

Poor, black enclave still struggling two months after storm

By BRUCE SMITH
Associated Press Writer

MOUNT PLEASANT, S.C. -- In the poor, black enclave of Hamlin Beach, the air is acrid with mud and decaying marsh grass two months after Hurricane Hugo. Flies swarm over discarded furniture and clothing and tiny, tin-roofed shacks remain roofless.

Relief has been slow in coming to the rural hamlet of single-story homes nestled on a marsh in Mount Pleasant, across the Intra-coastal Waterway from the posh Wild Dunes resort on Isle of Palms.

The 600 residents, many descendants of slaves, wonder what to do about homes in ruins, piles of debris still stacked along the road and appliances rendered useless by a wall of seawater that accompanied the Sept. 21 fury.

"Folks are taking it real hard. They're depressed," said Isaac Manigault, surveying the remains of his home that was ripped from the foundation. "I've never seen anything like this," added Manigault, who rode out the last great hurricanes to hit the area -- Gracie and Hazel in the 1950s -- in that house.

Flies circled waterlogged mattresses, and broken chairs and basketball trophies remain scattered in the yard. A neighbor's home lies in splinters and marsh grass covers a car and a couple of pickups destroyed in the storm.

Manigault's 76-year-old mother, Mary Jane, braved 135 mph winds and chest-deep waters during the height of Hugo to walk more than a mile to an evacuation shelter. Her home was flooded, but she intends to rebuild.

"I don't know how, but I hope I can," said Mrs. Manigault, who is living temporarily in a mobile home. "I know the good Lord will take care of me."

Many in the enclave of poor and near-poor rely on faith to see them through the job of rebuilding. But faith will have to be augmented by temporal help.

"We still need building supplies, plywood, lumber and the like," said the Rev. A.J. Blake, pastor of

Goodwill AME Church, who is trying to get mobile homes for residents whose houses were destroyed or badly damaged.

Most did not have insurance to cover their losses. Of those who did, few had flood insurance to cover damage from the storm surge, which reached 17 feet in some places along the coast.

Assistance has reached the isolated community, but the response "is not as fast as it ought to be," Blake said, adding that many residents have not heard from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Compounding that problem is a reluctance by many to ask for help.

"You have a lot of pride among these people," he said. "We've had reporters come in from out of state and folks say, 'I don't want to be on TV. I don't want my picture in the newspaper.'"

For some, there is bitterness that relief shipments, slow in coming at first, have tapered off even more since attention was diverted to the northern California earthquake that struck Oct. 17.

"There are a lot more poor people in this area than in California, and we need the help bad," said Manigault, a plumber who lost most of his tools. FEMA gave him some money for living expenses and clothing and he has picked up some additional money doing odd jobs. He will rebuild, but not in the same spot.

"I'm too scared to come back. You never know what will happen in the future." His son, however, hopes to rebuild on the family homestead.

A short distance away, Elizabeth Edwards' house is little more than a shattered framework of lumber. A ceiling fan and chandelier hang precariously from the rafters. Ms. Edwards has moved into a mobile home donated by a Boone Christian aid group, Samaritan's Purse, until her home can be rebuilt.

"There's nothing we can do but trust in the Lord. It could have been worse," she said. "We just take it as it comes."

Some blacks frustrated by an American dream not their own

By MICHAEL MORAN
Associated Press Writer

NEWARK, N.J. -- A majority of residents trace ancestry to people unwillingly brought to America in chains. Not surprisingly, there is little nostalgia for the concept of this nation as a great melting pot.

"It's a lot easier to change your name when you get to America than the color of your skin," said Howard Taylor, a Princeton University sociologist and former head of the school's Afro-American studies program. "There is ongoing resentment on the part of the black community for what they perceive as the advancement of other immigrant groups at their expense."

Taylor and other experts say institutional bigotry in the United States, linked primarily to skin color, has prevented blacks from following in the footsteps of the Irish, Poles, Jews and other immigrant groups.

No one disputes that black Americans have made strides in the past 20 years toward overcoming the systematic discrimination that denied them access to so much.

And in many ways, Newark was a catalyst for that progress, from the explosive expression of rage in 1967's race riots to the 1970 election of Kenneth Gibson as the first black mayor of a major American city.

But economic and social progress for blacks in New Jersey and nationwide has been uneven, experts say. Often it must be forced on the majority white population by court orders and discrimination suits.

David Surrey, an urban affairs professor at St. Peter's College in Jersey City, said black resentment of the upwardly mobile immigrant can be traced to the racism directed at American blacks by segments of white society.

"Hiring patterns in institutions traditionally open to immigrants, like police, fire and education jobs, continue to leave blacks out," said Surrey. "For blacks, that leaves the distinct impression that the deck is stacked against them."

Just this month, Camden's police department and its union agreed to a plan to promote three blacks and a Hispanic officer, pending the outcome of a discrimination suit filed by minority officers. The agreement was the result of a two-year legal battle.

Please see page A10



Photo by Mike Cunningham

Free At Last!

A coalition of Darryl Hunt (second from left) supporters join him at Emmanuel Baptist shortly after his release from Forsyth County Jail Thanksgiving eve. John Mendez (far left) thanked God for what he called Mr. Hunt's "moment of victory." The state Supreme Court overturned Mr. Hunt's two murder convictions in the deaths of Deborah B. Sykes and Arthur Lee Wilson. A judge set his bond at \$50,000 earlier this month. Attorney Larry D. Little (second from right) contacted Benjamin Chavis (far right), executive director of the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ. Mr. Chavis brought a check for \$50,000 from the National Conference on Churches. Mr. Hunt, who is a free man for the first time in nearly five years, is living with Khalid Griggs, his muslim brother. District Attorney Dean Bowman of Surry County has yet to decide whether he will retry Mr. Hunt in the Sykes rape and murder. District Attorney Warren Sparrow has already said he will retry the Wilson case.

Holiday Traditions Begin At Thruway

TOMORROW EVENING

You are invited to share the beginning of a new

Holiday Tradition

at

Thruway Center

Friday, December 1st
6-9 P.M. Only

- Very special values - 3 hours only
- Fashion showings
- Special holiday musical entertainment
- Refreshments
- Door prizes, giveaways

The Winston-Salem Chronicle is published every Thursday by the Winston-Salem Chronicle Publishing Co. Inc., 617 N. Liberty St. Mailing address: Post Office Box 3154, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27102.

Phone: 722-8624. FAX: (919) 723-9173. Second-class postage paid at Winston-Salem, N.C. 27102.

The Winston-Salem Chronicle is a charter member of the Newsfinder service of the Associated Press and a member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations, the National Newspaper Publishers Association, the North Carolina Press Association and the North Carolina Black Publishers Association.

Subscription: \$18.52 per year, payable in advance (North Carolina sales tax included). Please add \$5.00 for out-of-town delivery. PUBLICATION USPS NO. 067910.

Thruway

C · E · N · T · E · R

SOUTH STRATFORD ROAD WINSTON-SALEM