

Jim Maestas/Dana Echohawk Transcription

Transcriber: Hannah Wilson

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**DANA:** I'd like Jim to introduce himself.

**JIM:** My name is Jim Maestas. First name is j-i-m, last name is m-a-e-s-t-a-s. I'm a resident of Denver Colorado, living at 3722 Utica Street. I don't know if that's necessary. And we're into the interview.

**DANA:** Okay. Tell us a little bit, Jim, about your personal background. Were you born in Denver?

**JIM:** Yes. I was born in Denver, February the 9<sup>th</sup>, 1934. So I'm close to 77 years old next February. Born here in West Denver at West 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Umatilla. So it's right in the West side of Denver. Went to school here. Spent all of my life here with the exception of three years that I served in the United States Marine Corp.

**DANA:** And were you born, I mean, did you live in the Auraria neighborhood?

**JIM:** Yeah. Early on in my life from West 13<sup>th</sup> and Umatilla Street, we moved over to the corner of West Osage and 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue which is right across the street from Lincoln Park. And I remember my grandfather would take me over there to watch all the activities in the park and we would walk from there or he would take me on his wagon, his *carreta* he used to call it, all the way to Saint Cajetan's church which is right in the Auraria community center. And we'd go to church and then after that he would drive or ride me around in his *carreta* to Speer Boulevard to buy donuts there and then we would come back home. So I often marvel at the fact that that must have been a 20-some-block ride and he would push this metal cart with me in it all the way around there. And he was already in his 60s so it was a pretty great feat for him.

**DANA:** It was a long way?

**JIM:** Long ways and, but very enjoyable and everlasting in my memory.

**DANA:** You had a story one time about the Tivoli? Having dances?

**JIM:** Yeah. During that period of time when we lived in the Auraria area, we found an apartment above the Tivoli brewery or Tivoli Bar. It was right around the corner of 9<sup>th</sup> and Larimer Street, I believe. And we got the apartment upstairs on the second floor so we were probably only one of

the few families around that can boast to the fact of having lived in parts of the Tivoli building. We lived up there for several months and then we moved downstairs, two terraces, right on 9th Street and Larimer. I lived there for quite a few years. During that period, they used to have an artist, a photographer, who took pictures of all the employees. And this one time, I was out in the front yard watching and they lined up all the employees from the Tivoli place out in front of the building and it must have been a block of people standing side-by-side. And the photographer in front was getting ready to take his picture. He saw me standing there watching and he asked me if I wanted to get in the picture and I said, "sure". So he put me on the very end and I understand that that photograph is still floating around. I've tried to find it but I'm not very successful. But it is one of the times that I remember very clearly in my mind. We lived there for quite a number of years and then moved over to Champa Street, which is just around the corner, apartments that they had there, terraces. And from there, we moved over to off of Speer Boulevard and lived there for a few years before we moved over to the final place we spent most of our life, 11th, 1163 Stout Street; right where the helicopter landing strip is for the Convention Center building, right downtown. That's Speer and Stout.

**DANA:** Are those buildings and apartments and homes still there?

**JIM:** No they're all gone. They were taken over by Auraria. It's where the campuses are now and only a few of the buildings are left. I've been down there to look around and there is one house on the corner, I can't recall exactly where, but it was an old friend of the family, I used to call him Don Miguel, last name was Anaya, and he lived right on the corner there. And he was quite old, even then, so he's long passed, since. But that's the only thing I remember- the grocery store that was there, my uncle Frank Gabriel Maestas worked there when he was only a young man, 18 years old. And that has since changed into a coffee shop, I think.

**DANA:** I believe it is an Einstein's bagels.

**JIM:** Yeah, and it was a super market with all of the delicatessen items. It was quite popular in those days.

**DANA:** Tell us the story about your mother going to the dance.

**JIM:** Over at the Tivoli, they had not only occasional photographs out in the front of the employees, but they also did monthly dances in the center of the building. And we lived on the terraces across the street from there, and my mother went to the dance there one time, and I guess she left us home alone and we, my sister-my older sister, was a little bit scared of being there alone and we crawled out the window and went over and they were all dancing and partying and having a real good time and here we popped up, me and my sister in diapers looking for our mother. *[laughing]* And they called for her over the loud speaker and the poor thing came up to the front, picked us up, and took us home.

**DANA:** Was she angry?

**JIM:** She was, my mother never got angry, but I'm sure she was very embarrassed and a little upset over the whole issue. But we went home and that was the end of that story! *[laughs]*

**DANA:** As you became a young boy, you boxed? Were you a boxer?

**JIM:** We were doing service stuff for the, there was a man-I can't recall his name but he used to work for the public service company. And he used to organize young kids, to get em off the street and take em up to Lowry Air Force base. In those days it was Lowry Air Force base one and two. That was when the military was segregated and the blacks were at Lowry two and the whites were all at Lowry one. Hispanics in those days were considered white and we were with the white people. And they brought us in there to put on demonstrations; wresting, boxing, entertainment, and the military people that were there on the base were welcome there and they got in the place free and there's a couple photographs in the box that I gave to you showing a couple of those exhibition rounds that we had and they were very appreciative of it. I'm sure we didn't give them a real professional fight but they enjoyed having us get out there and box around. And after that they gave us donuts and that was one of the main reasons why we went there *[laughs]* got the donuts free. But they had a lot of good entertainment, a lot of professional wrestlers that came out and gave demonstrations the same as we did. So we did that all for the military people who were on the base there at Lowry Air Force, base.

**DANA:** How old were you, yourself when you went into the military?

**JIM:** I was 18 years old and I joined as opposed to going to high school. I dropped out of high school and joined the United States Marine Corp, went to the Marine Corp recruiting camp in San Diego, trained there as a recruit, came out of there, went to camp Pendleton in Oceanside California, and spent a little while there. And then was notified that I was gonna go over to Korea. I went to Korea, spent about 12 months there, and returned to McAlester, Oklahoma, at the naval ammunition depot there, to serve the balance of my time. And it was quite an experience. The thing that stands out in my mind about that whole experience was that when I was at camp Pendleton, they took rotation system for deciding who was going to go overseas and who was gonna wait until the next draft. So the draft that I went through with, I think it was the 33<sup>rd</sup> draft, they had a young man from Los Angeles who was scheduled to go. I was not scheduled and he called his senator and the senator called the commander and they got him off the list and I took his place. And the sergeants came to me and told me 'well, you're replacing this individual but we'll take care of him'. They were very angry over the fact that he got political pull to get him off the list and they said 'you have any problems with going over'? Well I said 'I don't wanna go but I'll go'. So I did go and spent my time in Korea.

**DANA:** How many years were you in Korea?

**JIM:** About 12 months. 3 full years in the Marine Corp.

**DANA:** Were there other Hispanic people in the same, I don't know, troop?

**JIM:** Well we left Denver here to go into the military, into the training on April the 2<sup>nd</sup> of 1952. and I went with two other Hispanics that I knew: Alfred Vigil and Jimmy Duran. All three of us went at the same time and we all went to Korea at the same time. But they went in different directions and I went with the amphibian tank battalion. But Jim Duran was the only one that was really injured. They dropped a shell on the front of his platoon and he got splattered with rocks and dirt and cut up pretty bad. He came back home, was very quiet about the whole issue and then one day he just up and left and moved to California. I never heard from him again so I'm not sure what ever happened to him.

**DANA:** What story stands out in your mind about the time when you were in Korea?

**JIM:** It's just, when we first got into the base of Korea, we landed in Chaun and then we were driven by truck to the base where we were to be located. When we first got there, the guys that were there were pretty happy to see newcomers come in and we were fresh in that area so they scattered blood- ketchup all over themselves and pretended to have been in a big fire fight and scared us half to death before we found out they were just putting on a show for us. But that first night, we had a red alert, which meant 'caution'. We all came out of our bunkers and went over across the hill and got into foxholes waiting for someone to attack. No one ever did attack and the red alert was lifted and we went back to our bunkers and lived there for the balance of the time.

**DANA:** When you came back out of the service, had things changed? And if they did, how?

**JIM:** Well, there were no jobs. In those days, it was about 1955 when I got out in December, there were no jobs and there were no McDonalds and there were no Burger Kings and there-none of the fast food places were evident, anywhere. That was before they started up. And so there were no jobs, very difficult to find work. As a matter of fact, that was one of the reasons why I went into the Marine Corp in the first place. You couldn't find work anywhere. And I didn't want to go to school so that was the alternative left to me. But there were no jobs and it was a very difficult time because the time that I was in the Marine Corp, I had the benefit of a uniform, military buddies, I carried and M1 rifle almost 24 hours a day- even to bed, and I carried a 45 on my hip. And that was the weapon of the tank battalion. And so I carried a 45 and an M1 rifle all through the period of Korea and when I came back from Korea, I carried the 45. So, all this time, I had arms at my side and a uniform and a belonging to the unit. And when I got out, I lost my uniform. I lost my weapons. I lost everything that tied me to the branch of service and it was quite lonesome. They didn't have in those days, rehabilitation programs so when you got out of service, you just took off your uniform and went out into public and tried to find a job. And there were so little jobs. I was fortunate to have gone to work for a manufacturing jewelry place with a man I had met before Roger Simbroder (14:21) and they did casting of gold, turning them into rings and they'd file them down and clean them up and put diamonds in them and they'd sell them. So that was the job that I did; polishing, cleaning up gold for quite a number of years, several years.

**DANA:** Was the GI Forum an organization at that time? When you came out of the service?

**JIM:** Yes. The American GI forum was founded by Dr Hector P. Garcia in Corpus Christi, Texas. And gradually over the years, after about 1941, that developed and he spread the organization out throughout the U.S. Many of the members came to Denver and started chapters here. I joined the Mile High Chapter back about 1970 and was a member there for quite a few years. Then I left that group and started the Skyline Chapter. I stayed there for about a year and then I came away from there and started my own chapter, the Denver Central Chapter, which I have to this date, as an active chapter. But we had a lot of activities, a lot of conventions, and a lot of gatherings and learned to use Roberts's Rules of Order and that was quite an experience for me.

**DANA:** What is the purpose of the forum? What is its mission?

**JIM:** The American GI forum was founded by Dr. Garcia in 1944 because a young man who had served in the military went over to Europe and got killed and they sent his body back to Corpus Christi and the local mortuaries there would not bury him in the regular traditional mortuary cemetery. They wanted him buried somewhere else.

**DANA:** Why was that?

**JIM:** They didn't want him in there because he was Mexican. And Dr. Garcia went to battle, got him buried in Arlington National Cemetery. That was during...

**DANA:** Was that World War II?

**JIM:** No it was before that, well right after the World War was over, I'm thinking about the president that was there in office... about Kennedy's time, (he) was the one that joined in and helped resolve that issue.

**DANA:** He made it possible.

**JIM:** But everybody was so thrilled over the work that Dr. Garcia had done, they were anxious to become involved. The problem different today (is that) young military people don't like being involved in organizations like this.

**DANA:** So has membership dropped?

**JIM:** Membership has dropped significantly, yeah.

**DANA:** You were fairly active on a national basis with the forum as well.

**JIM:** Yes, I got pretty actively involved. It was one of the ways of making up for the difference in lifestyles. I no longer had the military so this was the next best thing. Getting into an organization where they kind of band together and try to do some good. I was a state commander here in Colorado three different times, three different periods, and I ran for national commander once and lost by two votes so I didn't quite make it to the national commander level. But I was active nationally for quite a few years.

**DANA:** I know that you were active in politics in the state of Colorado as well. Do you want to talk

**JIM:** Yes, my political activity started about the same time as my time with the American GI Forum. It educated me to know how to run meetings, how to organize, and from that I got involved in other activities which lead me to think that maybe I could get elected into an office. So I ran against Bob Keating here in Northwest Denver who was a longtime city councilman and whose father was Bert Keating, a longtime district attorney in Denver, very well known. So the name was very well known. I ran against him in the City Council, I think I shocked everybody that I, an Hispanic Republican, would think that I could beat a well-known Democrat; well entrenched, well known, who had been in office two terms, two or three terms. Well, obviously I didn't win because the political system is such that if there are 500 Democrats and 400 Republicans that's how many numbers would turn out the vote, exactly. So if you were a Democrat, you got elected. And if you were a Republican, you did not. My thinking at that time was that maybe I as a Republican-Hispanic, could convince enough people to look at the individual, look at the candidate, and vote based on background. But it didn't work out that way. The numbers still come out the same. Whatever number are registered Republicans are the number that turn out the vote and whatever number of Democrats are there, that's the way they turn out the vote. And it just doesn't matter what the situation is or what the issues are, they don't see that.

**DANA:** They vote party ticket.

**JIM:** They vote party ticket and that's one of the things that I think is wrong with the system today. Is that there are too many people that think Republican/Democrat first, and country second. And it should be the other way around. But it's not.

**DANA:** What other offices did you run for?

**JIM:** I left the city council very excited and very enthused because everybody seemed to be excited about the campaign and I announced for the State House of Representatives. I made a bid for...I can't remember the number, but I ran against Paco Sanchez and District 7 who was a well-known radio announcer/comedian, very well-known in Mexico and known here in Colorado because of the radio station. And I lost that race also, on the same basis. The number of Democrats were heavier, greater than the number of Republicans and so that's how many people got to vote. No matter how hard we worked, no matter what we did in the community, still that same number came out and voted Democrat and the same number voted Republican. So I lost that one. Then I ran for the House of Representatives the second time about 1973. I ran against Ruben Valdez who was on my committee to elect me to the House of Representatives. And at the last minute, he said he wanted to run on his own so he backed out of my campaign and ran against me as a Democrat with all the power of the Democratic community. It was my hope at that time that there would not be a Democratic candidate. But it turned out that there was and he again came through with all the votes necessary to win. And he went on to become Lieutenant Governor and became a lobbyist here in Denver; still active in the Denver community.

**DANA:** How do you think politics that relate to Hispanic people in the state of Colorado has changed in your lifetime?

**JIM:** Well, It really has not changed at all. The people are still tied to the Democratic Party system or to the Republican Party system. They haven't changed a bit. In the old days, most of the Hispanics that I remember or that I recall- I shouldn't say most but many of them- were Republican. My grandfather was a Republican. And then with Franklin Roosevelt, he became a Democrat, and a staunch Democrat. So there was a lot of interest in the Republican Party back in those days. Back in the early 1900s and that kind of went by the wayside. And we're outnumbered now, Democrat over Republican, probably two to one.

**DANA:** Since you bring up your grandfather, tell us about your ancestry, how your ancestors came to Colorado and where they came from.

**JIM:** I've been doing a lot of research on genealogy and I find that all of my history of family come from Taos, New Mexico and they migrated over in Ocate and Ocate is just on the right side of I-25 going south. They had a piece of land there that they were deeded as a result of one of my great, great grandfathers working with the Union Army, Diego Mestaes. His name was m-e-s-t-a-e-s. And he served in the military with the Union Army helping them in the Indian areas as a scout. He served twice, two terms. As a result of that, I believe they gave him land and he developed it and my family took over that land. And the predominate one in the family is Lucas Maestas. He is my Grandfather's father. And he's the one that developed the house and built everything with the help of what was left by Diego. They still have the land there that has now been sold to another party. But we have a family cemetery there in Ocate that is still in existence. We were there about ten years ago doing a clean up and re-fencing and all that. Had the whole family there, about a thousand people I think were there to celebrate the clean up of the cemetery. All of my relatives were buried there except those who came way, the brothers of Lucas Maestas. Some went to California. My grandfather came to Denver trying to find work. Again, no jobs, no income, with five children to feed. He left the youngest of my uncles, Charles Maestas, with the grandmother there in Ocate because he was too small to travel. So my grandfather took the rest of his kids, came by train to Longmont, to Mead, Colorado, and then to Denver trying to find work. They followed the fields, the beet fields, the planting and harvesting. They then came to Denver and planted themselves here in about 1926. It was a very difficult time for them and I don't know, nowadays you can see young people who take a very different view of family life and don't really care too much about how people live. People live to survive. My grandfather came here with no money, with no future, no job, and no career and brought his whole family with him. You'd think he might consider leaving them there on the family farm and just taking off himself, just going to Las Vegas or somewhere and living a life. But he didn't. He brought his family here and struggled with them to find food for them and to help them survive through the difficult times. That was right at the tail end of the depression- very difficult for people to live in those days. But he survived and he did real well with his family.

**DANA:** Do you remember your grandmother?

**JIM:** No, my grandfather married a woman by the name of Juanita Romero. And she was the mother of the kids, of all my uncles. She died about 1916 and we didn't have much contact with any of the family. One of the pictures in the file that we've given you, my Uncle Salomé (27:10) was playing cards. It looks like it might have been a staged photo, but really a very interesting photo. He was in the photo with two other gentlemen. I understand that the gentleman in the middle is my grandmother's brother. But I'm not sure; I still haven't identified him for sure. But the one on the right is my Uncle Sam, as he was known in those days, Salomé Maestas. He came to Denver, lived his life out here and died just a few years ago.

**DANA:** We have the photo of Salomé here and we'll use some of those. Backing up just a little bit to when you were in politics, tell us about the photo of you and William McNichols. Was he governor at that point in time?

**JIM:** Yes, he was. That was one of the political photographs I had- **unclear speaking with Dana and Jim (28:15)**

**JIM:** Steve McNichols who is one of our leaders here in Colorado; Governor. And he made some kind of a presentation to me. I can't remember what it was about.

**DANA:** Tell us a little bit more about your life. You were very active in politics and in the Forum but tell us about some of your other entrepreneurial activities.

**JIM:** Yeah, my other activities involved being in the cosmetology field. My wife and I opened a shop in northwest Denver and prior to that I worked for a Mr. George Day on 1600 East Evans. I worked there for a couple of years. That was my first trip in an airplane. Mr. Day had an airplane, a single engine and took me up and flew me around the city for a while. And I got good and sick and said that's the last flight I'll ever take. But we went from there. We opened a shop on 50<sup>th</sup> and Federal and had quite a term in the business. My aunt who also became a hairdresser came to work for us. She's in one of the photographs there, just to learn the business. After that she left and went back to her home and opened a shop in her basement or back room and continued on in the business. But we've had a long list of family members that have been in the cosmetology business. My Uncle Charles Gabriel- Charles Thimber Maestas (30:04) is still alive today, he's 94 years old, he went into the cosmetology business many, many years ago and worked until he was about 85 years old before he finally decided to retire. He was the one that the family left in Ocate because he was too little to come to Denver with them when they migrated here. And he finally came over to join them at about age six or seven. So he finally joined the family back at that time.

**DANA:** Did he own his own shop?



**JIM:** No, he never did. He just didn't like the idea of being an owner. He never had an interest in owning a shop. He worked for all the big companies in Denver- for Mr. Mac, for The May Company, The Denver Dry, Sears. He worked for all of those and he enjoyed the work.

**DANA:** The two salon's, one was Mr. Day's and one was Mr. James.

**JIM:** Yeah. Mr. Day's shop was the first one I went to work for. He's the one on 1600 East Evans. I worked there for about two years and then I bought my own shop on 50<sup>th</sup> and Federal. I named that Mr. James and we were there for about 12 or 13 years.

**DANA:** Who stands out in your mind in the state of Colorado who has made a large difference for Hispanic people?

**JIM:** I think I'd have to point to Federico Peña who came from Texas and gathered up his supporters here in Denver and planned his way to the Mayor's office. I was fortunate and happy to say that I joined his campaign and I managed one of the fundraisers that we had for him here, a steak dinner dance for him. Quite successful, he was very happy about that and we got him elected. So I think if anybody would be identified in that position, it would be him. Long before him, there was, of course, Corky González who did an awful lot starting community activity and interest in politics. A little bit on the militant side but he hit on all the right buttons and made everyone real proud to be Hispanic and would not let anybody take a second place to anyone. So he did quite a bit of activity here in Denver before he finally retired.

**DANA:** Were you involved in the La Raza or the Crusade for Justice?

**JIM:** I was involved with the Crusade for Justice and when I ran for office, they endorsed me as a candidate and usually they wouldn't endorse political candidates for any office. But they did endorse me twice because I was there and I convinced them that they should do so. But that was... I lost my train of thought there...

**DANA:** About the Crusade for Justice and your involvement.

**JIM:** No I think that's about it, I just covered it there. They did a lot of other things, a lot of political stuff, a lot of community activity stuff. They went to Washington on the Million Man March. I didn't go to that but they did. I met all the players. I met Martinez (34.00) here in Denver from New Mexico. He was going after land grants, trying to make changes there. Others from California came to Denver and intermingled with us for a period and then went back. The farm workers in Delano, California were very active when they came here, I've met with them.

**DANA:** You mentioned the land grants. Do you have anything you'd like to tell us about the Mexican/American land grants?

**JIM:** I don't have that much. I don't really know for sure what and how that happened. I know there's been a lot of court battles over land that was supposed to have been owned by Hispanics

and were taken over by the Texas millionaires when they came here. But when you own land and you need to sell it and you need money, they come in with the money and they buy. They bought everything. They bought the land that we have in Ocate, it's owned by people who came here from Texas. They just take it over and they move in cattle and that's what they use it for- cattle grazing.

**DANA:** Dana asks for time, camera person says eight minutes..

**JIM:** Just after getting out of the military and we fell instantly in love. *[laughs]* We have one daughter, Renee, who is now 49 years old, learning disabled- she was injured at birth, too much oxygen, got cerebral palsy. And now she's going blind, but she's doing real well, surviving nicely, and real independent. And lives close to us here. Do you have anything you want to say Ann?

**ANN:** No, I don't. *[laughs]*

**DANA:** I might mention that Ann's grandmother was a survivor of...is it your grandmother? Was it Ludlow?

**ANN:** Yes.

**DANA:** Do you want to tell us for history's sake a little bit?

**ANN:** Yes, my grandmother lived to be 99 and a half and the story is that she was in the Ludlow massacres. We don't have anything documented but that's the story.

**DANA:** And we do have photos in the collection.

**ANN:** Yes, she had five daughters.

**DANA:** Okay, well I want to thank you both for having us in your home and for the interview. You've given us Jim and the stories about your family. We'll be transcribing those and I'll get you a copy of it. Do you have anything else you'd like to say that we may have overlooked or missed?

**ANN:** I think James has a lot of interesting stories about Korea that he forgot about; what happened to the natives there when the Americans went over and changed the money. All the natives were working in the laundry for the service men and then they changed the money. And the prostitutes had a lot of money and at the last minute when the money was changed, they were crying that they wanted reimbursement. And then he had a friend that shot a Korean guy by mistake. It was an accident.

**JIM:** Yeah. Those are probably two of the main issues back then, the sadness of the whole thing. Koreans would come around the gate and want to take up all of our trash and garbage and try to recycle it somehow.

**ANN:** They wanted to eat it.

**JIM:** And they gathered the money that we paid them and government **checks (38.10)** and saved it and when the government all of a sudden decided to change the money, they made all that money obsolete and issued new money in exchange which made all that money worthless and the people were there at the gate begging us to take it in because we were the only ones that could exchange it. But, you know, we were young and didn't want to take a chance at getting caught exchanging money for the people there. So, they had boxes of money that they had to throw out and burn. It was of absolutely no value to them. My friend, I should mention too, Robert Schlund (38.50) who was one of my buddies in Korea, he was about six foot tall, big husky guy, and just as mellow and kind as anybody you could ever meet. He was on guard duty. I have a picture there of me and him standing together at guard duty at the guard shack, and he took out his 45 and lost one bullet into the chamber and, if you know how a 45 operates when you put the bullets in there, one goes into the chamber and if you're not aware of it, it's in there loaded, ready to be shot. He cocked the weapon and a little boy came over to talk to him and put his hand up to his face like this, and the bullet went in here, through his mouth and came out his neck. The way the military operates in cases like that is they take the individual marine and get him out of there and move him somewhere. Nobody knows where he goes. They just get him out for safety. They had a court marshal for him to discuss the issues surrounding that accident. I never did hear what happened to the little boy. I don't know whether he died or whether he survived. And Robert Schlund lived in Ohio and he died several years ago. I made an effort to contact him and I did get a hold of his daughter and son in-law in Ohio but they told me he had died a few years before. So I was a little bit late. I wanted to call him, say hello, and see how he was doing but I never got a chance to talk to him. So the only ones I have here left are Jimmy Durand who is somewhere in California and Alfred Vigil who lives over here north of me and I've called him several times, I call them off and on just to see how he's doing. They're the only friends I have left from the old Korea days.

**DANA:** Those were tough years.

**JIM:** Yeah.

**DANA:** I think we're out of time. Any stories we've overlooked or things you want to tell us about?

**JIM:** One of the stories I would like to tell, to remember, is one that my Uncle Charles, whom I said is 94 years old, still alive today, he was telling me this story about when they lived up in Mead, Colorado. They had a car, I don't know how in the world they ever got a car, but they had one. And they all wanted to come to Denver on a trip and my Uncle Frank, who was the other brother, was driving. And my grandfather was in the car and they drove to Denver, had an accident, and my grandfather injured his shoulder and his arm. And no one else was injured and they destroyed the car. And I just thought that was such a horrible incident- that he should get hurt on such an innocent trip. But that was about the extent of that.

**ANN:** Can I mention something? I think it would be important to- she had sixteen children and there was only- this is Jim's grandfather, he survived. He survived.

**(42:22)**

**JIM:** She had so many children that during the flu epidemic of 1916 they were dying like flies. Everybody was just dying and they couldn't figure out why. And the story is that one of my cousins in Utah who has done a lot of research came up with the story that she would work around the kitchen stove crying continuously and moaning that she thought God was punishing her because she lost nine of her children, one right after the other, in that epidemic, the flu epidemic. So it was quite a distressing tale about those poor people and the difficulty they had lived through.

**DANA:** Where did they live?

**JIM:** They were in Ocate, New Mexico at that time.

**DANA:** So your grandfather was one of the survivors?

**JIM:** Yes, mm-hm. Yeah. She survived, also- my grandmother and my grandfather and several of his sons. One of them is named Ben Maestas, Sam/Salomé Maestas, and I've forgotten the other name.

**ANN:** Emily? Your Aunt Emily?

**JIM:** Oh, Aunt Emily, and her brother is up there in California somewhere. And he survived also. It seems like the older ones all survived. It's the younger ones that suffered the difficulty of the flu.

**ANN:** The way that we got this photo is that we went to go see his Aunt Emily in California and she had this photo and you know how old photos are and kids poke the eyes out and everything? Well, we have that and we brought it back and Jim's uncle, Uncle Charles, had it restored and then his Aunt Emily came from California and she- we have the names of everybody.

**JIM:** She identified everybody in the photograph. So, we're lucky that we did that. You know, you always say 'I wished I had done this' or 'I wish I had asked these questions'? Well fortunately, we asked that question and we have the names of everybody in the photograph-

**DANA:** Great.

**JIM:** -which is unbelievable.

**ANN:** It was done, it was taken in, according to Uncle Charles, it was taken in 1898.

**DANA:** 1898.

**ANN:** mm-hmm.

**DANA:** we have just a few minutes. Tell us what your father did for a living. How did he support your family?

**JIM:** [*laughs*] He didn't... I don't recall that he had a job. I don't know how they survived. I know that he was waiting for Franklin Roosevelt's pension that was gonna come into effect, I guess, like social security. And he never did get it. He died before it was enacted. And, but he looked forward to that. And the only thing he did was little odd jobs here and there, whatever he could get to raise a little bit of money.

**DANA:** Okay. Well, I want to thank you. I think we're at the end of the tapes.

**JIM:** Well, thank you.