

A DAY AT DANADA

Her eyes roamed the vast sweep of prairie grasses like rippling ocean waves. Early twilight intensified the green. An intermittent breeze ruffled wheat and corn rows to the west and acres of trees beyond. She paused often as she approached the stables, smiling at the soft whinny she recognized as her favorite brood mare. Sometimes she had to stand still and mentally pinch herself into belief-- so much bounty and beauty belonged to her and her gentleman farmer. Knowing how blessed they were, they had resolved to always give back. Generously and often.

How long had they been in their evergrowing paradise, each day a new scene, new adventure? She caught her breath. Hard to believe they bought the first acreage in '29. Years later, just back from an exciting day at Arlington, she told Dan she wanted a race horse. He grinned, then bought her eight yearling thoroughbreds. She remembered raising good broodmares and foals. They were fortunate in finding good trainers and the Rice colors, cerise and white won many honors at the tracks. The Ada L. Rice Racing Stables became well-known.

Oh, they still raised cows, chickens, draft animals and dogs, and she still loved to paint and be a story teller, but her heart was saddled to the sleek backs, flying manes and lightning hoofs of her first love. And her secret dream of winning at Churchill Downs.

In 1965, it came true. Her three-year-old bay with the white star on his head was first under the wire in the Run for the Roses. Lucky Debonair won the Kentucky Derby and the world's most coveted gold trophy. In 1966, his stablemate, Advocator, lost it by only a neck.

Now was a new decade, the early '70s as she thought how gracious time had been to them, now in their seventies. We need to make definite plans for the future, she nodded, gazing blueward at the fading light. Ada walked on through the fields beyond the paddocks, her head bowed in gratitude for their many blessings and for the encompassing beauty of Danada, their home.

--Glenna Holloway