



Foundation Document Overview

Jimmy Carter National Historic Site

Georgia



Contact Information

For more information about the *Jimmy Carter National Historic Site Foundation Document*, contact:
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or write to: Superintendent, *Jimmy Carter National Historic Site*, 300 North Bond Street, Plains, Georgia 31780

Purpose



The purpose of the JIMMY CARTER NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE is to benefit, inspire, and educate present and future generations of people by interpreting the broad stories of Jimmy Carter's life, preserving the resources associated with those stories, presenting the history and evolution of Plains as a small rural Georgia town and its influence on Jimmy Carter, and interpreting Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter's impact on the global community.

Significance

Statements of significance are guided by legislation and the knowledge acquired through management, research, and civic engagement. These statements of significance define why, within a national, regional, and systemwide context, the park's resources and values are important enough to warrant national park designation.

- Jimmy Carter of Plains, Georgia, was the 39th president of the United States.
- Jimmy Carter was the first president elected from the Deep South since before the Civil War.
- President Carter's policies and presidential achievements continue to have an impact on American and international life.
- President and Mrs. Carter have a profound and enduring connection with Plains, Georgia, and Sumter County; they have drawn upon their experience with the people, land, and community to advocate for local, national, and international issues.
- The relationship between the community and President and Mrs. Carter has successfully preserved the historic structures and landscapes within the community, park, and preservation district, reflecting every chapter of the Carter's



Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those resources and values that are critical to achieving the park's purpose and maintaining its significance. They are directly tied to the reason(s) that the park was established. If fundamental resources and values are allowed to deteriorate, the park purpose and/or significance could be jeopardized.

The following fundamental resources and values have been identified for the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site:

- Plains Depot
- Museum collections and memorabilia associated with the 1976 presidential campaign
- Carter Boyhood Farm (comprising his boyhood home, commissary, Clark house, kitchen gardens, tennis court, privy, barn, and animal paddock)
- Plains High School and cultural landscape
- Carter compound



Interpretive Themes

Primary interpretive themes are the most important ideas and concepts of the park that need to be communicated to provide people with opportunities to understand and appreciate the park's resources. These themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose and significance. Primary interpretive themes connect park resources to relevant ideas, meanings, concepts, contexts, beliefs, and values.

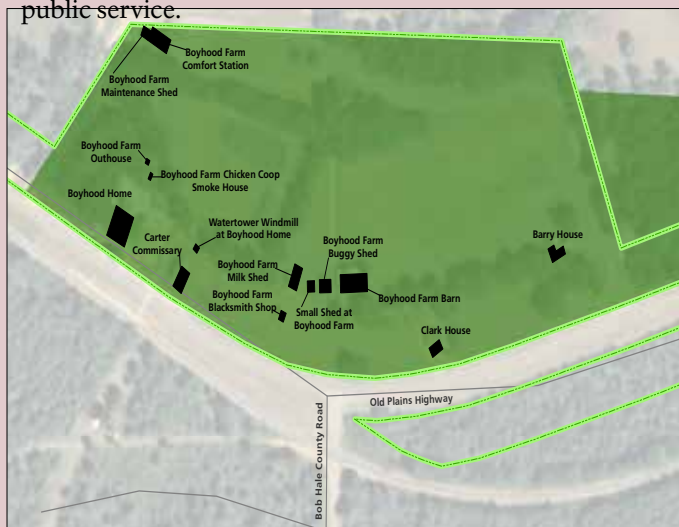
- Jimmy Carter's inspiration for dedication and commitment to his country was exemplified during his military service.
- Jimmy Carter's own early education experience at Plains High School, his service on the school board, his further education at Georgia Southwestern, Georgia Tech, Union College, and the Naval Academy formed the foundation of his lifelong commitment to education.
- Jimmy Carter's experiences, from his roots as a farm boy experiencing solar energy to his service as an officer on a nuclear submarine, formed the basis of his leadership regarding the nation's energy policies.
- Jimmy Carter understood the importance of partnerships and community support from his early boyhood experiences into his adult business operations, political career, and global initiatives. Local partnerships, including fundraising and financing, have been critical to the creation, development, and management of the national historic site.
- Life in rural Georgia during the 1930s shaped Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter's attitudes, work ethic, family, spiritual, and community viewpoints.
- Jimmy Carter's political experiences with adversity and success influenced his activities involving voting rights and ethics worldwide.
- President Carter's policies and presidential achievements



Interpretive Themes

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- The life stories of President and Mrs. Carter can inspire and motivate visitors to positively contribute to society in their own unique ways.
- The frenzy and complexity of the 1976 presidential campaign transformed Plains, Georgia, into a political boom town.
- The environment and community of Plains, Georgia, represent the history of a small southern town in relation to transportation trends and the growth of the railroad in southwest Georgia.
- The intertwined histories of Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter and Plains, Georgia, represent the experiences of individuals and a community where faith and the willingness to give of themselves sent a message to the United States and the world of enduring hope and perseverance.
- Jimmy Carter's life reflects both successes and setbacks and the ability of President Carter and his family to meet these divergent experiences with dignity and courage.
- The environment and community of Archery and Plains, Georgia, shaped the Carter nuclear and extended family and eloquently illustrated the individual's and community's attempt to engage longstanding questions of human rights, race, and religion.
- After the presidency, President and Mrs. Carter's values brought them back to their hometown roots, which served as a haven and fostered their commitment to continued public service.



Description

The Jimmy Carter National Historic Site and Preservation District was established by Congress in 1987 by Public Law 100-206. The historic site consists of the Plains Depot, Jimmy Carter's Boyhood Home, Plains High School, the Carter compound, and 100 feet of scenic easements along both sides of Old Plains Highway (U.S. 280) west of Plains. The park unit includes the historic site, the preservation district, and 650 acres of various agricultural lands in and around the incorporated city of Plains, Georgia.

Few U.S. presidents have maintained such close ties with their hometown. The rural southern culture of Plains, Georgia, which revolves around farming, church, and school, exerted a powerful influence in Jimmy Carter's life; molding the character and shaping the political policies of the 39th president of the United States. At the conclusion of his presidential term in 1981, the Carters returned to Plains.

The National Park Service partners with the City of Plains, its citizenry, and Sumter County, Georgia, to ensure that Plains and the surrounding area continues to accurately reflect the setting in which Jimmy Carter matured and to which he returned after service in the U.S. Navy, the Georgia governor's mansion, and the White House.

