

that among her many beautiful flowers, the chrysanthemum appeared to be her favorite. When she was able to pursue gardening, she made countless gifts to friends of flowers and her celebrated homemade relishes and pickles. Mr. Blanton concluded his warm profile, "she is, I believe, the most respected and beloved citizen of our town, and incidentally, our finest gardener."

I doubt that any person who ever saw the Norris House will ever forget its imposing dignity. Even when it declined into deserted semi-ruin, it remained an impressive structure, a very special Apex landmark. Those of us who remember it will never pass by its vacated space without envisioning what the Norris House must have been in its days of inhabited grandeur, and feeling the keenest regret that all efforts to preserve it so that it might be restored were swept aside. When a landmark that has been an integral part of the historical fabric of a town is untimely demolished, it leaves an aching void. The poet Edwin Markham captured that emotion in his poignant eulogy for Abraham Lincoln: "As when a kingly cedar green with boughs/ Goes down with a great shout upon the hills,/ And leaves a lonesome place against the sky." For those of us Apex residents who remember the Norris House, there is a lonesome place at 100 South Elm Street.

October 23, 2001

