

# National Park Service Cultural Landscapes Inventory 2022



**Plains Depot**  
**Jimmy Carter National Historic Site**  
**[SHPO Review]**

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## Chapter 1: General

### Region

Southeast

### Park Alpha Code

JICA

### Park Org Code

5690

### Resource Type

Cultural Landscape

### Resource Classification

Cultural Landscape

### Inventory Status

[Incomplete]

### Resource ID

550105

### Resource Name

Plains Train Depot

### Parent Landscape

N/A

### Parent Resource ID

N/A

### State

Georgia

## Park Name

Jimmy Carter National Historical Park

## Cultural Landscapes in the Cultural Resources Inventory System:

CRIS is the National Park Service's database of cultural resources on its lands, consisting of archaeological sites, historic structures, ethnographic resources and cultural landscapes. The set of CRIS records for cultural landscapes is referred to as CRIS-CL. CRIS-CL records conform to a standardized data structure known as the Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI).

The legislative, regulatory and policy directions for conducting and maintaining the CRIS are: Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act, NPS Management Policies (2006), Director's Order 28 (Cultural Resources) and Director's Order 28a (Archeology).

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI)

The CLI is the data structure within CRIS used to document and evaluate all potentially significant landscapes in which NPS has, or plans to acquire any enforceable legal interest.

Each CRIS-CL record is certified complete when the landscape is determined to meet one of the following:

Landscape individually meets the National Register of Historic Places criteria for evaluation; or,  
Landscape is a contributing element of a property that is eligible for the National Register; or,  
Landscape does not meet the National Register criteria, but is managed as cultural resources because law, policy or decisions reached through the park planning process.

Cultural landscapes vary from historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes to historic ethnographic landscapes, but may also fit within more than one type. Those eligible for the National Register have significance in the nation's history on a national, state or local level, as well as integrity or authenticity.

The legislative, regulatory and policy directions for conducting and maintaining the CLI within CRIS are: *National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 USC 470h-2(a)(1)). Each Federal agency shall establish...a preservation program for the identification, evaluation, and nomination to the National Register of Historic Places...of properties...*

*Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3(a)...Each agency with real property management responsibilities shall prepare an assessment of the current status of its inventory of historic properties required by section 110(a)(2) of the NHPA...No later than September 30, 2004, each covered agency shall complete a report of the assessment and make it available to the Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Secretary of the Interior...*

*Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3(c) each agency with real property management responsibilities shall, by September 30, 2005, and every third year thereafter, prepare a report on its progress in identifying...historic properties in its ownership and make the report available to the Council and the Secretary...*

*The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1998. Standard 2: An agency provides for the timely identification and evaluation of historic properties under agency jurisdiction or control and/or subject to effect by agency actions (Sec. 110 (a)(2)(A) Management Policies 2006. 5.1.3.1 Inventories: The Park Service will (1) maintain and expand the following inventories...about cultural resources in units of the national park system...Cultural Landscape Inventory of historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes,...and historic sites...*

*Cultural Resource Management Guideline, 1997, Release No. 5, page 22 issued pursuant to Director's Order #28. As cultural resources are identified and evaluated, they should also be listed in the appropriate Service-wide inventories of cultural resources.*

## Landscape Description

### SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The Plains Depot is a landscape located within the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site (JICA). The .32-acre depot site is situated in the small town of Plains, Georgia, in rural Sumter County. The National Park Service (NPS) has managed the property since its acquisition in December 1987. The site is roughly 9 miles west of Americus, the county seat, 45 miles southeast of Columbus, Georgia, and 115 miles south of Atlanta. The property is bounded on the north by the rail right-of-way, on the east by South M. L. Hudson Street, on the south by West Main Street, and on the west by a parcel containing two warehouse buildings located within the rail right-of-way. While once functioning as the symbolic and functional center of Plains, the Plains Depot is now principally associated with Jimmy Carter and his 1976 presidential campaign.

The Plains Depot is both a historic site and a historic vernacular landscape that is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with broad patterns of history and Criterion B for its association with the life of Jimmy Carter, the 39<sup>th</sup> President of the United States. The site is significant at the local level for community planning and the development of Plains. Plains was moved to its current location to be near the railroad line that was extending from Americus, ultimately leading to the development of the town around the depot and the railway. The site is also eligible under Criterion B for its association to President Carter as his presidential campaign headquarters.

The period of significance is based on the National Register nomination for the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site. The period of significance begins in 1921, with the birth of Jimmy Carter, and ends in 2022 (the current date at the completion of this cultural landscape inventory (CLI)) for the continued contributions of the 39<sup>th</sup> President and his wife. This period of significance is for the historic site as a collective unit and does not include the construction of the depot in 1890. A more accurate period of significance for this CLI should begin with the construction of the depot building in 1890 and the end in 1976, the year Jimmy Carter was elected as President of the United States. When writing this CLI, the above dates were considered to be the period of significance.

The surviving resources of the site that reflect this association include the depot building, overall spatial organization, and preserved utilitarian character. Adjacent properties support the historic character of the site. The cultural landscape continues to reflect the character of the site as it existed during the period of significance (1890 to 1976). The site maintains integrity of feeling, location, workmanship, association, setting, materials, and design. These are reflected through the character defining features such as natural systems and features, views and vistas, building and structures, and spatial organization. The Plains Depot Cultural Landscape is in fair condition.

### **Landscape Hierarchy Description**

The Jimmy Carter National Historic Site (JICA), established in 1987 to interpret the life of James Earl Carter, Jr., consists of four landscapes: the Jimmy Carter Boyhood Home, Plains High School, Plains Train Depot, and the Carter Compound. The Plains Train Depot is a historically contributing landscape of the broader landscape of Plains. The significance of the depot is not limited to its association with Jimmy Carter, but includes the development of the town.

### **Recent Condition**

Fair

### **Subsite/Child components**

N/A

### **Landscape Type**

Historic Site

Historic Vernacular Landscape

### **Cover Page Graphic**

See Cover Page.

Site Plan(s)

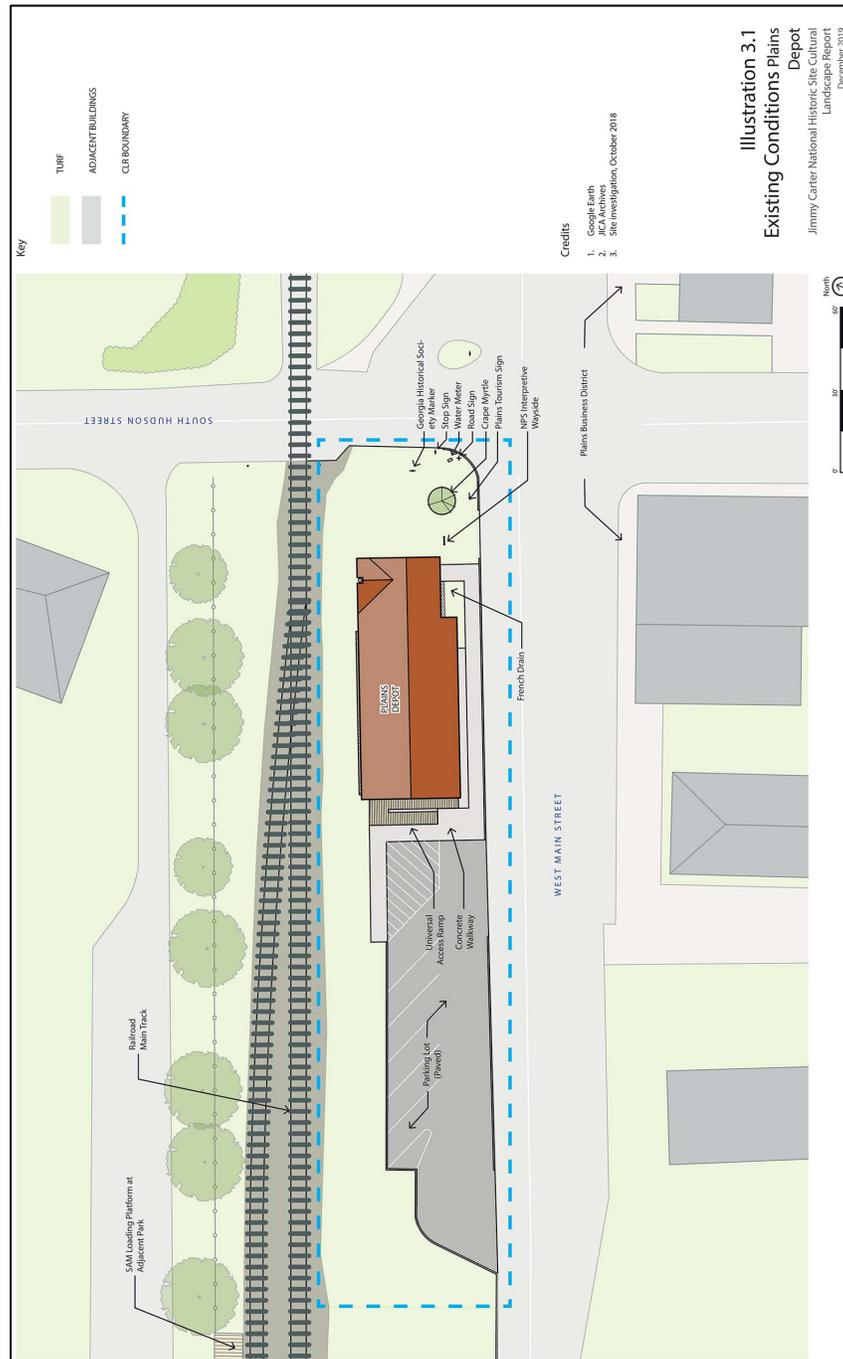


Fig 1.1. Site map of the Plains Depot Cultural Landscape in 2017. Originally used in the Plains Depot Cultural Landscape Report as the Existing Conditions Map.

## Hierarchy Description Graphic

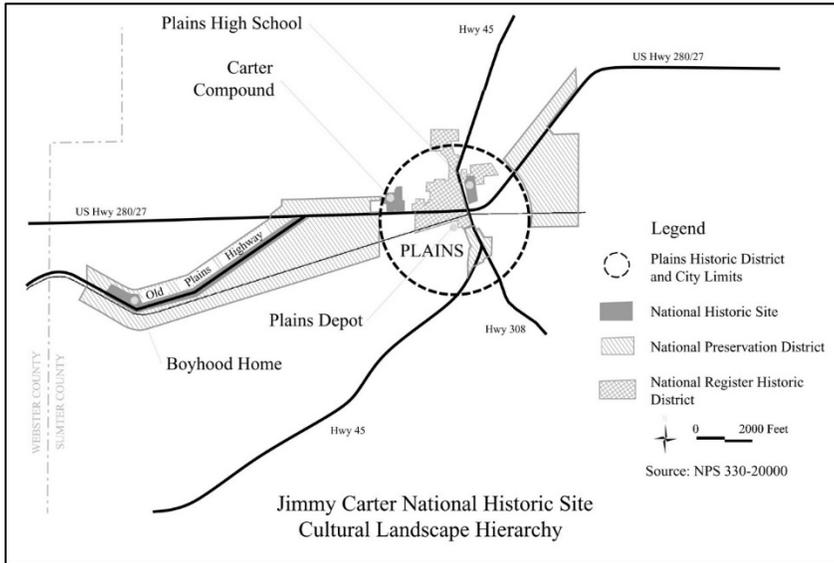


Fig 1.2 Jimmy Carter National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Hierarchy Map.

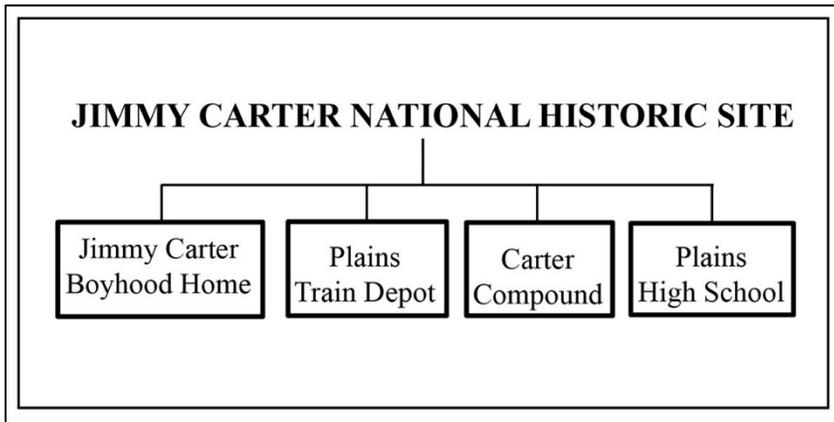


Fig 1.3 Jimmy Carter National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Hierarchy Diagram.

## Other Names

Seq. No.	Name	Type
1	CSX Southern Seaboard Train Depot	Historic
2	Plains Train Depot	Both Current and Historic
3	Seaboard Air Line Train Depot	Historic

## **Chapter 2: Concurrence Status**

### **Park Superintendent Concurrence Date**

[mm/dd/yyyy]

### **Park Superintendent Concurrence**

No

### **Completion Status Explanatory Narrative**

Brian Morris, Sean Styles and Susan Hitchcock started the CLI-level I in 1995. The report was completed by Cari Goetcheus in 1998 and submitted to the park for review. The draft CLI was entered into CLAIMS by Virginia Hunt and Amie Spinks in July of 2000. The report is available from SERO and the park. A Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) was completed in December of 2019 by WLA Studio in conjunction with the National Park Service Southeast Regional Office Cultural Resources, Partnership and Science Directorate. The CLR was used to update this CRIS-CL record and create a complete and certified inventory.

### **Concurrence Graphics**

[to be inserted at a later date]

### **Revision**

[N/A]

## Chapter 3: Geographic Information

### Area (Acres)

0.31

### Land Tract Number(s)

101-02, 101-18

### Boundary Description

The property is bounded on the north by the rail right-of-way, on the east by South M. L. Hudson Street, on the south by West Main Street, and on the west by a parcel containing two warehouse buildings located within the rail right-of-way.

### Latitude/Longitude

[Seq. No.]	Geo-metry	Lati-tude	Longi-tude	Geo-Datum	Eleva-tion (Meters)	Position Source	Positi on Accuracy	Date	Narra-tive
	Point	32.03333	-84.39416	1984 WGS		Aerial Photograph		12/02/2021	

### Regional Landscape Context

#### *Physiographic*

The town of Plains is located within the Flint River Valley and Southern Coastal Plain Area of Southwest Georgia. The soil of this area is characterized by gently sloping, well-drained sandy loam to sandy soils over friable sandy clay loam to clay subsoils that are sticky when wet. These soils are the most productive upland soils in the state and are well adapted to any use with a few exceptions. When fertilized and limed, soils produce high yields of corn, peanuts, tobacco, small grains, and soybeans. The majority of the area is considered prime farmland with fair to good suitability for residences and industry. Forest vegetation in the area consists primarily of Loblolly and shortleaf Pine (Hodler, Thomas W. & Schretter, Howard A.;1986: 30-129).

**Cultural**

The Plains Train Depot was constructed three years after the establishment of the Americus, Preston and Lumpkin Railroad line. The establishment of the railroad line was the impetus for creation of the town of Plains.

**Political**

Sumter County is represented in the Georgia legislature as District 137; in the Georgia Senate as part of District 14; and in the 2nd U.S. Congressional District for Georgia.

**Location Map Graphic Information**



Fig 1.2. Location map of Plains Depot Cultural Landscape. Enlarged JICA park map modified from the original to highlight the Plains Depot location. (Source: NPS Harper Ferry Center).

**Counties and States**

Sumter County GA

## Chapter 4 : Management Information

### Management Category

Must be Preserved and Maintained

### Management Category Date

06/17/1998

### Management Category Explanatory Narrative

To obtain the requirements for “Must be Preserved and Maintained” a landscape needs to meet certain criterion such as being specifically listed in the enabling legislation; related to the park’s legislated significance; nationally significant as defined by the National Historic Landmark criteria or serves as the setting for a nationally significant structure or object; or is less than nationally significant, but contributes to the park’s national significance. The Plains Depot is clearly mentioned in the enabling legislation Report 100-342 in Section 1(b)(2) where the real property is described as having significance historically associated with the life of Jimmy Carter. The property is not only listed in the legislation, it is also discussed in the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site Register Nomination. In the nomination, the building is listed as contributing, however the site itself (i.e. the landscape) is discussed but overlooked as a contributing feature though it still serves as the setting for the building. The depot is significant at the national level for its association with Jimmy Carter and his 1976 Presidential Campaign as well as at the local level for its association with the town and of Plains, Georgia and its development. A landscape must meet one of the afore mentioned criterion, and the depot obtains three, therefore, the landscape qualifies for the management category of “Must be Preserved and Maintained.”

### Management Agreements

Management Agreement	Other Management Agreement	Management Agreement Expiration Date	Management Agreement Explanatory Narrative
N/A			

## Legal Interests

Legal Interest Type	Fee Simple Reservation Expiration Date	Other Organization/Agency	Legal Interest Narrative
N/A			

## Located in a managed wilderness?

No

## Adjacent Lands Information

### *Do Adjacent Lands Contribute?*

No

### *Narrative*

[enter text here]

### *Adjacent Lands Graphic*

## Chapter 5: National Register Information

### National Register of Historic Places

#### *Documentation Status*

Entered Inadequately Documented

#### *Documentation Narrative Description*

The Jimmy Carter National Historic Site was created and administratively listed in the National Register on December 23, 1987. As described in Public Law 100-206, the site consists of: Plains Train Depot; Plains High School; the Carter Home on two 2.4 acre tracts at Woodland Drive; the Gnann House at 1 Woodland drive adjacent to the Carter Home; the boyhood home of Jimmy Carter on 15 acres in Archery, and a 100-foot-wide scenic easement on either side of Old Plains Highway.

An amendment to the National Register form was begun in 1998 by Cultural Resources staff at NPS SERO. A later nomination was accepted in 2015. It lists the depot as a contributing resource. The nomination also provides a site description of the Depot property but does not go on to list the Depot property as a contributing site of the Jimmy Carter NHS district (similar to how the Plains High School property is listed as a site. The Depot landscape is significant for its use by Carter during the campaign and should be considered as a contributing site. Features within the landscape characteristics of circulation, views and vistas, and small scale features would contribute to the Depot site.

**Eligibility**

Eligible

**Concurrence Eligibility Date**

12/23/1987

**Concurrence Eligibility Narrative**

[N/A]

**Significance Level**

National

**Contributing/Individual**

Contributing

**National Register Classification**

District

**Statement of Significance**

The following is an excerpt from the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site National Register Nomination (2015), pages 4-5; 16-17.

Site Description:

The Plains Depot is located on a rectangular tract of land at the southwest corner of the intersection of Hudson Street and West Main Street. This tract is immediately adjacent to and south of the local railroad line. The property is composed of two parcels. The first (Tract 101-02) reflects the footprint of the building itself, while the second (Tract 101-18) consists of the entire

site containing the depot building, a parking lot and open space. The entire property measures 0.32 acres. The property features an asphalt-paved parking lot with one-way circulation. The parking spaces adjacent to the rail line are parallel spaces while those facing Main Street are pull-in angled spaces. An L-shaped concrete sidewalk, which is flush with the asphalt of the parking area, is located at the east end of the parking lot. The walk provides an accessible route to the building and links directly with a wooden ramp at the west end of the building. The landscape is dominated by lawn. The few plants consist of a young hardwood tree north of the parking lot as well as a mature Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) and a single shrub located northeast of the building.

Plains Depot, 1888, IDLCS 91350 Architectural Description:

The building is a 36' by 70' rectangular wood frame structure oriented northeast to southwest on the east side of the railroad tracks. The Depot features an asphalt shingled, side gable roof. The building is supported by a brick pier foundation with some additional concrete block supports. Typically, square brick piers with one header and one stretcher on each course of each side support the siding decks. Larger, T-shaped piers are found along the centerline of the warehouse section (covered with board and batten siding) of the depot. The office and reception area (covered with German notched siding) are nearly on grade with typically square brick piers barely visible (approximately 2" or less) above grade. The gabled roof has a large overhang for the siding decks on the east, west, and north elevations. Rafters and roof truss system are exposed under the overhangs and porch extension on the north. Windows on the south are mixed four-over-four and six-over-six double hung wood sash with molded surrounds. In the warehouse the west elevation features a tri-bearing truss wall, all other walls of the Depot are typical balloon framing. A metal historic marker is northeast of the building and faces Hudson Street. A nearby interpretive panel is oriented toward Main Street.

All elevations are asymmetrical except for the west side elevation. The front (south) elevation is a long elevation along West Main Street. It has a pedestrian entrance door in its southeastern corner that is nearly at grade. There is a window adjacent to this door to the west with lapped siding around this door and window. Two more windows are to the west of this window. The

southwestern corner of this elevation features a loading doorway with sliding door. This loading bay door and two windows are surrounded by board and batten siding. The western quarter of this elevation is a deck covered by an extension of the gabled roof. The east elevation is a gable end of the main roof and has a small gabled projection that extends north of the north (rear) elevation. A window is located in this projection and to the north of the ridgeline. This entire elevation has lapped siding. The north (rear) elevation is the other long elevation of the Depot and is parallel to the railroad tracks. It has a gabled projection in the northeastern corner of the elevation. This projection has two windows centered on its north side, and a window on its west side. An exterior, pedestrian door is located to the west of the gabled projection. The siding around this door and the gabled projection feature lapped siding. The remaining siding of the north elevation is board and batten, and has a loading bay door with sliding door at the northwestern corner. A covered deck extends from the pedestrian door near the gabled projection to the terminus of the elevation to the west. Wood steps provide access to the covered deck from the pedestrian door on this elevation. The western quarter of this elevation is a deck covered by an extension of the gabled roof. The west elevation has a full-width deck covered by an extension of the main gable roof. All siding on this elevation is board and batten. A ramp is located along this elevation providing an accessible route from the adjacent parking lot.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph:

The resources within the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site (NHS) are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and B. Though geographically separate and linked by spaces that do not meet National Register criteria, these collective resources are significant for their associations with broad patterns of history and the life of Jimmy Carter, the 39th President of the United States.

Under criterion A, the Plains Depot is significant at the local level in the area of community planning and development. At the state level, the NHS is important in the areas of agriculture, exploration/settlement, and community planning and development as representative of rural development patterns. The NHS possesses national and local significance under Criterion B. It is

nationally significant in the area of government/politics due to its association with President Jimmy Carter.

The Plains Depot is locally significant under criterion A for its association with the community planning and development of Plains. Leaders of Plains made a conscious decision to move the town to be near the railroad line extending from Americus. The presence of the railroad influenced the creation of a vernacular development plan for the town, with stores, houses, churches, and other buildings constructed near the depot. The depot reflects development patterns of small rural communities in the south from the 19th and 20th centuries.

#### Period of Significance (justification)

The Period of Significance for the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site begins in 1924 with the birth of Jimmy Carter and extends to the present time, reflecting the continued contributions of our nation's 39th President and his wife, Rosalynn. Born in Plains, Georgia, Carter moved to the nearby agricultural community of Archery, Georgia, at age four where he resided for the remainder of his childhood. Plains continued to play an important role in Carter's childhood, as this is where he attended school and church. He left Plains to attend college and eventually served in the US Navy, which took him and his wife, Rosalynn, to several other locations in the United States. With the death of his father, Carter returned to Plains in 1953 to manage the family's agriculture business. He became involved in politics first at the local level, and later as a Georgia state senator, and eventually Governor of Georgia in 1971-1975. He was elected President of the United States, serving from 1976-1980. After losing the election in 1980, he and Rosalynn returned to Plains, where they continue to reside today.

This period includes alterations to his residential property, made to retrofit his residential home and site for use by a former presidential family. With the creation of the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site, restoration, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts were undertaken throughout the historic site to interpret the locations that were important in Carter's life. Collectively, these non-contiguous sites forming the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site allow visitors to explore the historic resources and rural southern culture that had an influence in molding the character

and political policies of Jimmy Carter. This period of significance will be amended when there are significant changes to park operations or boundaries.

As written above, the national register nomination describes the depot site and the building, but only lists the building as a contributing feature in the nomination therefore leading to the “entered-inadequately documented” categorization of the landscape. This CLI serves as a supplement to the nomination and determines the Plains Depot Cultural Landscape as a contributing feature to the historic site. The CLI discuss not the Depot building, but also circulation, small-scale features and vegetation. The views and vistas from the site perhaps have the largest impact on the connection of the current landscape to the historic period as they remain intact and continue to form a connection to the town of Plains and the railroad.

Also of note is the period of significance for the historic site, listed as both 1921-2014 and 1924-2014 in different places. The discrepancy of the start date is unclear; 1921 is the construction of the first structure included in the nomination, the high school, and the year 1924 represents the birth of Jimmy Carter. It should also be noted that the nomination refers to the end year 2014 as it was the year of its completion, however it refers to the end date as “present time” for the continuous contributions of the Carters. This would mean that at the completion of this CLI the end date of the period of significance would be 2022. This period of significance pertains to the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site as a whole, and not the individual landscapes. A more accurate beginning date for the Plains Depot Cultural Landscape would be with its construction in 1890, which lead to the relocation and development of Plains. The period of significance should conclude in 1976, the year the depot was used as Jimmy Carter’s Presidential Campaign Headquarters.

## **National Register Significance Criteria**

A- Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

B- Associated with lives of persons significant in our past

## National Register Criteria Considerations

### National Register Periods of Significance (with Historic Context Themes)

Seq. No.	Start Year/Era and End Year/Era	Historic Context Theme	Subtheme	Facet
1	1921-2022 CE	Shaping the Political Landscape	Political and Military Affairs After 1945	United States As Leader of the Free World

### National Register Areas of Significance

Seq. No.	Category	Subcategory (only for Archeology and Ethnic Heritage)	Narrative
1	Agriculture		
2	Architecture		
3	Education		
4	Community Planning and Development		
5	Politics-Government		
6	Exploration/Settlement		

### NRIS Information

Seq. No. (R)	NRIS Name (R)	NRIS ID (R)	NRIS URL (R)	Other Name	Primary Certification Date (R)
	Jimmy Carter National Historic Site	01000272	<a href="https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/AssetDetail/416cbd3d-91e8-4855-8c2b-43e3b5533bda">https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/AssetDetail/416cbd3d-91e8-4855-8c2b-43e3b5533bda</a>		

### State Register Documentation

Seq. No. (R)	Identification Number	Name	Listed Date	Narrative
	N/A			

### National Historic Landmarks

Status	Theme	Contributing	NHL ID	NHL URL	Date
N/A					

*Statement of Significance for National Historic Landmark*

N/A

### World Heritage Site

Status	Category	WHS ID	WHS ID URL	Date
N/A				

*Is Resource within a designated National Natural Landscape?*

N/A

## Chapter 6: Chronology & Physical History

### Chronology

Seq. No.	Major Event	Major Event Narrative	Start Year of Event	Start Era	End Year of Event	End Era
1	Settled	The Creek Indians establish their center of government at Coweta, sixty miles northwest of Plains, near present day Columbus, Georgia.	1700	CE	1700	CE
2	Settled	Following the 1828 Treaty of Washington, the first non-native peoples settle the Creek Territory.	1828	CE	1828	CE
3	Settled	Sumter County is created out of a portion of Lee County.	1831	CE	1831	CE
4	Established	Early settlers of the area establish Plains of Dura in the mid-1830s.	1830	CE	1839	CE
5	Farmed/Harvested	Sumter County prospers agriculturally through enslaved labor.	1840	CE	1860	CE
6	Built	The Southwestern Railroad is constructed linking Macon to the southwestern communities of Georgia, including Americus.	1848	CE	1853	CE
7	Established	Jimmy Carter's paternal great-great-grandfather moves to east Georgia.	1851	CE	1851	CE
8	Built	The Americus, Preston and Lumpkin (AP&L) railroad is established across Sumter County in response to the Southwest Railroad monopoly.	1884	CE	1886	CE
9	Moved	The leaders of Plains of Dura relocate the town to be closer to the railroad.				
10	Developed	Plains of Dura is established as a transfer station for the Savannah, Americus, & Montgomery Railway.	1888	CE	1888	CE
11	Built	Workers build the depot.	1890	CE	1890	CE
12	Established	Plains is incorporated.	1896	CE	1896	CE
13	Altered	The railway company expands the depot to accommodate passengers.	1911	CE	1911	CE

**Plains Depot  
Jimmy Carter National Historic Site**

14	Farmed/Harvested	Cotton production decreases, and corn and peanut production increases.	1913	CE	1918	CE
14	Established	Jimmy Carter is born on October 1, 1924 at the Wise Sanitarium.	1924	CE	1924	CE
15	Moved	The Carter family moves to a 360-acre farmstead in Archery.	1928	CE	1928	CE
16	Moved	Jimmy Carter attends the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland.	1943	CE	1946	CE
17	Abandoned	The railroad discontinues passenger service to the town and the segregated waiting rooms is removed.	1951	CE	1951	CE
18	Moved	After the death of his father, Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn return to Plains.	1953	CE	1953	CE
19	Established	Jimmy Carter gains a seat on the Sumter County Board of Education.	1956	CE	1956	CE
20	Established	Jimmy Carter wins a Georgia State Senate seat.	1962	CE	1967	CE
21	Abandoned	The Plains Depot is closed to the public. During this time the Carters rent the building for storage.	1969	CE	1976	CE
22	Established	Jimmy Carter becomes governor of Georgia.	1970	CE	1974	CE
23	Established	Carter begins campaigns for President of the United States.	1974	CE	1976	CE
24	Altered	The grounds surrounding the depot are covered with gravel and workers install ornamental planting beds between the gravel and the street.	1976	CE	1976	CE
25	Established	On Easter Sunday, the depot is officially opened as the campaign headquarters for Jimmy Carter's presidential campaign.	1976	CE	1976	CE
26	Altered	The depot is utilized by a tour company as a gift shop and museum.	1977	CE	1980	CE
27	Land Transfer	The depot is donated to the Plains Historical Preservation Trust by CSX Transportation Corporation. A state historical marker was installed east of the building.	1986	CE	1986	CE

**Plains Depot  
Jimmy Carter National Historic Site**

28	Established	The Jimmy Carter National Historic Site was established on December 23.	1987	CE	1987	CE
29	Land Transfer	The Plains Historical Preservation Trust donated the depot to the National Park Service.	1988	CE	2002	CE
30	Altered	A new wooden stoop is added outside the main entrance.	1990	CE	1990	CE
31	Altered	A new roof is installed using shingles that match campaign-era asbestos shingles.	1992	CE	1992	CE
32	Altered	Benches are added to the site.	1997	CE	1997	CE
33	Altered	Clean up occurs of contaminated soil from a DDT spill requiring the removal and replacement of the depot platform.	2002	CE	2002	CE
34	Altered	The depot is painted and stabilized.	2003	CE	2004	CE
35	Built	The NPS installed a concrete sidewalk south of the building. A small rectangular area of turf edged with pea-gravel was laid between the front door and the wooden platform on the west side of the building. Wood timbers edged the travel on the north and south sides.	2006	CE	2006	CE
36	Altered	The roof was replaced; a crape myrtle was removed unexpectedly by a utility company.	2007	CE	2007	CE
37	Altered	The NPS installed a replacement seat swing on the platform of the depot. The swing was removed in 2013.	2010	CE	2013	CE
38	Removed	A large shrub was removed from the northeast corner.	2017	CE	2017	CE
39	Developed	A condition assessment on the stability of the depot is completed and an archeological study of the site is conducted.	2018	CE	2018	CE

## Physical History

### 1. Introduction

The following Physical History section is from the “Plains Depot Jimmy Carter National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report” (WLA Studio 2019).

The Plains Depot cultural landscape reflects two areas of United States history: the growth of community planning and development in southwest Georgia and the life of President Jimmy Carter. The history of Plains is closely tied to the railroad, and the depot—the oldest remaining building in Plains—is located in the center of the community. Jimmy Carter has had a lifelong association with the depot and famously used the building as his 1976 presidential campaign headquarters.

Established in the 1830s within recently colonized lands, the Plains of Dura (a biblical place name referencing an area near Babylon) developed as a small agricultural outpost in the western portion of Sumter County, Georgia. Soon, settlers increased in population, starting several other communities in the vicinity. When the AP&L constructed a railroad line that connected the county seat to the Chattahoochee River to the west, several small communities merged and relocated to the route. Here, community members founded the town of Plains by April 1890. The depot was one of the first buildings constructed in the town. Built in 1890 on land donated by a community founder, the depot served as a regional hub and transfer station for people and products alike.

Jimmy Carter knew the depot well, as he often played at the station and caught rides on trains to Americus to visit the movie theater. After a stellar political ascent, in 1974, Jimmy Carter announced his candidacy for President of the United States. The Plains Depot would serve as the campaign’s headquarters. Volunteers rehabilitated the depot building and landscape, painting the depot with campaign colors, adding ornamental plantings, and renovating the depot’s interior for campaign use. After the campaign, with Carter in the White House, the depot functioned as the office for a local tourism company. In this capacity,

the building served the throngs of visitors coming into Plains to visit Carter's hometown. By 1980 however, tourism had dwindled, and soon Jimmy Carter would lose his bid for reelection. The Carter family returned to Plains in 1981.

In 1986, the CSX Corporation (formerly Seaboard Railroad), which still owned the depot, donated the building to the Plains Historical Preservation Trust. Then in 1988, the Plains Historical Preservation Trust donated the depot to the National Park Service, which soon took over maintenance of the building. The stewardship of the depot by the National Park Service over the last 30 years has helped maintain the building's integrity. Today, the depot continues to reflect Plains' developmental history and its association with Jimmy Carter. The following site history outlines the development of Plains and Jimmy Carter's life, focusing on the themes of agriculture, railroad development, race, and politics.

## 2. American Indian History Prior to 1828

For thousands of years prior to European colonization of southeastern North America, American Indians inhabited the area now known as southwest Georgia. Here, within the broad Coastal Plain between two large river systems, a dynamic and ecologically-abundant landscape supplied generations of American Indians a place to develop extensive cultural traditions related to kinship, religion, trade, warfare, and use of natural resources. Over millennia, these traditions evolved, adapting to both environmental and societal changes.

Archeologists trace the region's American Indian history back 15,000 years, to the Paleoindian period (O'Brien 1991, 11). Throughout this period, climate fluctuations resulting in varying wet and dry periods influenced the natural environment of the Coastal Plain, especially through compositional changes to flora and fauna communities (Elliot and Sassaman 1995, 18-19). In addition to climate, sea level variability affected the flow of inland river systems, "though it seems doubtful that fluvial systems would have been affected to the extent that flowing water was not available in the numerous creeks and river channels of the region" (Elliot and Sassaman 1995, 17). During the Late Archaic period, around 4,000 BCE, the region reflected present-day seasonality, "with high summer precipitation from

thunderstorms with frequent lightning strikes” (Elliot and Sassaman 1995, 17). Over time, a landscape characterized as longleaf pine wiregrass savanna developed across much of south Georgia and north-central Florida (Noss 2013, 16). This ecosystem was characterized by an “open canopy structure and rich understory of grasses and herbs” and contained “some of the world’s most diverse plant communities, along with a unique complement of wildlife” (Parks 2013, 1).

In conjunction with topography, geology, and the presence of water, seasonal fires served as a “determining factor” in the historical presence of the longleaf ecosystem (Figure 2.1) (Elliot and Sassaman 1995, 11; Noss 2013, 63). Though archeological data shows that lightning ignited the majority of the fires, southeastern American Indians also intentionally lit fires in an effort to maintain, and, in some areas, expand patches of grassland (Elliot and Sassaman 1995, 11; Noss 2013, 63). In doing so, they created desired habitat for wildlife while also clearing land for the establishment of agricultural fields (Noss 2013, 67; Hudson 1997, 92). In this way, American Indians of southwest Georgia worked in conjunction with natural cycles to create productive landscapes for humans and nonhumans alike (Noss 2013, 67).

Beginning around 800 CE, an influential cultural florescence called the Mississippian period developed in the Mississippi Valley and spread throughout the Southeast (Browne 2013, 3). Mississippian period societies established socially stratified chiefdoms characterized by extensive agricultural production, centralized and fortified towns, complex religious practices, long-distant trade, and chiefs that possessed the ability to direct large numbers of people to conduct war or construct massive earthworks (Browne 2013, 3). Within a few hundred years however, because of a combination of factors including “overpopulation, depletion of soil fertility due to intensive agriculture, shortages of wood resulting from deforestation, climate change (the ‘Little Ice Age’), [and] warfare,” many though not all Mississippian chiefdoms collapsed (Noss 2013, 65). When the Spanish began their invasion of the Southeast in the sixteenth century, American Indians in the region had established or were in the process of establishing a new “multicultural and multilingual” social order known as the late Mississippian period (Figure 2.1) (Hudson 1997, 30). In some areas, the

new social order resulted in the formation of a paramount chiefdoms, defined as “constellations of chiefdoms under the sway of a particular chiefdom that was dominant or paramount” (Hudson 1997, 30).

The Spanish encountered these newly-formed groups as they traversed the panhandle of Florida and traveled into southwest Georgia and beyond, engaging with American Indians through both trade and cooperation as well as combat and pillage (Hudson 1997, 30; O’Brien 1991; 11). No matter the type of engagement, all interactions resulted in the Spanish exposing American Indians to European diseases for which they had no immunity. The diseases swept through American Indian settlements, decimating local populations and shattering social cohesion. By the time Britain and France expanded their own colonial projects in North America during the seventeenth century, the recently reorganized Late Mississippian chiefdoms had collapsed, “leaving the survivors to organize themselves along simpler lines” (Hudson 1997, 30). The fallout resulted in an “incalculable loss of knowledge and traditional practices. Old ways of minimizing the level of violence between and within chiefdoms undoubtedly broke down. Life in the Southeast must have become less predictable and palpably more hazardous. Assailed by Old World diseases and chaotic political and military finagling, the southeastern chiefdoms began their final decline, and the survivors found themselves facing unprecedented challenges” (Ethridge 2003, 22).

Southern American Indians who survived the first wave of European colonization then formed what are known as “coalescent societies” (Ethridge 2003, 22). Several coalescent societies developed in the region, including the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Catawbas, and, in the deep South, the survivors “integrated into what became known as the Creek” Confederacy (Byrd 2013, 7). Rather than being a monolithic group, people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds formed the Creek Confederacy, though many spoke variants of the Muskogean language. While the British had assigned the name “Creek” to the group, adding “Lower” or “Upper” depending on the settlement’s location, the Creek initially organized themselves differently. As Robbie Ethridge explains, “three protohistoric provinces formed the nuclei for people emigrating from their fallen chiefdoms. One was the

Abihka province on the middle Coosa River in present-day northern Alabama; the second was the Tallapoosa province on the Tallapoosa River in present-day central Alabama; and the third was the Apalachicola province on the lower Chattahoochee River in present-day western Georgia. The Abihka and Tallapoosa provinces eventually formed the Upper Creeks, and the Apalachicola province was the nexus of the Lower Creeks” (Ethridge 2003, 24).

Totaling around 8,000 in 1730, the Creek population rose over the course of the 1700s. By the late eighteenth century, “73 towns, ranging in size from as few as 10 to 20 families to more than 200 families, comprised the Creek Confederacy—48 Upper Creek towns and 25 Lower Creek towns, in total about 15,000-20,000 people” (Ethridge 2003, 31). These towns spread across an expansive swath of territory, encompassing large parts of Alabama, Georgia, and Florida (Saunt 1999, 12).

Throughout the colonization process, relations between Europeans and the Creek varied and evolved. In general, some Creek groups aligned closer with the Europeans and adopted Western forms of political structure, marriage, land ownership, and economy, including chattel slavery (Creeks in Alabama 2018; O’Brien 1991, 21). Others sought to retain their traditional culture and homelands and rebelled against assimilation (O’Brien 1991, 13). As part of a continuum of hostilities since European invasion, the division resulted in the outbreak of civil war between the two factions in 1813 (Bryd 2013, 13). While the reasons for the conflict were numerous and complex, “in broad terms, the Creek Civil War was a clash between those building a capitalist nation-state and those fighting against it” (Shriver 2013). Soon, the United States, which the Creek had generally supported during the American Revolution, became involved, waging war on the traditionalists and their black allies (Saunt 1999, 270). With the support of the United States military, the war ended with the defeat of the traditionalist faction at Horseshoe Bend.

Afterward, the 1814 Treaty of Fort Jackson forced both groups of Creek peoples to cede an immense piece of land containing much of central and southern Alabama and Georgia to the United States, 23 million acres in total (Saunt 1999, 272). As a result of this treaty and others

signed in subsequent years, by 1827, the Creek occupied only a fraction of their former territory—a small area straddling the Alabama-Georgia border, including the area that would soon become Sumter County (Figure 2.3). These treaties marked the end of the Creek control of the region; a region occupied by American Indians for over 10,000 years.

In 1830, the United States government passed the Indian Removal Act. Though the federal government offered land and money to the Creek people in exchange for the land, it also maintained the right to forcibly remove any American Indian unwilling to leave the area. Many Creek resisted, but ultimately federal authorities forced those who remained to leave their homeland along the Trail of Tears for reservations west of the Mississippi.

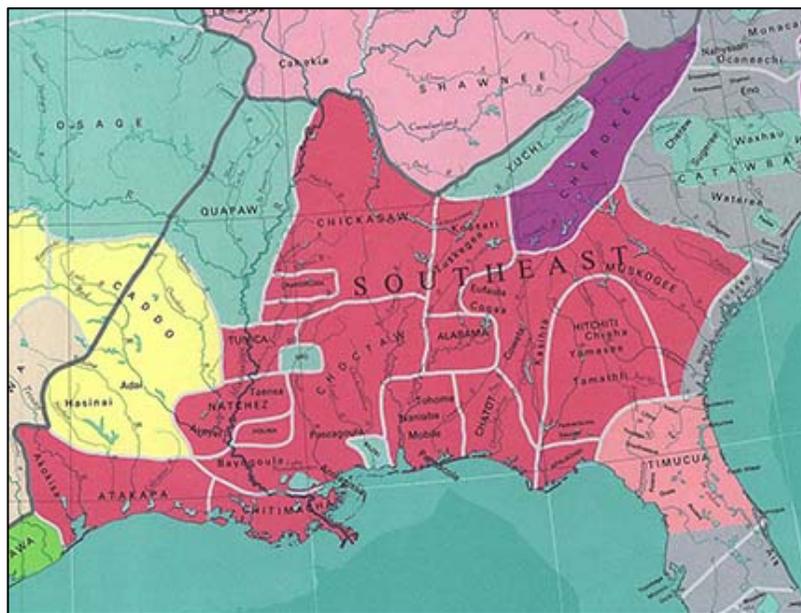


Fig 2.1 Portion of map showing the tribes, cultures, and languages of the United States, prior to colonization. (Sturtevant, William C, and U.S Geological Survey. National atlas. Indian tribes, cultures & languages: United States. Reston, Va.: Interior, Geological Survey, 1967. Map. <https://www.loc.gov/item/95682185/>).

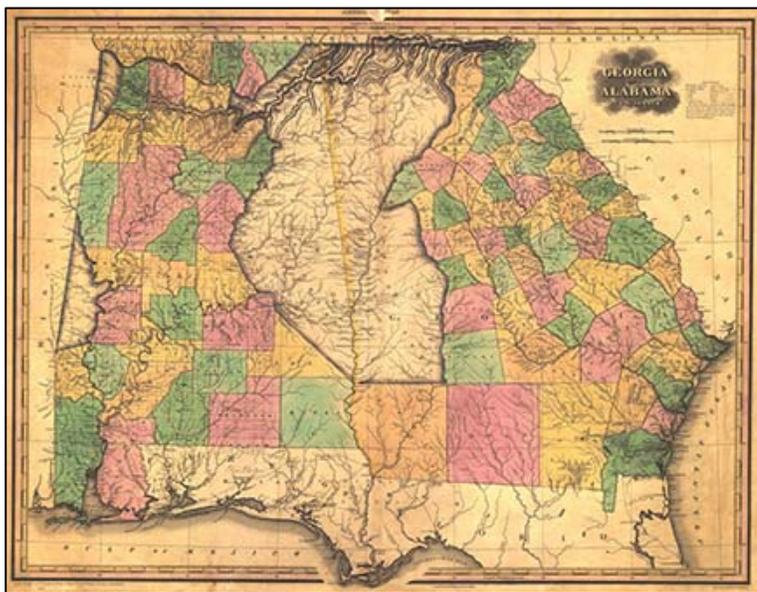


Fig 2.2. 1823 map of Georgia and Alabama showing American Indian lands after a period of cessations. (Georgia and Alabama By H.S. Tanner. Published by H.S. Tanner, Philadelphia. Engraved by H.S. Tanner & Assistants. Entered 20th day of August 1823, by H.S. Tanner Pennsylvania. American Atlas).

3. European and African American Settlement of Southwest Georgia (1828-1865)

After the Treaty of Fort Jackson in 1814, American settlers began streaming into southwest Georgia, establishing farms, communities, towns, and counties. Then, following the 1828 Treaty of Washington, “six whites and a free black couple crossed the Flint River at Shelby’s Ferry, thus becoming the first non-native peoples of record to settle in the Creek territory that would later become Sumter County” (O’Brien 1991, 13). In 1831, an act of the Georgia legislature dedicated a portion of Lee County for the creation of Sumter County (Figure 2.3) (Inscoc 2002). Settlers then established a new town, Americus, to serve as the county seat. Most of the initial settlers acquired land through the 1827 state land lottery and “like many of those moving into southwest Georgia at the time, quickly turned their property into cotton farms and plantations” (Inscoc 2002).

The Flint River formed Sumter County's eastern border. Concurrent with the settling of the county, the use of steamboats for transporting goods and people along and across the river developed. Though a network of wagon roads crisscrossed the region, steamboats allowed for both faster travel over long distances and the ability to transport a greater volume of goods such as cotton. The Flint River thus connected the Gulf Coast of Florida with the interior of Georgia, facilitating long-distance commerce in the region. Pioneer farmers valued the increased access to markets and situated their nascent agricultural communities in relation to these transportation routes. Soon the population of Sumter County grew exponentially, but "Although the population increased tenfold between 1830 and 1840, with farms making up 80 percent of the countryside, three-fourths of the region remained uncleared for cultivation" (O'Brien 1991, 16).

#### The Plains of Dura

By the mid-1830s, early settlers established a community called the Plains of Dura in the western portion of Sumter County (O'Brien 1991, 16). Though research does not reveal much information about the founding years of the settlement, its location fit within the preexisting cultural landscape. As John H. Goff explains, the "crossroads at Plains of Dura was the intersecting point for two early traces:" Bond's Trail and a former Creek path now known as the Old Americus-Preston Road (2007, 32). Settlers used these routes to traverse the newly-acquired landscape of southwest Georgia.

The establishment of the Plains of Dura occurred during a period of rapid population growth in the county, resulting in the establishment of several other nearby communities, including Magnolia Springs (O'Brien 1991, 16). The gently rolling topography of the area lent itself to farming, and settlers transformed the preexisting environment into an extensively cultivated and peopled landscape. Though relatively close to the county seat and the Flint River to the east, the Plains of Dura nevertheless "operated as a small agricultural center, isolated and self-sufficient" (O'Brien 1991, 16). By 1839, the small community grew large enough to have a post office—one of the first in the region (Goff 2007, 35). By the mid-1840s, the community offered "educational facilities of a high order," including a women's boarding school, "where

literature, ornamental needle work, and drawing and painting and music were taught by an accomplished young lady” (Pickett 1884). A 1857 letter to the editor published in a local newspaper celebrated the “lovely,” “agreeable,” and “healthy” location of the settlement, stating that amidst the collection of homes and buildings of the community, “health, happiness, and true contentment can be found” (Figure 2.4) (Letter to the Editor 1857).

#### Antebellum Agricultural and Social Traditions

The first half of the nineteenth century saw the explosion of cotton production throughout the South. Cotton fetched high prices, and as a result, many farmers in the region grew the crop (Bonner 2009, 53). As the cotton-based agricultural economy expanded, so did class distinctions between types of farmers, principally between the planter classes and the yeoman farmer class. The planter classes, characterized by their ownership of vast plantations, “by means of social position and money, controlled the political systems of the county and established those social norms subscribed to by the rest of society” (O’Brien 1991, 16). The small-scale market or subsistence farmer however, looked at the planter classes as “models to aspire to” (O’Brien 1991, 16). Often, these small-scale farmers fell into deep financial hardship attempting to pay off debt incurred by purchasing property or scaling up production. The nature of the credit system, which a period newspaper described as designed to “make the Rich, richer and the Poor, poorer,” simply did not allow for widespread upward mobility (Bonner 2009, 57). Despite these financial prospects, small-scale farmers nevertheless participated in cultural traditions and economic systems that maintained the planter classes’ preferred social order, which was one that profited off the enslavement of African Americans (O’Brien 1991, 16).

Like many areas throughout the South at this time, enslaved labor accounted for Sumter County’s agricultural prosperity (Figure 2.6). By 1850, nearly 4,000 enslaved African Americans lived in Sumter County, working in the fields and homes of around 400 white land owners, planters, and yeoman farmers alike. By 1860, the enslaved population was around 5,000. Records indicate the presence of several free blacks in the county. At this time, of the principal means of generating and inheriting wealth—and thus socio-political power—

was through the institution of slavery (Bonner 2009, 196). As a result, dozens of Sumter County's small farmers, including the ancestors of Jimmy Carter, who may have not had much wealth in terms of acreage or cash finances, invested what little capital they had in enslaved people and the productivity of their farms (O'Brien 1991, 17).

#### The Carter Family in Sumter County

Jimmy Carter's matrilineal (Gordy) and patrilineal (Carter) ancestors both came to Georgia between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (O'Brien 1991, 14). The Gordy Family moved to the area in 1803, and the Carters moved there in 1787. In 1851, Jimmy Carter's patrilineal great-great-grandfather, Wiley Carter, moved from East Georgia to a property 10 miles north of present-day Plains (Brinkley 1999, 789). While the family "may not have become rich, but for the economic standards of the time, they were extremely well off" (Brinkley 1999, 786). As Douglas Brinkley explains, by 1861, "Wiley Carter had a thriving plantation complete with six hundred acres of improved land, sixteen hundred acres of unimproved land, two horses, eleven mules, ten head of cattle, 165 slaves, and two graceful two-story houses—one for himself and one for his daughters. Extra money was even generated by opening a slave market only two hundred yards from his home" (1999, 787). In this way, the Carters became entrenched within the "social and economic milieu of southwest Georgia" (O'Brien 1991, 17).

As part of the Southern slaveholding class, the prospect of slavery's abolition threatened the family's status. For his part, when the Civil War began, Wiley Carter "spent the Civil War growing food for the Confederate Army" and died in 1864, near its end (Brinkley 1999, 787). Three of Carter's children, including Jimmy's great grandfather Littleberry Walker Carter, enlisted to fight for the Confederacy. After the war ended, the boys returned home, with Littleberry taking over operations of the family farm.

#### The Civil War in Sumter County

While Sumter County did not serve as the stage for any Civil War battles, "with the establishment of Andersonville prison some 20 miles to the northeast of the Plains of Dura,

the war took on a new, grisly reality for the residents of the Flint River region” (O’Brien 1991, 18). Here, the horrors of the Civil War were concentrated and distilled into a terrible scene that impacted later remembrances of the war and complicated recollections of the war’s ultimate purpose (Figure 2.7). As the National Park Service summarizes,

Andersonville, or Camp Sumter as it was officially known, was one of the largest of many Confederate military prisons established during the Civil War. It was built early in 1864 after Confederate officials decided to move the large number of Federal prisoners kept in and around Richmond, Virginia, to a place of greater security and a more abundant food supply. During the 14 months the prison existed, more than 45,000 Union soldiers were confined here. Nearly 13,000 died from disease, poor sanitation, malnutrition, overcrowding, and exposure to the elements (National Park Service 2014, 3).

It is probable that Sumter County farmers produced crops for the military prison. In this way, the prison was not an isolated outpost but linked to the daily lives of those who lived nearby. After the war ended and word spread about the conditions of the camp, a moral outrage among Northerners coalesced, prompting a spirited Southern defense of the prison. While the prison came to serve as a “blot on Southern honor” for some, for others, the attitude was that the “Yankee prisoners got what they deserved” or simply that the allegations of mistreatment were greatly exaggerated (O’Brien 1991, 20; Brinkley 1999, 790). Such debates over the Civil War, its events, heroes, villains, and causes continued well after the war’s end and shaped how Reconstruction transpired at both national and local levels.

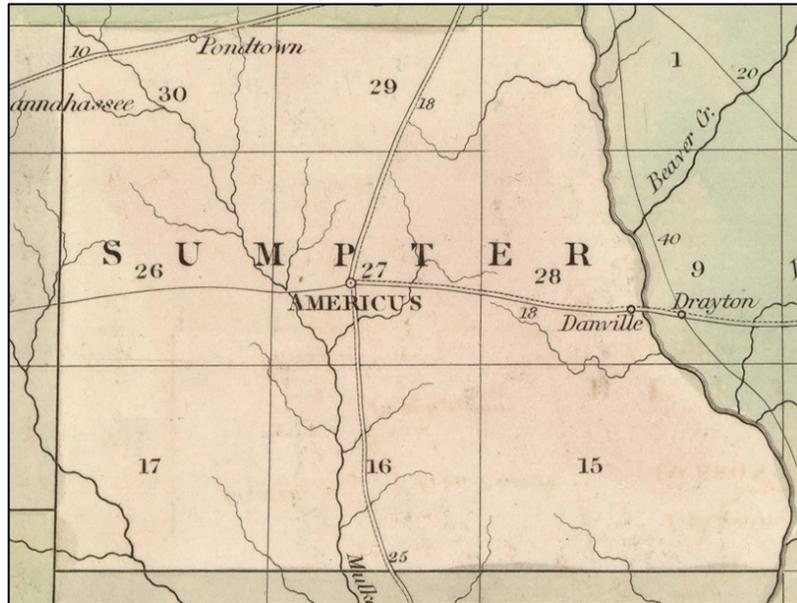


Fig 2.3. The Burr, David H. Map of Georgia & Alabama exhibiting the post offices, post roads, canals, railroads etc.; by David H. Burr Late topographer to the Post Office, Geographer to the House of Representatives of the U.S. [London, 1839] Map. (<https://www.loc.gov/item/98688462/>).

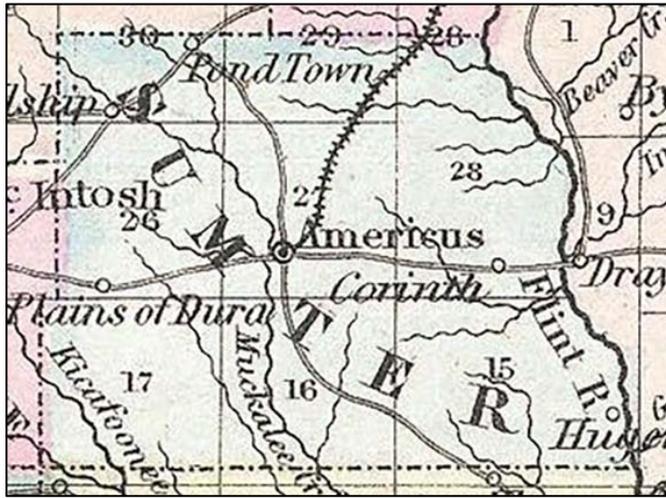


Fig 2.4. 1855 map showing Sumter County, and the Plains of Dura on the road between Americus and Lumpkin. (Cartography Associates, <http://www.davidrumsey.com/maps3568.html>, "Georgia." Published by J.H. Colton & Co. No. 172 William St. New York. Entered 1855 by J.H. Colton & Co. New York. No. 29).

#### 4. Early Development of Plains, Georgia (1865-1890)

In the Flint River region, as elsewhere in the South, the upheaval caused by the Civil War presented an opportunity for sweeping economic, political, and social change. Millions of freed African Americans envisioned a future where they could work, raise families, and socialize, fully taking part in American society. Poor white farmers looked to climb out of the debt and insecurity that accompanied their agricultural operations. However, the wishes of both working class blacks and whites faced major obstacles as attempts to institute equality met fierce resistance. Throughout the recently reunified country, the passage of racially discriminatory laws, often enforced with violence, curtailed African American's rights of assembly, voting, and employment. The intensification of a capitalist economic system that

did not include equitable use and allocation of resources further undermined progressive change (Cooper et al. 2017, 492; Bryan 2018, 179). Though producing some notable achievements, the Reconstruction era proved to offer only limited advances in creating equity across class and race (Cooper et al. 2017, 439-440). Regardless of its social and environmental costs, the period ushered in revolutionary advancements in industrial technology and agricultural science that not only influenced the development of cities and farms but also provided new opportunities for wage work and massive economic gains for investors (O'Brien 1991, 21).

In the Flint River region, the expansion of the railroad network and a new agricultural system based on sharecropping and crop diversification served as the catalyst for the region's economic recovery, although both relied on the continued exploitation of human labor (O'Brien 1991, 21; Bryan 2018, 175). The manufacturing industry also came to the region, as demonstrated by the post-war establishment of a steam-powered shoe factory located in the Plains of Dura that employed hundreds of workers (Pickett 1884). Despite the unequal distribution of the benefits of the economic transformation, the Reconstruction era nevertheless profoundly affected the development of southwest Georgia and the growth of the Plains of Dura.

#### Southeastern Railroad System

In 1833, workers for the South Carolina Canal and Rail Road Company completed the first railroad in the Southeast (Cooper et al. 2017, 345). Running 136 miles from Charleston to Hamburg, South Carolina, its construction initiated a series of other railroad projects as entrepreneurs, bankers, industrialists invested in the creation of a railroad network throughout the South. Railroads first appeared on the Georgia landscape in 1835, with the construction of the Central Rail Road of Georgia, which later became the Central of Georgia Railway (Storey 2006). The line eventually extended from Savannah to Macon, enabling the transport of cotton and other goods to both domestic and foreign markets. Even though the economic panic of 1837 slowed construction for a time, by the 1850s, railroads began to

“cover much of the South,” including substantial portions of Georgia (Cooper et al. 2017, 345).

In 1845, railroad executives conceived of a railroad connecting Macon, the economic hub of Middle Georgia, with the agricultural communities of southwest Georgia. The appropriately named Southwestern Railroad was one of the first railroads to cross into southwest Georgia (Storey Sept. 2018). Construction on the line started in 1848, with the Southwestern’s enslaved workers laying miles of track over the next several years (Storey Sept. 2018). By 1852, “rails had been laid from Macon only as far as the Flint River at Oglethorpe. The next year the line was extended to Americus, aided by a \$75,000 investment by Americus citizens” (Storey Sept. 2018). By this time, Georgia contained more miles of rail track—643—than any other southeastern state.

The Civil War interrupted this initial period of railroad development and resulted in the destruction of much of the railroad network in the South (Cooper et al. 2017, 455). After the war, “investors began building new lines and acquiring existing railroads, consolidating them into larger systems” (Storey 2006). Many of the new lines extended into previously unserved areas such as western Sumter County.

#### Plains and the Railroad

Several years after the war, the Southwestern Railroad leased the line to the Central Railroad and Banking Company (Kinnamon 2018). By this time, the line stretched from Macon to Eufaula, Alabama (Figure 2.8) (Kinnamon 2018). The leased line remained the only railroad in the area for over a decade. The virtual monopoly meant that “the South Western, and its lessee, the Central Railroad, were able to charge what Sumter County residents believed to be ‘unjust tariffs,’ thus causing a decline in business,” especially for citizens of Americus (Kinnamon 2018). A dispute between Americus’ business community and the railroad resulted in the railroad excluding Americus on the train’s printed timetable, further impacting business. Frustrated by these actions, a wealthy lawyer and banker from Americus, Samuel Hugh Hawkins, financed the creation of a narrow-gauge short line

railroad to connect Americus with transportation options on the Chattahoochee River (Knight 1917, 3246). Residents of Americus also contributed to the cause, raising \$42,000 (Barthold 1989, 2). In 1884, the Americus, Lumpkin, and Preston Railroad (AP&L) was chartered, and by 1886, its tracks reached the town of Lumpkin across Sumter County's western border. The AP&L line expanded eastward over the next several years, connecting to the Ocmulgee River in 1887 (Storey Oct. 2018).

The railroad presented new opportunities for the residents of Sumter County. After the construction of the railroad south of the Plains of Dura, the community, along with nearby Magnolia Springs, Lebanon, and Bottsford, decided to relocate to the line the following year, purchasing land owned by Milton Leander Hudson and Carey Cox (O'Brien 1991, 20-21; Barthold 1989, 2). Though research does not reveal much about the landscape of the new settlement location, it reportedly featured some amount of woods, which was preserved as a local park named "The Grove" (O'Brien 1991, 121). As railroad historian Steve Storey explains, the move reflected a common trend in settlement at this time:

The growth in the number of towns engendered by the railroads was due in part to the steam trains' need to stop frequently for water (to be converted into steam) and fuel (first wood, later coal). Once the railroads came through an area, towns grew up along them, frequently at points where trains would stop for water and fuel. A depot would be built and businesses would locate nearby to take advantage of the concentration of potential customers. Other businesses would be established to provide such services as lodging, saloons, livery stables, blacksmiths, warehouses, and milling. Eventually a town or city would develop. Often a city would be incorporated with its boundaries legally defined as a circle with the railroad depot in the center. (2006)

This period marks the beginning of a railroad "golden era," during which "lines expanded, railroad technology improved, and revenues grew" (Kinnamon 2018). Throughout, investors and executives established new lines, consolidated older ones, and merged rival companies (Figure 9). As part of this trend, in 1888, AP&L executives established a route between

Savannah and Montgomery, Alabama. As a result, the company changed its to the Savannah, Americus & Montgomery Railway (SA&M). As Edward A. Johnson explains, the expansion “involved upgrading the original narrow gauge (3' - 0") track to standard gauge (4' - 8.5"), construction of a bridge over the Chattahoochee River, construction of additional trackage, and arranging for trackage rights into Savannah. When completed the railroad covered 340 miles. The railroad’s economic impact was quickly felt in the rural areas east and west of Americus” (2018).

In this way, the introduction of a railroad into an area was often mutually beneficial to both communities and railroads. This was especially the case for the Plains of Dura, as in 1888, “the [SA&M] announced that Plains would become a transfer station for all goods being shipped west,” a major economic boon for the community (Barthold 1989, 3).

#### Post-War Agriculture and Society

That the SA&M selected the Plains of Dura to serve as a transfer station highlights its agricultural prosperity following the Civil War. Much of this prosperity resulted from cotton production. At this time, “[c]otton lay at the nucleus of Southern social, political, and economic life: the ownership and use of land, obtaining and controlling labor, the rise and fall of individual fortunes as measured by pocketbooks and place in society, and how far the South would distance itself from its antebellum roots and the destruction of war and defeat” (Cooper et al. 2017, 456). In order to maintain “King Cotton,” a new agricultural system based on tenancy and sharecropping developed on the farms and plantations throughout the South (Figure 2.10). Though many African Americans left the fields for work in cities, many others returned to (or stayed on) the same plantations that had previously enslaved them, switching to tenancy or sharecropping.

Tenant farming meant that a prospective farmer rented a piece of land, often along with a house, from a landowner in order to grow crops for market. The tenant then paid rent to the landowner upon selling their crop. Tenant farmers often owned their own means of production, such as animals, seed, and plows, which allowed tenants to better negotiate

prices with the landowner. Because of this autonomy, tenant farmers preferred this arrangement to sharecropping, which developed at the same time. Sharecropping left smaller farmers in a more precarious position, as in exchange for their labor, the farmer received some portion of the crop. This portion was typically half, but this varied depending on the availability of labor (Cooper et al. 2017, 459). Black sharecroppers still favored sharecropping to being paid in cash, as they “believed it allowed them a place in the decision making on the farm and hence greater personal freedom” (Cooper et al. 2017, 459). As a Sumter County sharecropper John Lundy relayed, with sharecropping “you wouldn’t make more money but you’d have more pleasure” (Lundy 1985, 4). Lundy continued, “Yeah, see wages, you’d farm every day. And a sharecropper, along this time of year, we’d be gathered up and we didn’t have anything to do but fish and hunt...On them rainy days and cold days, we’d be in the house. But wages—you’ve got to be there, you know, you’re straight time” (Lundy 1985, 5). However, even with (limited) participation in decision making and having the flexible the social, political, and economic power remained with white landowners, who exerted control over farm laborers through various legal and extralegal means (Cooper et al. 2017, 456-459). For this reason, some recently freed African Americans opted to not participate in this new system altogether, purchasing land and establishing autonomous farmsteads.

An 1870 newspaper article highlighted the acrimony between the black sharecroppers and the white owners of the farms they worked on in the Plains of Dura, stating:

[A]t a meeting of colored people held at the Plains of Dura, on Wednesday last, several of the speakers advised their race not to work on the farms of any of the whites, for less than one-half the crops, and the proprietors to pay the entire expense of the farm and furnish their rations. They also said that they would not vote for any white man for office, and if any of their color did, and could be found, they would kill them (Bad Advisors 1870).

As African Americans worked to secure their own prosperity, many white landowners saw such changes related to the agricultural system as “threatening to the established systems of

society and government” (O’Brien 1991, 22). Fear of change led to the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, which as early as 1884, had a presence in the Plains area (Kuklux in Limbo 1884).

#### The Carters in Sumter County

After the Civil War, the Carters of Sumter County attempted to adjust to the new social and economic order. The transition did not come easy, not simply because of a changing world, but because of family tragedy. Littleberry Walker Carter was shot to death over a business dispute in 1873 (Brinkley 1999, 793). Littleberry’s wife, Diligence, in shock of her husband’s death, died on the day of Littleberry’s funeral (O’Brien 1991, 21). The deaths of Littleberry and Diligence meant that their four children, including Jimmy Carter’s grandfather William (Billy) Archibald, became orphans left to take care of themselves. William Carter was 15 years old. In the late 1880s, William moved from the family farm, purchasing a property in Early County, southwest of Plains. Here, he and his wife Nina Pratt established a family of five, which included James Earl, who would eventually become the father of the future president (O’Brien 1991, 21).

#### Landscape Summary (1865-Early 1890)

Little is known about the character of the depot landscape between 1865 and 1890. Prior to its acquisition by the AP&L, wealthy land-owner and town founder M. L. Hudson owned the property. Deed records do not contain reference to any improvements made to the property, nor is there an accompanying plat map. However, it is possible, though unconfirmed, that after the completion of the railroad in 1886, the railroad company constructed a first depot on the lot. Railroad timetables listed the Plains of Dura as a stop by March 1886 (A.P.& L Railroad Schedule 1887). The following year, a local newspaper notes the presence of a “depot” existing in Plains (Special Schedule 1887). In 1888, the SA&M selected the Plains of Dura as a goods transfer station, elevating the status of the town (Barthold 1989, 3). This role likely necessitated the presence of a physical depot building or a loading platform of some size. It is possible that this building or structure was located on the present-day depot lot. By the end of this period, owing in large part to the presence of the railroad, the town now

known simply as “Plains” underwent rapid growth, adding a small downtown center, featuring businesses, churches, and warehouses.

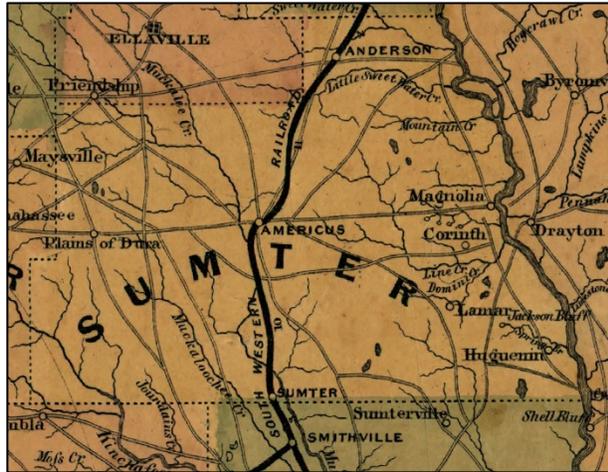


Fig 2.5. 1864 map of Georgia, with the Plains of Dura and nearby railroad clearly indicated. (Lloyd, James T. Lloyd’s topographical map of Georgia from state surveys before the war showing railways, stations, villages, mills, &c. New York, J. T. Lloyd, 1864. Map. <https://www.loc.gov/item/99447154/>).

5. Growth of Plains, Georgia (1890- 1951)

By April of 1890, a local newspaper noted that “our post office at this place is no longer Plains of Dura, but simply Plains” (Americus Weekly Recorder 1890). Dropping the biblical reference from the town’s name was reportedly for “the convenience of the new businesses in the town” (Barthold 1989, 3). Plains proceeded to grow rapidly, adding a “row of single-gabled white [sic] frame structures on the south side of the track, that in time, would be replaced by more substantial, two storied brick buildings” (O’Brien 1991, 22). Contemporaneously, “residential neighborhoods developed to the north and south of the railroad tracks” (Niles 1984, 3). In May of 1890, workers completed the construction of a new depot in Plains, possibly replacing an older depot. With the town growing and population

increasing, Plains incorporated in 1896 (O'Brien 1991, 22). Residential and commercial growth continued into the twentieth century (New Homes Are Going Up at Plains 1912).

Like other small railroad towns, Plains' limits radiated outward from the depot, placing the building at the center of the town. As historian John Stilgoe explains, "in the years after 1880, railroad depots became the hubs of small-town life; around them developed businesses dependent on train transportation, and in them converged people anxious to learn the latest telegraphic news, to greet travelers from the corridor, and to depart from traditional life to the mysteries of the Pullman sleepers and underground terminals. No longer did the general store, barber shop, and post office focus small-town life" (1983, 193).

By 1910, Plains contained a number of new establishments, including the depot and row of commercial buildings, as well as a hotel, stable, warehouse, tannery, bank, shoe factory, telegraph office, high school, post office, and several churches (Figure 2.6 and Figure 2.7) (O'Brien 1991, 22). A 1913 newspaper article notes that "the ring of the hammer is heard here every day...Taken altogether this is one of the busiest building seasons that has been known here in some time" (Building Boom Is Now On At Plains 1913). By the end of the decade, the city added a water works and electrical plant (O'Brien 1991, 22). Wise Sanitarium, constructed in 1921, was a modern health facility. While the commercial enterprises served as the physical representative of the town, agriculture remained its foundation, though its resilience in this position was repeatedly tested, most dramatically by the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The Great Depression hit the growing agricultural community hard, as cotton prices plummeted while the costs of the means of production remained the same. Many of those who left the farms the previous decade to work in the industrializing cities returned to Plains. Jimmy Carter recalled that he "didn't know of anyone actually starving, but malnutrition and other ravages of poverty were prevalent in our community. Our shared concern brought us closer together while, paradoxically, the intensity of our competition for jobs and income increased the suffering of the weaker and more helpless among us" (Carter

2001, 63). Many area farmers lost their land to foreclosure, resulting in absentee ownership of “most of the land surrounding Plains” (Carter 2001, 66). Government interventions through New Deal programs reduced the amount of crops farmers could produce, further changing Sumter County’s agricultural landscape. “For the former day laborers, tenant farmers, merchants, equipment dealers, cotton ginner, warehousemen, and local bankers, it was almost as though a substantial portion of our community had been wiped off the map” (Carter 2001, 67). World War II led to additional hardships through shortages and the disruption of daily life. While Plains and the rest of the South eventually recovered from the ravages of the economic depression and the challenges of wartime, by 1950, the region emerged significantly transformed through both economic and societal changes.

#### Segregation and Race Relations

Throughout the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, white business owners operated the majority of downtown commercial businesses—the brick row lining Main Street—and these businesses mostly catered to white patrons. Further, town politics remained the sole province of white men. Though the town’s business and politics were dominated by the white community, this did not inhibit the development of African American businesses however, and black proprietors established a “cluster of four small segregated stores just south of the intersection of Main and South Hudson Streets,” one block south of the town depot (O’Brien 1991, 24). Not only were these businesses segregated, but so were the town’s churches, schools, medical facilities, and funeral services (O’Brien 1991, 24). Thus, African American life in Plains developed “separate and culturally estranged from the dominant white society,” though interactions between black and white people in a small rural town were a constant of daily life, especially on the area’s farms such as the Carter’s (O’Brien 1991, 24).

Daily interactions between white and black people in Plains and Archery generally followed established societal norms and customs, which were typically enforced by social pressure as opposed to outright violence. As Jimmy Carter recalled, racial segregation was “accepted like breathing or waking up in Archery every morning,” with both white and black residents,

with few exceptions, following the “rules” (2001, 96). Still, repeated flare ups of violence and intimidation in nearby towns served as a reminder of the costs of challenging the existing racial hierarchy. This period marks the height of the lynching epidemic that plagued the South, and the 1913 lynching of Will Redding by a mob of hundreds of white residents of nearby Americus served as an example of this form of racial terrorism (Chief Barrow was Shot 1913).

#### The Depot and the Railroad

As soon as workers finished the AP&L in 1886, railroad timetables listed the Plains of Dura as a stop on the line. The first mention of a “depot” near the town dates to 1887 when a local newspaper briefly noted its existence (Special Schedule 1887). It is unknown whether this original depot was a fully enclosed building or a simple loading platform structure. It is also unknown for certain where the original depot was located. However, the AP&L received the current depot lot in July 1884 from M. L. Hudson, a wealthy landowner and town founder who donated the land. Given the 1884 date of donation, it is probable that this lot contained the original depot and served as the location for a subsequent depot.

In 1888, the SA&M chose Plains to serve as a goods transfer station. The decision likely initiated the construction of a new depot, as two years later, the May 23, 1890, edition of the *Americus Weekly-Recorder* noted that “the new depot is now completed and helps the look of the town considerably” (From Plains 1890). The article did not provide a description of the new depot, and no original plans for the depot are known to exist. It is also unknown when construction began on the building. Based on architectural drawings of the depot from 1911, as well as its current condition, it can be presumed that the 1890 depot was constructed as a typical vernacular one-story train station, rectangular in form and clad in wood (Office of Chief Engineer 1911). Stilgoe notes that during this period of railroad expansion, railroad companies sought to ensure efficient and safe operations through the standardization of depot buildings (1983, 198-203). As original plans for the depot have not been located, it is unknown what prototype the depot building in Plains was based on. It is also unknown if the new depot reused any of the first depot’s materials. The depot was located at the corner of

present-day South M. L. Hudson Street and West Main Street and oriented at a slight angle, extending northeast to southwest along the south side of the railroad track. No details concerning the depot's surrounding landscape from this time are known.

#### Ownership and Physical Changes

In 1895, the Georgia and Alabama Railway (GA&A) acquired the SA&M company and its holdings, including "all track, equipment, and structures for the railway that went from Abbeville through Wilcox, Dooly, Sumter, Webster, and Stewart counties to Savannah" (Barthold 1989, 3). No known changes to the rail line or depot in Plains resulted from the acquisition. Several years later, the Seaboard Air Line railway "gained control of GA&A through stock ownership and the railroad property and franchises were sold to Seaboard on February 20, 1902" (Barthold 1989, 3). Again, the sale did not produce any known alterations to Plains Depot. In 1910 however, Seaboard Air Line engineers drafted a series of architectural plans proposing alterations to the depot (Figure 8 - Figure ). Two drawings, dating between July 1910 and January 1911, with April 1911 revisions, depict a proposed 24'-0" × 36'-0" passenger-waiting area expansion of the depot. A final proposal dated September 29, 1911, further refines the proposal. As the HABS Written Historical and Descriptive Data details,

The plan shows the original depot with the proposed additions. Before the addition, it consisted of the loading dock, warehouse, and an 8'-0" × 21'-0" baggage room on the east side. The additions were to include a 40'-0" × 10'-0" office east of the baggage room and two segregated waiting rooms; a 18'-0" × 24'-0" "colored" section on the south side with two windows on the south and an exterior door on the east and a "white" section with one window on the east, two on the north, an exterior door on the north, and a door on the west wall to the office. Two ticket windows on the east wall of the office open into each of the waiting areas. (Barthold 1989, 2)

The segregated waiting rooms matched the trains, which featured separate black and white seating sections (Carter 2001, 95). In August of 1911, as recorded by the local Weekly Times

Recorder, Plains residents petitioned for a new depot in the town. The article does not specify any specific issues with the 1890 depot, but states: “Plaines [sic] has been wanting a better depot for some time and recently the railway company set in to build an addition to the present small structure there. This was not satisfactory to the people of Plains it seems, and as a final solution of the case an appeal to the Railway Commission was made by citizens. Plains is a growing little city, and needs utilities, she thinks, commensurate with her growth” (New Depot At Plains 1911).

Based on the dates of the meeting compared with the architectural drawings, it is likely that Seaboard proposed the modest additions to the depot, but it left the town’s residents wanting more. The company revised the plans, resulting in the September 1911 drawing. Seaboard then proceeded with construction of the addition as described above. There is no indication that the Seaboard Air Line made any additional improvements to the structure after 1911, and it appears Plains kept its modest, though expanded, depot as it was until mid-century. Though no photographs of the depot itself from this period are known to exist, an aerial image from 1937 provides a partial understanding of the depot landscape and surrounding context (Figure 2.11). The aerial image shows a building or structure on the west side of the depot building that was large enough to cast a shadow. The road intersection to the east of the depot remained unpaved at this time, as indicated by non-uniform road edging. No vegetation is apparent in the photograph.

#### Gandy Dancers

During this period, a work crew of six African American men, supervised by a white foreman, E. H. Watson, maintained the Seaboard Airline Railroad (Carter 2001, 15). Jimmy Carter recalled that these workers lived in nearby Archery and set out from there each morning to conduct routine repairs and upkeep on the line. Ruth Godwin Carter, wife of Jimmy Carter’s first cousin Hugh A. Carter, remembered that the crew kept their eight miles of track “in good repair” and “never allowed a wreck” (Carter 1986, 4). While they worked, the men sung songs synchronized to the rhythm of their labor. Carter recalled that it was “a pleasure to be near them as they sang and worked in perfect harmony” (Carter 2001, 62).

Based on this portrayal, these men represented the “Gandy Dancer” tradition of railroad folk life. Gandy Dancers, “a nickname for railroad section gangs in the days before modern mechanized track upkeep...were called dancers for their synchronized movements when repairing track under the direction of a lead workman known as the ‘caller’ or ‘call man’” (Brown 2007). Historian Jim Brown provides this description of the work and song of the Gandy Dancers:

Lining track was difficult, tedious work, and the timing or coordination of the pull was more important than the brute force put forth by any single man. It was the job of the caller to maintain this coordination. He simultaneously motivated and entertained the men and set the timing through work songs that derived distantly from sea chanteys and more recently from cotton-chopping songs, blues, and African-American church music. Typical songs featured a two-line, four-beat couplet to which members of the gang would tap their lining bars against the rails...A good caller could call all day and never repeat the same phrase twice. Veteran section gangs lining track, especially with an audience, often embellished their work. (2007)

Jimmy Carter’s description of the local section crew as proud of their work and a “pleasure to listen to” may indicate the crew also embellished their songs and movements for the entertainment of a crowd (Carter 2001, 62). Working for wages on the railroad offered an alternative to the farm jobs that many other African Americans held. It is unknown how long the crew worked for the Seaboard Air Railroad, but the crew was likely eventually replaced by the mechanization of railroad labor.

#### More Railroad Changes and the Decline of Passenger Use

In the first few decades of the twentieth century, the Plains Depot was a hub of activity, with both passenger and freight trains passing through the town daily. Agricultural products were a regular sight at the depot, and depending on the season, a person could see “watermelons, corn, peanuts, grain, beans, hay, tobacco, sugarcane, peaches, pecans, cotton and livestock” leave out on the train to go to markets throughout the South. In 1919, “seventy-six cars of

hogs and cows were shipped from Plains, the largest number from any U.S. city that year, and in 1920-21, cotton receipts showed that 6,000 to 10,000 bales of cotton were shipped from Plains” (Barthold 1989, 3). Plains’ downtown merchants also relied on the train to ship their wares and merchandise. A special diesel-powered train known as the “Butthead” delivered mail to Plains twice a day. All this activity was in addition to regular passenger use, which served local workers and travelers alike. As Steve Storey explains, by the 1920s, “railroads covered almost all of Georgia,” with the era representing “the high point of railroad service in the state” (2006). Ruth G. Carter, Jimmy Carter’s cousin’s wife, reminisced that “the train was the highlight of almost every day” (Carter 1986, 2-3). She also recalled that one of the “favorite pastimes” of the local children, including Jimmy and her husband Hugh, was placing “pennies on the track and let the train mash them” (Carter 1986, 3).

After the 1920s, across the United States, passenger train use declined significantly due to the increasing availability of personal automobiles (Storey 2006). Plains was not immune to such change, and in 1951, after a series of mergers with other companies, the railroad discontinued passenger service to the town. That year, the railroad removed the segregated waiting rooms from the depot. It is unknown why this demolition occurred. The railroad also removed the southern one-third of the office addition but left the northern two-thirds of the office addition in place (Barthold 1989, 2). While passenger use ended, use of the railroad for freight commerce continued, which served the modernization of the agricultural industry in the region.

#### Modernization of the Agricultural Economy

While many localities in the South industrialized around the turn of the century, Sumter County’s economy, like much of the surrounding region, remained predominately agricultural-based, with cotton production serving as the primary cash crop. A 1917 agricultural report on the county noted that “one-third of all farm lands in the county [were] in cotton, one-third in woods, and the remainder in other crops and pasture” (Dixon and Hawthorne 1917, 1). Secondary crops grown at this time included corn, cowpeas, and oats. While cotton remained the principal commodity crop grown in the region, farming this crop

proved increasingly difficult and the thousands of cotton farmers in the region did not have easy or secure lives. Cotton farmers, whether white or black, “worked hard and often earned little more than subsistence. Effort did not lead to success. Instead, cotton prices fell, debts mounted, and tenancy grew. By contrast, the railroads, the banks, and the army of middlemen who serviced agriculture seem to thrive. Even the weather appeared to conspire against men and women of the soil” (Cooper et al. 2017, 557). Such prospects were not made any easier by arrival of the cotton boll weevil in 1915. While the boll weevil disrupted cotton production in the county, it did not have the same devastating effect on Sumter County as it had on other areas (Hawthorne et al. 1922, 2). Still, its arrival forced farmers to diversify their crops and resulted in a decline in production. Between 1913 and 1918, cotton acreage per white-owned farm decreased one third, while corn and peanuts increased (Hawthorne et al 1922, 3). Peanuts soon became the foundation of Plains’ agricultural economy as well as its cultural identity.

#### Crop Diversification

Before twentieth-century farmers came to see peanuts as an alternative to cotton, enslaved Africans, who likely brought the crop with them to North America, had long grown peanuts in Georgia (Messick et al. 2001, 42). Peanuts served as a “staple of household gardens” of the enslaved, with European Americans not recognizing the economic possibilities of the plant (Messick et al. 2001, 42). By the mid-nineteenth century, some south Georgia farmers saw potential for peanuts as a feed crop, but it was not until the turn of the century that farmers began planting peanuts in any sizable acreage (Peanuts Have Found 1912). Soon thereafter, “improvements in machinery for growing and handling peanuts as well as increased knowledge about their food value to humans and animals allowed peanuts to develop into an important commercial crop by World War I” (Messick et al. 2001, 42).

Around 1910, as an “agricultural experiment,” a northern farmer planted peanuts on a Sumter County farm (O’Brien 1991, 23). Initially, no stable market for peanuts existed in the region. Further, at this time, farm workers picked peanuts by hand, making peanut production a labor-intensive process. Thus, Plains area farmers were slow to adopt the crop.

By 1916 however, a market for the crop materialized and area farmers began planting the peanut as a side crop to cotton, selling the peanuts for peanut oil manufacturing as well as for candy (O'Brien 1991, 23). That year, a peanut mill opened in a neighboring county. By 1918, peanuts represented 10 percent of total crop acreage on white-owned farms in Sumter County, up from 2 percent in 1913 (Hawthorne et al. 1922, 3). Over the next several decades, peanut production continued to grow alongside cotton. While farmers planted 1,500,000 acres of peanuts in 1942, peanuts did not overtake cotton as the area's principal crop until after World War II (Messick et al. 2001, 43). While the growth of the peanut industry benefited many area farmers, the combined effect of advancements in peanut harvesting machinery and the decline of cotton production "left many blacks in southwest Georgia and elsewhere unemployed" (O'Brien 1991, 43).

Diversification also introduced soybean production to Sumter County. Tree crops including pecans, peaches, and pine furthered the diversity of the county's agricultural output. Labor adjusted to these changes, and at this time, truck farming—the term for market-oriented farming of diverse crops— "began to replace the old tenancy and sharecropping system. Migrant workers now showed up in June and left in the fall, taking the place on the rural landscape of the former black sharecroppers, but without the complication of residency or extended community conflicts" (O'Brien 1991, 54). These changes represented a new way of life for many Sumter County residents.

#### The Carters of Sumter County and Jimmy Carter's Childhood

The Carter's businesses and farming operation in Early County proved successful. William (Billy) Carter owned several buildings, becoming a commercial property owner in the town of Rowena (O'Brien 1991, 21). Tragedy again struck the Carters in 1903 when one of Billy's tenants shot and killed Billy during a violent argument concerning the supposed theft of a wooden desk. The following year, Billy's survivors sold off the family assets and moved to Plains. James Earl Carter Sr. was ten years old at the time. Soon, the Carters rose to prominence yet again, becoming "well established in the prevalent regional social and

economic orders” through their involvement in local business, their ownership of property, and status as a middle-class white family in the south (O’Brien 1991, 25, 34).

Jimmy Carter’s early life serves as a window through which to personalize the evolution in race relations, agricultural production, and politics in the South and Plains. His parents married in Plains in 1923 and proceeded to live in a house close to the railroad, fully involving themselves in the daily life of Plains. Lillian joined the ranks of progressive women across the country who eschewed traditional gender roles pertaining to labor. Independently minded, Lillian became well-educated and entered the nursing profession working at the local Wise Sanitarium (O’Brien 1991, 26). She was also relatively progressive in terms of her attitudes about race, adopting the more liberal views of her father, Jim Jack Gordy. James Earl Carter (who went by “Earl”), on the other hand, “did not share his prospective wife’s progressive views. He was a product of the Old South and supported the established social and economic structures” (O’Brien 1991, 27). His agreement with the status quo manifested in the family’s business dealings and operations which included hundreds of acres of crop land.

While Lillian worked as a nurse, Earl Carter became involved with a variety of businesses. His investments paid off, and the household soon became solidly middle class. Between 1924 and 1937, Earl and Lillian had four children. Jimmy Carter was the first-born, delivered at the Wise Sanitarium on October 1, 1924. After a series of moves to different houses in Plains, in 1928, the family moved to a 360-acre farmstead in nearby Archery, a historically African American community about two-and-a-half miles west of Plains. Through their farm in Archery, the Carters’ lives centered on with the agricultural economy and reflected regional customs related to race, gender, and labor relations.

#### The Carter Farm in Archery

The Carter Farm in Archery serves as a representative of a traditional white-owned middle-class farm operation in the rural south. Here, a community within a community developed: one dependent on people to work together towards common goals, though the rewards were

meted out unevenly (O'Brien 1991, 34-35). Jimmy Carter described the farm's operation as "a huge clock, with each of its many parts depending on all the rest. Daddy was the one who designed, owned, and operated the complicated mechanism, and Jack Clark wound it daily and kept it on time" (Carter 2001, 38). Clark was one of the many black farmers who worked for Earl Carter in Archery, all of whom "lived in five small clapboard houses, three right on the highway, one set further back from the road, and another across the railroad tracks directly in front of [Carter's] house" (Carter 2001, 38).

While the exact number of workers at the Carter farm likely varied across growing seasons, Earl Carter employed approximately 200 African American men and women to work his 4,000 acres of farmland spread out across the region. During the Depression years, Carter paid the Archery farm workers "\$1.25 for men, .75 for women and .25 a day for children" (O'Brien 1991, 32). The laborers not only worked in the farm's fields, they also performed essential functions of the farmstead including cooking, cleaning, maintenance, and other tasks. Like the Gandy Dancers, the workers "still sang the work songs of their fathers and grandfathers as they labored in the fields" (O'Brien 1991, 33). An on-farm commissary sold food and goods to the workers on credit. Carter recalled that his childhood was "shaped by black women" (Carter 2001, 75). He befriended their children, ate at their dinner tables, and learned many life skills, lessons, and morals through working alongside them and their husbands. The Clarks, integral members of the farm community, left a lasting impression on young Jimmy. He recounted that aside from his parents, Rachel Clark in particular "was the person closest to me" (Carter 2016, 26). Such relationships influenced Carter's future politics.

Though better off than the black farm hands, in the early years of the farm operation, the Carters did not live a luxurious life. Their house did not have indoor plumbing, Jimmy Carter's bedroom did not have a heat source, and it was not until 1937 that the house had electricity. The surrounding landscape contained a number of outbuildings and yard and work spaces common to vernacular farmsteads in the area, including "an outhouse, smoke house, mule barn, chicken house, hog lot and blacksmithing shed," amidst a backdrop of all the sights, sounds, and smells of a working farm (O'Brien 1991, 29).

The food and cash crops grown on the farm reflected the diversification of the agricultural economy after the arrival of the boll weevil. Principal crops included corn, peanuts, and cotton (O'Brien 1991, 28). Additionally, the farm featured "everything that there was a market for at the time - watermelons, sweet potatoes, black-eyed peas, cotton, corn, tomatoes, peanuts. The vegetable patch yielded squash, peas, cabbage, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes and beans" (O'Brien 1991, 30). Ducks, chickens, guinea hens, horse, dogs, cows, geese, and pigs comprised the livestock and animals of the farmstead.

Jimmy Carter worked alongside the sharecroppers on the farm, asking numerous questions in order to get an understanding of how to run a successful farm. However, after hard lessons learned during the Depression about poverty, government intervention, and the modernization of farming, the young Carter set his sights on a career outside of the farm and Plains. After 14 years on the farm in Archery, Jimmy Carter left the farm to pursue a college education (Carter 2001, 72).

#### The Carters' Political Influence

In addition to growing up within an agricultural context, Jimmy Carter's childhood also included lessons in Plains-area politics. As O'Brien explains, "Carter's family was heavily involved in the operation of the town, its politics and its community. His father's brother, Alton, had business and political interests there, including a mule barn. Alton Carter served as mayor of Plains for 28 years during his lifetime and also served as a city councilman and county commissioner. Earl Carter also had business interests in town and was active in politics, serving on the school board and as one of the first area directors of the federal Rural Electrification Administration (REA) in 1937" (O'Brien 1991, 42). As elsewhere in the segregated South, white males dominated the political arena in Plains, largely excluding women and African Americans from the public decision-making process. In addition to certain individuals like the Carters, the church also held political and social influence in the town. As such, the Carters were actively involved as church deacons at the Plains Baptist Church. The expectation to serve the public in leadership roles, both secular and sacred,

greatly informed the personality of Jimmy Carter, paving the way for his political career (O'Brien 1991, 44).

#### Landscape Summary (1890-1951)

The completion of the Plains Depot in 1890 marks the beginning of this period, with the end of passenger service and the removal of the 1911 building additions in 1951 marking the end of the period. Because of the removal of the 1911 additions, the 1951 character of the site itself likely reflected landscape conditions of the late 1800s. Unfortunately, research reveals little documentation of the appearance of the depot building and landscape during this period except for the building as a one-story vernacular train station, rectangular in form.

Aerial photographs of the site for the years 1937, 1948, and 1951 are not of a scale that allows for detailed assessment of the historic condition of the site but do supply some limited information. Sometime between 1937 and 1948, owners reroofed the depot building, switching from tin to a darker roofing material. Ruth Godwin Carter stated that these were likely slate shingles (Figure 2.12) (Carter 1986). At this time, the surrounding landscape of the depot reflected its utilitarian use, with no apparent vegetation features—ornamental or otherwise—or other visual intrusions that would pose safety risks to the railroad operation. The open character resulted in clear views towards downtown, and from downtown to towards the depot. The bounding roadways along the site's south and east sides of the property appear to have remained unpaved throughout this period but became more well-delineated as time went on. No circulation features are known to have existed within the depot landscape, though informal paths likely existed. The HABS documentation for the depot building notes that in 1951, with the cessation of passenger service, owners removed the segregated waiting rooms on the west side of the depot and a part of the office addition. These changes are visible in a comparison between a February 1951 aerial and an April 1953 aerial (Figure 2.13 - Figure 2.14) (USGS 1951).



Fig 2.6. 1905 photograph of downtown Plains.  
Note the well in middle of image. (JICA Archives,  
Carter Family Photograph Album; Accession No.  
JICA-19; Catalog No. JICA-935; Date of  
Photograph: 1905; Photographer: Unknown).

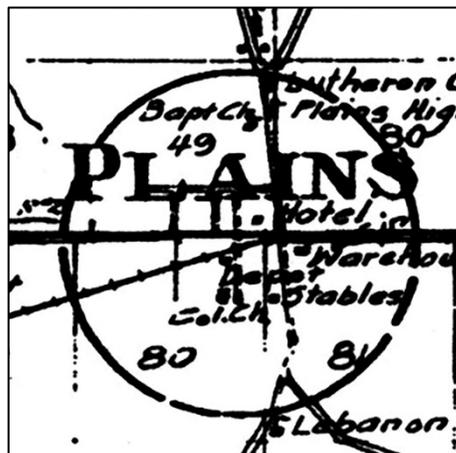


Fig 2.7. Portion of 1910 Hudgins map of Sumter  
County. Note the presence of the high school,  
churches, depot, stables, and railroad line.  
("Sumter County Maps,"  
<http://www.sumtercountyhistory.com/maps/SumterMap/map.htm>).

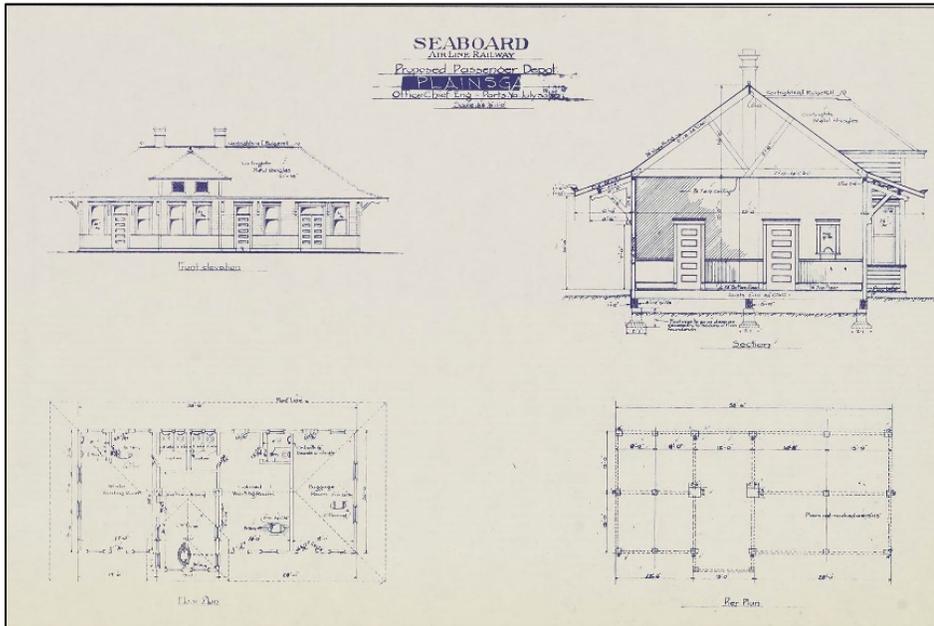


Fig 2.8. Proposal for the improvement of the Plains Depot date July 30, 1910. ("Seaboard Air Line Railway, Proposed Passenger Depot, Plains, GA" Office of the Chief Engineer, Portsmouth, Virginia. Scale 1/8" = 1'. JICA Archives, ICA-269 JICA 9239 Series VI: Oversized Map; Subseries A: Maps & Drawings).

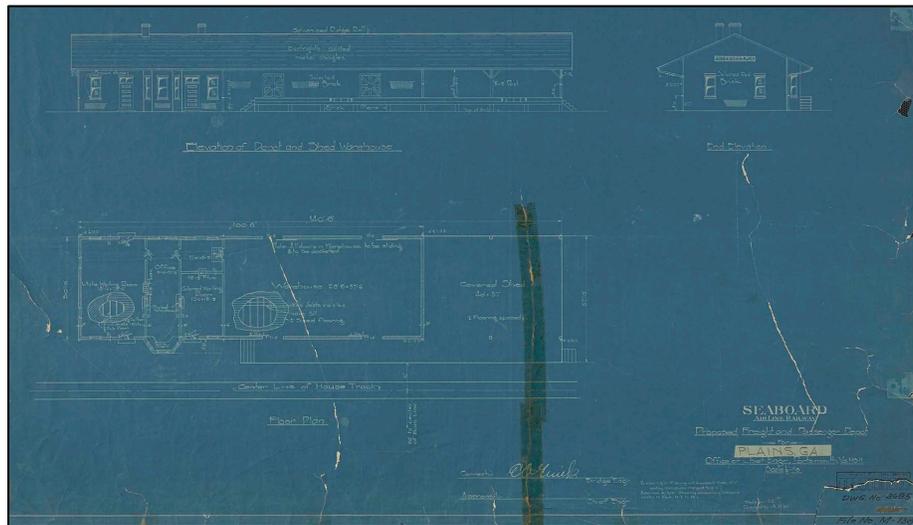


Fig 2.9. Proposal for the improvement of the Plains Depot dated January 10, 1911, with revisions noted as being made in March and April. ("Seaboard Air Line Railway, Proposed Freight and Passenger Depot for Plains, GA" Office of the Chief Engineer, Portsmouth, Virginia. Scale 1/8" = 1'. JICA Archives, JICA-269 JICA 9239 Series VI: Oversized Map; Subseries A: Maps & Drawings).

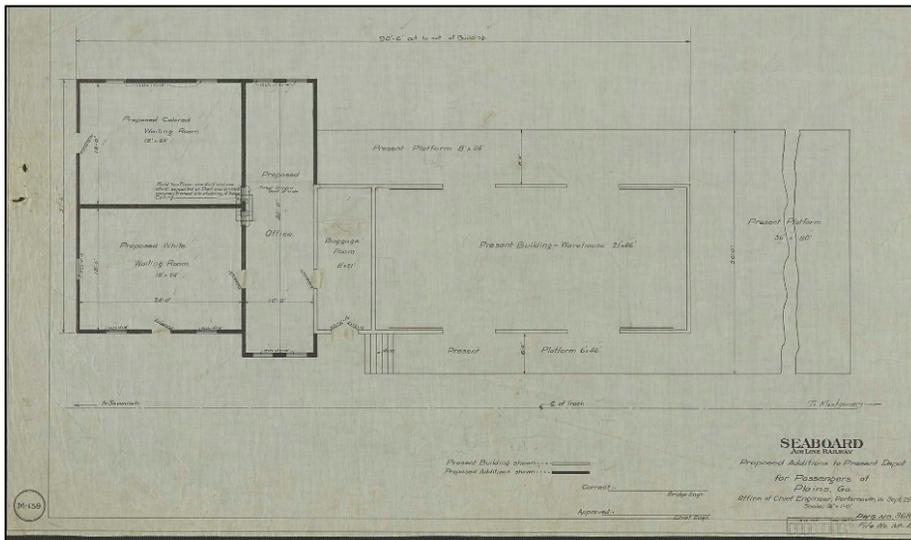


Fig 2.10. Proposal for additions to the Plains Depot dated September 29, 1911. ("Seaboard Air Line Railway, Proposed Additions for Present Depot" Office of the Chief Engineer, Portsmouth, Virginia. Scale 1/4" = 1'. JICA Archives, JICA-269 JICA 9239 Series VI: Oversized Map; Subseries A: Maps & Drawings).



Fig 2.11. 1937 aerial photograph, with depot location indicated by arrow. (University of Georgia Libraries, Map & Government Information Library).

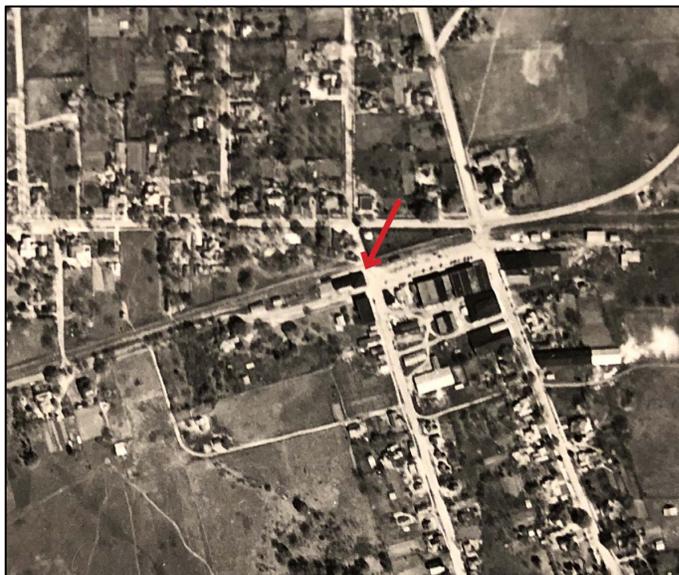


Fig 2.12. April 1948 aerial photograph of downtown Plains. (University of Georgia Libraries, Map & Government Information Library).



Fig 2.13. February 1951 aerial photograph of downtown Plains. The 1911 depot addition is still intact. (University of Georgia Libraries, Map & Government Information Library).



Fig 2.14. April 1953 aerial photograph of downtown Plains. By this time the 1911 depot addition had been removed. (University of Georgia Libraries, Map & Government Information Library).

6. Mid-Century Plains and the Carter Campaign (1952-1976)

By the 1950s, Plains continued to serve as a small agricultural center in rural southwest Georgia. While this overarching role remained steadfast, both economic and societal changes influenced the daily lives of Plains residents. Economic changes ushered in by the increasing mechanization of agriculture resulted in decreased work opportunities for the farm laboring black population. The civil rights movement that led to desegregation proved even more transformative. Both the economy and race relations influenced the direction that politics took in the mid-twentieth century. The Democratic Party, once dominant in the South, gave way to the growing conservatism of the Republican Party. Sumter County and Plains serve as a microcosm of these national trends in agricultural economics, race relations and civil rights, and political transformations.

Changing Racial Attitudes and Desegregation

The demolition of the segregated waiting rooms at the Plains Depot in 1951 may not have been in response to the growing civil rights movement, but their removal foreshadowed the coming radical transformation in civil rights throughout the country. Historians mark the early 1950s as the beginning of the modern civil rights movement. By this time, out of necessity, southern African Americans carved out distinct communities of their own, complete with their own schools, churches, and businesses. Yet African Americans, nearly 100 years after emancipation, still lacked equal rights and protections under the law. While the Reconstruction era, and subsequent women's rights and labor rights movements, ushered in a number of reforms, civil rights for African Americans were still few or absent in much of the South. As a result, building on the solidary techniques employed by earlier protest campaigns, African Americans began a series of civil disobedience actions that included sit-ins, boycotts, and demonstrations, aimed at system-wide desegregation and the enfranchisement of their communities. Such activities took place in big cities and small towns, including places like nearby Americus and Albany, Georgia. The US Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* declared the segregation of public schools in Georgia and other states unconstitutional. The decision, along with a number of other court rulings in favor of desegregation, ushered in the modern civil rights movement.

Albany, Georgia, police arrested Martin Luther King Jr. for protesting segregation in the city in 1961. Police held King in the Sumter County courthouse jail, bringing the national spotlight on racial desegregation to the area. National attention on southwest Georgia intensified in 1963 with the case of the “Stolen Girls.” The Stolen Girls were a group of 35 black female teenagers and girls who Americus police officers arrested for protesting segregation. As part of a tactic used by other Southern police stations trying to limit the publicity and spread of the protest movement, Americus police transported the group away from Americus to Leesburg, Georgia, 27 miles to the south. Police detained the group in a deteriorating public works building for 45 days, before public outcry secured their release.

Koinonia Farms, located nine miles southeast of Plains, served as another source of racial tension in the area. A local Baptist preacher, Clarence Jordan, founded Koinonia in the early 1940s as an agrarian commune based in a “message of love and the brotherhood of all men and women...and racial equality was part of that message” (O’Brien 1991, 39). As the civil rights movement intensified, this message of racial equality did not sit well with many in the local community and the farm became a regular target of racist backlash. Jimmy Carter and his family, though at this time not associated with Koinonia, identified with the ideals of the commune, and when in 1966 they “opposed a resolution prohibiting attendance of ‘Negroes and Civil Rights agitators’ at Plains Baptist [the Carter Family church], they also met with anger and hostility” (O’Brien 1991, 39).

Over the next several tumultuous years, the participants of modern civil rights movement secured victories that added to the advances made by earlier social movements, principally the desegregation of public spaces and the right to vote. After the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in November 1963, Lyndon Johnson became president. He continued Kennedy’s push for equal rights for black citizens, and less than a year later he was able to gain enough support for the passage of the landmark Civil Rights Act. Despite lingering acts of violence, unequal economic opportunity, and resentment among white southerners, as O’Brien notes, “in less than 20 years a 400-year legacy of racial oppression and inequality in

the American South would be substantially altered. Jimmy Carter would play an important role in this change” (O’Brien 1991, 47).

#### Agricultural Change

Technological innovation in agricultural production continued after WWII, producing a notable impact on traditional livelihoods. Coupled with the civil rights movement, these changes transformed the social structure of rural communities, especially as it related to labor. As O’Brien explains,

The number of black tenants and sharecroppers, dwindling ever since World War II, continued to drop as blacks moved to cities in search of better lives and opportunities. New crops, such as soybeans, began to augment the agricultural base of Sumter County. Tree farming became important. Peaches and pecans, always available, also increased in demand. Truck farming began to replace the old tenancy and sharecropping system. Migrant workers now showed up in June and left in the fall, taking the place on the rural landscape of the former black sharecroppers, but without the complication of residency or extended community conflicts. (1991, 54)

In 1951, institutional influence on agriculture increased in Sumter County when the University of Georgia established an agricultural experiment station in Plains, part of a new era of agricultural research in the state. Local citizens purchased the 450 acres of land for the facility. This station joined those in Athens, Griffin, and Tifton. The facility remains in place and conducts studies in peanuts, peaches, pecans, and a variety of other crops that southwest Georgia farmers specialized in.

#### Jimmy Carter Leaves Plains

The Carters knew that the old ways of farming were changing and that their children should seek out other opportunities for work and service. For Jimmy Carter, the first step was the continuation of his education beyond high school. Building on the education he received at Plains High School under Julia Coleman’s tutelage, Jimmy enrolled at Georgia Southwestern

Junior College (now Georgia Southwestern State University) in nearby Americus, where he studied science and engineering. He then joined the United States Navy's ROTC program and transferred to the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta. In 1942, he successfully applied to the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, where he began his studies in the summer of 1943. A stand-out academic, Carter graduated from the Naval Academy in 1946 near the top of his class. The summer following graduation, Carter married a childhood neighbor, Rosalynn Smith. The two had rekindled a friendship while he was away in school. Rosalynn's family also held deep ties to the Plains area.

After these two life milestones, Carter officially joined the Navy, where he served in a submarine program. The position necessitated several moves, taking him and Rosalynn from Virginia to Hawaii, Connecticut, California, Washington D.C., and lastly, New York, all within a six-year span. Despite the constant moving, Jimmy and Rosalynn had three children during this time, each in a different state. Life outside of Plains offered Rosalynn a sense of freedom that few women possessed at home, and she enjoyed a life outside of housework (O'Brien 1991, 45). This life took a significant turn when in 1953, Jimmy's father died, leaving the family farm and other business operations in limbo. Jimmy and Rosalynn debated what to do, and despite Rosalynn's hesitancy in moving back, they decided to return to Plains.

#### The Carters Return to Plains

When they returned, the Carter family settled back into life in their hometown. Jimmy Carter took over the peanut farm and warehouse operation, and Rosalynn Carter soon became a full partner in the business (Figure 2.15) (O'Brien 1991, 46). The family initially lived in a public housing complex just north of the Plains Depot. In 1956, they then moved to a property locally identified as the "Haunted House," which is between Plains and Carter's boyhood home. One final move to a house the Carters designed—a modest ranch style house—occurred in 1961. Now settled, from this point forward Carter developed a political career that eventually put Plains, Georgia, on the map.

#### Political Aspirations

In 1956, Carter entered the political world by gaining a seat on the Sumter County Board of Education (O'Brien 1991, 49). Carter soon served as the Board's chair. His leadership of the Board came at a period of intense conflict and transition in the US education system with the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling. For his part, inspired by the civil rights movement sweeping through major cities and small towns alike, Carter did not fall under the persuasion of the more conservative Southern Democrats. On account of the national Democratic Party Platform steering toward equal rights, these traditionalists broke away to form the States Rights Party (aka the Dixiecrats), which ginned up support among both rural and urban members of the party. Despite his progressive attitude, Carter had to politic in a manner that could pull in white rural voters as well as those of the transforming Democratic Party. Initially, he attempted to skirt the "volatile question" of race relations (O'Brien 1991, 50).

Carter successfully ran for a Georgia State Senate seat in 1962, in an election that was marred by vote rigging by his opponent. He served as senator between 1963 and 1967. While in office, Carter made civil rights, education, and government efficiency his primary issues. Concerning civil rights, Carter's "first speech in the senate supported the abolition of the 'thirty questions' required of black voters, with Carter stating that it was only a ruse to keep blacks from voting. The rule remained on the books, however" (O'Brien 1991, 51). Still, Carter ran unopposed for the seat in 1964 and won.

As his second term in the Georgia Senate came to an end, instead of seeking an almost assured reelection, Carter decided to run for governor. His progressive position of race in a deeply conservative state politically dominated by segregationists resulted in him losing the primary race to avowed segregationist Lester Maddox. The defeat did not dissuade Carter of his political ambitions, and he launched a campaign for governor again. This time, Carter won the election, becoming governor of Georgia in 1970. His tenure in office was marked by political undermining by his Lieutenant Governor, Maddox, who had run for the position after his term-limited governorship ended (O'Brien 1991, 53). Despite the difficulties, Carter focused on his bread-and-butter issues during his tenure, including improving government efficiency.

### The 1976 Presidential Campaign

In 1974, Carter decided to run for President of the United States. The election would take place during the Bicentennial of the country, a country that had undergone radical transformation since its creation. This was especially true for the South, which in 1976 “bore only faint resemblance to the South of 1876. The overwhelmingly impoverished agrarian world of the 1870s had given way to a prosperous modern South of metropolitan complexes and cities, of diverse manufacturing and growing service industries, of agribusiness, retirement centers, and tourism” (Cooper et al. 2017, 829). Nationally, American voters were reeling from the Watergate scandal of the early- and mid-1970s and the abuse of power by President Richard Nixon and his close aides. The events around Watergate forced Nixon to resign from the presidency in 1974, with Gerald Ford assuming the presidency. This scandal was fresh on the American voter’s mind.

The 1976 presidential election touched on many of the themes that over two centuries had become part of the national identity, particularly agrarian and familial traditions. As Brinkley explains, “when Carter left the governorship to campaign for president during America’s bicentennial year, he brought this message of roots, heritage, and kinship to the campaign trail” (Figure 2.16) (1999, 780). Carter matched this message with the forward-looking optimism that asked, “Why not the best?” Many locals identified with the message, and “Plains residents, black and white together, worked for their candidate’s dream, and as they worked, their candidate’s dream became their own” (O’Brien 1991, 56). The campaign built upon the transformations in race relations occurring in their town and in the country as a whole. In terms of political strategy, this entailed Southern Democrats working closely with their black neighbors, moving the party from the “politics of white supremacy to desegregation, even integration” (Cooper et al. 2017, 829). Carter organized and gave life to this message of inclusivity and small town neighborliness through his campaign’s dedicated group of volunteers—Carter’s “secret weapon,” the Peanut Brigade (Pearlman 1980).

### Peanut Brigade and the Primary Season

Established in the fall of 1975, the Peanut Brigade served a vital role in Carter’s presidential campaign (Figure 2.17). Fanning out across the country, using their own money and time, the Brigadiers stumped for a person they saw as one of their own—a pious peanut farmer, rooted in tradition but also projecting a progressive vision for the future. The Peanut Brigade had more than 600 members, and the “organization was composed of citizens who were middle class on the economic scale, with smatterings of higher and lower income participants. They ranged in ages from 15 to 78 and were drawn from a diversity of occupations including businessmen, professionals, farmers, students, and housewives. Also among the group of volunteers were retired Georgians and one rehabilitated drug addict” (Isaacs 1977, viii). Most of the Peanut Brigade hailed from southwest Georgia with many coming from Sumter County. During the first half of 1976, the Peanut Brigade flocked into primary states, sharing the message of good governance and southern hospitality to all who would listen. In both formal and informal settings, the Peanut Brigade with their thick Southern accents and propensity for salt-of-the-earth humor endeared them to many voters who were all asking, “Jimmy Who?” (Isaacs 1977, 47, 134).

Even with the Peanut Brigade’s help, the primary campaign for the Democratic nomination proved difficult at first. The crowded field—14 candidates at one point—meant Jimmy had to separate himself from the others. Again, relying on the message of small-town community conviviality and American progress, Carter made his case for the nomination. After securing major victories in Florida and Ohio, Carter’s principal challenger George Wallace called him at the Plains Depot to concede the race, all but ensuring Carter’s nomination. Carter would later acknowledge the pivot role the Peanut Brigade played in securing the nomination (Isaacs 1977, 47, 134). In July, Carter chose Walter Mondale as his running mate.

#### The Use of the Plains Depot

Back home in Plains, Maxine Reese, Carter’s campaign director for the southwest Georgia area, no doubt recognized the success the Peanut Brigade was having with their messaging. It made sense that the campaign headquarters should reflect the small-town-America symbolism employed by the Carter campaign. As such, the Plains Depot, the town’s oldest

building, became the presidential campaign headquarters (Figure 2.18). The depot, with its rustic charm, embodied an America that remained relatable to many and idealized by many others now removed from small town life. It was the “singular symbol of the Plains community,” belonging “emotionally to the townspeople it served” (O’Brien 1991, 76; Stigoe 1983, 195). Another important feature was that it was one of the few buildings in Plains large enough for public assembly and also having a functioning restroom (Reese 1985, 19). The depot became the staging ground for news conferences and other campaign functions. “Every time Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter would return to Plains from the campaign trail, the townspeople would gather at the station [depot], no matter what hour, to greet their native son. Reese admitted that the main reason for these planned events was to capture the attention of the media” (Barthold 1989, 4).

After passenger train service ended in 1951, the depot alternated between vacancy and being used for storage. According to Loren Blanton, the son of a former Depot Agent, the depot was closed to public use by 1969 (Blanton 1985, 14). Sometime in the early 1970s, the Carters rented the building using it to store “fertilizer, and feed and farm stuff” related to the family peanut business (Wise 1989, 14). By this time, the building was in a state of disrepair. To ready the depot for use as its local headquarters, the campaign enlisted the help of Plains citizens along with Jimmy Carter’s brother, Billy, and John Pope of Americus. Together, they “cleaned out the old depot and painted it white with ‘Carter’ green trim” (Barthold 1989, 4). Because the campaign did not have the time to mow the lawn, the volunteers covered a large portion of the grounds surrounding the depot building with gravel (Barthold 1989, 4).

Photographs taken in 1976 show that in addition to the gravel treatment, campaign workers had installed an ornamental planting bed between a band of gravel and South M. L. Hudson Street. The planting area contained approximately 10 evergreen shrubs of what appears to have been two different types, potentially azalea and holly. Photographs suggest that the easternmost row of shrubs was comprised of azaleas, while the row closer to the depot were Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinense*) or Japanese holly (*Ilex crenada*). Two crape myrtles (*Lagerstroemia indica*) bordered the north and south extents of the bed (Figure 19 - Figure

21). The campaign mounted two United States flags to the southeast and southwest corners of the building. They also mounted a large green sign with the text “elect Jimmy Carter President” at the top of the signal pole on the north side of the depot building, clearly visible to traffic along the adjacent roadways. The campaign altered the interior of the depot to facilitate the new use; and beyond basic cleaning and repairs, workers partitioned the warehouse section of the depot into offices. On Easter Sunday, April 18, 1976, the Plains Depot officially opened as Jimmy Carter’s presidential campaign headquarters. Carter also had a campaign office in Atlanta, but the Plains office served as home base. Staff worked the depot from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm daily (Carter Plains Headquarters Opens 1976). Maxine Reese recounted that Carter’s mother, Miss Lillian, sat in a rocking chair at the depot nearly every day talking with the throngs of visitors streaming into Plains (Reese 1985, 32).

Reese’s vision for using the depot as a part of the campaign’s message proved effective. Ruth Godwin Carter, wife of Jimmy Carter’s first cousin Hugh A. Carter, notes that “so many pictures were taken at this spot the [Railroad] superintendent called from Jacksonville giving instructions for (1) to put a Railroad Decal on every side of the station so there would be one in every picture taken, and (2) to get a Southern Railway car off the side track—it was in too many pictures at a Seaboard station, and (3) to get a wreck out of the way because it was being shown too much” (Carter 1984, 7). Not only reporters descended on the town but also hordes of tourists from all over who had come to visit Plains. As Carter’s celebrity grew, traffic in the town increased so much as to generate colorful newspaper article headlines, such as “A Hound Dog Can’t Sleep on Plains’ Road Nowadays” (Joyce 1976).

#### Presidential Victory

On November 2, 1976, the night of the election, the depot served as the gathering spot for Carter’s family, supporters, and media outlets. A large number of volunteers got the town ready for the event. As Ida English recounted, “we got every broom we could find in Plains and we swept every street in Plains by hand that night to make sure the world didn’t see us dirty” (1985, 15). The campaign set up television sets at the depot to watch the results. It was a chilly night, and people wrapped in coats gathered around bonfires in cans to keep warm.

The race proved to be a tight contest, and it was not until 3:30 am on the morning of November 3 that media outlets declared Carter the winner. The crowd at the depot “broke into pandemonium upon announcement of Carter’s victory” (O’Brien 1991, 75). The victory enshrined the Plains Depot as the tangible manifestation of the 1976 campaign and Carter’s victory, forever linking small town Plains with the highest political office in the country.

#### Landscape Summary (1976)

At the end of 1976, the depot landscape reflected the changes made during the 1976 presidential campaign. Despite its new use, the depot’s landscape remained predominately utilitarian in appearance, consistent with its historic character when used as a passenger and freight depot.

Carter’s supporters had improved the depot building, altering both its interior and exterior appearance. The campaign also made changes to the cultural landscape by adding gravel as a groundcover and installing ornamental vegetation. The gravel extended from the parking area west of the depot building, east towards South M. L. Hudson Street. The gravel terminated roughly halfway through the open space east of the depot where it abutted the ornamental planting space. A connected strip of gravel extended east-west between the depot building and West Main Street. The planting area east of the depot featured approximately eight rounded-form (evergreen) shrubs and two small crape myrtles. A pine straw mulch covered the planting area.

Circulation patterns at the site featured an unpaved parking lot and two rail lines running immediately north of the depot building. The southernmost line was a spur track for loading on and off railcars at the depot. Small-scale landscape features included a mailbox and curbing along the road. View and vistas were predominately to and from adjacent properties.

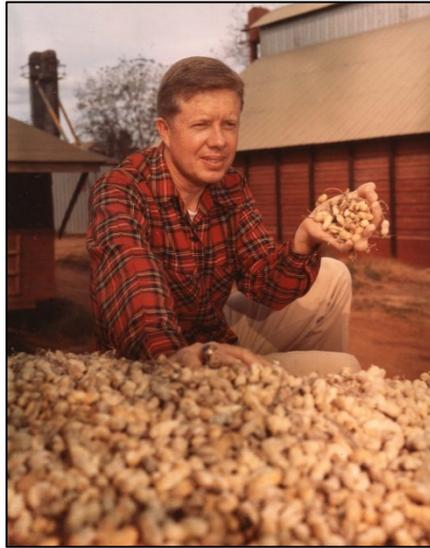


Fig 2.15. “Jimmy Carter down on the farm in the 1970s.”  
(Lawrence Smith Negative Collection; Accession No. JICA-255; Catalog No. 6923; Photographer: Lawrence Smith; Photo Courtesy of the Columbus Ledger Enquirer).



Fig 2.16. Jimmy Carter at a campaign event at the depot in 1976.  
(JICA Archives, JICA255\_6923\_00673ee).

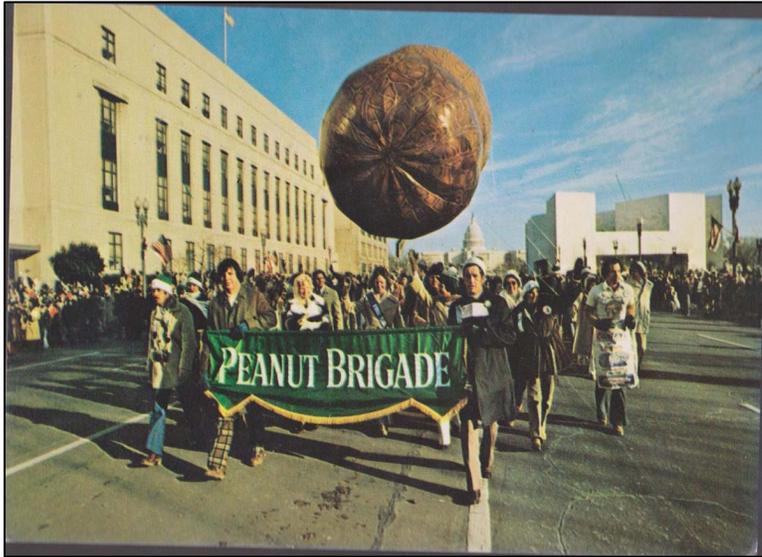


Fig 2.17. A group of the Peanut Brigade marching in the inauguration parade, as shown on a period postcard. (<https://carlanthonyonline.com/floating-a-giant-helium-peanut-balloon-the-peanut-brigade-of-plains-marched-in-carters-inaugural-parade/>).



Fig 2.18. Depot in 1975, prior to campaign use. (Digital Library of Georgia).



Fig 2.19. Undated image of depot site, no date, but signage and landscaping indicate a 1976 date of documentation. ("Old Railroad Depot (Carter Headquarters)" [postcard] Published by the Sandcraft, photograph by Charles W. Plant).



Fig 2.20. Undated image of depot site, no date, but signage and landscaping indicate a 1976 date of documentation. (“Old Railroad Depot (Carter Headquarters)” [postcard] Published by the Sandcraft, photograph by Charles W. Plant).



Fig 2.21. 1976 photograph of Rosalynn and Amy at the depot. Note extent of gravel and landscaping in background of image. (Courtesy of Kim Fuller, photographer unknown).

7. The Presidency and Plains (1977-2018)

Post-Campaign Depot Use

The end of the 1976 presidential campaign did not immediately sever the link between the Carter campaign and the depot, as Barthold explains, “On 19 January 1977, the day before Carter’s inauguration, the depot was used once again for its intended use, as more than 100 campaigners and fans boarded an eighteen-car Amtrak train bound for Washington, D.C.’s Union Station; it was the first time the tracks had been used for passenger transport since 1951. So certain was she that Carter would win, Reese called Amtrak to arrange for the \$80,000 lease of the train in summer 1976” (Barthold 1989, 5). The “Peanut Special” took Carter and many supporters on a train ride from Plains to Washington D.C. (Figure 2.22).

With Jimmy Carter now president, Plains continued to serve as America’s unofficial home town. As O’Brien notes, “As Carter the individual had become the symbol and leader of the American people, so had his home town become a symbol and gathering place for the nation’s people, good and bad, rich and poor, all races, all creeds. As he attempted to mold the destiny of the nation, so did the nation affect and change his life and his hometown” (1991, 57). The most noticeable change pertained to the steady influx of tourists into Plains. By early 1977, an estimated 5,000 tourists a day traveled to Plains; the town’s population at this time was only 683 (King 1977).

The Plains Depot became a highlight on the routes of the several new tour operators. In fact, one operation—the Carter Country Tour company—appears to have been based in the depot. Hugh Carter elaborates on the use of the depot at this time, recounting that it “was used as a gift shop except one room of it was maintained as kind of a museum-like with pictures of Jimmy on the wall and different members of the family and a few museum items in there. And then the back portion of it was operated by the Plains Civic Project incorporated as a gift shop, you know, in the big end of it” (Carter 1985, 24). Not everyone thought the commercialization of the town was a good thing. As former city councilperson Mill Simmons opined, “I really think that the years during President Carter’s presidency were not good years for Plains because the local greed opened up,” with “everybody” seeking various ways

to make money off Carter's presidency (2007, 13). Simmons also noted how it was not just locals trying to cash in, but also an "awful lot of people come in from outside that bought or rented buildings and setup these souvenir shops" (2007, 13).

Photographs depict the character of the depot landscape immediately after Carter's inauguration. Generally, many of the landscape features added to the site during the candidacy period remained in the years immediately following the election. For example, the gravel ground cover remained on site and continued to stretch out from the east side of the depot towards a planting bed. The ornamental plants also survived for several years. For a time, the shrubs and two crape myrtles installed during the campaign remained located along the dividing line between the grass and the gravel in the center of the area. Other site features from this initial tourism period included a wooden bench located adjacent to the planting bed, a "Carter Country" tour sign at the south side of the planting bed, a stand-alone ticket booth in the northeast corner of the site, and a wooden step stool to assist loading passengers into the tourist vans (Figure 23 - Figure 24). On the north side of the depot building, an area of gravel, patchy lawn, and weedy plants existed between the depot and the railroad tracks. West of the depot, a worn gravel parking area provided spaces for the numerous automobiles coming into downtown Plains. After the election, someone removed the "Elect Jimmy Carter" sign atop the signal pole on the north side of the depot. In early 1977, the owners installed a railing south of the railroad tracks on the east side of the property.

On the eve of the next presidential election, tourism to Plains declined significantly. With the absence of tourists, Plains reverted to "ghost town" conditions according to one newspaper article from this time (Pearlman 1980). The article also notes the depot was "empty except for two or three tourists, pictures of the first family, and lots of peanut-shaped souvenirs" (Pearlman 1980). It is unknown how long the Carter Country Tour Company remained in the depot, but it appears that the building was being used as a gift shop during the end of his presidency. The newspaper article hints at the resentment amongst locals concerning Carter's job performance and signaled a general feeling of being left behind by the man they helped

elect (Pearlman 1980). Still, Carter was one of their own, and his celebrity endeared him to locals despite the political difficulties Carter experienced.

#### The 1980 Presidential Race

Because Jimmy Carter was an incumbent and lived in Washington D.C., Carter's reelection campaign did not employ the Plains Depot as a backdrop for campaign activities. Though incumbent, due to dissatisfaction within his own party, Carter had a Democratic challenger for the 1980 election—Ted Kennedy. Carter successfully fended off Kennedy's primary challenge, securing the nomination in August 1980. The month prior, the Republican Party nominated Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush for their ticket. The election in November proved to be a referendum on Carter's job performance in the face of several domestic and international crises, as well as on a new style of conservative politics embodied by Reagan. On the night of November 4, Reagan defeated Carter in a landslide. The following January, the Carters left the White House for their home in Plains.

#### Post-Presidency

Carter's homecoming took place on a cold and rainy January day at the Plains Depot, which "seemed to symbolize the disappointment felt by the President and his supporters" (O'Brien 1991, 60). Despite the sting of loss and cold rain, over 2,500 people turned out to welcome their homegrown president, throwing a massive potluck feast (Harris 1981). While the Carters surely appreciated the welcome, unfortunately, they "returned to a region that in some ways remained openly hostile to much of what he had come to stand for," namely Carter's liberal politics (O'Brien 1991, 60).

Ignoring the distractions, upon return to their home on Woodland Drive, the Carters threw themselves into humanitarian work, publishing books, and small town living that centered on active church membership. In 1982, the Carters established the Carter Center, a nonprofit organization that "seeks to prevent and resolve conflicts, enhance freedom and democracy, and improve health," throughout the world (The Carter Center 2018). They are also known for their work with locally-founded Habitat for Humanity, the nonprofit housing

organization started by Millard Fuller and Clarence Jordan of Koinonia Farms in the late 1960s (The Carter Center 2018). Through the organization, the Carters provided celebrity to the cause of providing housing for all people, in the US and abroad.

#### Use of the Depot

After the tour company left the depot building at some point in the early 1980s, it appears the Seaboard Air Railroad had little use for the old building. Around this time, the Chessie Seaboard Corporation merged with the Seaboard Air Line Railroad, forming the CSX Transportation Corporation. In recognition of the building's significance, on May 6, 1986, CSX donated the Plains Depot to the Plains Historical Preservation Trust, Inc (Barthold 1989, 2). That year, the Georgia Historical Society installed a state historical marker east of the depot noting the significance of the depot building and site. These actions laid the groundwork for the creation of Jimmy Carter National Historic Site the following year.

#### Jimmy Carter National Historic Site

On December 23, 1987, the 100th Congress of the United States passed Public Law 100-206, a bill to establish Jimmy Carter National Historic Site (Hanson et al. 2015, 3). As it was originally passed, the enabling legislation allowed for the acquisition of four properties: Jimmy Carter's Boyhood Home, the Plains High School property, the Carter House and Garden, and the Plains Depot (Figure 34). The legislation required all but the boyhood farm to be donated; the boyhood farm could be purchased with federal money.

#### NPS use of the Depot

In 1988, the Plains Historical Preservation Trust donated the depot to the National Park Service (NPS). Its transfer initiated an unexpected fifteen-year-long process of acquisition. The issue stemmed from a clause in the original deed between M. L. Hudson and the railroad, which stated that "the conveyance from M. L. Hudson to the Railroad dated July 29, 1884, conveys an easement only for railroad purposes to the railroad," with "no conveyance of the underlying fee" (Acquisition of Plains Depot Property 1993). Further, the deed stipulated that if the railroad's use of the property ended, the property should be transferred

to Hudson's heirs. Hudson could not have foreseen that a President of the United States would one day come from the small town he helped to found, nor that the depot would be the subject of dedicated preservation efforts. Regardless, the NPS looked into various other means of acquisition as it tracked down Hudson's descendants, of which the NPS identified 30 persons. After exploring their options, the easiest approach to acquiring the depot was by crafting an amendment to the enabling legislation allowing the federal government to acquire the property through outright purchase. The law passed, and the NPS financially compensated decedents for the property. Throughout this lengthy process, the NPS made many alterations to the site for interpretive, visitor service, and maintenance purposes. The NPS also commissioned a Historic American Buildings Survey for the historic site, providing a record of the depot at this time of transition (Figure 2.26 - Figure 2.29).

A number of documents and images located in Jimmy Carter National Historic Site (JICA) archives allow for an understanding of the landscape changes at the site over the last several decades. The following provides an overview of significant alterations to the site.

The NPS added a new wooden stoop outside the main entrance door into the depot in 1990. In 1992, contractors installed a new roof on the depot using shingles that match campaign-era asbestos shingles. In 1997, the NPS added benches to the site. By this time, park management began to conceive of a complete landscape overhaul at the site.

In 1999, the NPS rendered a plan for a new depot landscape (Figure 2.30). Highly ornamental, the plan included a paved brick plaza and planting area east of the depot building and several other improvements not in keeping with the site's historic character. JICA personnel rejected the plan, and the NPS drafted a new plan (Figure 2.31). This second plan proposed the installation of a French drain surrounding the base of the building and the construction of a sidewalk along the south side of the lot, connecting the parking area to the entrance of the depot. Additionally, the area east of the depot, formerly covered in gravel was to be replanted with sod. The NPS installed another strip of lawn between the depot and the railroad tracks. Research does not reveal when the revised plan was implemented.

In 2000, building upon regional tourism initiatives, including the development of JICA, a coalition of partners worked to reestablish the SA&M Shortline Railroad. Then, “after more than two years of careful planning, track rehabilitation, and equipment acquisition, passenger trains began rolling once again down the historic mainline” (Kinnamon 2018). The completed route spanned from Cordele in Crisp County to Archery in Sumter County. Managed by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and staffed by both experienced railroad engineers and volunteers, its reestablishment brought the conspicuous blue and yellow engine to Plains, serving as a welcome tourism initiative in the region. In Plains, instead of disembarking at the depot, passengers used a platform at the city park located northwest of the depot building, on the opposite side of the tracks.

As the new millennium began, the NPS readied a growing list of necessary repair projects at the depot, including the stabilization of the depot building (FY2004) and the removal of a septic tank in FY2002. Most importantly, in 2002, “after 15 years of what has been one of the most complicated land acquisition initiatives,” the NPS legally acquired the Plains Depot (Boyles 2002). The process necessitated “legal action, negotiation, and even an Act of Congress” (National Park Service 2002). Before the park could formally dedicate the site however, the NPS discovered that a DDT spill occurred on site “perhaps 50 or 60 years ago,” which would date the spill to the 1940s or 1950s (Boyles 2002). In July 2002, cleanup of the contaminated soil began, requiring the removal and replacement of the depot platform. In October 2002, the NPS held a public dedication ceremony for the depot. Jimmy Carter National Historic Site was now complete. From this point forward, the NPS carried out various repairs and upgrades to the site.

In 2003, the NPS painted the depot. The following year, a contractor performed a condition assessment on the building, noting various issues to the material integrity of the building in the lead up to the stabilization of the depot. The stabilization process entailed replacing rotten beams and the application of Boracare preservative treatment to exposed wooden material. Contractors modified the pitch of the wooden platform at this time to improve

water drainage off the structure. That year, a record 71,293 people visited Jimmy Carter National Historic Site (Jimmy Carter National Historic Site Annual Narrative Report 2004). By 2006, the NPS had improved the depot landscape in keeping the revised 1999 landscape plan (Figure 2.32). The NPS installed the concrete sidewalk in the area south of the depot building. The sidewalk connected the front door of the depot to the asphalt parking lot. The NPS installed a small rectangular area of turf edged by a narrow band of pea-gravel between the front door and the wooden platform on the west side of the building, covering the French drain. Wood timbers edged the pea-gravel bed on its north and south sides. A standard NPS interpretive panel existed off the southeast corner of the building at this time and may have been installed during the site rehabilitation.

Several notable alterations occurred in 2007. First, contractors again replaced the roof with in-kind mineral-fiber shingles. In April, to the surprise of park staff, contractors for a utility company began digging on the depot property without permit (Figure 2.33). A concerned local resident called Jimmy Carter, and Carter arrived on his bicycle to assess the situation. Carter directed the workers “where to dig” and okayed the removal of one of the crape myrtle trees (Robinson 2007). The hole measured 4 feet wide, 11 feet long, and 6 feet deep.

In 2008, more trenching occurred, this time related to the installation of new water lines. The NPS Planning, Environmental and Public Comment (PEPC) entry for the project stated that the trench would be “approximately 300 feet long, 3.5 feet deep and 2 feet wide within two feet of the curb on W. Main Street beginning at the southeast corner of the [depot] property. 300 feet of 6" PVC water line will be installed, the ditch filled, sidewalk replaced, parking lot [patched] and sod replaced.”

In 2010, the NPS installed what may be a replacement seat swing in the platform area of the depot. The swing appears to be located in the same spot that a similar swing shown in a photograph taken between 1976 and 1980. Contractors also repainted the depot again this year. In 2013, the NPS installed a new interior interpretation exhibit, updating the collection that had been in place for a decade (Figure 2.34). In 2015, the NPS removed the outdoor

swing over safety concerns. In 2017, the NPS also removed a large shrub that had grown at northeast corner since shortly after the campaign. Its removal marks the last significant alteration to the site to date.

In 2018, two important JICA documents were produced. In October 2017, Bennett Preservation Engineering PC conducted a conditions assessment on the Plains Depot. The 2018 findings report describes the project as focusing on “structural issues that might affect the longevity of the building and to convey those issues and repair scenarios, briefly, back to the owners, through a report and cost estimate. The work would focus, in particular, on the brick pier deterioration, wood floor framing member rot and damage, insect damage and drainage-related damage” (Bennett Preservation Engineering PC 2018, 3). The report included a number of recommendations, including rebuilding historic building piers, replacing deteriorating wooden stairs, and replacing deteriorated roof framing in several locations.

In December, SEAC Supervisory Archeologist John Cornelison and Archeological Technician Josh Guerrero conducted an archeological investigation of the Plains Depot landscape. The crew dug to test pits—one in the open area east of the depot building and one in the lawn off the northwest corner of the depot building. Neither test revealed any cultural artifacts. The report concluded, “no additional testing is deemed required” before the park implements physical improvements to the landscape (Guerrero 2018, 1).

#### Landscape Summary (1977-2018)

Between 1977 and 2018, the depot landscape underwent both subtle and significant changes. At the beginning of the period, the depot functioned as a key symbolic representation of the Jimmy Carter presidency as well as a primary stop along the Plains tourism circuit. The depot and the surrounding landscape were well-maintained, featuring the improvements made for the campaign in 1976 as well as new site features related to the tourism business that operated inside the depot. By 1980, tourist activity in Plains declined, and the depot was mostly unused. Jimmy Carter lost reelection that year, and in 1981, the Carter Family

returned to Plains. With his historic significance established, the process of developing Jimmy Carter National Historic Site began. An act of Congress in 1987 created the historic site, a discontinuous district that included Carter's Boyhood Farm, the Plains High School, his present-day home, and the depot.

Over the next three decades, the NPS made a number of repairs, alterations, and improvements to the site. While mostly in keeping with the depot's primary year of significance—1976—the NPS improved the depot landscape in order to increase public accessibility within the site. Changes to the circulation system included the addition of a walkway from the parking area to the entrance of the depot and a wooden universal access ramp in 1998. Another significant change was the removal of the railroad spur line closest to the depot building sometime between 1980 and 1987. Over the course of this period, the ornamental vegetation east of the depot gradually diminished. Likely as part of the improvements to site circulation, the NPS installed an area of lawn in the area, retaining the two crape myrtles. In 2007, a contractor removed the northernmost crape myrtle as part of utility work. Other significant changes included the removal of the railroad track spur line closest to the depot building sometime between 1980 and 1987. Informational signs and displays increased the number of small-scale features. Despite these alterations, the character of the depot landscape, and surrounding context, is still reflective of the 1976 presidential campaign period (Figure 2.35).



Fig 2.22. The Peanut Special pulling up to the Depot in January 1977. (AMTRAK'S "PEANUT SPECIAL" TRAIN TO WASHINGTON, D.C. FOR INAUGURATION. NEWSMEN AND PEOPLE BOARDING TRAIN; Lawrence Smith Negative Collection; Accession No. JICA-36; Catalog No. JICA-620; 11/18/1977; Lawrence Smith; Photo Courtesy of the Columbus Ledger Enquirer).

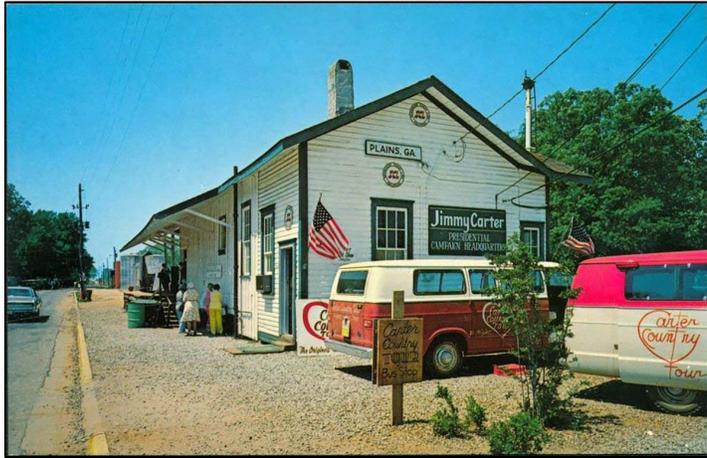


Fig 2.23. 1977 postcard of the Depot showing landscape improvements related to the tourism operation. Note the “Elect Jimmy Carter” sign atop the signal pole had been removed after the election. (Photo by R.E. Drew, published by MWM Dexter).



Fig 2.24. 1977 photograph of the east side of the depot. (Robert Buccellato, “Presidential History Lover” [blog] <http://floridahistorylover.blogspot.com/2015/08/>).



Fig 2.25. Circa 1988 photograph of the depot, showing new NPS signage along South M. L. Hudson Street. Note the absence of the railroad tracks closest to the depot. (JICA Archives, Box 18, Folder 21).



Fig 2.26. HABS Photograph, July 1989. (Library of Congress. Call No. HABS GA,131-PLAIN,15--1; Photograph No. GA-2209-1; Photograph Title: "SOUTH FRONT, EAST OFFICE PORTION;" Mark Harrell).



Fig 2.27. HABS Photograph, July 1989. (Library of Congress. Call No. HABS GA,131-PLAIN,15--2; Photograph No. GA-2209-2; Photograph Title: "SOUTH FRONT AND EAST SIDE;" Mark Harrell).



Fig 2.28. HABS Photograph, July 1989. (Library of Congress. Call No. HABS GA,131-PLAIN,15--3; Photograph No. GA-2209-3; Photograph Title: "EAST SIDE;" Mark Harrell).



Fig 2.29. HABS Photograph, July 1989. (Library of Congress. Call No. HABS GA,131-PLAIN,15--5; Photograph No. GA-2209-5; Photograph Title: "NORTH REAR AND PLATFORM, LOOKING SOUTHEAST;" Mark Harrell).

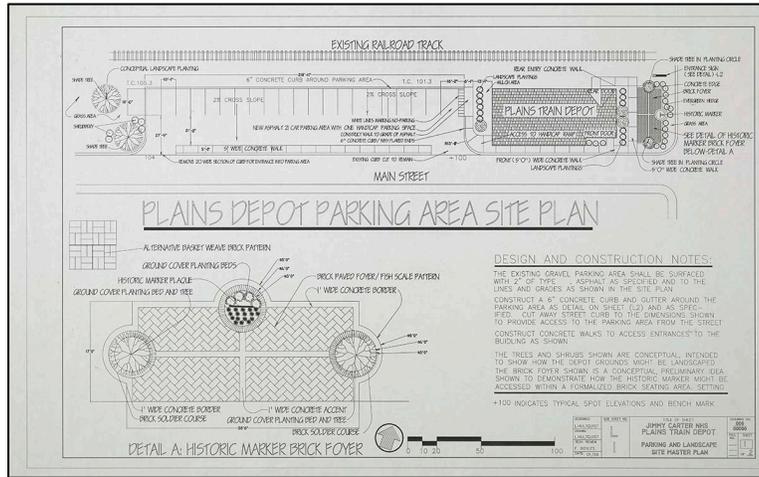


Fig 2.30. Proposed landscape plan for the depot dated 1999. This plan was never installed, and instead a simpler design—mostly through the addition of a walkway—was installed. (JICA Archives 44\_JICA-269\_9239\_979\_ParkingAreaPlan1990s).

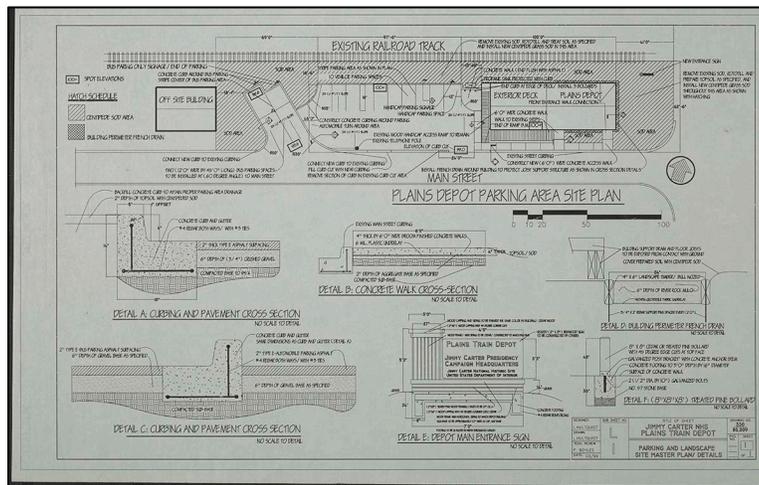


Fig 2.31. Proposed landscape plan for the depot dated March 1999. This plan replaced an earlier version and was implemented soon thereafter. (JICA Archives, 46\_41999\_JICA-269\_9239\_978\_SitePlan1989).



Fig 2.32. 2006 photograph showing landscape improvements. (JICA Interpretation Digital Files; Photograph Date: 1/13/2006; Photographer: Unknown., 47\_2006\_CRW\_0484\_RT16).



Fig 2.33. Utility work at depot, April 2007. Note uprooted crape myrtle. (JICA Cultural Resources Digital Files; Photograph Date: 2/1/1997; Photographer: Unknown).



Fig 2.34. Updated interior display, 2018. (Source: WLA Studio).



Fig 2.35. The depot and east lawn area in Fall 2018. (Source: WLA Studio).

## Chapter 7: Uses

### Functions and Uses

Seq. No. (R)	Major Category (R)	Category (R)	Use/ Function (R, if exists)	Historic (Yes/No)	Current (Yes/No)	Primary (Yes/No)
1	Education	Interpretive Landscape	Interpretive Landscape	No	Yes	No
2	Recreation/Culture	Museum (Exhibition Hall)	Exhibit	No	Yes	Yes
3	Transportation	Rail-Related	Station (Depot)	Yes	No	Yes

### Public Access

**Public Access**

Unrestricted

**Public Access Narrative**

### Associated Ethnographic Groups

Seq. No. (R)	Ethnographic Group [Select from drop down pick list.]	Current (Yes/No)	Historic (Yes/No)
	N/A		

**Ethnographic Study Status:**

N/A

**Ethnographic Narrative:**

N/A

## Chapter 8: Analysis & Evaluation

### Analysis and Evaluation Summary

The following Analysis and Evaluation section is from the “Plains Depot Jimmy Carter National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report” (WLA Studio 2019).

#### LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

The Plains Depot is significant for its association with Jimmy Carter and his 1976 presidential campaign. As laid out in the 2015 Plains Historic District National Register Nomination, the overall period of significance is from 1921 to present day (2014 at the time the nomination was written). This period of significance, though broad, excludes the year of construction for the depot, 1890. The National Park Service (NPS) maintains the landscape to the above mentioned 1976 campaign period. The landscape was evaluated based on the years between 1890 and 1976. The following Analysis and Evaluation section is taken from the “Plains Depot Jimmy Carter National Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report” (WLA Studio 2019).

Eleven landscape characteristics are present on the site and demonstrate the significance of the site. Those present include:

- Natural Systems and Features,
- Spatial Organization,
- Land Use,
- Cultural Traditions,
- Topography,
- Vegetation,
- Circulation,
- Building and Structures,
- Cluster Arrangements,
- Views and Vistas,

and Small-Scale Features.

The natural systems and features of the site, along with the site topography, have remained intact since the period of significance and are still reflective of that time. The addition of the paved parking area and sidewalk have altered the spatial organization, circulation, and cluster arrangement of the landscape; however, these features remain within keeping of the historic landscape. The continued use of the depot and landscape as an interpretive site demonstrates the land use and cultural traditions of period of significance. The views within and out of the site are congruent with historic views furthering the connection of the site to the railway and the town of Plains. Small-scale features from the period of significance have been retained, either being replaced-in-kind when needed or replicated. The depot, the main fixture of the site, continues to reflect the period of significance, especially its use as the 1976 presidential campaign headquarters for Jimmy Carter.

#### **INTEGRITY**

The Plains Depot maintains integrity through the seven aspects of integrity as they relate to the period of significance. The depot was constructed in 1890 in the location in which it currently sits. The depot has not been moved, and therefore retains integrity of location. The depot landscape relates directly to adjacent properties, particularly the railroad tracks and the Plains commercial district. The land use within the site boundary has changed, the overall setting of the landscape still reflects the period of significance therefore retaining integrity of setting.

The general form of the Plains Depot site is still discernable despite alterations to some site features and spaces. The depot building still reflects design aspects of the period of significance and the spatial organization of the property has been retained. Despite the loss of designed features, the overall form of the property still generally reflects the historic period maintaining integrity of design. The depot building is of wood construction and has retained its original materials through the preservation actions of the NPS. Other materials have been lost including cultural vegetation and the railroad spur tracks affecting integrity of materials; however, since

the property historically maintained a minimal amount of vegetation and the spur track trace remains, overall, the cultural landscape retains integrity of materials.

The connection to regional construction workmanship has been retained through the preservation of the depot building. As the depot is the primary feature that reflects workmanship of the historic period, its retention results in landscape retaining integrity of workmanship. The depot reflects the Carter presidential campaign and is maintained to reflect the year 1976, within the broader period of significance. As such, the NPS has not altered the site in a way that diminishes this historic sense of the Plains Depot site. While visitor service amenities have been added to the site, their addition do not alter the property's overall connection with the historic period, and the Plains Depot cultural landscape retains integrity of feeling. The NPS preserves and interprets the Plains Depot, highlighting the association between the site and the historically-significant 1976 presidential campaign. Further, the NPS also highlights the association between the depot and the historical development of Plains, to which the site is of central importance. As the property still reflects both these associations, the Plains Depot cultural landscape retains integrity of association to the period of treatment.

## **Landscape Characteristics and Features**

### ***Natural Systems and Features***

#### **Historic Condition (1890-1976):**

During the historic period, the natural systems of the region did not overtly influence the development of the depot landscape. These features included the humid subtropical climate, regional terrain, and the related underground soils. The climate, characterized by warm to hot summers and cool winters and an average of nearly 50 inches of annual precipitation, was likely a factor in how the depot was constructed. Specifically, the depot featured generous roof overhang that shielded both the depot building and people who were at the depot from the effects of sun and rain.

The regional terrain and soils were amenable to farming and town development. At the depot, the gentle topography of the site allowed for easier construction conditions. The soils, which were characterized by their fertility, allowed for the widespread adoption of agriculture in the region. The goods and products of this agricultural system passed through this depot on their way to wider markets. Though influencing the development of the region and depot landscape in terms of agriculture, commerce, and transportation, the soils, terrain, and climate appear to have had minimal effect on the 1976 presidential campaign.

**Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:**

After the historic period, the natural systems and features present at the depot largely remained the same. Though disturbed, the soils and generally level terrain at the depot and the surrounding region remain the same as they did in 1976. Though daily temperatures during the summer months have risen since 1976, amounting to an additional 16 days of 90 degree temperatures on average, the overall climate of the region has cooled slightly due to colder winter temperatures.

Though part of a downtown setting, the Plains Depot property is situated within a broad riverine environment called the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River Basin (ACF Basin). In addition to portions of east Alabama, west-central Georgia, and the panhandle of Florida, the ACF Basin encompasses the majority of present-day southwest Georgia, including the city of Plains and Jimmy Carter National Historic Site. The project area is associated with the Kinchafoonee-Muckalee Watershed and the Flint River Basin, both of which are sub-regions within the ACF Basin. Given the urban setting of the depot, no obvious natural systems and features are apparent.

Climate

The climate of Plains and the surrounding area is characterized by hot and humid summers and mild winters, referred to as a humid subtropical climate. Spring is the wettest season, with March being the wettest month, when over 5 inches of precipitation on average is recorded in Plains. The driest month is October, which registers 2.4 inches of precipitation on average. Annual

precipitation for the area is roughly 50 inches. Due to the effects of El Nino, the annual temperatures in the southeastern United States have not risen like they have in the rest of the country. Climate models predict that temperatures will rise in the future. As of 2012, no consensus exists concerning potential precipitation changes at the park; some models project a wetter climate, while others forecast a drier environment.

#### Soils

The Plains Depot property has soils typical of the surrounding area, which enticed settlers to establish farms in the region. The soil at the depot site is characterized as Greenville sandy loam, and 0 to 2 percent slopes. Located across the upland Coastal Plain, this soil type features well-draining red clayey material initially formed by marine deposits. The soil at the depot site has been disturbed on several occasions.

In summary, the natural systems and features that influenced the development of the landscape remain intact. Further, the development of the landscape in reaction to these systems and features are also still present in the landscape.

#### *Landscape Features:*

**Feature Name:** Humid subtropical climate

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Soils

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Terrain

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

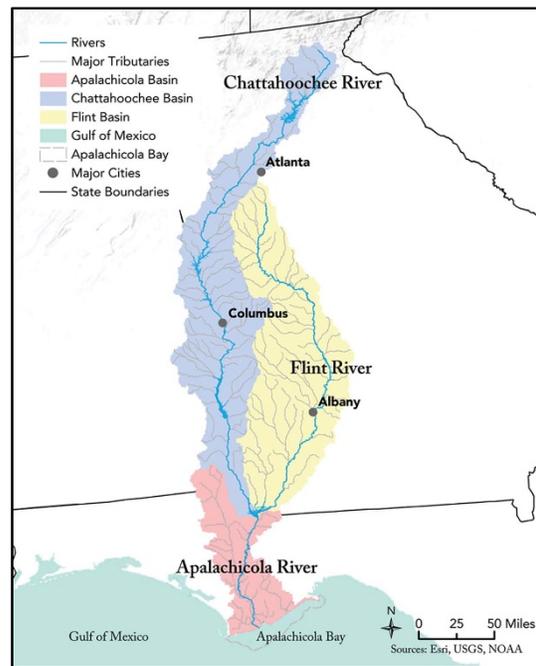


Fig 3.1 Map depicting the extent of the ACF basin. (Jonathan Skaggs / River Basin Center).

### **Spatial Organization**

#### **Historic Condition (1890-1976):**

Though plans for the depot's initial construction have not been located (if they ever existed), based on plans from 1911, early aerial images, and descriptions of the depot, it appears that during the historic period the property alternated between containing three and two distinct spaces on the site. When first built, it is presumed that the depot was situated 40 feet east of the road now known as South M. L. Hudson Street. This placement resulted in the creation of three spaces: an open area east of the building, the depot building in the middle, and an open area west of the depot. In 1911, the railroad company constructed an addition onto the depot that extended east into the space between the depot and the road. As a result, between 1911 and 1951, only two spaces existed: the depot building and the open area to its west. In 1951, the three-part spatial organization of the property was restored with the removal of the 1911 addition. In 1976, as part of site improvements related to the presidential campaign, workers landscaped the eastern space with a linear planting bed adjacent to a wide band of gravel.

Throughout the historic period, the overhead plane remained open due to the lack of vegetation on the site. The surrounding small town context and the adjacent railroad tracks contribute to the spatial organization of the site. A cluster of warehouses and silos bounded the site on the west, limiting expansive views in that direction.

**Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:**

After the historic period, the three-part spatial organization of the site remained. After the building sat vacant for a period of several years, the NPS made improvements to the site, such as paving the parking area and sodding the open area east of the depot. These improvements altered the character of the spaces, but the organization of the site remains the same. Similarly, both the overhead plane and the adjacent bounding properties remain as they existed in the historic period.

The spatial organization of the Plains Depot site is defined in two ways: first by adjacent properties and second by the three-part organization within the property boundaries. Though not within the National Park Service-owned parcel, the railroad tracks that run east-west just outside of the site's northern property line organize the space north of the building. The depot building is oriented toward the tracks (Figure 3.2). This location provides a sense of the property's original use and its link to the city's history.

Presently, the three-part spatial organization of the site reflects the historic period, with an open lawn area east of the depot, the depot occupying the middle space, and the parking area west of the depot (Figure 3.3-3.5). The absence of historic site features such as cultural vegetation diminish the integrity of the historic character of the spaces, but the overarching organization of the site remains intact. The overhead plane is clear of any spatially-defining features such as trees, buildings, or other organizing features. This allows for open views to and from the site.

*Landscape Features:*

**Feature Name:** Organization by adjacent properties

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Three-part organization at the ground level (parking area, depot building, lawn area)

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Open visual plane above and through the site

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing



*Fig 3.2. The adjacent railroad tracks serve as a key spatial organizing feature for the site. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.3 The parking lot serves as a distinct space within the depot landscape. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.4. The depot building serves as the primary organizing feature of the site. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.5 The lawn area east of the depot is another distinct space within the landscape. (WLA Studio).*

### **Land Use**

#### **Historic Condition (1890-1976):**

During the historic period, land use at the site related to two primary uses: transportation via the railroad, and, at the end of the period, the political activity associated with the 1976 presidential campaign.

The construction of the AP&L railroad enticed the settlers of Sumter County to move from their disparate communities to establish a new town—Plains. M. L. Hudson donated land to the railroad so that the company could construct a depot for the town. By 1887, a depot was reportedly in use in Plains, though it is unknown if it was located on the donated land. In 1890, the railroad built a new depot on the donated land. The depot served the local community for the next 60 years, until passenger service ended in 1951. Owners of the depot then periodically used it for storage. In 1976, the depot site served as the campaign headquarters for Jimmy Carter’s presidential campaign.

**Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:**

After the campaign, owners used the depot for tourism purposes, as it became a symbol for Jimmy Carter and his successful election. After a peak in popularity in the late-1970s, tourism to Plains subsided and the depot became unused. In 1987, the Plains Historical Preservation Trust donated the building to the National Park Service. The agency manages the depot as a historic resource, thus establishing federally-sanctioned historic interpretation and heritage tourism land use at the site. Lastly, locals and tourists both use the paved parking area for matters nonrelated to the depot, such as parking for nearby downtown businesses, though this use is not sanctioned by JICA.

Currently, the land use of the site relates to its function as a component of Jimmy Carter National Historic Site. Tourism and historic interpretation are the site's primary land uses (Figure 3.6). The proximity of the site to downtown means that downtown patrons occasionally use the parking lot when on-street parking is not available.

*Landscape Features:*

**Feature Name:** Tourism

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Parking

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Historic interpretation

**Feature Contribution:** Noncontributing



*Fig 3.6. Interior use of depot reflects interpretive land use. (WLA Studio).*

### **Cultural Traditions**

#### **Historic Condition (1890-1976):**

Cultural traditions that influenced the development of the depot landscape during the historic period include travel customs, commerce, leisure, segregation, heritage/political tourism, interpretation, and historic preservation.

The Plains Depot, through its role in facilitating travel and commerce in and out of Plains, held a key role in the development of the town, as such, the depot became the community center. Such activity related to travel and commerce via the railroad. In keeping with the tradition of public use of community common spaces, leisure traditions present at the site during the historic period included children playing at the depot as well as locals congregating at the site. The cultural tradition of racial segregation was made tangible through the construction of segregated waiting rooms at the depot in 1911. Forty years later, the railroad company removed the addition and discontinued passenger service, effectively ending spatial segregation at the depot.

When the depot stopped serving the commercial and transportation needs of the town in the 1950s, no other distinct cultural tradition developed on site until 1976. That year, Jimmy Carter's 1976 presidential campaign designated the depot as its headquarters. United States political campaigns have both generated and drawn upon cultural traditions. Using the depot, the campaign exploited the depot's symbolic value in United States culture, namely as a representation of the look and feel of a small-town community and "old-fashioned" values. As a result, the Carter campaign linked Jimmy Carter's down-to-earth messaging with its physical representation—the Plains Depot.

The organization of volunteers, delivering of speeches, and holding other public events are part of political campaign cultural traditions and activity. The "Peanut Brigade," which helped Carter win crucial primary contests, is also representative of this political cultural tradition. Physical developments linked to these traditions include the repairs, alterations, and improvements made to the depot and depot landscape in 1976.

After securing the Democratic Party nomination, tourists began flocking to Plains through the second half of 1976. The depot with its "Carter Green" trim and large signs became an easily recognizable and popular destination for tourists interested in the president's home town. Tourism thus became another cultural tradition tied to the depot.

**Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:**

By the end of the historic period, cultural traditions related to political activity, commerce, travel, racial segregation had all ended. Tourism to the depot continued, though with time, the numbers of visitors to the town and depot declined. An act of Congress established Jimmy Carter National Historic Site in 1987. Its creation, along with the subsequent acquisition of the depot by the NPS, derives from the tradition of historic preservation, park creation, and heritage interpretation by the federal government. Current cultural traditions at the site include heritage tourism, political tourism, and heritage preservation. The continued maintenance of the Plains Depot in keeping with the 1976 presidential campaign period reflects a historic preservation tradition engrained in

both the National Park Service and the United States in general. This tradition allows for a sustained heritage and political tourism related to the founding of Plains and the 1976 campaign.

Since 1987, the NPS has continued the cultural traditions of interpretation and historic preservation at the depot. Heritage/political tourism to the site also continues due to the agency's actions. These cultural traditions guide the management of the site, with decision making concerning alterations to the property based on such traditions.

*Landscape Features:*

**Feature Name:** Depot role in community development

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Depot role in presidential politics

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Heritage/political tourism

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Heritage interpretation

**Feature Contribution:** Noncontributing

**Feature Name:** Historic preservation

**Feature Contribution:** Noncontributing

***Topography***

**Historic Condition (1890-1976):**

The topography of the depot landscape is reflective of the changes required during the construction of the depot and its associated features and spaces. Located on a piece of land with

relatively little topographical variation, the depot landscape was likely lightly graded to create a level building surface. Overall, the site sloped north to south on a subtle grade. During this period, a railroad track ran through the northern portion of the site. Its construction resulted in an elevated railroad bed and a swale between it and the other railroad track to its north.

**Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:**

After the historic period, little topographic change occurred. The NPS made improvements to the site that slightly altered its topographic condition. Specifically, the NPS graded the parking area and sidewalk to shed water away from the property. Additionally, the removal of the railroad track through the northern portion of the site altered the subtle topographic variation in that area, though a shallow swale is still present. The circulation features on the south and west sides of the building feature few grade changes (Figure 3.7). On the north, a shallow swale between the depot building and the railroad tracks collects water, shedding water away from the depot building and toward West Main Street (Figure 3.8).

*Landscape Features:*

**Feature Name:** Flat terrain with little topographic variation

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Drainage swale north of Depot building

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Grade of circulation features

**Feature Contribution:** Non-contributing



*Fig 3.7 The landscape subtly slopes south, shedding water away from the depot building (WLA Studios).*



*Fig 3.8 A slight swale exists between the depot landscape and the adjacent railroad tracks (WLA Studios).*

## **Vegetation**

### **Historic Condition (1890-1976):**

Research does not reveal sufficient information to understand the vegetative character of the site during the early historic period. While period accounts mention the presence of a wooded “grove” in the vicinity of the new settlement of Plains, there is no mention of vegetation at the depot site. Aerial images from the 1930s through the early 1970 do not show any distinct vegetation growing at the site. A 1970s photograph of the site shows weedy vegetation growing in the parking lot west of the depot.

In 1976, campaign workers installed ornamental plants in the open space east of the depot. Here, in a bed of pine straw, workers planted approximately ten small shrubs in two rows oriented north-south. Though it is unclear what type of shrubs the workers planted, they appear to have been two different types. Photographs suggest that the easternmost row of shrubs was comprised of azaleas, while the row closer to the depot were Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinense*) or Japanese holly (*Ilex crenada*). Workers also planted two crape myrtles (*Lagerstroemia indica*) in the space, one on the north end of the row of shrubs and one on the south. A narrow band of turf grass covered the ground on the south and east edges of the area and scattered grasses grew in the areas unpaved in gravel.

### **Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:**

For several years after 1976, the landscape created by the campaign workers remained in place. At some point, potentially around the time of the depot’s acquisition by the NPS in late 1987, someone removed all the shrubs for unknown reasons. The owner retained the two crape myrtles. At this time, either intentionally or spontaneously, a turf groundcover took over the area east of the depot, which formerly featured gravel and pine straw. With the formalization of the landscape by the NPS around 2006, defined areas of turf covered portions of the site including the area east of the depot, a narrow area north of the depot and parking lot, and an area on the western edge of the property. In 2007, utility contractors removed the northern crape myrtle. Around 1980, an evergreen shrub—likely a boxwood—was planted at the northeast corner of the

depot, which grew into maturity. In 2017, the NPS removed this shrub. The NPS periodically plants seasonal ornamental vegetation at the site in decorative barrels located at various locations in the depot landscape and elevated platform.

#### Natural Vegetation

The Plains Depot site is mostly devoid of natural vegetation. Currently, only intermittent communities of spontaneous “weedy” flora grow within the site, mostly along disturbed edges such as the depot building footprint (Figure 3.9).

#### Cultural Vegetation

The Plains Depot site contains limited cultural vegetation. Existing vegetation features include turf grass (*Cynodon spp.*) and weedy-species groundcover in several areas of the site and a mature crape myrtle east of the depot building (Figure 3.10 - 3.11). The turf grass is mostly contained within the lawn area east of the depot building, with long strips of grass along the northern and western edges of the property (Figure 3.12). A small island of turf also exists near the front door of the depot on the south side of the building (Figure 3.13).

#### *Landscape Features:*

**Feature Name:** Turf grass (*Cynodon spp.*)

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*)

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Weedy vegetation

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Turf grass (*Cynodon spp.*): Post-historic extent

**Feature Contribution:** Noncontributing



*Fig 3.9 Detail of patchy lawn area. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.10. The lawn area east of the depot has a swath of turfgrass and a single crape myrtle tree.  
(WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.11 The lawn area east of the depot has a swath of turfgrass and a single crape myrtle tree.  
(WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.12 A narrow band of turfgrass is located on the north side of the depot and arcs around the parking lot's west end. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.13 A strip of turfgrass is located near the entrance door. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.14 The depot is located at the intersection of M. L. Hudson Street and Main Street in downtown Plains. (WLA Studio).*

### **Circulation**

#### **Historic Condition (1890-1976):**

The historical development of the depot property directly relates to circulation features within and immediately adjacent to the site. Prior to the construction of the depot, the AP&L railroad right-of-way abutted the northern site boundary. After the construction of the depot, a short spur line branched off the main railroad track and ran across the northern edge of the property. The spur line, constructed of metal rails and wood railroad ties, facilitated the loading and unloading of goods and people at the depot.

As constructed, the depot building featured a covered open-air loading platform to the west of the enclosed portion of the building. Two walkway-width platforms extended across the north and south facades of the depot building. These wooden walkways both terminated in short flights of stairs that led to ground level.

An aerial image from 1937 shows roadways bounding the site on the south and east. No other circulation features appear to be present in the landscape, though desire paths may have existed. After 1951 and the removal of the unidentified structure west of the depot, the driving of cars into and out of the site created an unpaved parking lot in this area. As seen in photographs at the end of the historic period, the parking area was unpaved and mostly undefined. This condition remained the same through the end of the historic period, with a red clay parking area clearly seen in period photographs.

### **Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:**

#### Vehicular

Two vehicular circulation features exist within the site: the parking lot and trace of railroad tracks. The active railroad tracks outside the park boundary also contribute to the cultural landscape.

#### Parking Lot

In 2006, the NPS formalized the parking lot west of the depot, reducing the size of the parking area. The asphalt-paved parking lot is located in the western portion of the site (Figure 3.15). The irregular shaped lot spans 150' – 0" along its southern edge and 114' – 0" along its northern edge. The eastern edge of the lot is straight, and the western edge is curved. The parking lot contains seven angled parking spaces, with one (easternmost) universally accessible space. The lot is striped for one-way traffic, with automobiles entering in from the eastern curb cut and exiting from the western curb cut. The lot has curbing along its entire perimeter, except for three curb cuts along the roadside; the middle cut does not appear to serve a vehicular purpose due to modern striping. An angular access aisle associated with the universal access parking space is indicated with striping at the northeast corner of the parking lot.

#### Railroad Trace

Between 1980 and 1987, potentially in conjunction with the NPS acquiring the site, the owners removed the spur railroad track. Research does not reveal a reason for their removal. The faint trace of where the spur track once entered the depot landscape is located in the small strip of land

between the north side of the depot building and the still-active railroad tracks (Figure 3.16). The metal track and wooden timbers are missing, but the grading remains evident.

#### Railroad Tracks (adjacent)

Though not located within the depot site, the association between the still-active railroad tracks and the depot landscape remains strong, meriting its inclusion in this documentation of existing conditions (Figure 3.17). The tracks extend northeast to southwest across the north side of the depot landscape. The track includes typical features including a gravel ballast, rails, fasteners, and large wooden railroad ties.

#### Pedestrian

Two formal pedestrian circulation features exist within the site: a modern concrete walkway and the wooden platform and associated walkways.

#### Concrete Walkway

In 2006, the NPS installed an L-shaped concrete walkway connecting the parking area to the entrance of the depot building and the universal access ramp (Figure 3.18). The walkway begins at the northeast corner of the parking lot, where it aligns with the access aisle. From there, it runs south along the outer edge of the universal access ramp, to which it provides access. The walkway then turns east, parallel with and between the road and depot building. Outside of the entrance door on the east end of the depot, a short section of walkway connects the main walk with the entrance door. The walkway is not connected to any other adjacent walkways. The concrete walkway measures 6 feet wide and features regularly-spaced score joints.

#### Loading Platform, Platform Walks and Stairs

The main section of elevated wooden platform occupies a 20' – 5" × 23' – 5" space west of the main depot building block. Two wooden walkways extend across portions of the north and south elevations; these walkways terminate in a short flight of stairs with a section of handrail (Figure 3.19 - 3.20). The south walkway is 42' – 7" long and the north walkway is 58' – 8" long. They are both roughly 7' – 7" wide.

### Universal Access Ramp

A two-section wood universal access ramp located between the parking lot and the elevated platform provides access to the depot building (Figure 3.21). The wood ramp features two sections and measures 56 linear feet.

Circulation at the site played a major role in the historical development of the property. The circulation features at the site facilitate vehicular and pedestrian access within the site and also to adjacent properties.

### *Landscape Features:*

**Feature Name:** Loading platform decking

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Parking lot

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Railroad tracks (adjacent)

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Concrete sidewalk

**Feature Contribution:** Noncontributing

**Feature Name:** Universal access ramp

**Feature Contribution:** Noncontributing

**Feature Name:** Railroad spur track trace

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing



*Fig 3.15 Tourists and locals alike use parking lot at site. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.16 Former location of railroad tracks and existing adjacent railroad tracks. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.17 A concrete sidewalk runs from the eastern portion of the parking area to the front entrance on the south facade. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.18 Northern platform walkway extension with handrail. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.19 Southern platform walkway extension and associated stairs and handrail. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.20 Wood access ramp. (WLA Studio).*

### ***Buildings and Structures***

#### **Historic Condition (1890-1976):**

Throughout the historic period, the depot served as the principal constructed feature at the site. Research indicates the presence of a depot in Plains that predated the construction of the current depot. It is unknown if this depot was constructed on the same lot as the present depot. In May of 1890, a new depot was built on the lot donated to the railroad by M. L. Hudson. It is assumed the AP&L paid for its construction. Based on earlier architectural drawings of the depot from 1911, as well as its current condition, it can be presumed that the 1890 depot was constructed as a typical vernacular one-story train station, rectangular in form and clad in wood. As original plans for the depot have not been located, it is unknown if the depot's construction was based on an established prototype. It is also unknown if the new depot reused any of the first depot's materials. The depot was built at the corner of present-day South M. L. Hudson Street and Main Street and oriented at a slight angle, extending northeast to southwest along the southside of the railroad track. In 1911, the Seaboard Air Line Railroad proposed the construction of an addition on the east side of the depot, occupying what is presumed to have been an open area between the depot and the road. Plans for the addition provide valuable information about the original section of the depot. The plans reveal that the depot consisted of an 8' × 21' baggage room, a 46' × 21' warehouse room, and an open-air platform that measured 80' × 36'. Two sections of walkway ran along the north and south facades of the depot. These walkways both terminated in a short flight of stairs.

The 1911 addition added three rooms: two racially segregated waiting rooms and an office. The addition was positioned asymmetrically on the east side of the depot. The two waiting rooms measured 18' × 24' and contained a ticket window served by the adjacent office. The office measured 10' × 40' and contained two doors—one into the whites-only waiting room and one into the baggage room. The drawing does not indicate access between the blacks-only room and the office.

A 1937 aerial of the site shows an unknown structure west of depot building. The structure

was elevated high enough to cast a shadow in the image, but it does not appear to have a roof line, suggesting it was a flat platform of some type. The structure remained in place until the railroad removed it, along with a majority of the 1911 addition, in 1951. The demolition completely removed the segregated waiting rooms, and roughly 16 feet of the office. The northernmost 24 feet of the office was retained, with the southern portion made flush with the baggage room and warehouse sections. There is no known reason for the removal of these additions, nor is it known why the owners retained a portion of the office block. Between 1951 and 1976, the depot building sat mostly unused.

In 1976, campaign workers for Jimmy Carter's presidential campaign rehabilitated the depot to serve as the campaign headquarters. Workers painted and installed campaign signs on the exterior of the building and repartitioned the interior. The depot became recognizable throughout the country for its association with the Carter campaign. Other buildings and structures present during the historic period relate to utilities on site, which were limited to a timber power pole located on the eastern edge of the property between the road and the ornamental planting area.

**Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:**

After the historic period, at least two additional structures were added to the landscape and others removed. By June 1977, a ticket booth for the Carter Country Tours company existed near the northeast corner of the property. The standalone structure was approximately the size of a phonebooth and featured a gabled roof and at least one large window. The clapboard-sided structure was painted white and potentially featured green trim in keeping with the depot building to its west. Research identified only one photo of the ticket booth, but based on historic images from several years later, the booth was at the site for two or three years.

Though various structures were once present, the Plains Depot is the only historic building remaining on site. The building has undergone significant alterations several times since its construction in 1890. The present configuration of the depot is reflective of the 1976 campaign period. The universal access ramp attached to the west end of the depot building is a modern addition.

The Plains Depot (CRIS # 91350)

The Plains Depot building, constructed in 1890, is the dominant feature at the site (Figure 3.21). The building is a one-story rectangular wood framed structure. There is an addition on the east side of the building. The side-gable roof has a large overhang and there are wood decked platforms on the north and south facades. There is a large open platform on the west facade. The building sits on brick pier foundations with additional concrete masonry unit (CMU) and timber piers.

Within the lot, the building is oriented northeast to southwest on the south side of the railroad tracks that run through the town. The depot building's west facade is 20' - 5" wide. The east facade measures 24' - 1/2" wide due to a short el off the northern facade. The building is 80' - 2" long and 19' - 7" tall. It is painted white with "Carter Green" trim. The building has little architectural ornamentation. Visual variation on the facade includes differences in paint color, building siding, doorway access, and window placement along the depot's facades. Except for the western facade, all the depot's facades are asymmetrical.

The south facade of the depot serves as the front of the building (Figure 3.22). On the eastern end of the building, a modern glass doorway provides pedestrian access into the building at grade (Figure 3.23). This section of the building features lap siding. A sliding door for the warehouse section of the depot is located on western end of the south facade. It is accessed from the outside by a short flight of wood stairs and the landing is connected to the large loading platform extending from and wrapping around building's west facade. The majority of the south facade features board and batten siding. There are three windows on the eastern end of the south facade. The west facade of the main building block does not have any doors. This facade has a simple, hand painted locational sign typical of rural depots, containing the text "Plains, GA." A building vent is located above the sign (Figure 3.24). The large open-air wood loading platform wraps around the base of the west facade, with a narrow section of decking extending along the north facade. The gable end roof extends across the entire platform (Figure 3.25).

The north facade of the depot building faces the railroad tracks (Figure 3.26). This side of the depot has a narrow, gabled projection at the northeast corner of the building (Figure 3.27). The projection has three windows and a door for pedestrian access at grade. Lapped siding covers this portion of the north facade. A narrow extension of the loading platform exists across the facade, terminating in a small flight of stairs. This area provides access to a loading bay door.

The east facade faces downtown Plains (Figure 3.28). This side of the building features a large green sign with the text "Jimmy Carter PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS," and a "Plains, GA." sign similar to the one on the west facade. These signs are described in the Small-scale Features section below. Two windows are located on this side of the building as well as a standard modern utility meter. Two United States flags on poles are mounted to the corners of the facade. The east facade has lapped siding.

One of the primary characteristics of the depot is the oversized side gable roof, which overhangs the building block on the north and south facades (Figure 3.29). The roof covers the large open-air wooden loading platform extending from the west facade of the building (Figure 3.30). The rafters and truss system are visible on the underside of the roof. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

#### Universal Access Ramp

A wooden ramp is attached to the west side of the loading platform (Figure 3.31). The ramp is flush with the edge of the platform and includes two ramped runs with a middle landing. There are handrails on both sides of the ramp. Access to the ramp is provided by the concrete walkway along the southern edge of the property boundary. The total structure measures 25 feet wide by 56 feet long. The grade change is 2' – 8" over the length of the ramp.

#### Utilities

There are several utilities at the site. An above-head utility line enters the site from the southeast, connecting to a meter box on the east facade of the depot (Figure 3.32). The line delivers power and phone utilities to the building. A below-grade water meter is located at the southeast corner

of the property. There is a French drain located along the foundation of the depot building's south side (Figure 3.33). Marked on the surface by a bed of pea gravel bordered by wood timbers, the drain is located west of the entrance door.

Landscape Features:

Feature Name: The Plains Depot (CRIS # 91350)

Feature Contribution: Contributing

CRIS-HS Resource Name: Plains Train Depot

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 091350

Feature Name: Universal Access Ramp

Feature Contribution: Noncontributing

Feature Name: Utilities

Feature Contribution: Noncontributing



*Fig 3.21. The depot is located at the intersection of M.L. Hudson Street and Main Street in downtown Plains. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.22. South facade of the depot. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.23. Modern glass entrance door. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.24. West facade of depot. (Source: WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.25. West facade of depot showing roof overhang. (Source: WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.26. North facade of depot. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.27. North facade of depot showing projection on east side. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.28. East facade of the depot. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.29. Wide roof overhang. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.30. Roof covering loading platform. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.31. Wood access ramp. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.32. Above ground utilities lines enter into the site from the east. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.33. French drain system along base of south facade. (WLA Studio).*

### **Cluster Arrangement**

#### **Historic Condition (1890-1976):**

Workers constructed the 1890 Plains Depot building approximately 20 feet from the main rail line with the long edge of the building parallel to the rail alignment. It is unknown if the railroad spur dates to the construction of the depot building, but as the spur appears on a 1937 aerial photograph, it is known it was constructed sometime during the early historic period. The proximity of the two rail lines with the depot building formed a cluster of built features in the eastern half of the site.

Prior to 1937, adjacent property owners constructed a cluster of warehouses and silos to the west of the property boundary. These buildings located just outside the site's western edge helped frame what would become a parking area between the warehouses and the depot building. By the late nineteenth century, property owners in the downtown area had begun to construct buildings along West Main Street, across from the railroad. These buildings had the same northeast to southwest orientation as the Plains Depot Building and the rail line. Another set of

buildings were located on both sides of South M. L. Hudson Street, across West Main Street from the depot site.

**Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:**

The existing Plains Depot building is arranged linearly northeast to southwest in relatively close proximity to the railroad track. Roughly 20 feet separates the building from the track. The long facade of the building parallels the track. The building also sits parallel to the road and is oriented northeast to southwest like other downtown buildings, which are located south of West Main Street on both sides of South M. L. Hudson Street. Sometime between 1980 and 1987 workers removed the railroad spur line between the depot building and the main railroad line.

With the exception of the missing railroad spur line, the cluster arrangement at the site reflects the historic period, with the depot building paralleling the railroad tracks and located across the street from Plains' downtown buildings. The overall cluster arrangement of the site remains intact.

*Landscape Features:*

**Feature Name:** Relationship to downtown buildings

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Relationship to railroad tracks

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

***Views and Vistas***

**Historic Condition (1890-1976):**

Given the small size of the site and its spatial organization, during the historic period, the principal views pertaining to the depot landscape extended to and from adjacent properties as opposed to being contained within the property boundaries. Notable views toward the depot

landscape included: (1) the views from multiple points in downtown Plains, generally northwest towards the depot; (2) the view of the depot as approached along South M. L. Hudson Street; and (3) the view from the railroad tracks in both directions (Figure 3.34 - 3.37).

Notable views from the depot included: (1) the open view of downtown Plains from various points in the landscape; and (2) the views east and west along the railroad tracks (Figure 3.38). These views included the depot within the larger context of downtown Plains and served to reinforce its central importance to the development of the town.

**Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:**

Aerial photographs show some minor changes to the buildings and streetscape of downtown Plains since 1976, but these changes did not overly affect historic period views.

In summary, views to and from the depot site remain the same as they were in the historic period. Principal views continue to be those to and from the depot site from the Plains business district, the railroad tracks, and along adjacent roadways. These open views allow for clear recognition of the depot and its placement within the context of downtown Plains.

*Landscape Features:*

**Feature Name:** Views of downtown Plains from depot landscape / Views of depot from downtown

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** View toward depot from South M. L. Hudson Street

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** East and west views along railroad tracks to and from the depot

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing



*Fig 3.34. View of depot looking northwest from downtown Plains. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.35. View of depot from M. L. Hudson Street, looking southwest. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.37. View west along the railroad tracks. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.38. View east along the railroad tracks. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.39. View toward downtown Plains, looking southeast. (Source: WLA Studio).*

### **Small-Scale Features**

#### **Historic Condition (1890-1976):**

As photo documentation of the depot site is limited, little is known about small-scale features present at the site during the historic period prior to 1976. It is assumed that a variety of small-scale features were present to serve transportation and commerce-related needs. Photographs of the site taken during the 1976 presidential campaign show a collection of small-scale features that relate more to the campaign than to the historic use.

A photograph of the east side of the site taken prior to campaign-initiated improvements shows campaign signage attached to the east facade of the depot as well as another sign mounted on two posts and erected on the eastern edge of the property facing to the east. The large post-mounted sign contained the text “Jimmy Carter PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS” on a green background. The sign attached to the east facade contained the text “elect Jimmy Carter President” and also featured a green background. At least six bollards of an unknown material bordered the open space east of the depot in an “L” arrangement.

Campaign workers continued to make improvements to the landscape throughout 1976. In addition to creating a planting bed and installing gravel over large portions of the site, workers moved the previously described signs. They relocated the “elect Jimmy Carter President” sign to the top of the signal pole on the north side of the depot building, clearly visible to traffic along the adjacent roadways. In its place, workers moved the post-mounted sign with text “Jimmy Carter PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS” to the east facade of the depot. Workers placed a third large green sign with the text “Jimmy Carter! For President” to the east of the sliding door on the south facade of the depot.

There were the two town identification markers located on the east and west facades of the depot building. The simple signs contained the text “Plains, GA” in stenciled lettering on a white background. Additionally, at least four identical signs identifying the depot’s association with the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad were attached to the depot in different locations: one above the office projection on the north facade, one attached to a roof support beam on the west side of the loading platform, one attached to the south facade above the entrance door, and two attached to the east facade. The signs were circular with two layers of text: unstylized black lettering wrapping around the outside edge of the sign read “Seaboard Coast Line Railroad” and the abbreviation “SCL” is written in italicized red lettering in the center of the circle.

The only traffic sign present at the site during the historic period was the road sign marking the intersection of Main Street and South Hudson Street. The green road signs were mounted to a metal pole located at the southeast corner of the depot property. A white newspaper mailbox was located by the road signs.

Various seating arrangements existed at the site during the campaign period, including several rocking chairs and a bench swing on the loading platform. The rocking chairs were not fixed to any one place on the platform, whereas the swing was chain-mounted and suspended from the depot roof. Other small-scale features included trash bins, which did not stay in any one place at

the site. Two United States flags were mounted to the southeast and northeast corners of the depot, with the flags extending straight off the building to the east.

Lastly, also related to the campaign, was the 13-foot-tall peanut statue that was located both inside and outside the depot during the campaign. Designed in Indiana for a campaign parade, the statue was then transported to the depot in September 1976. Photographs show the large peanut with its iconic grin inside the warehouse section of the depot as well as positioned on the covered loading platform. The peanut was constructed of wooden hoops, chicken wire, and aluminum foil and painted in life-like colors.

**Post-Historic and Existing Conditions:**

Immediately after the historic period, the depot began incorporating tourism-related activities, which resulted in the presence of new small-scale features in the landscape. A January 1977 photograph shows that by this time, a metal I-beam railing was located south of the railroad tracks on the east side of the property, separating the landscape area from the railroad tracks. Related to the tourism company that rented the depot after the campaign ended, a small wooden handmade sign with the text “Carter Country Tours Bus Stop” was located on the edge of the gravel bed abutting the planting area. A larger, more elevated white sign appears to have been mounted to a post near the entrance door to the depot. A pew-like wooden bench was situated in various places within the open area east of the depot. A wooden stepstool is shown in period photographs in the same area. For an unknown period of time, two soda machines were positioned against the west facade of the depot building.

Tourism to the site declined as Carter settled into the presidency. By 1980, the Carter Country Tour company vacated the depot. Afterward, the owners removed signs and other features related to the tourism operation, including the 13-foot-tall smiling peanut, which was relocated to a local gas station. The large green campaign signs were kept in place until NPS acquisition. After the depot property became a historic site, park staff and other officials altered the existing small-scale features within the landscape and added new features to aid visitors. Such features included informational signage, directional signage, replica campaign and depot signage, and

decorative features. In 2015, the NPS removed the swinging bench from the loading platform due to safety concerns. The majority of small-scale features present today primarily serve interpretive needs of the historic site.

### Signs

A number of signs are located within the depot landscape, mostly concentrated in the lawn area east of the depot and attached to the depot itself. After the NPS acquired the site, park staff removed all signs from the exterior of the depot, placing them in storage. The park then replaced these signs with replicas.

### Jimmy Carter Signage

Two large replica signs related to Jimmy Carter's 1976 presidential campaign are located on the depot building (Figure 3.19 and Figure 3.28). The one located on the east facade contains the text "Jimmy Carter PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS" in white lettering atop a green background. The other, located on the west side of the south facade contains the text "Jimmy Carter! For President" in white lettering atop a green background.

### Georgia Historic Marker

In 1986, the Georgia Historical Society installed a historical marker in the lawn area east of the depot (Figure 3.40). The marker contains text describing the significance of Jimmy Carter, Plains, and the depot. The brass sign features raised gold lettering atop a dark brown backdrop and is supported by a light gray freestanding chamfered pole. Note, in April 2019 this sign was damaged and removed to JICA storage.

### "Plains, GA" Depot Signage

Two identical signs identifying the town of Plains are attached to the depot building's east and west facades (Figure 3.41). The narrow rectangular signs contain the text "Plains, GA." in green stenciled text is painted on a white background. The signs have a narrow wood frame painted green.

#### Seaboard Coast Line Railroad (SCL) Signage

Four identical signs identifying the depot's association with the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad are attached to the depot in different locations: one above the door on the north facade, one attached to the gable end of roof on the west, one attached to the south facade above the entrance door, and one attached at the gable end of the east facade. The signs are circular, with two layers of text: unstylized black lettering wrapping around the outside edge of the sign with the text "Seaboard Coast Line Railroad" and the abbreviation "SCL" in italicized red lettering in the center of the circle (Figure 3.42).

#### Plains Tourism Sign

A small sign denoting the depot as feature one on the "Plains Historic Tour" is located near the southeast corner of the lawn area (Figure 3.43). The small white metal sign is attached to a black metal post.

#### Traffic Signs

The site contains three traffic-related signs: a stop sign, a road sign, and a universal access parking sign. The stop sign and standard road sign (South M. L. Hudson and West Main Streets) are located in the southeast corner of the lawn area east of the depot (Figure 3.44). Both are mounted on standard metal poles. The accessible parking sign is located in the parking lot west of the depot (Figure 3.45).

#### Interpretive Panel

In 2006, the NPS installed a standard 36" × 24" NPS low-profile wayside interpretive panel is located off the southeast corner of the depot building (Figure 3.46). Titled "Plains Depot," the panel presents information about the site, and includes a map of the entire Jimmy Carter Preservation District. The wayside is mounted on two posts.

#### Other

Other small-scale features at the site include curbing along the road and parking lot edges, visitor amenities, depot-associated features, and decorations that include benches, rocking chairs, United States flags, and decorative barrels.

In 2015 the NPS installed the concrete curb that spans from the southeast corner of the site west across the south edge of the parking lot (Figure 3.47). Its span is interrupted by four curb cuts, three at the parking lot and one on the south side of the lawn area. An additional curb runs from the southwest edge of the parking lot toward the depot building, ending at the universal access parking space (Figure 3.48).

Depot-associated features include a telephone box on the north facade of the depot and a signal pole with an associated ladder. The telephone box is a small wooden box mounted to the face of the depot several feet above the elevated walkway. It is painted green. The signal pole is located just north of the office portion of the depot on the north. It is ground-mounted and rises up above the roof line. The roof of the depot has a section cutout to allow the pole to extend upward. The pole is painted white with green details, and the ladder that extends up the north side of the pole is painted green as well.

Two simple wooden benches, placed on site in 2015, stand with their backs against the west facade of the depot building (Figure 3.41). The benches are positioned side-by-side and on center with the sign and ventilation window above. Flanking the set of benches are two decorative barrels. Additionally, two wicker-backed rocking chairs are located on the loading platform but are placed inside the depot during closed hours. Two United States flags on poles are mounted to the corners of the east facade, with the poles extending eastward.

A standard plastic brochure box is located adjacent to the depot's front door.

*Landscape Features:*

**Feature Name:** United States flags

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Road sign

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Jimmy Carter signs

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Plains, GA depot signs

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Seaboard Coast Line Railroad signs

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Benches

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Rocking chairs

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Stop sign

**Feature Contribution:** Contributing

**Feature Name:** Georgia Historical marker

**Feature Contribution:** Noncontributing

**Feature Name:** Plains tour sign

**Feature Contribution:** Noncontributing

**Feature Name:** Accessible parking sign

**Feature Contribution:** Noncontributing

**Feature Name:** Interpretive panel

**Feature Contribution:** Noncontributing

**Feature Name:** Curbing

**Feature Contribution:** Noncontributing

**Feature Name:** Decorative barrels

**Feature Contribution:** Noncontributing



*Fig 3.40. Georgia Historic Marker east of depot building. (WLA Studio).*



Fig 3.41. Locational sign on west facade. Sign is identical to one on east facade. (WLA Studio).



Fig 3.42. One of four SCL signs. Pictured sign is located above the doorway on north facade. (WLA Studio).



*Fig 3.43. Cluster of signs in the southeast corner of the site. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.44. ADA parking sign in parking lot. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.45. Interpretive wayside near southeast corner of the depot. (WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.46. Detail of concrete curb. (Source: WLA Studio).*



*Fig 3.47. Concrete curbing around the parking lot. (WLA Studio).*

## Chapter 9: Condition Assessment

### Assessment Interval:

6

### Condition

**Condition:**

Fair

**Condition Date:**

12/07/2021

**Primary Inspector Name:**

**Profession/Credentials:**

**Narrative:**

The Plains Depot is a historic site that reflects the use of the landscape during Jimmy Carter's 1976 presidential campaign. There have been changes to the site, such as the removal of historic vegetation, the addition of the new circulation patterns, and small scale-features, and though minor on their own, the cumulative affect has led to a 'fair' condition assessment of the site. A cultural landscape report for the landscape was completed in 2019. Implementation of the proposed treatment plan suggested in the report will likely increase the condition of the site to 'good.'

### Impacts

Seq. No.	Type	Impact Type – Other	Internal Source?	External Source?	Narrative	Date Identified
1	Removal/Replacement		Yes	No	Historic vegetation has been removed from the site, including a crape	12/07/2021

					myrtle from 1976 by contactors.	
2	Other		Yes	No	The addition of new features, such as formalized parking area, the concrete walkway, and the non-historic signage have altered the appearance of the landscape.	

## Chapter 10: Treatment

### Stabilization Measures

Stabilization Measure Narrative (R)	Stabilization Cost (R)	Stabilization Cost Date (R)	Estimate Level (R)	Cost Estimator (R)	Cost Narrative

### Approved Treatments

Type	Completed	Approved Treatment Doc.	Doc Date	Narrative	Approved Treatment Cost	Cost Date	Estimate Level	Estimator	Cost Narrative
Rehabilitation		Cultural Landscape Report	2019						

## Chapter 11: Bibliography and Supplemental Information

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### Supplemental Information

Seq. No.	Supplemental Information Title	Supplemental Information Narrative



	Open visual plane above and through the site	Contributing									
	Land Use										
	Tourism	Contributing									
	Parking	Contributing									
	Historic Interpretation	Non-contributing									
	Topography										
	Flat Terrain with little topographic variation	Contributing									
	Drainage swale north of depot building	Contributing									
	Grade of circulation features	Contributing									
	Vegetation										
	Turf grass ( <i>Cynodon spp.</i> )	Contributing									

	Crape myrtle ( <i>Lagerstroemia indica</i> )	Contributing									
	Weedy vegetation	Contributing									
	Turf grass ( <i>Cynodon</i> spp.): Post-historic extent	Non-contributing									
	Circulation										
	Loading platform decking	Contributing									
	Parking Lot (space)	Contributing									
	Railroad Spur Track Trace	Contributing									
	Concrete Sidewalk	Non-contributing									
	Universal access ramp	Non-contributing									
	Buildings and Structures										

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	Plains Depot	Contributing				Plains Train Depot	091350				
	Universal access ramp	Non-contributing									
	Water Meter	Non-contributing									
	Electric line with utility boxes	Non-contributing									
	French Drain	Non-contributing									
	Cluster Arrangement										
	Relationship to town buildings	Contributing									
	Relationship to railroad tracks	Contributing									
	Views and Vistas										
	Views of downtown Plains from depot landscape/Views of	Contributing									

	Depot from downtown										
	View towards depot from South M.L. Hudson Street	Contributing									
	East and west views along railroad tracks to and from the depot	Contributing									
	Small-Scale Features										
	United States flags	Contributing									
	Stop sign	Contributing									
	Road sign	Contributing									
	Jimmy Carter signs	Contributing									
	Plains, GA Depot sign	Contributing									
	Seaboard Coast Line Railroad signs	Contributing									
	Rocking chair	Contributing									

	Benches	Contributing									
	Georgia Historical marker	Non-contributing									
	Plains Tour sign	Non-contributing									
	Accessible parking sign	Non-contributing									
	Interpretive panel	Non-contributing									
	Curbing	Non-contributing									
	Decorative barrels	Non-contributing									