

Jimmy Carter

Goober Peas

Thirty-Ninth, 1977-1981



Nicknames: "Hot[shot]", "Cousin Hot", "The Peanut Farmer"

Birth: October 1st, 1924, Plains, Georgia

Death: Still living as of the time of writing

Significant Events During Carter's Term: Personal Computers ... Alex Haley's "Roots" ... Love Canal ... Three Mile Island ... Iran Hostage Crisis ... Mount St. Helens Erupts ... John Lennon Murdered

Quotes: *"Studies never bothered Jimmy. In fact the only times he opened his books were when his classmates desired help on problems."*

-- Jimmy Carter's Annapolis Naval Academy Yearbook caption, 1946

"Our people are losing faith. Not only in government itself but in their ability as citizens to serve as the ultimate rulers and shapers of our democracy." -- Jimmy Carter, 1979

"I've looked on a lot of women with lust. I've committed adultery in my heart many times."

-- Jimmy Carter, in an interview with Playboy magazine

"I want to talk to you right now about a fundamental threat to American democracy...I do not refer to the outward strength of America, a nation that is at peace tonight everywhere in the world, with unmatched economic power and military might. The threat is nearly invisible in ordinary ways. It is a crisis of confidence. It is a crisis that strikes at the very heart and soul and spirit of our national will. We can see this crisis in the growing doubt about the meaning of our own lives and in the loss of a unity of purpose for our nation." -- Jimmy Carter, 1979

"Any attempt by an outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States. It will be repelled by the use of any means necessary, including military force." -- Jimmy Carter ("The Carter Doctrine"), 1980

"He gave me a broader role and was kinder to me [as Vice President] than any President in history."
-- Walter Mondale, 1981

How his term ended: Carter was defeated for reelection by Ronald Reagan

Other Professions: Soldier, Peanut Farmer, Author

Worst Mistake: Carter's failure of note was allowing the brutal autocrat Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the deposed Shah of Iran, to enter the United States for medical treatment. This was a boo-boo on two levels: first, the man was ruthless and deserving of no favors; second, doing so provoked the outraged Iranian people to express their displeasure by storming the U.S. Embassy in Teheran and taking many Americans and Canadians there hostage.

Saving Grace: Carter attempted to bring about peace in the Middle East. A fool's errand, perhaps, but as with the attempt to free the hostages in Iran, at least he tried. And he did achieve a measure of temporary success, as he was able to get Egypt's Anwar Sadat and Israel's Menachem Begin together for at least a hand-shaking photo op.

Following his presidency, Carter performed volunteer work for the charitable organization Habitat for Humanity, helping to provide "simple, decent, and affordable" housing to those in need. And Carter wasn't just a board member or pencil-pusher—he actually used his own elbow grease to help build homes, swinging a hammer and putting his money where his mouth was. How many former Presidents have been willing to "stoop" to directly helping common people in such a manner, as opposed to wallowing in their wealth and cultivating their connections after retiring to their manor?

Notes: Jimmy Carter's given name is James Earl Carter, Jr.

Carter was the first President to have been born in a hospital.

Carter's great grandfather, Littleberry Walker Carter, was a Confederate soldier during the Civil War, who survived that conflagration (including the Battle of Gettysburg) but was later killed by a business associate over the proceeds from a merry-go-round. Carter's (again, paternal) grandfather was also killed in a dispute, in this case over the ownership of a desk. His maternal grandfather was also a Confederate Civil War veteran, and survived to become a postmaster after the War; some claim he was the first person to suggest Rural Free Delivery.

Carter's mother Lillian was a maverick: She advocated racial equality before it was “cool” to do so (keep in mind that the family resided in rural Georgia). Mrs. Carter even served as midwife to poor black sharecropper women who could not afford medical care. “Miss Lillian” joined the Peace Corps in 1966 at the age of 68.

Even though he was Governor of Georgia at the time, Carter appeared in 1974 on “What's My Line?” and was hardly recognized by anyone on the panel.

Carter, a Navy veteran, granted unconditional amnesty to all Vietnam-era “draft dodgers” during his term.

Carter is unfortunately probably best remembered for the botched rescue attempt of the American and Canadian hostages taken in Iran (see “Worst Mistake” above). Poor planning, mechanical failures, and human error were to blame for the mission's failure. Had it worked out, Carter would've doubtless been glamorized as a genius and a hero.