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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 6, 1976

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR: JOHN O. MARSH, JR.
FROM: JAMES E. CONNOR *JEC*
SUBJECT: Paper Dated 9/2/76 Entitled
"The Waltons" Re: Carter

The attached was returned in the President's outbox with the following notation:

"How about giving this to Bob Dole."

Please follow-up with the appropriate action.

cc: Dick Cheney

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Jack Marsh

How about giving
this to Bob Dole.

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN....

THE WALTONS

It is suggested that there is a misconception about Carter, his agricultural background and circumstances of his youth and early life. A certain folklore or myth has evolved from the primaries that has not as yet been dispelled. Impressions that persist from the primaries portray a rather impoverished family with a father barely making ends meet, running a sparse, break-even country store, who each year reaped a meager harvest of peanuts.

His early life and boyhood might be described as a Georgia edition of John Boy Walton, having to face many hardships with few of life's comforts, including indoor plumbing. If the outdoor privy was a part of the life of Carter, it was probably a part of the life of nearly all rural Georgians.

The recent disclosures of the Carter land holdings indicate family holdings passing from succeeding generations and now comprise 3100 acres. This is a mammoth tract of land by anyone's standards. It is almost five square miles. If the Carter land holdings in his youth were even one-half this size, it is hard to equate such

large land holdings with the grinding poverty that seems to come across in his early campaign. The Carters at worst may have been land poor, but they were not so poor in the Depression that they lost their land, which was the case with thousands of other American farmers. This is to his father's credit.

It is highly probable that whatever hardships Carter faced were no greater than those of other children of the Depression, and in a Southern setting, it is quite likely, based on family background and land holdings, his hardships were far less than most country folk.

In a region of the country where traditionally great land estates have been associated with aristocracy "and the people who run things," it is hard to believe Carter is a departure from the norm.

There has never been a thorough description of the Carter physical plant, i.e., homes, barns, fences, out buildings, tenant houses, and equipment. There is some idea of their wealth based on recent reports that the family fortune is between \$4 and \$5 million.

What kind of a house does Carter live in? How many out buildings does he have? How many tenants

live in these buildings? What do these tenants do?
Do they farm for a wage? Or do they farm for shares?
What was the Carter acreage in the 1930's?

There is nothing wrong with his background of a family with prestige, with land holdings and influence. In fact, you can argue there is a certain noblese oblige in seeking the Presidency. However, depicting a youth who bears undue scars of the Depression and a poor boy who makes good are impressions that should be set straight if they are not correct. The circumstances empirically indicate they are not. Hence, the need for more information as to what are the facts.

9/2/76