwhile, Ronald Reagan had cruised effortlessly to the Republican nomination and criticized Carter daily for the ongoing hostage crisis.

A televised debate between Carter and Reagan occurred a few days before the 1980 election, and the president prepared hard for it. But Reagan seemed to know what Carter would say, which he did because the

Reagan campaign had stolen a copy of Carter's briefing book before the debate. Reagan was a vastly superior television candidate, primarily due to his ability to provide memorable quotes in terms that were easy to understand. For example, when Carter sounded annoyed and shrill, Reagan said, "There you go again." Then, at the end of the debate, Reagan looked directly into the camera and asked the viewers: "Are you better off than you were four years ago?" Reagan won in a landslide, 489 to 49 electoral votes.

40. In the 1970s, the great landscape photographer Ansel Adams and others argued that Alaska's vast and largely untouched wilderness needed protection from unrestricted oil and gas exploration, and Carter agreed with them. However, the energy industry disagreed and eventually, Carter and Congress compromised on the issue. In December 1980, he signed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, creating more than 157 million acres of protected wilderness areas and national parks. The area of the protected land was 1.5 times as large as the state of California. It was, and remains to this date, the single most significant expansion of protected lands in history. The act more than doubled the size of the National Park System. However, in a nod to the energy industry, it permitted oil and gas exploration in 100 percent of Alaska's offshore areas and some of the state's other lands.

41. Jimmy Carter was the first world leader to recognize the problem of climate change. In 1977, he commissioned the *Global 2000 Report to the President*, an ambitious effort to explore environmental challenges and the prospects of sustainable development over the next two decades. As part of that process, the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) issued three reports about global warming, the last of which – issued the week before Carter left office – was devoted entirely to the long-term threat of what a handful of scientists then called "carbon dioxide pollution."

The report, written by Carter's top aide on the environment, urged "immediate action" and included calculations on carbon dioxide emissions for the next two decades that proved to be surprisingly accurate. The CEQ report predicted, with remarkable prescience, that the large-scale burning of oil, coal, and other fossil fuels could lead to "widespread and pervasive changes in global climatic, social, and agricultural patterns." One recommendation urged industrialized nations to agree on the safe maximum level of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere. The CEQ report suggested trying to limit global average temperature to two degrees Centigrade above pre-industrial levels – precisely the standard agreed to by the nations of the world thirty-five years later in the Paris Climate Agreement.

With these facts in hand, the results of the 1980 presidential election take on a tragic dimension. Carter acted on every CEQ report issued in the previous four years with aggressive legislation and executive orders. He would have almost certainly done so on this one if he had been re-elected. Gains under Carter's presidential leadership in the early 1980s might have bought the planet precious time. Instead, for the next twelve years under Reagan and George H.W. Bush the U.S. government would view global warming as unworthy of study, much less action. Then came twenty-five years of stop-and-start efforts by both parties, followed by a complete denial under President Trump.

42. When Carter became president, his business interests – including the farm and the peanut warehouse – were put into a blind trust. When the Carters left the White House, they found out that they were a million dollars in debt, primarily due to droughts that had occurred. They sold Carter's Peanut Warehouse in Plains for \$1.2 million to pay off the debt, but Jimmy still needed money to support his family.

He refused to "enrich" himself by sitting on corporate boards or giving speeches (except for a few for charity). Instead, he became an author. By 2020, Carter had written thirty-two books on a wide variety of topics, e.g., his boyhood, flyfishing, faith, and the Middle East.

43. In retirement, one activity that Jimmy and Rosalynn have enjoyed is Habitat for Humanity, a program in which volunteers build a home for a low-income family. They have spearheaded thirty-seven "builds" in fourteen different countries. Jimmy, a skilled carpenter, often acts as the foreman for the build, barking out orders like the submarine captain he never got to be. Once, when he saw a government minister walking around a job site in Thailand, he asked, "Why aren't you working?"

Contrary to public belief, Carter has never run Habitat for Humanity. But he has been an active board member and the public face of the organization. Habitat for Humanity has constructed millions of homes and become the largest not-for-profit home builder in the world.

44. In 1982, Jimmy and Rosalynn founded the Carter Center, a non-governmental, nonprofit foundation. The center is housed in a building adjacent to the Jimmy Carter Library and Museum in Atlanta. The Carter

Center's goal is to advance human rights and alleviate human suffering, and it has improved the quality of life for people in more than eighty countries. The center has many projects, including election monitoring, supporting locally-led state-building and democratic institution-building in various countries, mediating conflicts between warring states, and intervening with heads of state on behalf of victims of human rights abuses. It also leads disease eradication efforts, spearheading the campaign to eradicate Guinea worm disease and controlling and treating river blindness, trachoma, lymphatic filariasis, and malaria through awareness campaigns.

In addition to his work through the Carter Center, Carter has served as a freelance ambassador for various international missions and advised U.S. presidents on Middle East issues. In 2002, he received the Nobel Peace Prize for his work "to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development."

45. After the "malaise speech," one of the cabinet secretaries who resigned was Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal. Carter replaced him with William Miller, who had been serving as the chairman of the Federal Reserve. When Carter's first choice for Fed chair did not accept the position, Carter turned to Paul Volcker, an economist who viewed inflation as the economy's most significant problem. Carter was warned that Volcker was not a "team player" and that he would probably raise interest rates, which might eventually curb inflation but could also cause political problems during the remainder of Carter's term. Bert Lance said, "He [Carter] should not appoint Paul Volcker. If he appoints Volcker, he will be mortgaging his re-election to the Federal Reserve."

Volcker was sworn in on August 6, 1979, and raised the Treasury's discount interest rate half a percent to an unprecedented 10.6 percent. One month later, he raised it 11 percent. One month after that, he raised it to 12 percent. In addition, for the first time, the Fed announced that it was also imposing strict limits on the quantity of money being circulated. Commercial banks would be required to set aside more of their deposits as reserves, and the Treasury would produce fewer greenbacks. Very quickly, the prime lending rate rose to an astonishing 21.5 percent, and mortgage interest rates ballooned to 18 percent.

Volcker's policies eventually broke the inflationary cycle – in about three years – but in the short term, they severely damaged Carter's re-election prospects.

See the next page for a list of references.

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