



A Full Life: Reflections at Ninety

Jimmy Carter

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In his major *New York Times* bestseller, Jimmy Carter looks back from ninety years of age and “reveals private thoughts and recollections over a fascinating career as businessman, politician, evangelist, and humanitarian” (*Booklist*).

At ninety, Jimmy Carter reflects on his public and private life with a frankness that is disarming. He adds detail and emotion about his youth in rural Georgia that he described in his magnificent *An Hour Before Daylight*. He writes about racism and the isolation of the Carters. He describes the brutality of the hazing regimen at Annapolis, and how he nearly lost his life twice serving on submarines and his amazing interview with Admiral Rickover. He describes the profound influence his mother had on him, and how he admired his father even though he didn’t emulate him. He admits that he decided to quit the Navy and later enter politics without consulting his wife, Rosalynn, and how appalled he is in retrospect.

In his “warm and detailed memoir” (*Los Angeles Times*), Carter tells what he is proud of and what he might do differently. He discusses his regret at losing his re-election, but how he and Rosalynn pushed on and made a new life and second and third rewarding careers. He is frank about the presidents who have succeeded him, world leaders, and his passions for the causes he cares most about, particularly the condition of women and the deprived people of the developing world.

“Always warm and human...even inspirational” (*Buffalo News*), *A Full Life* is a wise and moving look back from this remarkable man. Jimmy Carter has lived one of our great American lives—from rural obscurity to world fame, universal respect, and contentment. *A Full Life* is an extraordinary read from a “force to be reckoned with” (*Christian Science Monitor*).

A Full Life: Reflections at Ninety Details

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From Reader Review A Full Life: Reflections at Ninety for online ebook

Carol says

Former US President reflects on his life and on a wide-range of issues including the recent changes in the South, the shooting tragedy in Charleston, the Middle East and the Iranian hostage crisis, and writes that the US is in a state of decline of influence. What I like most about the book is his honesty, open admission of his mistakes, and how he owned them up. President Carter said that he's comfortable with all the decisions he made as President irrespective of their outcome. Frank, honest and insightful, this memoir covers an important chapter in the history of United States and deserves to be in the hands of all serious students of history. I enjoyed his poetry and his paintings.

If you are interested in seeing the interview of Judy Woodruff with Jimmy Carter --
<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/former...>

Jim Ogle says

I never voted for Jimmy Carter. When he first ran for President, I had supported Gerald Ford because I had thought Ford made the tough calls in one of the worst time ever. I voted for Ronald Reagan because I knew people weren't better off than they had been four years before.

Yet, I don't think anyone has been a better ex-President than Jimmy Carter. He left the Presidency at such a young age. He has done so much with his life since then.

This book is his effort at this late date, to re-tell his own story. It is a good one.

With the recent acknowledgement by Carter that he is fighting cancer, I hope this isn't his last book. It is worth the read!

Georgia hillstrom says

I absolutely was stunned by the information in this book and the man Jimmy Carter. I knew he was president but had no idea of the scope of his greatness or the humbleness he has shown to his fellow man. He must surely be one of the great humanitarians of our century. From the time he was a child he was a determined person. Just the detail of that are in this book. I loved he shared his personal faith and lived it. I feel so inspired reading this book. The lessons he learned in life, the grief, the failures. how could a person not respect him. After reading this I am thinking how we dwell on mistakes and past happenings, that get us stuck in life. He had tings happen made mistakes, but learned and went forward. The last paragraph in the book he sums his life up. He gives credit to people that made a difference in his life. I can say I would like to meet him, just tell him he is inspiring. Thank you Jimmy Carter for writing this book sharing your story.

Paul Brannan says

For many Americans Jimmy Carter will be remembered as one of the worst US presidents in recent history.

His legacy remains blighted by memories of the Iran hostage crisis, still a painful national humiliation, soaring energy costs, crippling stagflation and a sense that the US was emasculated by a weak commander.

The kindest critics describe him as more effective as an ex-president than he ever was as leader of the free world.

He deserves better, both for his term in office from 1977-1981 and as a diplomat and mediator confronting some of the most divisive issues of modern times.

This latest book, the 29th he has published, is not, like so many political autobiographies, an attempt to redeem or even burnish his reputation. It's more of a personal, matter-of-fact plod through the arc of a diverse life.

There's a quiet dignity about his perspective on his presidency. There are regrets, but no attempt to retrospectively justify policies and decisions that didn't work out.

"I look back on those four years with peace and satisfaction, knowing that I did my best and had some notable achievements."

Foremost among those achievements was the 1978 signing of the Camp David Accords in which Egypt formally recognized the state of Israel.

He defers to his vice-president, Walter Mondale, to sum up the best of their administration, quoting him saying: "We told the truth, we obeyed the law, we kept the peace." And then he goes on to add: "We championed human rights."

For a man who has endured so much opprobrium the book is remarkably even-toned, a monochrome view of a colorful career.

There's no bile or anger directed at political opponents, no hyperbole or intrigue and no 'setting the record straight'.

He does wish he'd sacked his supreme commander of US forces in Europe, General Alexander Haig, stating: "I had difficulty in understanding what he was trying to say and was concerned about his partisanship and derogation of my policies emphasizing peace and human rights."

He also had a testy relationship with Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of Germany, recording in his diary after a meeting: "He's a strange man and a good leader of Germany. I'm afraid he has a problem in his attitude toward me...he's constantly critical of the United States, of our fairness, our commitment, our honesty".

There may be frustration, but there's no deep-rooted vindictiveness, no spiteful retorts. Events and meetings are recorded almost as if viewed by an onlooker rather than a key participant. What does shine through,

especially in the post-presidential years, is a continued desire to make the world a fairer, better place.

Carter comes across as that rarest of men, a politician who refuses to bend his beliefs to court popularity, and a principled individual whose firmly held opinions have led him into deep and troubled waters.

In 2006 he faced harsh criticism from members of his own Democratic party, the powerful Israeli lobby in the US, and hard-liners in Tel Aviv for condemning Israel's attitudes towards the Palestinians in his book *Palestine – Peace not Apartheid*.

He has talked to tyrants, despots and “unsavory people” like North Korea’s Kim Il Sung, Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, Sudan’s Omar al-Bashir and Ethiopia’s Communist dictator Mengistu Haile Mariam.

These choices “are not always popular”, he blandly states, but they are not allowed to divert him from efforts to find compromise in intractable situations or broker peace deals where other avenues have ended in deadlock.

He also continues to speak truth to power, denouncing Supreme Court rulings on unlimited, secret campaign funding as a subversion of the US political system.

The country had become an oligarchy in which there was “unlimited political bribery”, he said on a nationally syndicated radio show last month.

Earlier this year he vowed to tackle violence and injustice against girls and women saying it would be the highest priority for the rest of his life.

He hadn’t known then that he had cancer of the liver that has since metastasized to parts of his brain and which he expects to continue to spread as he undergoes treatment.

Just as he did at the end of his presidency, the inevitable parting is being met with a calm dignity: “It is in the hands of God and I am prepared for anything that comes. I feel very good. I have had no pain or debility.”

Telling the truth, obeying the law, keeping the peace and championing human rights is quite a legacy.

So forget Iran, the handover of the Panama Canal, the economic woes and all the other perceived failings. America briefly had the kind of principled president who could pass scrutiny as an exemplar to the rest of the world of the kind of decency, humanity and humility required from a leader in the democratic world.

Rebecca Foster says

(DNF @ 26%) I admire Carter for his philanthropic work and think he’s probably an underappreciated president. He’s published quite a number of political and autobiographical titles now. This one, issued for his 90th birthday, is composed of short vignettes starting with his growing-up years in Plains, Georgia. Many people might not realize that, like Winston Churchill, Carter also paints and writes poetry. There are examples of his artwork and verse here, and you know what? They’re not half bad.

I got up through Carter’s Navy years and found the writing just a bit too sleepy to keep going; I haven’t

looked at the e-book in months so will probably consider it tabled for now. If you want a pleasant, downbeat introduction to Carter's life, this would be a great choice. What with his recent cancer diagnosis, we might not have this elder statesman around too much longer, and his stories are worth hearing.

Char says

I just finished listening to this autobiography and most of it was very interesting.

I reserved this at the library about a week before the news came out about Jimmy Carter's cancer. I have always respected the man, even if I haven't always agreed with his policies, and I wanted to learn more about him.

What I discovered was that Jimmy Carter is a fascinating man. I have always heard him described as a "peanut farmer" and I find myself wondering why. I had never heard that he served in the Navy. I hadn't heard that he was a submariner or that he had a degree as a nuclear engineer. That's pretty far away from a peanut farmer, in my book.

It seems that President Carter has always been working, even as a child on his father's farm. It also seems that he is a good man at heart, and has donated many hours of his time supporting the causes important to him and his family. It was these charitable acts that I found the most interesting. Well, that and his relationships with other former presidents and world leaders.

I enjoyed this audiobook, narrated by President Carter himself. I will admit though, at times my mind did wander a little bit and I found a few portions to be a bit dry in the telling.

Other than those tiny issues, I enjoyed learning more about this former president and his personal life and I would recommend this audio book to anyone else that wants to learn the same.

Kathleen says

I'm parched. This was so dry.

Jean says

I saw an interview with Jimmy Carter on the PBS NewsHour, and that interview triggered me to buy the book. I was amazed at how much Carter has done and been in his ninety years. He has been Governor of Georgia, President of the United States, a naval officer, a cotton and peanut farmer, philanthropist and author. He also has been a professor at Emory University for the past 33 years. Carter has written over 30 books and one of the books was a Pulitzer Prize finalist, he also was a Nobel Peace prize recipient.

In this book Carter tells about his formative year growing up on a farm in Georgia. He goes into depth about his years at the United States Naval Academy and his eleven years in the Navy.

In the book Carter describes the race problems growing up and living in the Deep South throughout his

lifespan. He describes the harassment and ostracizing his family faced because he voted for integration. He goes into his time working his way through local and state politics in Georgia. He states Plains schools did not admit a black student until 1962, thirteen years after the United States Supreme Courts Brown V Board of Education decision.

Carter briefly goes into his time as President but spends most of the rest of the book about life since he left office. He provided lots of information on the Carter Center and his role as a gadfly. The book also contains some of his poems. I read this as an audiobook downloaded from Audible. Jimmy Carter narrated the book himself. I understand the print version also has pictures of some of his paintings.

Charles says

The Carter perspective on his life and the country that he helped shape

While his presidency is generally ranked in the higher twenties among the 43 presidents that have completed their term, (1 is the best), it is hard to argue that any of them approach what Carter has done since leaving office. Granted that he has been blessed with good health in body and mind, but his list of accomplishments is enormous and still growing.

This book is exactly what the title states, a series of brief reflections on various events and people in his life. He goes back to his childhood and what life was like in rural Georgia at that time. It was a time when segregation was just the way things were, he pulls no punches about his father's views on white superiority. Yet, unlike so many other whites, his father insisted on demonstrating his superiority, he always dealt fairly with all people, paying what was decent wages for the time.

Carter describes his life in the Navy and his decision to leave it and take over the family business. At times he struggled to pay the bills, but he credits this with instilling in him a level of understanding of what it means to struggle financially.

Quite naturally, Carter defends his legacy as president and he did accomplish some major changes, none greater than the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. It is a treaty that has remained intact and more than anything else has guaranteed the survival of Israel, for as long as Egypt is not involved, the Arab countries cannot defeat Israel militarily.

Although it is like all memoirs of political figures that have been severely criticized in the sense that Carter is defending himself, this is a very good book. It gives us the Carter perspective of the profound changes that took place in the south during his life and on the legacy of what he did before, during and after his presidency. In many ways, it was white men in power like Carter that made desegregation work in the south, it may have been imposed by the federal government, but they are the ones that implemented it.

This book was made available for free for review purposes and this review also appears on Amazon.

Laura says

I can't say enough about this book. I have always respected and loved the contributions Jimmy Carter has made so perhaps I'm a little biased. When my family arrived in the United States in 1979, Jimmy Carter was

at the end of his term as President. I remember my dad telling me and my siblings (ranging from ages 6-11) that Jimmy Carter was perhaps considered not a great President by some but he was a great man and would do many things for democracy and advocacy for human rights. He would often tell us that Jimmy Carter would be one of those people who would secure a place in history not from the things he said but the action he took. My father passed away in 2001 but I know were he alive today, he would have enjoyed this book thoroughly. Jimmy Carter came from very humble beginnings. He was raised in the racist South during a time when race-relations were based on the notion that Blacks and Whites were best to be separate and that Whites were superior. However, Carter was raised in a home where although his father was a segregationist, he also felt strongly about the equal respectful treatment of ALL people regardless of race. Therefore, Carter was raised with, played with and worked side-by-side with Blacks during all of his formative years. This experience gave him a very caring and understanding view on the differences and above all, similarities of people. Also, this formed his view on politics and reform in the South. He went to College and then the Navy where he served with great success and accomplishment. The books addresses his view on race-relations based on his political and personal (spiritually and day-to-day) experiences and relationships. His admiration and respect for his wife is refreshing and so admirable. This was the last book I read in 2015 and I felt it set such a positive note on ending the year and started 2016 on a positive tone. Although Jimmy Carter is a well-known member of the Democratic party, I would discourage you from going into this book assuming that he is pushing some kind of partisan agenda, as he is most definitely not. It is simply his recollection of 90 years in his very eventful life.

Terri Jacobson says

Jimmy Carter was the 39th president of the United States. He is widely seen now as a "failed president," but I strongly disagree with this assessment. This book illustrates why I feel that way.

The book roams over Carter's entire life. We learn about his upbringing on a peanut farm. He was a hard worker from the start. He learned about farming and woodworking. When he took over the family farm, he sought out education about agriculture. Carter joined the navy, and he was instrumental in the development of the first nuclear submarines. After discharge from the service, he returned to Plains, Georgia. In addition to the farm, he was active in his church and often taught Sunday school. He was a member of the Board of Education during the time schools were being desegregated. Carter was comfortable with African Americans from an early age. He worked side-by-side with them on the farm. His parents were far ahead of their time in their acceptance of African Americans. He entered politics as a state senator and went on to become governor.

Jimmy Carter served as president from 1977-1981. The book discusses his experiences in this role. His main goals as president were to keep the peace and expand human rights. (Carter has continued to work tirelessly for these same issues in his post-presidency with the Carter Center.) It was quite interesting to read his reactions to many of the things he had to handle as president, from the Panama Canal to the Iranian hostage crisis, from race relations to the Mideast peace process.

Jimmy Carter was truly a Renaissance man. His knowledge covers an amazing scope. In addition to all his political, agriculture, and religious work, Carter paints and writes poems. Some of these are included in the book, and it was truly a highlight to see these.

You may know that Carter has recently been diagnosed with cancer at 90 years old. His amazing strength and positive outlook have been displayed for all to see. He has written more than 24 books. He still teaches

Sunday school. Rosalynn, his wife and partner, remains a huge source of support for him. This book is an excellent coda to a meaningful and productive life. Jimmy Carter will always be a hero to me, and this book is an excellent collection of reasons why I feel that way. A wonderful, beautiful reading experience.

Phil says

I certainly didn't think I'd be reading this during the week of the President's diagnosis, let alone finishing it on the day of an amazing press conference. For the book, I'll say this: read the beginning to understand an America long gone. Read the rest to understand the America that might have been, had we not taken the road of 'trickle down' and false patriotism. Carter? He kept the peace, obeyed the law, told the truth . . . to the end. A full life, that has been a gift to us all.

Mark Fallon says

Carter's presidency will always be marked by the hostage crisis. However, his life has contained so much more.

Furrawn says

Jimmy Carter has led one very interesting life. I wasn't actually inspired by this book, but that was my fault. I didn't realize when I began reading it, that this book is more a reflections on Carter's entire life. The minutiae and the legendary.

An engrossing read. Expect this one to be more like a biographical sketch. I'm glad I read it. There are some fabulous stories within these pages. I'm a sucker for a great story. I think the story about his first senate race in Georgia and how his opponent cheated was one of my favorites. I am still laughing about the proposal in senate that people be prohibited from voting after having been DEAD for THREE years? It was a different world back then.

The book is well-written. Erudite. Carter's poetry is quite good. I first sighed when I realized there was poetry. I'm a poet and reading bad poetry is painful. His poems are excellent though.

An enjoyable read. I think the next book I'll read by him will be The White House Diaries.

Linda says

In 1974 I finished undergraduate school, got married and moved to Texas so my husband could go to grad school. I was ready to start real life and that involved getting my first job: as a file clerk! Another young woman that I met as we were filing raved about this man named Jimmy Carter who had come to her Baptist church -- he had been governor of Georgia and he was going to be the next President of the U.S. Who? That was my first introduction to Jimmy Carter and I did vote for him in 1976 (and felt sad when Jerry Ford lost, I liked him and his family too). I have always been interested in President Carter and his family and I've

enjoyed when he writes about his life so I was very happy to be able to download an eARC of his latest book.

Jimmy Carter truly has had a full life and although in this book he mentions some vignettes that are also in his previous books they fit into his continuing story. His writing here sometimes feels a little choppy and this is the first time I've ever read any of his poetry. He definitely has come to enjoy writing, something he first started to advance his political career but then turned to as a way to earn income after his Presidency and continues because he likes to do it.

President Carter freely admits times that he has made mistakes and events that did not turn out as he wished but he comes across as a man who is very comfortable with most of his decisions. His humor is subtle and but so enjoyable when it shows up. I remember the fight over the Panama Canal in the news in the 70s but did not really pay attention to it. Then my husband and I went there to live for 2 years (1979-81)and the new treaty was in place and we got to live there at a time of change. I really enjoyed that part of this book because it gave me background into this place and time that I was not that informed about, especially how hard it was to get this treaty passed. Jimmy Carter has lived a remarkable life - he says in this book that he will probably be spending more time at home rather than traveling but I'm sure he will stay busy and involved for as long as he is on this earth.
