

# Roberts brings back that old time religion

By Josh Shepherd  
The Carlsle Mercury Staff

hese walls echo with the sound of gospel. Television, which would later alter the form and nature of evangelism, was then little more than an investor's dream.

But the Christian message still reached the people. Though travelling from isolated villages to strings of mountain coal towns was perhaps not the most efficient method of carrying the message, the old tent meetings had a spirit and drive that characterize all too clearly the conviction of many preachers to spread the Christian word.

At dusk, people gather inside the tent. They sit on small wooden benches until all are full and still people come. They sit on the grass, clinging to the base poles and the ropes, spill out beyond the reach of the tent, and still people come.

A small makeshift choir files on a small raised stage and prepares to sing. Roberts, with little fanfare, walks in front of the crowd with a stack of hymnals and begins to play. Soon hands are clapping, feet are stomping, and the court-

In the present, the tent meeting is often portrayed as a decadent side show carnal with a dark underbelly, preying on poor folk frightened by fire and brimstone sermons into digging into their pockets for scant pieces of change which they cast at a charlatan's feet.

But for many people, in this time as well as then, tent meetings reaffirmed and reinvigorated Christian faith in a riddled and uncertain time. Consider 1942.

The Great Depression's stranglehold was only beginning to diminish. Young men

were either overseas or boot camp training for World War II. For the people there was little but the comfort of their beliefs and prayers. There were even sermons like Roberts.

Roberts delivered his first sermon in 19 to a field of corn at the Penquin Farm in Bourbon County, where he was raised and eventually married. He became an ordained Methodist Minister and his first assignment was the Corbin United Methodist Church.

Roberts was not a typical Methodist preacher. He preferred to remain behind the pulpit when he spoke.

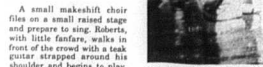
"I needed to move when I was preaching. I couldn't keep myself from it. I'd be in the aisle, talk directly to people at times. I didn't think I had corner on how to preach. It was just the way I did things," Roberts said.

But, as with all ministers, preachers, brothers, and priests, Roberts ministry was never confined to Sunday.

In the coal mining regions

of Kentucky, the very small mountain villages that lay scattered about the hillsides, Roberts and a small group of light dressers and heavy demands, he said. But he has been helped by the fact that he has a hand already well-seasoned and experienced to handle tough pieces of music.

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J.W. Roberts, left, and George Mays, right, prepare to baptize this young girl from Kenton, Kentucky in the early 1940's. Roberts said Mays baptized about 37 people.

## Nicholas Countians Claim Eight Medals

LEXINGTON — Five Nicholas County residents took eight awards in the Bluegrass State Games held in Lexington, Ky., July 26-28.

Nicholas took two first awards in Lexington, four second place and two third place awards.

Some 17,638 Kentuckians seeded their medals at the 1991 Bluegrass State Games and walked away with some 3,569 medals to show for their efforts.

The seventh annual Games was the largest to date in terms of participants who came to Lexington this weekend to participate in the 22 sports offered this year. About 15,500 persons competed in the 1991 Games.

Athletes came from 107 of Kentucky's 120 counties to participate in the Games.

Although the Bluegrass State Games is open to all ages, the majority of this year's individual participants were from 10 to 18 years old.

From Nicholas County:

- Nathan Hunt finished second in the junior division for males 15-20 in chess.
- Michael Warner took second in the men's mens percussion 25 yard six ball in shooting.
- Kelley Spittler claimed first in 6 under 200 freestyle relay, was third in the 50 backstroke and 50 freestyle in swimming.
- Felix Spittler finished third in 7-8 year old in the 50 backstroke.
- Kenye Bryant took two second place medals in the 1973-1974 200M hurdles 36 inches and 1973-1974 high jump.



Track and field was the most popular individual competition with more than 828 participants, followed by tennis with 566 athletes competing in the 1991 Games.

Softball was again the largest team event, drawing over 4,520 individuals. Soccer was the second largest team sport with 3,920 participants.

The Games are sponsored by the state of Kentucky and is organized by the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, with the help of more than 700 volunteers.

The Bluegrass State Games, funded by Valvoline Oil Company and Coca-Cola, is one of 41 state games held nationwide.

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# Gordon used to dealing with tight deadlines

By Josh Shepherd  
The Carlsle Mercury Staff

he had the opportunity to play since he had been a 1991 graduate of Northern Kentucky University he is used to tight deadlines and heavy demands, he said. But he has been helped by the fact that he has a hand already well-seasoned and experienced to handle tough pieces of music.

"I was impressed by Nicholas County band members the first time we met. But much of their experience comes from being a small school where the members

thing new here. They're not green and they often play at more advanced levels than school kids from larger systems," Gordon said.

His fascination for the marching band started when he was in the fourth grade and the Trimble County jazz band performed for his elementary school. The jazz band dazzled his senses, he said, and the following year, without hesitation, he took up the trumpet.

"I took to the trumpet pretty quickly and it came to mean a great deal to me. I came home from school and I practiced. After dinner I practiced. All most every spare moment I had I would be working to get good."

Like Nicholas County, Trimble allowed its students to join the marching band at grade seven. For six years Gordon performed, meaning climbing his way up band hierarchy until he became first trumpet his sophomore year and band president his junior year. These positions he kept until graduation in 1985.

Although by his senior year he was well versed in his instrument and had also developed a familiarity with all brass instruments, his first inclination was not to be a performer, but an educator.

He entered the University of Kentucky in the fall of 1985 as part of a 250 piece band, really just to see if his playing



William Gordon

**OBITUARIES**  
ISHMAEL James Harrison Ishmael, 86, of 222 Sycamore Street, Carlsle, widower of Clara Mae Jolly Ishmael, died Tuesday at the Nicholas County Hospital.

He was a member of the Tea Run Christian Church, a retired farmer, a veteran of American Legion Post #17, Carlsle.

He was born in Fleming County to the late Samuel and Emily died Wednesday, July 20 at his home. He was the son of three sons, Ray Kenneth and Junior Elwood Ishmael, both of Carlsle, Jessie retired from Claiborne Farm, James Ishmael, Nicholas where he was a Horseman for County; a daughter, Helen 44 years.

Survivors include five grandchildren; 25 great grandchildren; and 8 great-great grandchildren.

smith, Paris, Robert Rhinesmith, Bourbon County, Jimmy Rhinesmith, Paris, seven daughters; Betty Herbert, Lexington, Ruth Bryant, Sadieville, Theresa Tabbs, Paris, Phyllis Irvin, Paris, Carole Tolliver, Paris, Joan Linville, Paris, Lela Burke, Carlsle, and Jeffery Dan Rhinesmith, Orlando, Florida, 29 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. He is preceded in death by a daughter, Martha Rhinesmith.

Services were held Friday, August 2 at 10 a.m. at the Lark McFarland Funeral Home by Karl Laak Sr.

Funeral services were Edmond Boyles, John Boyles, David Rhinesmith, Bobby Rhinesmith, Shane Tolliver, Donnie Hober, Tony Bryant and Jeff Irvin.

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