

Amanda Smith as Janice Sue Slaba

Hi everyone,

My name is Janice Sue Slaba. I was the daughter of John and Minnie Slaba. Most of you won't remember me because I died when I was only 15. On Monday, July 9, 1951, Mother and I had taken the Packard out to do a little shopping. I'd been wanting that new red sweater and Mama did like to shop. We even had Daddy back the car out of the garage for us before he went back to work at the hardware store. We were on our way home. I remember thinking we had to hurry so I'd have time to practice my piano. I had a recital coming up soon. I loved playing piano and clarinet.

As we were driving home, a combine was coming down the road and a truck seemed to hit the combine and just like that, the big truck just spun around and hit us head on. Mama and I were both killed instantly.

Before that, I loved living in Buffalo Center. I had lots of friends and Mama hosted birthday parties and ladies' teas. Mama was friends with Amy Schoon, our neighbor. I played piano and won awards for our woodwind trio. Betty Burma and I gave 4-H demonstrations. You could say I was an active girl.

But all that changed so suddenly.

I wouldn't be playing piano or my clarinet and Mama wouldn't be hosting the Literary Club -- ever again.

But you didn't come today to hear my story. I meant to tell you about my dad, John Slaba and the John and Jerry Hardware store over there in Buffalo Center.

Dad bought the store from Henry Wagner in 1924 along with Jerry Schoon. Together they ran it for 32 years until Mr. Schoon died in 1956. Then dad kept it open until 1965.

It was located in the building you folks remember as Mr. K's.

They handled everything a good hardware store sold—everything the farmers around here needed and more. They put in those new display racks on the south side a few years ago.

Thankfully, Dad's store survived the fires on that street. Guess there was some space between the buildings and the firemen were able to keep it from spreading to the hardware store.

After my mother and I died, Dad remarried a lovely lady named Oreal. She had beautiful rose gardens at the house I grew up in—the same house Dad lived in all his life.

The house is gone now, but if you walk by and listen closely, you can still hear the music-----and maybe smell the roses.