

# Dickenson County

The traditional music of Dickenson County has a special sound. Based upon tones from the Primitive Baptist and "Dunkard" churches, this sound has influenced singers in the string bands of the region. The most famous of these singers is Ralph Stanley. With his brother Carter, Ralph Stanley created a band in 1946 that riveted the world's attention on the coalfields of Virginia and adjacent areas. The Stanley Brothers and their "Clinch Mountain Boys" began touring the nation and made notable recordings. Ralph Stanley continued the band after his brother's death in 1966. Many honors have come to him, including a National Heritage Fellowship and the America's Medal for the Arts, presented to him in 2006 at the White House by President George W. Bush. The Ralph Stanley Museum and Traditional Mountain Music Center in Clintwood celebrates his many contributions, tells of the boyhood of the brothers, and is a rich source of information about the music of the region. The Tri-State Singing Convention is held annually at Breaks Interstate Park on Labor Day. The Ralph Stanley Festival held on Memorial Day weekend at the Hills of Home Park between McClure and Coeburn attracts devotees from all over the world, well-known bluegrass bands, as well as Stanley and noted performers who have worked in his bands.

Four rivers arise in Dickenson County and nearby: the Pound, Cranesnest, Russell Fork, and McClure. They join and assault Pine Mountain, breaking through in a torrent of whitewater that attracts river rafting and kayak enthusiasts from distant places. The beautiful Breaks Interstate Park is named for this unusual geographic feature. John W. Flanagan Dam and Reservoir is another natural resource prized for swimming, boating, fishing, and the purity of its water.



Rafters on Russell Fork River



Ralph and Carter Stanley



The Breaks

# The Crooked Road

## Virginia's Heritage Music Trail

From the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Coalfields region, Southwest Virginia is blessed with historic and contemporary music venues, musicians, and fretted instrument makers. Historically isolated, the region retained its strong musical legacy by passing traditions down through musical families to an appreciative community.

Old time mountain music, bluegrass, and gospel can be enjoyed all year long and several museums are devoted to showcasing the area's rich musical heritage.

The Crooked Road winds through the ruggedly beautiful Appalachian Mountains and leads you to the major hotspots of old time mountain music, country music, and bluegrass. Alive and kickin' for today's fans, these venues preserve and celebrate musical traditions passed down through generations. Annual festivals, weekly concerts, radio shows, and jam sessions ring out to large audiences and intimate gatherings. Please visit the Crooked Road website to plan your trip to coincide with the current entertainment events.



The Carter Family



Dr. Ralph Stanley

[www.thecrookedroad.org](http://www.thecrookedroad.org)



### MAJOR VENUES

- ★ Blue Ridge Institute & Museum
- ★ The Floyd Country Store & County Sales
- ★ Blue Ridge Music Center
- ★ Rex Theater & Old Fiddlers Convention
- ★ Heartwood
- ★ Birthplace of Country Music
- ★ Carter Family Fold
- ★ Country Cabin II
- ★ Ralph Stanley Museum

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