► Cats host Furman Page 1B

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THE SYLVA HERALD
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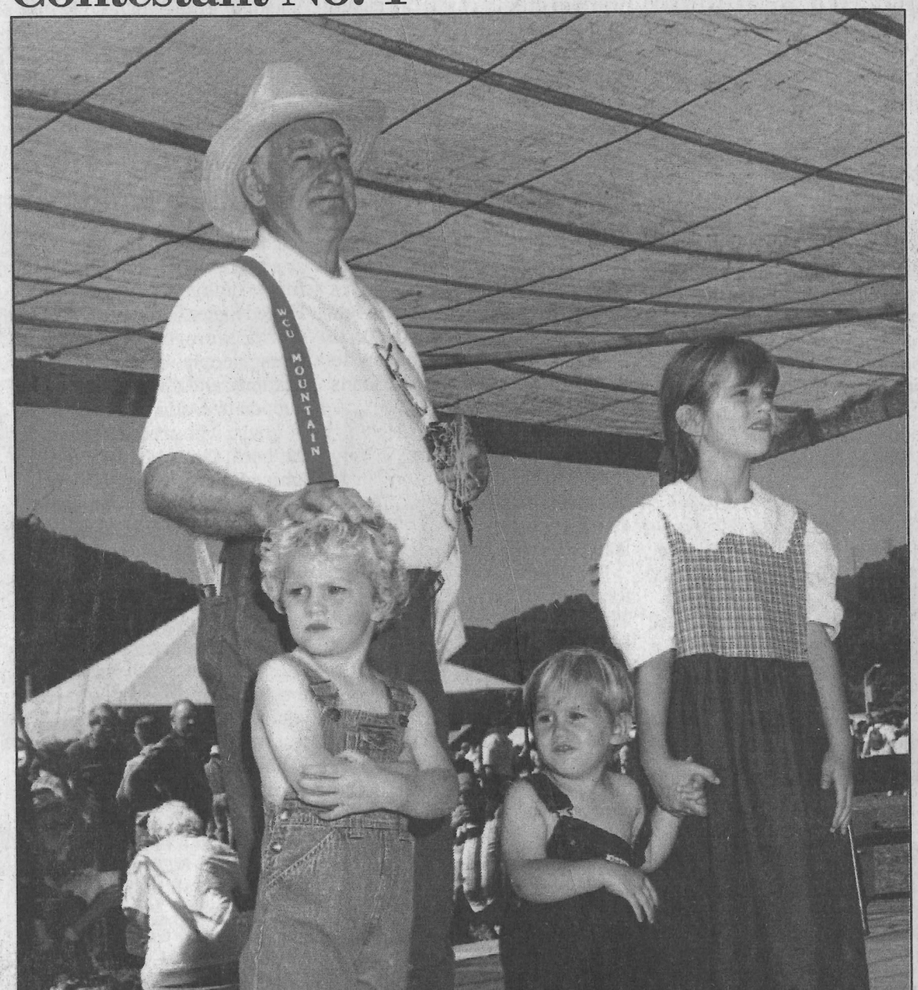
Contestant No. 1



Cradle of Forestry in America receives Mountain Heritage Award

The Cradle of Forestry in America, a National Historic Site in Transylvania County that commemorates the beginning of forestry conservation in the United States, is the 1997 recipient of Western Carolina University's Mountain Heritage Award.

Art Rowe, district ranger for the U.S. Forest Service's Pisgah National Forest, and Lewis Herron, a member of the board of the Cradle of Forestry Interpretive Association, accepted the award Saturday at WCU's 23rd annual Mountain Heritage Day.

One-hundred years ago, vast virgin forests still covered much of the Western North Carolina mountains, but the heavily wooded slopes were interspersed with farms cut out of the forests. Immigrants looking for land to settle had pushed deep into mountain coves, where fragile soils soon eroded under continual subsistence farming.

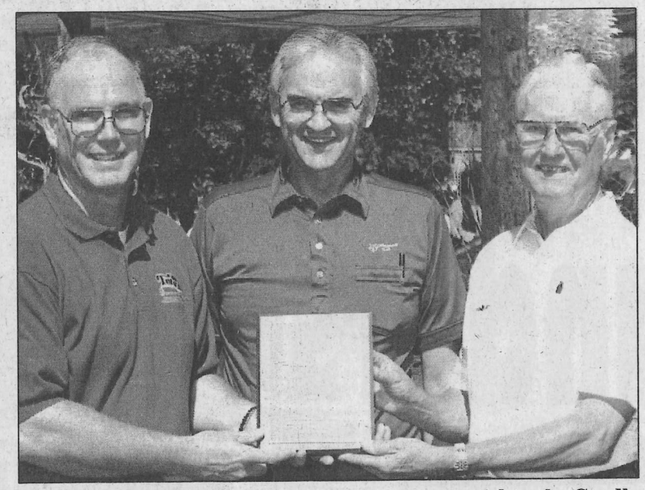
At the same time, logging barons were buying up huge tracts of land, some as large as 300,000 acres, for timber cutting.

Then, in 1889, George W. Vanderbilt began to purchase land in Asheville as a site for his Biltmore House. Vanderbilt hired a young forester, Gifford Pinchot, to manage his estate of more than 8,000 acres and to restore the abused and farmed-over land. Vanderbilt later expanded his estate to include a 80,000-acre tract of land extending to the slopes under Mount Pisgah. He named the area Pisgah Forest.

Dr. Carl Schenck succeeded Pinchot as Vanderbilt's forester in 1895, and for the next 14 years Schenck focused all his innovative forestry skills on transforming Vanderbilt's woodlands.

The estate became a magnet for

Please see **Award, 7A**



The 1997 Mountain Heritage Award was presented to the Cradle of Forestry in America during Mountain Heritage Day festivities at Western Carolina University Saturday. Accepting the award on behalf of the Cradle of Forestry were Art Rowe, left, district ranger for the U.S. Forest Service, and Lewis Herron, right, board member for the Cradle of Forestry Interpretive Association. The award was presented by James Dooley, assistant to the chancellor at WCU. *– WCU photo by Mark Haskett*