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Mother, Son, and His Wife Found Slain in Old Town

By John Downey
Staff Writer



Staff Photo by Charlie Anderson

Law enforcement and emergency vehicles remained at the Newton home on Valley Road much of the day yesterday.

The Newsoms Were Held in High Regard

By Tracie Gore
Staff Writer

The porch lights burning at the front door yesterday afternoon made it a Newsom's house located particularly inviting. Florence Newton, 61, was in the garden and over-looked trees shaded her garden.

But nobody was enjoying the home and the porch that night when she had made Mrs. Newton's 40th birthday. The woman, 61, was in the garden and over-looked trees shaded her garden.

"It's an absolute nightmare," said Mary Newton, a neighbor who shared with Mrs. Newton her love of gardening. "I'll tell you the place in the world I would not expect something like to happen. It was Mrs. Newton's house."

Mrs. Newton had been a member of Bethesda Bible Church since 1948, she taught Bible classes and was known for her homemade chicken pies.

The husband, Robert M. Newton Sr., died of natural causes at their home in 1978. He had been a tobacco auctioneer and owned a business.

The bodies of Mrs. Newton, her son, Robert M. Newton Jr., 40, and his wife, Florence Sharp Newton, 41, were found at the Old Town home late Sunday night by Mrs. Newton's family doctor, Robert and Florence Newton, lived at 101 Patience Road in Greensboro. They had two children.

Robert Newton called the police to check on Mrs. Newton after she missed church on Sunday and didn't answer telephone calls. The Newtons were apparently killed sometime over the weekend.

Her sister, the Rev. John Gander, last saw her on Tuesday when she brought in the church newspaper she had saved for a paper drive to work, a recent edition.

"When she didn't come to morning services," Gander said, "we were worried. When she wasn't going to church, we would let someone know."

Florence Newton was a retired school teacher and the widow of Sgt. R. B. Sharp, who became chief justice of the N.C. Supreme Court. Robert Newton Sr. was a tobacco auctioneer and owned a business. He had been a tobacco auctioneer and owned a business.

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about," Mrs. Setton said. "But we didn't worry about her on weekends because Bob and Florence were there. And look what happened."

Gander said yesterday that when he looked into the house from a rear door, he could see Hattie Newton lying on a sofa in a sofa in the living room. She was covered by an afghan, he said, and the television set was on.

"It looked like she had been sleeping and they just came in and shot her," he said. "I don't think she even woke up."

Florence Newton was lying on the living room floor near her. Gander said Newton was in the hallway and was not seen until officers went in the house.

Florence Newton was the widow of Judge M. Sharp, former Chief Justice of the N.C. Supreme Court. Her husband was a consulting engineer in private business in Greensboro and a former employee of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. in Winston-Salem. Hattie Newton was the widow of R.M. Newton, a partner in the Winston-Salem Tobacco Warehouse, who died in 1968.

The glass in the rear store door was broken, and Gander said glass was scattered inside the door.

Neighbors said they had been told by Captain that the house had been ransacked. They also said that the three may have been killed as early as Sunday night.

But Gander would not comment on the timing of the deaths or what resulted in the house was in.

"I won't speculate," Gander said. "It was the morning of a very difficult case. The investigation is continuing and I am not going to say anything until we know the results."

He would not confirm what caused the people were found in or any other way that they had been shot. He said that answering those questions would also be speculation.

Gander asked the Hattie Newtons of investigation to help his department, to the case. District Attorney Donald R. Tisdale was also called in the Newton house yesterday morning by investigation. But he also declined to comment on the case.

Neighbors said that Mrs. Newton's house was being searched with an afghan so that

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ROBERT M. NEWTON
... 246 Photo



HATTIE NEWTON