

## FINAL COPY

### Don Archuleta

Editor's note: I met with Don Archuleta in his beautiful home where he lives with his wife Maxine in Evanston, near Frederick. As you arrive, you are met by a wide expanse of drive and a gazebo awaiting spring. The house is beautifully decorated. Don Archuleta is a handsome, young looking seventy-eight-year-old man of medium height and build. He is casually dressed. His manner borders formal. He is every bit the gentleman.

Don Archuleta

As told to Oli Olivas Duncan January 14, 2009

My people are from New Mexico. My daughter Claudia lives in Longmont. I have two cousins in the area: Jerry and Ted Archuleta (died February 19, 2009). I have two brothers and a sister in California.

I was an air traffic controller. I worked for the FAA when the center was at Stapleton Airport. The center in those days was about as big as this front room. We didn't have radios; we couldn't talk to the pilots. We had to relay their clearances through their radio service company or through FAA flight service stations. There was nothing very modern about it. You had to do your work based on those limitations.

In 1960, because of the Cold War with the Soviet Union, the FAA wanted to move all traffic control centers away from major cities because they were essential to the movement of aircraft throughout the country. They wanted to move the centers to places outside the blast area of, say, an atomic bomb—away from the Denver Metropolitan area and the arsenal, and places like that, which would be prime targets for an attack, should that have occurred. Originally, they considered either Lyons or Longmont, and they opted to build the FAA Center in Longmont. We occupied it in 1963.

When I retired in 1986, the facility in Longmont controlled air traffic in all or parts of nine states, including commercial, general, and military. We were responsible for controlling all of the air

space except that airspace delegated to control facilities of major airports like Denver. They controlled their own space, laterally and vertically, in airspace delegated by the center in letters of agreement.

When I first started out, we didn't have radar or direct radio communications. Then we inherited some World War II battleship radars. Later, at the new center in Longmont, we were able to tie radar data into the computer. The computer elements in those days took up the space of a gymnasium. Now it's probably no bigger than that loveseat. We had this whole room full of huge computer elements. Nothing was very sophisticated, but eventually they were able to tie radar data into what I call a computer program that gave you paper information on the flights, and you could combine everything and control you flights in real time.

By 1986, when I retired, it had evolved to where you could communicate with the pilot. We had means of identifying individual airplanes—the name of the airplane, its speed and altitude, where it was coming from and where it was going. We could get all this information automatically on the computer displayed on the radar screen. I saw the evolution of flight control from no radar, no communications to a completely automated, real time computer system. I don't know how they have continued to advance the system, but it must be greatly improved since the time I retired.

They recently started an air traffic control program at Ames College in Greeley. Young people starting out today can choose to work in an airport air traffic control facility like Denver or in an air traffic control center like Longmont. Attending a program such as the one at Ames College shortens the length of time the FAA needs to train a licensed air traffic controller. When I taught air traffic control at the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City, it took three to four years from the beginning to the point where you could test out to be a licensed air traffic controller. At that time the success rate was one out of three or one out of four. The others just didn't have the temperament for it.

There's a lot of responsibility involved. As you get used to it, you don't think about it. Your idea is to be absolutely safe and make good, rapid decisions. You don't have a lot of time to think, and at times you have a whole screen full of aircraft targets in your area of control. Centers are

broken down into geographic areas called sectors. You've got high, medium, and low altitude, and those planes have to go up and come down, land and depart, and mix with enroute aircraft. You have all these teams of different traffic controllers at these different levels accepting or handing off traffic from sector to sector and from center to center. You have to know exactly where these planes are and their elevations. You have to be sure they have a certain amount of space around them: above, below and laterally. A place like Denver has a lot of traffic overflying, flights from Los Angeles to Chicago, for example, but also a lot of traffic landing and taking off from Denver. They probably handle about four thousand flights a day across the area. I don't really know. I don't pay much attention to this since I retired.

When I read about the new air traffic control program at Ames, at the back of my mind was the idea of going over there and just observing. When I taught at the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City, I taught meteorology, federal rules and regulations, communications, radar—I taught six or seven different classes. I think it would be fun just to go sit in, sort of audit the classes and see how they do things today.

When I was in Oklahoma City, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), which is part of the United Nations and headquartered in Montreal, Canada, contacted the FAA and requested an expert in air traffic control systems to go to Central and South America to do an analysis and recommend improvements in the air traffic control systems down there. My division chief called me into his office and suggested that I apply for the position. I was concerned because I did not speak fluent Spanish; however, the position did not require someone who spoke Spanish. The United States is the foremost country for teaching people to become air traffic controllers. Students from all over the world come to Oklahoma City to attend the academy, and they are required to speak English, because English is the international language for commercial flight. The director for ICAO resided in Lima, Peru. He was Bolivian. I wanted the job. I knew I had the technical expertise, but I still worried that I was not fully bilingual.

When the ICAO director for Central and South Americas interviewed me in Oklahoma City, we went out to dinner and talked. He spoke fluent English. I told him that I was very interested in the position and that I would do my best. I told him that I had taught a lot of the ranking officials in aviation in those countries when they were students in Oklahoma City.

Communications between member states was difficult. They couldn't communicate directly. In those days, the only way they could communicate with each other was by sending flight information via Mexico, then up to Kansas City, and then back to Mexico, and then back to the country. By the time they got that message, it would already be too late; the aircraft had already penetrated the country's airspace. You had to deal with the situation, depending on the country you were visiting. The people you met with sometimes were military people, and the people you talked to who were in aviation were under the direction of the military. You couldn't say a lot. You had to understand that this was a political situation.

I was down there a couple of years; the mission was funded for just two years. I visited each country for a month. I'd fly, say, from Buenos Aires to Cordova in inland Argentina and other major cities. Then I'd fly to Brazil and then to Columbia. The people in the Lima office were specialists representing member states in South and Central America, so we talked a lot. They really looked after my family. They made sure we lacked for nothing. We didn't have a car, so they'd come on weekends and take us to the beach and things like that. Since we were Americans and I worked for the U.S. federal government, I was authorized to purchase commodities at the United States Embassy. We could buy all of our food there. They would ship in planeloads of food every month for the embassy employees. You could buy produce, hams, turkey, beer, whiskey, whatever you wanted at a very good price.

We lived in a high rise in a very nice suburban neighborhood. In Lima there are class differences. The poor people lived on the edge of town, and the wealthy people lived in town in mansions, high rises, and so on. The only contact you had with poor people was with maids or childcare workers. Many of these people lived in lean-tos on the roofs of houses. Rich Peruvians

stayed at arm's length from the poor people—they were there to work; they were not there to socialize with.

Where we lived there was a representative from Israel. His expertise was in ground transportation. There were people from different countries in Europe doing their thing, whatever it was: sanitation, engineering of some sort.... We met some interesting people who are lifelong friends. Since I was gone a lot, they made sure that my wife Maxine got to where she had to go. The embassy had a large presence there. They had an American school, American teachers, and a lot of events for the kids, games, special events. It was enjoyable.

When I returned to Oklahoma City, I was sent to a computer programming school. That lasted eight months—five days a week, eight hours a day. Subsequently, I taught computer programming to students who were working in the field at various air traffic control facilities. After completing the course, they would test to become air traffic control computer specialists. Only a select few air traffic controllers were chosen to go to Oklahoma City to study computer programming. After completion of the course, they returned to their facilities.

I did that for a couple of years, and then I transferred to the Rocky Mountain Regional Office in Aurora, Colorado. There I was trained on the job and became an air space specialist. Air space specialists in traffic control work closely with airport and flight standards specialists to provide expert technical services to the public regarding all aspects of public need in air transportation.

I had the opportunity to return to Longmont as an area supervisor. I supervised teams of air traffic controllers within my area of responsibility. Other responsibilities were to train and evaluate performance of air traffic controllers in my area. Collateral duties included being appointed by the secretary of transportation to serve on his Equal Employment Opportunities Commission in Washington, D.C.

In 1986 I turned fifty-five and said "*Sayonara*." Things had changed, you know. President Regan fired some really good people with great potential. Many traffic controllers were fired. I was a supervisor. I called several people and advised them to reconsider. "Don't go out," I told them.

“You’re going to make a mistake. Many of the controllers who say they’re going to go out, they’re not going to go. When it gets down to the last minute, a lot of your friends, who you think are going to go out, are not going to go out.” Sure enough, that’s what happened. The FAA contacted former air traffic controllers in other offices doing nonessential traffic control functions, doing technical things that supported air traffic control. They became controllers again. Then, of course, they had this big hiring thing. It took a long time to recover.

When I joined the FAA, you had to be a pilot, or an air traffic controller in the military, or something like that to qualify. I got into it through the back door. I had been in the Navy in communications. When I got out of the service I went to work for the FAA in a flight service station. Flight service stations were mainly located at airports throughout the country. The flight service station located in Denver was adjacent to the control center. We all knew each other, so I knew when the center was hiring. I applied, went through the training, and became an air traffic controller.

Enough of that. I want to tell you about my ancestors. I want to tell you about my mother’s mother. My grandmother, Donaciana Manchego, was born in 1848 in Northern New Mexico. I don’t know exactly where. In about 1855, when she was about seven, there were a lot of Indian uprisings in the area, and she was abducted by marauding Indians. A couple of years later, a military organization out of Texas came to New Mexico to help put down these Indian uprisings. A soldier named Charles Eames was in an Indian camp. He saw my grandmother and realized that she was not Indian. He didn’t know where she was from, so he took her to Texas to live with his mother. Then he returned to continue with his duty to help put down the Indian crises. When he returned to Texas she was about fifteen years old. He married her. Then they settled in New Mexico. She didn’t know a word of English. They had three boys and a girl. For some reason, I don’t know why, he left her and took the oldest boy, Charles, with him. I assume he went back to Texas.

One of these days I’d like to try to locate the descendents of Charles Eames. I looked him up in the Texas census of 1870, or something like that, and learned that he was from New York, that he

was married, and it listed his children. So I have that record. It doesn't tell what happened in between, other than the fact that he had a ranch.

So there was my grandmother, abandoned, with three kids. Maybe she was living with her parents again. My grandfather, Ramón Trujillo,<sup>1</sup> fell in love with her and married her. They owned a ranch between Walsenburg and Gardner. They had three children; my mother Florence was the baby of the family.

My father, James Moses Archuleta, was born near Pueblo, Colorado in 1887. He is a direct descendent of Asencio de Arechuleta, born about 1573 in Eibar in Guipúzcoa, the Basque country of Spain. He was a soldier in the original Oñate colonization party that founded San Juan de los Caballeros in 1598 and Santa Fe in 1610. He brought his wife, Ana Pérez de Bustillo, and children with him to New Mexico knowing that they probably would never see Mexico City or Spain again.

My parents met at a dance. That's back when young girls were chaperoned at dances. The way they arranged marriages back then, he probably told his dad that he really liked her, and his dad arranged for someone to approach her parents to ask for her hand in marriage. The next record shows that in 1907 they were married in Greeley. Thus begins their lives' story in Northern Colorado.

My Aunt Lola, my dad's sister, and my Uncle John Espinosa were almost victims at the Ludlow Massacre in 1914.<sup>2</sup> Uncle John was a miner near Trinidad, and they were living in a tent like the other miners' families. The miners were trying to organize, to form a union. During the night my aunt and uncle crawled down into an arroyo and worked their way out of the camp before the Massacre took place. The Massacre was imminent. They knew it was going to happen, and they got out of there the best way that they could.

My dad's sister Della lived in Brighton. She was married to Tom Tobin, the great-grandson of the frontiersman, Tom Tobin.<sup>3</sup> He's the frontiersman who went out after the Espinosa brothers because there was a bounty on their heads. He cut off their heads and brought them back to prove that he was entitled to the bounty.

There are Tobins in Longmont. One of the Tobins went to high school with my daughter Claudia in the 1970s. His mother was a businesswoman in Longmont. We lived Northwest of Longmont in a Spanish colonial-looking house painted white with archways all the way around. Mrs. Tobin asked to use the house as a backdrop. She would bring people out and photograph them using our house as a backdrop. It's still there as far as I know.

We bought a house south of Lyons along the St. Vrain River. I retired and we then spent our winters in Yuma, Arizona. We spent seventeen winters in Yuma and, when we decided not to continue our annual migration, we sold and moved to Loveland.

My wife Maxine was born in Denver, Colorado in 1930. She graduated from Manuel High School in 1949. Maxine's father Stephen died when Maxine was three years old. Her mother Carolyn never remarried and raised six children during some very difficult times. Both Maxine's father and mother have deep roots in New Mexico. Her father's uncle was Father Garcia, who at one time was the oldest Catholic priest in the United States. He is buried in San Luis, Colorado.

I was born in Brighton, Colorado, December 10, 1930. I spent my early childhood living in Brighton or on a farm. I still remember sitting on the front porch with my mother and father and my older brothers and sisters listening to dad's car radio to Joe Louis box Max Schmeling of Germany.

We moved to Denver in 1937, and I attended public schools, played sports, became a boy scout, played trumpet and graduated from Manuel High School in 1949.

In 1950 I joined the Navy, went to boot camp in San Diego and communications school after boot camp. My first assignment was aboard a troop transport carrying troops to Korea or Sasebo or Yokohama, Japan. We made the trip from San Francisco to Korea or Japan every month.

After two and one-half years of that duty, I was transferred to a sea-going tanker stationed at the time in Long Beach, California. We left Long Beach and proceeded through the Panama Canal to Naples, Italy where we joined the fleet. A year later I was transferred to another tanker stationed in Virginia. After a few trips to Aruba, Texas, and Louisiana, the ship was ordered to Long Beach, California for decommission.

I was discharged in 1954, returned to Denver, caught up with Maxine, got married, and worked as a roofer and as a salesman for New York Life Insurance. In 1957 I joined the FAA in San Francisco, and later transferred to Denver. For a period of time, when I was not doing shift work, I attended Ames Community College and was awarded a scholarship to the University of Colorado School of Journalism.

Maxine and I are the parents of two biological children, Claudia and Mark, and an adopted son Troy. We have lost contact with Troy. He served in the Navy and held the rank of 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Petty Officer with a specialty of air controller.

My daughter Claudia lives in Longmont and is a real estate broker. She has two children: Austin 20, and Paris 16. Claudia is a Colorado State University alumna.

My son Mark lives in Canyonland, California with his wife Mimsy and son Max. Mark graduated from Lyons High School with honors, interned with PBS McNeil/Lehrer, and was nominated to the U.S. Naval Academy. After a year he resigned and returned to Colorado and graduated from the University of Colorado. He is presently a producer/director for Ted Turner Communications in Lancaster, California.

I come from a large family of mostly boys. Two of my brothers, Edward and Raymond, were in the Navy during World War II. Edward was serving aboard the *USS Yorktown* when it was sunk. He survived and continued to serve on the *USS Yorktown II*. Raymond was a boatswain's mate on the *USS Mercy* hospital ship. My brother, Richard, was in the Army Air Force and was a photographer/gunner on aircraft flying over the "Hump" in Southeast Asia into China. Another brother, Mose, was in the Army Coast Guard in Hawaii. He was stationed there when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. He was strafed by a Japanese fighter while attempting to set up a machine gun in front of his barracks. He was wounded in his legs, received the Purple Heart, recovered from his wounds, and continued fighting in the Pacific Theater until the end of the war.

Maxine and I enjoy a comfortable, leisurely retirement. Maxine likes cook, and she swims competitively in senior competitions. My hobbies are reading, golf, fishing, and hanging out with old friends. We enjoy traveling to Mexico and throughout the United States.

<sup>1</sup>de Onís, José, Editor. *The Hispanic Contribution to the State of Colorado*. Boulder: Westview Press, published under the auspices of the University of Colorado Centennial Commission, 1976: 163-82. The Y-shaped valley of Trujillo Creek is west of Aguilar [originally *Puerta del Cañon*], Colorado. Originally settled in the 1860s by José Ramón Trujillo with his first wife Ysabelita and others. Located seven and a half miles west of Puerta del Cañon, they settled and farmed a plazita called La Plazita de los Trujillos, later renamed El Rito de los Trujillos.

<sup>2</sup>Ubbelohde, Carl; Maxine Benson and Duane Smith. *A Colorado History*. Revised Centennial Edition. Boulder: Pruett Publishing Company, 1976: 254-56. The Ludlow Massacre took place at Ludlow Station, eighteen miles north of Trinidad, Colorado on April 20, 1914. Coal miners, mainly New Mexicans and immigrant Italians, were trying to unionize the mines belonging to John D. Rockefeller. On strike, they were living in tents with their families. Company militia (most accounts of the incident erroneously report state militia) came in the night and shot up the tent colony of nine hundred and burned down tents. Five miners, one militiaman, two women, and eleven children, one of them a small baby, were killed. A monument concerning the incident and commemorating the dead now stands at the site, erected by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).

<sup>3</sup>Chávez, Fray Angélico. *Origins of New Mexico Families: A Genealogy of the Spanish Colonial Period*. Revised Edition. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1992: 428-9. Tomás Ortibi, son of Bartolomé Ortibi and Serafina Tishman [Serafina Teyta (Sarah Tate?)], was married to Pascuala Bernal. They had a son, Juan de Jesús, Oct. 18, 1846. Ten years later the surname is given as Tomás Tobin or Tobens, if the same man, and married to Pascuala Bernal. Two Tobin children were Juan Nepomuceno, April 26, 1858, and María Serafina, Sept. 4, 1860. [Apparently brother of Carlos Ortibi (Charles Autobees) from St. Louis, who married María Serafina Avila Nov. 28, 1842.]

Final copy submitted for permission to publish by the Longmont Hispanic Study. Please sign and return one copy to me. Keep the second copy. Thank you.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Olí Duncan

5/28/09  
(Date)

Permission to publish as written above.

Permission to publish with changes/corrections indicated and initialed above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Don Archuleta

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)