

The Hilltop



MARS HILL, N.C. 28754

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Thavichith Family Arrives at Mars Hill



the family adjust to their new home but also the children to the new school they began attending Monday, December 10.

In making adjustments other than in language, the family has had to become accustomed to Mars Hill's cold climate during the months from December to February, for in Laos, the average temperature for these months is 60 degrees, and it is considered the dry season.

On December 1, the Thavichith family traveled to Hickory, North Carolina to reunite with a cousin, and his family who settled there only nine months ago. This cousin speaks English quite well and has been assisting in the development of communication between the family and the community.

Members of the Mars Hill community and a few hard-working members of Mars Hill College (including faculty, staff, and a very few students) have served on the various committees involved in enabling the Thavichith family to adjust to all phases of living in Mars Hill. These committees have furnished the family's home and have provided clothes and food. The committees are trying to secure employment for the Thavichith's but still need financial support until the family is economically stable.

If you are able to help the Thavichith family by giving money and/or time to help with the English lessons and cultural adjustment process, then please do. Your contributions will be greatly appreciated.

David Perkins

Package Store in Buncombe County

property and did not come to the same conclusion as the original surveyor.

"Therefore," he went on, "since the professionals could not get together on this, then I would say there is doubt in the matter. And if I understand the court system correctly, you just don't do something like this if there is doubt."

The commission was appointed last June by Superior Court Judge William T. Grist of Charlotte. It includes, in addition to Edwards, Asheville attorney Gary S. Cash and Charles D. Owens, a land developer from Forest City who was chairman of the commission.

A hearing to consider any objections to the decision was conducted at 9 a.m. Nov. 27 at the Buncombe County Courthouse, but it was not clear what legal standing such objections might have. The hearing was called by Judge Robert E. Gaines of Gastonia, who had previously granted a third 30-day extension in the preparation of the report.

The decision of the commission was made Nov. 19 during a meeting. For that meeting the Madison County member prepared a statement which included the following points:

*Madison County has collected taxes on the disputed property since 1851.

*Persons presently living on the property are receiving social welfare benefits from Madison County.

*Children who have lived on the property have attended schools in Madison County.

*More than thirty people have signed affidavits alleging that the property has historically been regarded as belonging in Madison County.

"It appears," said Edwards, "that the commission is going solely by the survey in making this decision, disregarding a good deal of other evidence. To me that's just like getting two doctors together and one says you have a toothache and the other says you have ap-

pendicitis. You just have to take your pick."

The package store in question, known as Peabody's Discount Center, is owned by Robert T. Soffield, Jr. and Edward J.R. Kirkpatrick. They were issued a permit by the state Alcoholic Beverage Control Board to sell beer at the store a year ago. The controversy has raged since then.

People in the community have objected to the package store because it is directly across the street from the Forks of Ivy Baptist Church, in a community comprised largely of elderly, non-drinking residents. According to the Rev. Ralph Hogan of that church, many residents resent the proximity of the store to the church and worry about driving past it during busy sales periods. Some 600 residents have signed petitions asking that the store be closed.

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After five and a half months of surveying and deliberating, a three-member commission has ruled that the package store in Forks of Ivy on the Madison-Buncombe County line is legally in Buncombe County.

The commission, consisting of one representative of Buncombe, one of Madison and one of Rutherford County, reached a split decision to Buncombe County Superior Court on Nov. 26. The dissenting vote was cast by Robert L. Edwards, the Madison County representative.

"According to the original terms that stated this commission," said Edwards, "the county's superintendent of schools, each of us had the right to hire another surveyor if we were not satisfied with the results of the original surveyor. I went to North Carolina State University and employed a professor by the name J.W. Horn; you can't get a more qualified person than that. He surveyed this