

Interview Date: February 2, 2006  
Interviewer: Steve Kite  
Subject: **Alice Zaloudek**  
Length of Video: 180 minutes 3 tapes  
Written Summary: Andi Holland

#### Tape 1

3:40 I was born on August 22, 1905 in the Indian Territory in Payne County between Quay and Yale. My parents came to the Territory in the 1870s. My father made the run into the Cherokee Strip and staked his claim at the place where I was born. We lived in a log cabin my father built. He came to America from Czechoslovakia. His parents came later to America. They landed in Hanover, Kansas in 1889. My dad heard about the run and came and made the run by himself. He stopped in Tonkawa to stake his claim on a pretty little farm but two men ran him off that ground so he made the run again and staked his claim near Yale.

5:40 His brother had come over from Czechoslovakia a couple of years earlier and he insisted that my dad come. He came by himself on an open ship and came through Ellis Island. His brother was living in Iowa. My dad lived with them for a while.

10:50 I was born in the log cabin. In 1891 his mother passed way and so he went up to Hanover, Kansas for the funeral. On his way back home he passed through Pilson, Kansas and stopped to visit a group of Czechs and ended up meeting the women he would one day marry. The couple was married in Pilson and then came back to his farm near Yale. My parents married and had their first child in 1897. There were three girls and one boy. Another son passed away. I am the youngest.

14:30 Our log cabin was one room with a stove and beds on the dirt floor. Mother was unhappy on the farm because the Indians would come up to the house and scare her but dad really liked them; they were friends. He never met a man he didn't like. His name was John Srajer. Because my mom was so unhappy dad moved us back to Kansas. We crossed the Cimarron River in a covered wagon he had built for us that was drawn by four horses. It was 1907 and I was 18 months old when we moved back to Kansas and settled nine miles northwest of Pilson. Dad left a sign on our farm telling everyone who owned it.

16:20 We never missed a Sunday at church. There was a Catholic Church two miles east of Tampa, Kansas. Later a small Catholic Church was built in Tampa. To keep us warm on the buggy ride to church mom put bricks in the stove and then put them in gunny sacks so we could put our feet on them and also put our feet on them in the church to stay warm. The church was ice cold.

20:45 My grandma from Czechoslovakia lived five miles from Pilson. We always had dinner at her house on Sunday. We rode in the wagon and we had a two-seat carriage. It took an hour to get to the church. We were dressed like Eskimos in the winter.

23:20 We had a two story, nice house. It had a small kitchen, living room and bedroom downstairs then bedrooms upstairs. Dad built it. My grandparents on my mother's side built their own home too.

24:45 My dad was a hard worker. When I got older my two sisters had to milk the cows. I couldn't wait to drink that warm milk they would bring in. I was the youngest and I was babied. We had a big yard. We planted lots of trees. We planted potatoes and then had to pick off the potato bugs.

28:20 I slept with my mother in her room. My two sisters slept in a room and my dad and my brother had their own rooms. Our beds were straw put in ticky cloth. You had to fluff up the straw mattresses.

31:00 In the summer we had chicken for dinner every day. On Sunday we got a special treat weenies from Chicago. We had a windmill but we had to draw the water. I used to do that some. We usually had homemade bread and butter for breakfast. We also had Kolaches. In the winter we had a lot of pork. We canned a lot during the summer.

34:48 Mother made sausage out of the pig's intestine. Grandma had a big kitchen. She took care of lots of children. My aunt was struck by lightning and killed. My grandma raised her baby. Grandma was killed in a car wreck. Special treats for us were Kolaches. We ate fried chicken fried in lard. We kept our milk in the cellar to keep it cool. Mom and Grandma baked every Saturday.

42:16 At Christmas we celebrated with Mass. For Christmas we would each get a tin pie pan filled with nuts and hard candy. We ate it all in one day.

44:15 Later on we would go over to Ramona, Kansas. Dad would take us in the open wagon pulled by two mules. The rest of my siblings were working at different places. In 1910 I was five or six. My sister would buy us a little sack of hard candy to share.

49:05 On Saturday night we would go into Tampa and just walk the streets and go to the picture show sometimes or have a dance. Tampa was the only place to go for farmers. In the 20s I was 16-17 and by then there were cars as well as horses and buggies. The mothers would sit on a bench and talk. All the men wore overalls. We had nice clothes that mother made. She was a good seamstress. Our hair was always in curls. She rolled our hair in rags.

52:53 I walked to Tampa to school. It was a small school with 24 children. We had a man teacher who roomed with us for a while. When it was snowing or raining my dad would take me to school.

55:30 I started school at age six. I didn't speak any English, on Czech. The rest of the family would help me read English. I understood English but couldn't speak it. We only spoke Czech at home. We always had apples in our lunch pail. Dad bought apples by the

bushel. We had bread and butter and a boiled egg for lunch at school. At recess we played on the playground.

## Tape 2

:09 We played baseball. We didn't have a bat so we used a board. We studied at home. We cut out paper dolls from ads in the catalogs and we played house outside. My brother was always with my dad learning to take care of the horses. I did ride an old mare to help get the cows in. I made angel food cakes.

4:15 At school we had some plays and singing. All the students at school were American people, Czechs, Russians, and Germans – all immigrants. There were lots of people that didn't have much money. My dad had a family from Bison that he helped moved to Kansas. They were struggling and my dad gave them a little farm.

9:15 In high school we would go to dances. We had basketball and baseball as sports in school. We danced in the gym. One of the teachers always danced with me. We had a band play for us.

11:14 We Polka danced at Pilson and at every wedding. We ate weenies and Kolaches. After high school I taught school for two years at a country school. I had to take a teaching exam.

13:54 My dad bought the first Ford in our area. He had a cover put on the top. We had to crank the car and then carry coal to the school to start the fire. My father was the first one to buy a Cadillac from the local dealership. I was in high school. I drove the Ford to school. I had to drop off my sister at work first. In the winter when it was too cold to drive home I would stay with a widow lady and her children. I taught at Belton School. We had 12 students up through the eighth grade. I made \$75 a month. I went to Wichita, Kansas to buy my wedding dress.

21:36 My aunt lived in Pilson and my husband to be, Tony Zaloudek, had stopped by to visit while he was up from Kremlin. My aunt told him about me and that he had to come back up for a dance so he could meet me. He did come for the dance. Before the dance the boys would fill their dance cards so they would know whom they were dancing with next. Tony had a Ford Jitney.

27:25 I didn't know a boy was coming but he was a good dancer and very friendly. He was nice looking and he stayed at our house while he was in town. He was the oldest so he probably didn't stay too long.

29:12 When Tony was in the fifth grade he left school and started working with his dad. I met him when I was in high school and then I taught school for two years. He was Catholic and he was Czech and he was hard working. He was good to me.

33:17 We courted for five years before marriage. We wrote letters back and forth. Long after I was married we got electricity. I was 22.

34:35 My mom and sisters and I went to Wichita, Kansas to shop for my wedding dress. I picked the prettiest one. We married in Pilson at the big church on May 9, 1927. Mother made all the chicken and noodles for the wedding. We had a 10 a.m. Mass then a picnic at our home then the wedding then dinner and a dance at the church. It was an all day affair. We had Chivalry where they put me in a wheelbarrow and Tony had to push me around.

40:30 The babies would get tired and nap over on the edge of the hall. We went to my parent's house the night of our wedding.

41:55 We left for Kremlin three days later. This was my dish, when you are married you are married. We lived with Tony's folks for a while. It was an old house that they were remodeling. I bought them a new wood burning range from Sears and Roebuck with my teaching money. The range had a hot water reservoir. There was no inside plumbing.

49:40 We raised children, set the hens, cooked all the time and we kept the baby chicks in the house to keep them warm.

51:09 Tony was a farmer and raised alfalfa, corn, wheat and oats. I cooked and took care of the garden. We had a farm helper that lived in the washhouse. I canned lots of stuff and I would take lunch to the field.

### Tape 3

:30 I remember an incident when I was still living at home with my folks. I was 10 or 12 and I was out helping dad chop weeds in the cornfield. I hit my ankle with the hole and cut a gash in my ankle. Dad spit some of his tobacco on my ankle then wrapped it with his red handkerchief and sent me home. I had to walk through the pasture where the cows were and I was afraid the bull was going to chase me. When I got home mom had to wash and clean my cut. She put a potato slice on my gash to help heal it.

3:30 We were never sick at home. I did have some sore throats often because I had my tonsils.

5:04 When Tony and I married our first house was a small two-bed bungalow with a kitchen, living room and no bathroom. We had the kitchen stove for heat. In the mornings we had to start the kitchen stove for heat.

8:09 We got electricity in the late 1920s. We then had lights in every room. Then we had a potbelly stove put in one of the other rooms for more heat. We then put in a floor furnace several years later. The house was a mile east of Kremlin on the south side of the road. We had lots of land. Tony would buy a farm and when it was paid for he would

buy another one. These were all 160-acre farms except for a couple of smaller farms. We had about 15 farms. I still have my Dad's original farm out by Yale. It was a lifetime of acquisitions. I remember wanting to buy a new rug for the floor so bad. But Tony told me, "Rugs don't make you any money, farms do."

15:50 We had three girls. The first was Patricia, born in 1930 and she died when she was 18 months old. The second was Mary Ann who was born in 1933 and then Judy who was born in 1938.

18:34 Tony's parents and sister came up to Kansas for our wedding. The day before our wedding they had been hailed out. There were no crops harvested our first year of marriage. I also remember the Dust Bowl. It was so dark you couldn't see in front of you. Those are the only two times I remember that there were no crops.

20:40 Everything took place in the kitchen because that was the only warm room in the house. I remember Tony's parents were coming over one day to visit. I tried to make a chocolate cake but I put too much soda in it and the cake was awful. We couldn't eat it. I remember visiting Tony's parent's home and his dad would many times have his feet over the open oven door trying to warm them.

22:10 We had feather tick beds and pillows. I still have one.

25:15 Groups of people settled where they did, especially immigrants close together so they would understand each other and have a shared language.

26:00 I learned to cook very well. Harvest workers would go from one field to the next. You had to put your bids in and get on the list. You didn't want to be the last one to get your crop harvested. You might get rained or hailed out before then.

27:00 We soon had combines of our own pulled by horses. We first had to shock the wheat, that meant several stacks of wheat tied together then the combine would come by and thrash them. We had to feed the harvesters three meals a day. We always had lots of eggs, milk, and pork. We'd cook the pork until all the water was out of it then we would coat it with lard and put it in the basement to keep it cold. It would last until summer.

30:10 We raised chickens and froze them after we got electricity. During harvest we made lots of noodles. When I was ironing I had to heat my irons on the kitchen stove. When we could harvest our own farms that was a great time. We always used Case machinery because the Zaloudek's had a Case franchise.

33:01 We had a farm hand who was called to service, Roy Wells. When he left to go Tony gave him a silver dollar and told him to bring it home. He did.

33:55 We got along fine during WWII because farmers were allowed more rations and we were self-sufficient.

35:20 Tony thought President Roosevelt was the best President ever. We followed politics closely. We were all Democrats.

36:30 Kremlin was not much. Floren was making lots of money selling farm equipment. That is the second oldest brother.

38:40 There were only dirt roads to Kremlin. Later on we got a very nice road to the highway. We had a Jitney one seater. Our first car was a Dodge.

40:00 The town of Kremlin was always small. We had the basics like a grocery and the farm implement store. We sold eggs and cream or used them to buy groceries. I would save the egg money to buy material and make dresses for our three girls. The girls had pretty clothes. I sewed for several ladies in town. I sold cream and made butter. When I married one of my first new jobs was to milk the cows.

44:40 Tony decided we didn't need all those cows so he bought a Jersey cow and sold the other milk cows. Jersey cows make the best milk. He also bought a separator that I had to clean every day. Monday was washday. I had two tubes out at the washhouse. I would have to pump water from the well and heat it on the potbelly stove. I made soap out of lye.

50:10 I would have to catch and kill a chicken every day for dinner. You put the chicken on the ground and lay a broomstick across the neck then step on either side of the broomstick and pull. Then we had to scald the chicken in boiling water so the feathers would come out then to get the fuzz off you had to light a fire to some newspaper and hold that up to the chicken to singe all the that off. Then you would clean it and cut it and cook it. We used every part of the chicken. We didn't waste anything. We would catch the chickens by the feet with a stick that had a loop on the end. We always wanted to get the biggest one to let the smaller ones grow. We worked in the garden. I had to lead the horse while Tony was behind the horse with the plow.

56:30 We were self-sufficient and didn't buy much at the store almost until the time we moved to Enid. Our garden had cucumbers and potatoes and green beans, peas and carrots. I remember eating cucumbers and cream. That is great.

#### Tape 4

1:00 Women had to feed the harvesters. It took a large group of people to thrash the crops. We took picnics to the field.

2:30 Tony didn't drink much, but on those hot days out in the field he loved to have a cold can of beer to keep him awake. Sometimes he would take a nap under the tractor.

3:46 It was a very different time period. It was peaceful and quiet on the farm. One time some gypsies came to our yard. They were ratty people. They came to steal from

us. They had a covered wagon and they would go from house to house and see what they could steal.

7:03 Tony and I took a driving trip to Pensacola, Florida. We stayed three weeks. Because of the high humidity our shoes mildewed. That was the first big trip we took. Our daughter was transferred to Hawaii so we went to see her and stopped off in San Francisco first. We went to Napa Valley and saw all the gardens.

12:30 Our first car was an old fashioned looking Dodge. We went along the coast all the way from New Orleans to Pensacola.

13:40 All this time Tony was adding new farms and growing our amount of land. We had worked up to a tractor with a cab but Tony didn't use the air conditioning. We took the crops to the elevator in Kremlin. The Zaloudeks owned the elevator, the grocery and the implement store. Only one Zaloudek child is left. Tony wasn't well. He had several strokes so we moved into Enid. We had lived 45 years on the farm. We moved to Enid in 1972.

17:26 We had some friends from Bison that had moved to this area and Tony loved this house. It had a big yard. I was happy to move to town. Tony couldn't do any work anymore. It was very sad to see all the cows and equipment leave the farm.

19:40 In town we had good neighbors and Tony had a lawn tractor to mow the yard. He loved playing with the neighbor boy. We played lots of cards. We would go to Dan and Bake or to Hedge's Café to eat on Sunday. In the evening we would listen to the radio or visit the neighbors. We played a lot of pitch.

25:00 Tony's uncle had a feed store here in Enid so Tony would go down there and they would play cards.

30:45 Tony died in 1975. There was a terrible flood in 1973. We had five feet of water in the house.

35:11 The town has built up so much. We bought a farm north of North Enid because Tony thought the town would grow north.

36:23 They built one oil well on our place. It was a dry hole. After Tony died they drilled again. It was Thanksgiving Day. My nephew called to tell me we had hit oil and it was a good one. That was Alice #1. Then another good one, Alice #2. Alice #3 was also good as was Alice #4. Now they are opening all four back up. Tony didn't get to see any of that. The Lord took care of me.

40:14 From then on I started traveling with Margie Gould, a lady who had also lost her husband. We went to Puerto Rico and South America.

48:43 This part of Oklahoma is home. I have lived so long because I have good genes, no drinking, no smoking, close to church. I have enjoyed my life. I've been to the Holy Land. I've taken six cruises and gone to Europe, Ireland, and Egypt. I've had an audience with the Pope at St. Peter's Square. I've seen the Sea of Galilee and got some Holy Water to bless my great grandchildren with. I've been on the Love Boat. The oil money allowed me to share great gifts with my family.

56:00 I've been to Alaska and Canada. We went by helicopter from Italy to England. I went to Princess Diana's wedding and we went to Princess Grace's monacle. At my 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party over 500 guests attended. The only state I have not been to is North Dakota.

End of Interview