Presidential Power & Precedents:
Jimmy Carter, Alaska and The Antiquities Act

Presented by Joshua Montanari, Education Specialist
Supporting the National Archives

Mission

We drive openness, cultivate public participation, and strengthen our nation’s democracy through public access to high-value government records.

Vision

Cutting-edge access to extraordinary volumes of government information and unprecedented engagement to bring greater meaning to the American experience.

Values

Collaborate. Innovate. Learn

Left: Transfer of “Charters of Freedom” to the National Archives, 12/13/1952 (National Archives Identifier: 5928179)
National Archives History

1934: Established to preserve and care for records of the U.S. Government

1949: Incorporated with General Services Administration

1985: Made independent agency

40 facilities across the country

- Federal Records Centers
- Presidential Libraries
- Office of the Federal Register
- National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

Right: MO 1947.93.74; Wheelchair Used by Franklin Roosevelt; ca. 1941-1945; Personal Possessions of the Roosevelt Family, 1941 – 2020 (FDR Library) Far Right: An Act of June 19, 1934 ("National Archives Act"), Public Law 73-432, 48 STAT 1122, to Create a National Archives of the United States Government, and for Other Purposes (National Archives Identifier: 299840)
Presidential Libraries

- Not mandatory, choice of outgoing Presidents; collections preserved regardless
- Embraced from Herbert Hoover, through Barack Obama (14 currently existing)
- Construction paid for with private and non-federal funds raised by respective presidents
- Collections, museums overseen and maintained by National Archives
- Many libraries supported in part by non-profit foundations
Carter Presidential Library

- Opened October 1, 1986
- 40 million pages of written materials
- 40,000 museum objects/artifacts
- 500,000 photographs
- 2,500 hours of film, audio and video tape

Right: A portion of the Carter Library archival collections as seen from the museum floor (Carter Library)
Teaching with Primary Sources

• They make us question where information comes from; encourages consideration of original intent and context

• Images, Film and Audio sources reveal the intangible

• Analyzing multiple documents related to a similar topic allows researchers to consider multiple perspectives

• No single primary source will contain all desired information, prompting further inquiry
Program Overview

- Alaska & the U.S.
- Carter’s Conservation
- Antiquities Act of 1906
- Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA)
- Constitutional Checks and Balances

Left: Proposals authorized by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (National Archives Identifier: 42203688)
• Arranged by Secretary of State William Seward in 1868 for $7.2 million (less than 2 cents/acre)
• Ridiculed as “Seward’s Folly”, U.S. clears $3+ trillion in revenue

Above: Treasury Warrant in the Amount of $7.2 Million for the Purchase of Alaska (National Archives Identifier: 301667)
Right: Secretary of State William Seward (National Archives Identifier: 528347)
A New Star and Promises Made

1959: Alaskan Statehood proclaimed by President Eisenhower

- Includes mandate for 104 million acres to be transferred to state control

1971: Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act

- Provided 44 million acres of land and $962.5 million to Alaska Native Regional/Village Corporations
- Authorized Secretary of Interior to withdraw 80 million acres for conservation purposes

- **Deadline to implement:** 12/18/1978

Right: President Eisenhower celebrates after signing the official proclamation admitting Alaska at the 49th State, 1/3/1959 (Eisenhower Library)
Jimmy Carter: Rooted in Conservation

- Land ethic gained during childhood, farming in Depression-era
- Faith-inspired environmentalism

Right: Young Jimmy Carter and pony on family farm in Archer, GA (Carter Library)

Far Right: Left to Right: Ruth Carter, Lillian Carter, Jimmy Carter (Carter Library)
Protecting Georgia’s Natural Resources

- Establishes Georgia Heritage Trust
- Vetoed more than 600 applications to drain swamplands, protecting vital wetland ecosystems

Left: Jimmy Carter pictured in his office while serving as Governor of Georgia (Carter Library)
Environmental Momentum in 1976

- Creation of Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1970
- Notable environmental legislation:
  - Clean Air Act (1970)
  - Clean Water Act (1972)
  - Endangered Species Act (1973)
  - Federal regulation of pesticides and insecticides

Right: Carter-Mondale 1976 Presidential Campaign Poster (Carter Library)
A President’s Environmental Message

• Pollution and Health
• Energy and Environment
• Urban Environment
• Natural Resources
• National Heritage
• Global Environment
• Improving Government

Left: Jimmy Carter giving the Energy Address (National Archives Identifier: 6783239)
Alaska Demands Action, Carter Seeks Advice

- State of Alaska seeks legal action after Congress misses deadline to act

- “...he may require the Opinion, in writing, of the Principal Officer in each of the executive departments…”
  (Article II, Section 2)

Far Left: Alaska Land Case Complaint (National Archives Identifier: 140575)
Left: Letter from Jimmy Carter to Cecil Andrus seeking counsel on use of Antiquities Act of 1906 to protect public lands in Alaska (National Archives Identifier: 140574)
The Antiquities Act of 1906

“The President of the United States is hereby authorized, in his discretion, to declare by public proclamation historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest that are situated upon the lands owned or controlled by the Government of the United States to be national monuments…”

Far Left: President Theodore Roosevelt (National Archives Identifier: 166698144)  
Left: S. 4698, A Bill for the Preservation of American Antiquities (National Archives Identifier: 28264995)
1950: Compromise to establish **Grand Teton National Park**

“…no further extension or establishment of national parks or monuments in Wyoming may be undertaken except by express authorization of the Congress.”

*Note the revision to the Antiquities Act by [U.S. House of Representatives](https://www.house.gov)*

**Right:** “The Tetons – Snake River”, Grand Teton National Park, Wyoming, by Ansel Adams (National Archives Identifier: 519904)
A President Gets Their Answer

11/28/1978: President Carter is advised by Interior, and Agriculture Secretaries to take action under the Antiquities Act “...to provide strong and certain protection to the most critical areas.”

Left: Excerpt from Alaska Lands Memo, 11/28/1978 (National Archives Identifier: 140572)
Carter Acts...Alaska Reacts

• **12/01/1978**: President Carter invokes Antiquities Act to preserve 56 million acres of Alaskan lands

• Secretary of Interior Andrus withdraws additional 40 million acres for 20-year period

• Unrest and acts of civil disobedience break out in Alaska at sites of proposed public land designations

Left: President Carter burned in effigy following use of Antiquities Act in Alaska (University of Alaska Fairbanks Archive)

Federal public land designations in Alaska greater than 5,000 acres require Congressional approval going forward

Left: President Jimmy Carter signing ANILCA, 12/2/1980 (National Archives Identifier: 166691808)
Clear Direction, Promises Fulfilled

Comprehensive Guidance for all Federal Public Lands in Alaska:

• Wilderness
• Subsistence
• Transportation and Utility Corridors
• Oil and Gas Leasing
• Mining
• Public Access
• Hunting, trapping and fishing

Right: Two subsistence hunters pull a recently harvested seal from icy waters in Alaska (Department of Interior Photo)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Lands Created/Altered by ANILCA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Arctic National Wildlife Refuge</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Admiralty Island National Monument</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Bering Land Bridge National Preserve</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Denali National Park and Preserve</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Gates Of The Arctic National Park and Preserve</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve</strong></td>
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Permanent Pipeline: Ecotourism

Economic Impact of Alaska’s Visitor Industry, 2017:

- Peak Season Jobs: 52,000
- Taxes & Revenues: $125.6 M
- Visitor Spending: $2.8 B
- Economic Impact: $4.5 B
- Labor Income: $1.5 B
- Total Visitors: 2.24 M

Left: Alaska’s Marine Highway - Kayaking near Kodiak (National Archives Identifier: 7716889)
Belated Recognition

Extraordinary Conservation

- Made Honorary National Park Ranger, highest civilian honor of the NPS
- Established total of 39 NPS units during one-term presidency
- Created numerous programs critical to NPS Urban Agenda

Read full details of this honor from the National Park Service

Left: For his contributions to conservation as President, Jimmy Carter is made an honorary National Park Ranger by the National Park Service, April 17, 2016 (NPS Photo)
Constitutional Checks and Balances

1. Did President Carter’s use of the Antiquities Act in Alaska exceed Constitutional powers of the Executive branch?

2. Were there checks or balances applied to his actions by the Legislative or Judicial branches, or state governments?

3. How has the Antiquities Act strengthened or weakened democracy? How has it served to stimulate civic engagement?

Clockwise from top: Supreme Court Building (National Archives Identifier: 594954) The United States Capitol, 1/15/1977 (National Archives Identifier: 6384310) The White House, 1/15/1977 (National Archives Identifier: 6384319)
# Further Inquiry

## Research

- The Record of Jimmy Carter (National Archives Identifier: 143373)
- Alaska Land Case, 11/78-12/78 (Carter Library)
- Alaska Digitization Project (National Archives)
- National Monuments and the Antiquities Act (Congressional Research Service)
- The Antiquities Act: History, Current Litigation, and Considerations for the 116th Congress (Congressional Research Service)
- NPS History: The Antiquities Act of 1906 (National Park Service)
- The Monumental History of the Antiquities Act (National Park Service)

## Teacher Resources

- AP United States History Document-Based Question Exercise: The Antiquities Act
- Document Analysis Worksheets
“It is good to realize that if love and peace can prevail on earth, and if we can teach our children to honor nature’s gifts, the joys and beauties of the outdoors will be here forever.”

— Jimmy Carter —