

Grayson County

Western Grayson County has produced fine traditional musicians, performers at school entertainments, fiddlers' conventions, and community gatherings for many generations. Among them was the old-time string band, the Rugby Gully Jumpers (Walter Henderson, fiddle, Estil Ball, guitar, and Wade Reedy, mandolin) recorded in the 1930s by Alan Lomax for the Library of Congress. Outstanding finger-style guitarist Estil Ball and wife, accordionist Orna Reedy Ball, built a national reputation as gospel singers from local radio shows and independent recordings. They also performed with Blair Reedy, Charles Harless, and Charles Hodges as the Friendly Gospel Singers. Old-time banjoist Jont Blevins was admired here for his unique style and powerful rhythm.

The Wayne C. Henderson Music Festival and Guitar Competition is held annually here in the park on the third Saturday in June. Proceeds from the festival support a scholarship fund for mountain youngsters learning traditional music. A National Heritage Award winner, Henderson is the nation's best known luthier and lives nearby. A Henderson guitar is on display at the Visitors' Center inside the park. Grayson Highlands State Park has 15 miles of trails for walking, bicycling and horseback riding with majestic views. It offers a profusion of wild flowers during warm months, many migrating birds during spring and fall, and - if you are lucky - perhaps a glimpse of some of the wild ponies found here.



Estil and Orna Ball



Wild Ponies



Wayne, Walter, and Max Henderson