Flatt, Lester (1914-1979) Encyclopedia Article

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Contents

Flatt, Lester (1914-1979) Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Flatt, Lester (1914-1979).....3

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Born in Sparta, Tennessee, Lester Flatt's friendly, down-home vocal style, solid rhythm guitar, and songwriting were instrumental in both creating and popularizing bluegrass music. Joining Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys in 1945, Flatt's warm lead vocals were an integral part of the original bluegrass sound created in 1946-48, as was "the Lester Flatt G-run," a guitar figure used to punctuate song verses. Together with Earl Scruggs, he departed in 1948 to form the Foggy Mountain Boys, and throughout the 1950s and early 1960s the ensemble was one of the most visible and successful bluegrass acts. Creative differences led to a breakup in 1969, and Flatt formed a new band, the Nashville Grass, to pursue the earlier act's more traditional sound. With both former Foggy Mountain Boys and new musicians backing him up, Flatt remained a popular elder statesman of bluegrass until his death.