

# TROUTVILLE Tidbits



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## “Did I Ever Tell You About the Time...”

By Anne Graybill Vassar and Page Painter Weddle

How often did I walk into Thriftway to hear my uncle, Bland Painter, Jr. say, “Did I tell you about the time..”? Then he would proceed to tell me a hilarious story or one he thought would be of interest to me. He was perceptive and witty; always reflecting on the good things in life instead of the tragedies.

My childhood memories are vivid, as the Painter and Graybill families shared “a duplex” fifty years ago. The five children - Richard, Martha, B., Anne and Rosanna - were constant playmates and companions. Preschools, daycare, youth ball teams and swim clubs were nonexistent, so we had to provide our own recreation and entertainment. Our TV viewing was limited to channels 7 and 10; there were no DVD or VCR players. So on Monday mornings during the summer months, we piled into the back of my Uncle Bland's panel truck. Forget the seat belts or safety factors - it was an open back, covered truck with a bench on each side. It was a “joy ride” to Roanoke to purchase produce and groceries for the store. Straight up and straight back, but we thrived on it. If the truck was going out to deliver groceries to patrons or to pick up fresh chicken from the poultry plant, we were there for the bumpy ride. During the school year, our after-school daily ritual was through the front door of “Painter's Store” to get a 6¢ soft drink, to the back meat room to pick up a piece of freshly cut bologna or cheese and out the back door.

And then in 1955 - surprise, surprise! Along came Page. It was exciting to have a baby in the mix. Life was good. How lucky we were to all have each other. Although some of our loved ones are gone, including my Uncle Bland, we will always have wonderful memories to cherish. As adults, we have always known we could count on each other. We have shared happy and sad occasions as a family. We celebrated our grandmother's birthday on New Years Day. We traveled to Montebello for family reunions in August. We visited during the Christmas holidays and sang Christmas carols while my mom and Aunt Aggie played the piano.

This Father's Day without Bland will be difficult because he treasured his family. I am certain there are many “did I ever tell you about the time” stories floating around out there; each one is just as personal and funny as mine, but this tribute would not be complete without Page's comments on Bland's wonderful life.

My grandfather, Bland Painter, opened the store in Troutville in 1935, and the family moved here from Bedford County in 1938. My dad (Bland Jr.) purchased the store from him in the early 1950's, but both of my grandparents continued to work there. Beginning at a young age, I loved to be at the store. I feel very fortunate that I chose to follow my dad's footsteps into the grocery business because not only do I enjoy it, but it allowed us to spend many days working together. I heard for myself lots of the stories and jokes that he told you. I never ceased to be amazed at his memory!

He loved his family. He and my mom, Aggie, shared 61 wonderful years of marriage. In addition to the three children Anne wrote about, he was blessed with ten grandchildren and one great-grandson. He was very proud of each one.

In addition to family and life at the store, church was another important factor in his life. He sometimes combined that with his love of music by serving as the choir director in a local church. He worked side by side with my mom, Aggie, who served as the organist. He was always faithful to his church, where for a lengthy period, prior to his illness, he had 100% attendance in his Sunday School class.

My dad was an honest person; he would not want to cheat the customer out of even a penny – he would rush out to your car to give it to you. He was a caring person; he greeted you with a warm smile and a friendly hello. He was interested in you and the happenings in your life – never too busy to spend some time in conversation.

When asked when he was going to retire and do some things he enjoyed, his answer was “I enjoy what I do - but maybe, when I get old.” At age 83, he had still not gotten old.



“Well done thou good and faithful servant.” Matthew 25:21

Bland A. Painter, Jr.  
October 21, 1925 - December 29, 2008

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