

The Stanley Brothers Encyclopedia Article

The Stanley Brothers

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During the late 1940s, the Stanley Brothers (Carter, 1925-1966, and Ralph, 1927—) and their band the Clinch Mountain Boys helped to establish bluegrass—as Bill Monroe's new style came to be known—as a musical genre. According to folklorist Neil Rosenberg, their 1948 recording of "Molly and Tenbrooks"—featuring Darrell "Pee Wee" Lambert, a tenor singer and mandolin player like Monroe—offers the first proof that Monroe's sound was being copied by other groups. Merging the old-time sound of traditional mountain music, haunting vocal harmonies, and bluegrass instrumentation, the early recordings of the Stanley Brothers have become bluegrass classics. When lead singer Carter Stanley died in 1966, Ralph took control of the group. He revitalized the band with new members (including Keith Whitley and Ricky Skaggs during the 1970s), and over the next two decades they developed and maintained a following among bluegrass and traditional folk fans that continued into the late 1990s.

Further Reading:

Artis, Bob. *Bluegrass*. New York, Hawthorn Books, 1975.

Rosenberg, Neil V. *Bluegrass: A History*. Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1985.