

HUGO'S PATH OF FURY



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JUILA SIMMONS is comforted by relatives after her friend Arthur McCloud was trapped in the collapsed basement of their Charleston, S.C. home. He was freed nine hours later.

SAVANNAH, Ga. — It took a phone call to bring home the terror of Hurricane Hugo to Peter Nistad.

He was one of the lucky ones who found out his family was safe in Charleston, S.C.

Nistad, 45, the owner of Charleston tugboat company, was in New York for a company meeting and when he heard Hurricane Hugo was headed for his Charleston home he sent his family to Greenville, S.C.

"They got out and they're fine," he said. "When I got through to the company line in Charleston I was told I had three pine trees in my house.

"One in the bedroom, the kitchen and in the garage."

Nistad's wife and two children are on the way to pick him up in Savannah, Ga. and then the family is going where it's safe.

"My employees told me there is no electricity or food in Charleston," he said.

Charleston is about 160 kilometres (100 miles) northeast of Savannah.

Yvonne Jones, 29, a Savannah car-rental employee, has "dozens of first and second cousins" in Charleston.

"I've been trying to get through since 7 a.m.," she said. "All I get is a recording that due to the hurricane all circuits are busy."

Susan Goodman, 28, of Charlotte, said a number of falling branches damaged her parents' home.

RAY SMITH

In Georgia



"There is no electricity but there is water," Goodman said.

In Charleston, Elizabeth Amory was told to leave her low-lying house but stayed because she feared for the safety of her four cats.

"The house sort of swayed all night," she said. "It was like being in a rocking chair. I didn't know how scared I was until this morning."

Jo Smith rode out the storm in her 100-year-old house, but said yesterday she wished she had left.

"I thought I was going to die," she said.

Thousands huddled in storm shelters and prayed for their safety as Hugo screamed through Charleston and sent 6-foot waves surging down streets as far as 16 kilometres (10 miles) inland.

At dawn yesterday, people got their first look at Hugo's destruction.

"There isn't a city block or a structure that hasn't had some damage," Charleston Mayor Joseph Riley said. "I don't think there could possibly be a stronger hurricane."



HOMEOWNERS TRY to salvage what little remains they can from their destroyed house in Charleston, S.C.