THE #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

An Hour Before Daylight



JIMMY CARTER

Memories of a Rural Boyhood

An Hour Before Daylight

Memories of a Rural Boyhood

A Touchstone Book
Published by Simon & Schuster
NEW YORK LONDON TORONTO SYDNEY SINGAPORE



TOUCHSTONE

Rockefeller Center
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020
Copyright © 2001 by Jimmy Carter
All rights reserved,
including the right of reproduction
in whole or in part in any form.
First Touchstone Edition 2001

TOUCHSTONE and colophon are registered trademarks of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

For information about special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact Simon & Schuster Special Sales: 1-800-456-6798 or business@simonandschuster.com

Designed by Brooke Zimmer Koven

Manufactured in the United States of America

3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

The Library of Congress has cataloged the Simon & Schuster edition as follows: Carter, Jimmy

An hour before daylight: memories of a rural boyhood / Jimmy Carter.

p. cm. Includes index

Carter, Jimmy—Childhood and youth.
 Presidents—
 United States—Biography.
 Farmers—Georgia—Plains—
 Biography.
 Plains (Ga.)—Biography.
 Plains (Ga.)—Social life
 and customs—20th century.
 Country life—Georgia—Plains—History—
 20th century.
 Plains region (Ga.)—Rural conditions—20th century.
 Carter family.
 Title.

E873 .C36 2001 973.926'092—dc21 [B] 00-048248

ISBN 0-7432-1193-6 0-7432-1199-5 (PBK)

Photo credits appear on page 285.

Praise for An Hour Before Daylight

"More than a memoir . . . it has the feel of being dead honest . . . the gift of language."

-Roy Reed, The New York Times Book Review

"Wonderfully honest and frank."

—John D. Thomas, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

"A true memoir, a book steeped in memory and organized in part by memory's principles: the vivid takes precedence . . . A moving reminder of how dramatically a child can grow beyond his roots and remain at the same time profoundly attached to them."

-Nancy Mitchell, The Raleigh News and Observer

"Thoughtful, intelligent, and eloquent."

—Booklist

"The best example of his skill . . . demonstrates that some lessons are universal and timeless."

-Ike Seamans, The Miami Herald

"A paean to the people, places, and values that shaped the life of a shy, bookish boy . . . quietly illustrates the importance of nurturing children with high expectations, early responsibility, and enduring values."

—Marilyn Gardner, The Christian Science Monitor

ALSO BY JIMMY CARTER

The Virtues of Aging (1998)

Sources of Strength: Meditations on Scripture for a Living Faith (1997)

Living Faith (1996)

The Little Baby Snoogle-Fleejer (illustrated by Amy Carter; 1995)

Always a Reckoning, and Other Poems (1995)

Talking Peace: A Vision for the Next Generation (1993)

Turning Point: A Candidate, A State, and a Nation Come of Age (1992)

An Outdoor Journal: Adventures and Reflections (1988)

Everything to Gain: Making the Most of the Rest of Your Life (with Rosalynn Carter; 1987)

The Blood of Abraham: Insights into the Middle East (1985)

Negotiation: The Alternative to Hostility (1984)

Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President (1982)

A Government As Good As Its People (1977)

Why Not the Best? (1975)

Jimmy Carter



To my newest grandson, Hugo, with hopes that this book might someday let him better comprehend the lives of his ancestors.

Contents

Land, Farm, and Place ONE TWO Sharecropping as a Way of Life 49 Hard Times, and Politics THREE My Life as a Young Pup FOUR My Mama and Daddy FIVE Boiled Peanuts in Plains SEVEN Breaking Ground, to Be a Man EIGHT Learning More About Life 191 Learning About Sin 207 The Carters of Georgia 231 TEN ELEVEN The Navy Versus Plains 255 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INDEX

275

Praise for An Hour Before Daylight

"More than a memoir . . . it has the feel of being dead honest . . . the gift of language."

-Roy Reed, The New York Times Book Review

"Wonderfully honest and frank."

—John D. Thomas, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

"A true memoir, a book steeped in memory and organized in part by memory's principles: the vivid takes precedence . . . A moving reminder of how dramatically a child can grow beyond his roots and remain at the same time profoundly attached to them."

-Nancy Mitchell, The Raleigh News and Observer

"Thoughtful, intelligent, and eloquent."

—Booklist

"The best example of his skill . . . demonstrates that some lessons are universal and timeless."

—Ike Seamans, The Miami Herald

"A paean to the people, places, and values that shaped the life of a shy, bookish boy . . . quietly illustrates the importance of nurturing children with high expectations, early responsibility, and enduring values."

-Marilyn Gardner, The Christian Science Monitor





ALSO BY JIMMY CARTER

The Virtues of Aging (1998)

Sources of Strength: Meditations on Scripture for a Living Faith (1997)

Living Faith (1996)

The Little Baby Snoogle-Fleejer (illustrated by Amy Carter; 1995)

Always a Reckoning, and Other Poems (1995)

Talking Peace: A Vision for the Next Generation (1993)

Turning Point: A Candidate, A State, and a Nation Come of Age (1992)

An Outdoor Journal: Adventures and Reflections (1988)

Everything to Gain: Making the Most of the Rest of Your Life (with Rosalynn Carter; 1987)

The Blood of Abraham: Insights into the Middle East (1985)

Negotiation: The Alternative to Hostility (1984)

Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President (1982)

A Government As Good As Its People (1977)

Why Not the Best? (1975)

Jimmy Carter



An Hour Before Daylight

Memories of a Rural Boyhood

A Touchstone Book
Published by Simon & Schuster
NEW YORK LONDON TORONTO SYDNEY SINGAPORE



TOUCHSTONE

Rockefeller Center
1230 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020
Copyright © 2001 by Jimmy Carter
All rights reserved,
including the right of reproduction
in whole or in part in any form.
First Touchstone Edition 2001

TOUCHSTONE and colophon are registered trademarks of Simon & Schuster, Inc.

For information about special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact Simon & Schuster Special Sales:

1-800-456-6798 or business@simonandschuster.com

Designed by Brooke Zimmer Koven

Manufactured in the United States of America

3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

The Library of Congress has cataloged the Simon & Schuster edition as follows: Carter, Jimmy

An hour before daylight: memories of a rural boyhood / Jimmy Carter.

p. cm.
 Includes index

Carter, Jimmy—Childhood and youth.
 Presidents—
 United States—Biography.
 Farmers—Georgia—Plains—
 Biography.
 Plains (Ga.)—Biography.
 Plains (Ga.)—Social life
 and customs—20th century.
 Country life—Georgia—Plains—History—
 20th century.
 Plains region (Ga.)—Rural conditions—20th century.
 Carter family.
 Title.

E873 .C36 2001 973.926'092—dc21 [B] 00-048248

ISBN 0-7432-1193-6 0-7432-1199-5 (PBK)

Photo credits appear on page 285.