

The

FLORIDA HORSE

April 1997

Official publication of the Florida Thoroughbred Breeders' and Owners' Association

\$3.00



IN THIS ISSUE: FLORIDA-BREDS AND THE CLASSICS ■ SHOW US THE MONEY:CHRIMS

FLORIDA-BREDS

by Cynthia McFarland

Without a doubt, the Kentucky Derby stands as the world's most recognized horse race. There are richer races, longer races, races which have been run for more years than the Derby. Yet when it comes down to prestige and glory, no owner of a three-year-old Thoroughbred could hope to win a race more history-making than the famed Run for the Roses.

Five Florida-Breds have stood in the Churchill Downs winner's circle on that first Saturday in May — Needles (1956), Carry Back (1961), Foolish Pleasure (1975), Affirmed (1978) and Unbridled (1990)

Florida's fourth Kentucky Derby winner, Affirmed, holds the distinction of being one of only 11 Triple Crown winners and the last to achieve the feat. We will take a closer look at the remarkable accomplishments of this Florida-Bred champion in Florida-Breds And The Classics: Part II in the May issue.

NEEDLES

'53 bay colt, by *Ponder--
Noodle Soup*, by *Jack High*
Breeder: *W. E. Leach*
Owner: *D & H Stable*
Trainer: *Hugh Fontaine*

Before Needles, no Florida-Bred had even run in the Kentucky Derby, let alone walked away with the coveted blanket of roses. Needles would change the way the world looked at Florida horses, and make an impact on the Thoroughbred industry in his home state that is felt to this present day.

Bred by William Leach, Needles was foaled on April 29, 1953, at the Leaches' Dickey Stables in Ocala. Needles' dam, Noodle Soup, had done nothing on the track to make anyone stand up and take notice. The daughter of Jack High had been raced lightly, and had only one win to her credit, that as a two year old at Rockingham Park where she paid almost 40 to 1. Noodle Soup ended her career in the ranks of \$3,000 claimers, with

total earnings of just \$1,975.

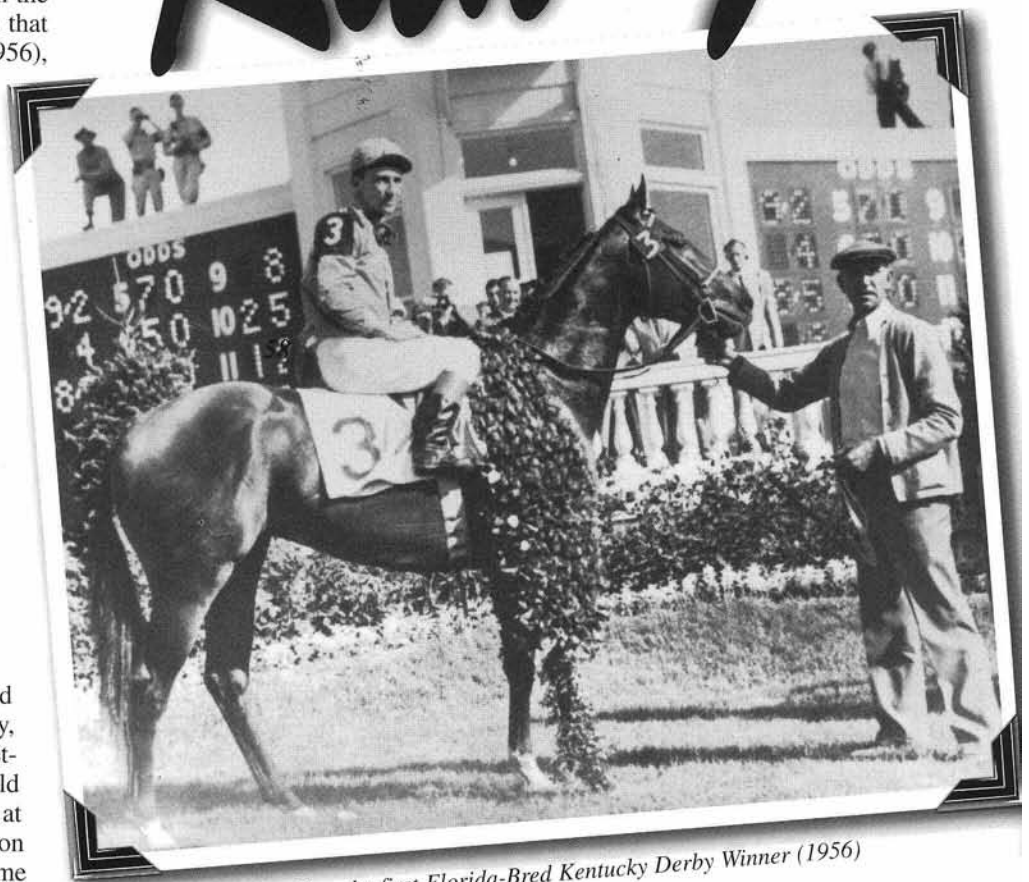
However, Needles' sire Ponder had just won the 1949 Kentucky Derby and retired with a bankroll of \$541,275, most impressive in those days. Ponder was a first-crop foal and the first stakes winner for his sire, Pensive, winner of the Kentucky Derby in 1944.

Five weeks after he was born, Noodle Soup's young foal contracted equine pneumonia, running a high fever

for weeks. Attentive care, countless injections and oxygen finally saved the bay colt's life, and he was christened "Needles", thanks to the many injections he received during his illness. Some would say Needles was meant to survive because he had a destiny to fulfill, though no one knew it at the time.

As a yearling, Needles was broken with approximately 20 other head at Dickey Stables where a young Buddy

Run For



Needles, the first Florida-Bred Kentucky Derby Winner (1956)

the way he could. Needles hadn't really been challenged and I don't think we were unrealistic to expect him to win."

And win Needles did, before the largest crowd in Derby history, and one that made him the favorite above 16 other starters. Needles was back in 16th position going into the backstretch, but a monumental stretch run put him ahead by 3/4 of a length at the wire.

Needles would go on to place second in the Preakness Stakes and then won the Belmont Stakes. Champion Three-Year-Old Colt of 1956, Needles finished the season with four wins and two seconds in eight starts. He raced only three times at four, ending his career with typical class as he won the Ft. Lauderdale Handicap and equaled the track record. Needles retired with total career earnings of \$600,355. In 21 starts, he had 11 wins, three seconds and three thirds.

Looking back, Heath believes the credit belongs to trainer Hugh Fontaine and to Needles himself. "Needles ran all the classics and did well. He never ran a bad one. He had such a will to win."

Dudley and Heath kept their Florida-Bred in his home state where he stood his entire career at Bonnie Heath Farm in Ocala. He sired 20 crops, which included 233 winners and 21 stakes winners. Among them were Irish Rebellion (\$224,877), Barking Steeple (\$166,959), Mary L. (\$153,786), Needles N Pens (\$135,432), Singing Needle (\$123,694) and Slystitch

(\$122,492).

Needles died in 1984 at the age of 31.

No one can argue that Needles' great success had an enormously positive impact on Florida's Thoroughbred industry. One can only hope that the horse who was largely responsible for putting Florida on the map will soon be recognized with a well-deserved place in the Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame at Saratoga.

"He should be there and we certainly hope to see this in the near future. He damn sure earned it," says Heath proudly.

CARRY BACK

'58 brown colt, by Saggy--Joppy,
by Star Blen

Breeder: Jack Price

Owner: Katherine Price

Trainer: Jack Price

The second Florida-Bred to leave hoof-prints in the winner's circle at Churchill Downs on Derby Day was Carry Back. Bred and trained by Jack A. Price, the colt was owned by Dorchester Farm Stable, the farm established by Price and wife, Katherine.

In 1955, Price retired from the successful machinery company he founded in Cleveland, Ohio, and whole-heartedly began training the stable of horses he had recently accumulated. One year later — the same year that Needles won the Kentucky Derby — the Prices shipped their first group

of yearlings to Florida for training at Ocala Stud. Two stakes winners came from this group, Stay Smoochie and Bang Up. Barely a year later, the Prices followed their horses south and moved to the Sunshine State themselves.

Judging on pedigree and first impressions, one might say Carry Back hailed from the "wrong side of the tracks." His sire was Saggy, who, despite a less than impressive name had been a decent runner, with the distinction of being the only horse to defeat Citation during his three-year-old campaign. Only a mediocre success at stud, Saggy stood for a \$500 fee; Carry Back was the result of a "bargain" breeding arrangement in which Price bred three mares to the stallion for \$1,200.

Carry Back's dam had also been christened with an unusual name — Joppy. The daughter of Star Blen had less than a stellar pedigree, and as a racehorse she earned the dubious reputation of being difficult in the gate and refusing to break. Carry Back was her second foal; her first, Beautiful A.M., had been a winner at two.

Carry Back was born April 16, 1958. Fortunately for the little brown colt, the Prices declined to use any combination of sire and dam's names when it came time to choose a name; instead he was named for a tax loophole. An Ocala Star Banner article dated November 19, 1961, quoted Joe O'Farrell as saying, "The Prices were losing so much money on their racehorses, they

decided if this new one turned into a winner, they'd take the winnings and carry them back on their losses!"

Those who were familiar with Carry Back in his early days were less than impressed. The colt stood a diminutive 13 hands as a yearling. In fact, even when full grown he was just 15.1 hands and weighed in at less than 1,000 pounds.

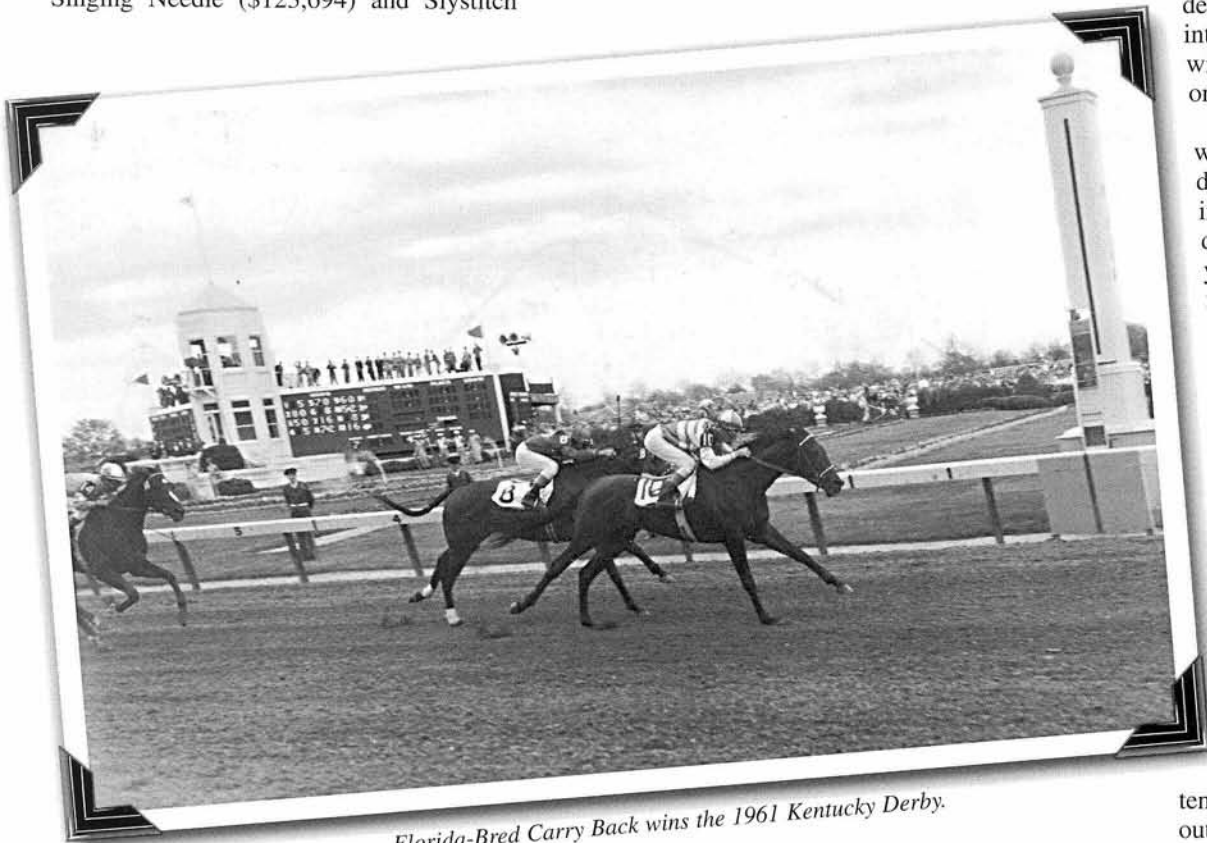
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O'Farrell would later admit to reporters, "I honestly didn't think he'd make a good race horse, much less a great one."

As an early two year old, Carry Back's racing career was launched on January 29, 1960.

Despite a bad start and a tenth place finish his first time out, the colt went on to break his maiden in his next race.

(Continued on page 18)



Florida-Bred Carry Back wins the 1961 Kentucky Derby.

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(Continued on page 18)



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(Continued from page 16)

Jack Price was in the racing business to make money. He campaigned the two-year-old Carry Back heavily and with remarkable success. In an incredible 21 starts at two, the colt captured five firsts, four seconds and four thirds, counting among his victories a win in the \$288,000 Garden State Stakes, then the world's richest race for two year olds. He earned a place in the history books as Florida's leading money-winning two year old, with \$286,299 in earnings.

As a three year old, Carry Back would command more coverage in American newspapers and magazines than any other racehorse in the country. With characteristic candor and humor, Price did his part to keep sports writers' pens scribbling. By the time the first Saturday in May had rolled around, Carry Back had earned his nickname as "the people's choice". Earlier in his three-year-old season, he had gone up against Fred Hooper's game horse, Crozier, in several races; only twice did Crozier come out on top. Carry Back was victorious in both the prestigious Flamingo Stakes and the Florida Derby, and finished a close second to Globemaster in the Wood Memorial.

On Derby Day, Carry Back ran his typical come-from-behind race, made even more impressive because of his eleventh-place position after starting from post number 14. The race caller actually announced, "Carry Back will not make it today," when the horses were on the backstretch. But Carry Back's blazing stretch run wore down Crozier and the rest of the field, putting him ahead by three-quarters of a length at the wire. On a track labeled as "good", Carry Back won the 87th Kentucky Derby in the time of 2:04 to earn the winner's share of \$120,500.

Jockey John Sellers began riding Carry Back in October of the colt's two-year-old season and all through his three-year-old races. Sellers was only 22, (in his own words, "just a kid and wet behind the ears"), when he won the Kentucky Derby aboard Carry Back in 1961.

"Jack and Katherine (Price) were absolutely super people," remembers Sellers. "They had Shoemaker and all the top riders in the country trying to get the mount for the Derby, but they stuck with me."

Sellers recalls that turf writers often criticized him for taking Carry Back wide around horses, but Sellers knew his colt. "He didn't like to run inside horses. I just let him do his own thing."

John Sellers rode in the Kentucky Derby a total of seven times through the years, but that first aboard Carry Back would be his only Derby win; he retired from race riding in 1980. Now a bloodstock agent, Sellers resides less than two blocks from Gulfstream Park and is happy to call Florida

home permanently. "The best two-year-old market in the country is in Florida," he states.

Carry Back went on to win the Preakness Stakes, but his Triple Crown hopes were dashed when he was injured in the Belmont Stakes and finished back in seventh place. After a two-month layoff, the brown colt was back on the campaign trail and defeated Belmont Stakes winner Sherluck when they met in the Jerome Handicap.

At the conclusion of his three-year-old season, Carry Back had gone to the post a total of 37 times in two years, winning 14 of those races and bankrolling \$851,648. He was voted Champion Three-Year-Old Colt in 1961 and was the richest horse still racing at the time. Carry Back would return to the track as a four year old and come home victorious in the Metropolitan Mile ahead of Kelso, two-time Horse of the Year.

Florida's first millionaire, Carry Back retired in 1962 with 13 stakes wins and 18 stakes placings. Price then sent his champion to the breeding shed where the horse covered 30 mares. Carry Back had been kept in light training and after his first breeding season, he returned to the racetrack. After placing in two handicaps, then finishing off the board in his next two starts, Carry Back was retired for good after he won the Trenton Handicap.

Sellers rode the horse in this last race. "He took the lead going past the half-mile pole," he remembers. "It was the best race he ever ran. He won it so easily."

In a remarkable 61 starts, the little brown colt from the wrong side of the tracks earned \$1,241,165 with 21 wins, 11 seconds and 11 thirds.

During his career at stud, Carry Back sired 283 foals of racing age, 188 of which were winners. His runners earned a total of \$5,212,406. Among his blacktype winners were Sharp Gary (\$535,198), Taken Aback (\$216,139), Back In Paris (\$154,366), Rockem Back (\$139,529), Spire (\$139,445) and Toter Back (\$139,260).

Four or five years after Carry Back was retired to stud, Sellers stopped by the farm to visit his old friend. Carry Back came running up to the fence, but he had his ears back and Sellers recalled the horse had always been somewhat "nippy" and didn't care much for being petted. "I talked to him and his ears came up. Then he let me pet him. That horse knew me," Sellers recalls fondly.

Carry Back was elected to the Hall of Fame in 1975. He died on March 24, 1983, at the age of 25.

"He was our son, a member of our family," recalled Jack Price at the time. "He was a terrific competitor and taught us the meaning of gameness."

FOOLISH PLEASURE

'72 bay colt, by *What a Pleasure--*

Fool-Me-Not, by *Tom Fool*

Breeder: Waldemar Farms

Owner: John L. Greer

Trainer: LeRoy Jolley

When analyzing the contenders for the 101st Run for the Roses, one sports writer noted, "If Foolish Pleasure's pedigree can get him to the eighth pole, his demonstrable grit should buy that extra furlong." Florida's third Kentucky Derby winner would prove he did have the necessary ability and determination.

Foolish Pleasure was owned by John L. Greer, a successful businessman from Knoxville, Tennessee. Considered a "little owner" among the Thoroughbred ranks, Greer only had a handful of horses — four or five at a time — in his racing stable, bought a couple yearlings a year and owned just a few broodmares.

Bred by Waldemar Farms, Foolish Pleasure was by *What a Pleasure* out of *Fool-Me-Not*, a *Tom Fool* mare who was herself a winner and a stakes producer. Foolish Pleasure was purchased by Greer for \$20,000 at the Saratoga yearling sale. Trainer LeRoy Jolley and his father, the veteran trainer Moody Jolley, selected the colt. Foolish Pleasure then returned to Florida where he was broken under the direction of Marty Hershe at Early Bird Farm.

"We all liked the breeding, of course," recalled Greer in a post-Derby interview, "the Bold Ruler line on top, and out of a *Tom Fool* mare. Generally, I like performance more than pedigree. By performance, I mean out of a mare that could run and by a stallion that was sound. You see a lot of beautifully bred horses that just are not sound; pedigree is not going to win races if they are not sound enough to race."

At the time, Joe King was manager of Waldemar Farms, which also produced Florida-Bred Eclipse Champions *Honest Pleasure* and *Tasso*. Waldemar Farms was strictly into breeding and selling; the only horses they raced were a few that didn't sell as they'd expected.

King remembers Foolish Pleasure as a "real good looking colt overall, although he didn't have great conformation if you picked him apart and wasn't blessed with the sweetest disposition." The colt's less than perfect conformation proved not to be a factor when he went to the races.

"We had no idea he'd be that good. If I'd known he was going to be that good, I'd have bought him," King recalls with a chuckle.

Under the capable training of LeRoy Jolley, Foolish Pleasure had an undefeated two-year-old season, counting among his



Florida-Bred Foolish Pleasure captures 1975 Kentucky Derby.

stakes wins the Dover (G3), Tremont (G3), Sapling (G1), Cowdin (G2) and the Champagne (G1). He was voted Champion Two-Year-Old Colt of 1974.

As a three year old, Foolish Pleasure won the Flamingo Satkes, but the previously unbeaten colt got his first taste of defeat when he finished third in the Florida Derby. Two days later, Greer announced that Foolish Pleasure had lost most of the frogs in both front hooves when they were peeled back during the race. The colt recovered nicely in time to win the Wood Memorial (G1), equaling his grandsire Bold Ruler's stakes record of 1:48 4/5.

"Really, I'm about as proud of his one losing race as I am any of his winning races. I believe he showed more courage in the Florida Derby than in any of his other races," Greer was quoted in a Blood Horse interview in May, 1975.

"We didn't want to publicize the extent of his injury at the time and have people thinking we were trying to come up with an excuse, but I really believe he showed more courage running the way he did that day he lost than he did in any of his winning races. You have to admire his great courage; he has shown it in all his races — maybe best of all in that one he lost."

Foolish Pleasure went into the 101st Kentucky Derby as part of a 15-horse field which included such colts as Master Derby,

Diabolo, Avatar, Prince Thou Art and Bombay Duck. Foolish Pleasure won strongly by 1-3/4 lengths in the time of 2:02, taking home the winner's share of \$209,600 to increase his earnings to \$673,515.

Foolish Pleasure would be a runnerup in both the Preakness and the Belmont. Later that summer he challenged Filly Triple Crown winner, Ruffian, in a match and would cross the finish line alone after the game, but ill-fated filly tragically broke down.

In 1976, Foolish Pleasure thrilled fans when he won the Suburban Handicap (G1) by a nose over Forego. He raced twice more before retiring that year with earnings of \$1, 216,705 — after winning 16 of 26 total starts — making him racing's 11th all-time earner at the time.

Foolish Pleasure began his breeding career at Greentree Stud near Lexington and led all first crop sires by progeny earnings in 1980. He later stood at Mint Lane Farm and Spendthrift Farm before being sent to Kerr Stock Farm in California. He sired 286 winners, including 37 stakes winners. Among these were millionaire Kiri's Clown (\$1,005,469), Maudlin (\$423,789), Sun Master (\$607,952), Foligno (\$503,787), and grade I winners Marfa (\$407,944) and Filago (\$889,265). He was also the sire of three champions: Baiser Vole, Bayford and What Nonsense.

Foolish Pleasure's last home was at Horseshoe Ranch in Wyoming where he pasture-bred mares for two seasons. The stallion died of a ruptured intestine in November, 1994, at the age of 22.

Foolish Pleasure took his place among racing greats when he was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1995.

UNBRIDLED

'87 bay colt, by *Fappiano--Gana Facil*,
by **Le Fabuleux*

Breeder: Tartan Farm

Owner: Frances A. Genter

Trainer: Carl Nafzger

No one who witnessed Unbridled's victory in the 116th Run for the Roses will forget the stirring scene as trainer Carl Nafzger called the race for his client and friend, 92-year-old Mrs. Frances Genter.

"He won it, Mrs. Genter! He won it! You've won the Kentucky Derby!" shouted an ecstatic Nafzger as Unbridled cruised to victory. On their best day, racing promoters couldn't have planned such a poignant and appealing display of the sport. And there it was, being broadcast live into the homes of millions of viewers.

Long before Unbridled, Frances Genter had established ties with W. L. McKnight's Tartan Farms in Ocala; the history of Tartan and the Genter stable have long been intertwined. Harold and Frances Genter entered racing in 1939, but it wasn't until their fine



Florida-Bred Unbridled was all alone at the wire in the 1990 Kentucky Derby.

two year old, Rough'n Tumble, debuted in 1950 that they had a major winner. Rough'n Tumble would later stand at Ocala Stud, where he sired champions Dr. Fager and My Dear Girl.

The Genters raced the outstanding My Dear Girl, who would later become the dam of In Reality, a son of the Tartan stallion, Intentionally. In Reality would stand much of his stud career at Tartan Farms. The John Nerud-bred Fappiano is the sire of Unbridled, who also has Dr. Fager, Rough'n Tumble, In Reality and My Dear Girl in his ancestry.

In November, 1987, Genter purchased Unbridled's dam, Gana Facil, when Tartan Farms and Hall of Fame trainer Nerud dispersed nearly 200 horses at Fasig-Tipton Kentucky. Unbridled was a \$70,000 weanling purchase.

Bryan Howlett of Tartan Farms remembers Unbridled's early days at the farm. "He was one of our top weanlings that year. From the time he was born until we weaned him, he was one of our top picks. He was a very well-balanced colt. Even as a foal, he had a real 'professional' attitude."

Unbridled trained under Carl Nafzger and became the eighth stakes winner Nafzger trained for Mrs. Genter. After winning his first start at two, the colt placed in four stakes races, including a second in the In Reality division of the Florida Stallion Stakes. He then had an impressive five-length win in the What a Pleasure Stakes, going 1-1/16 miles.

In his three-year-old debut, Unbridled ran fifth in the Tropical Park Derby (G2), then finished a game third in the Fountain of Youth Stakes (G2). The Florida Derby (G1), however, was another story; Unbridled won it by four lengths. The colt ran third in the Blue Grass (G2), then it was on to Churchill Downs.

In the 116th Run for the Roses, Unbridled was caught in tight quarters at the start, but soon settled into his stride, and went on to win by three and a half lengths in a time of 2:02. Nafzger has only sent one horse to the post on Derby Day and, thanks to Unbridled, the trainer made a trip to the winner's circle on that same occasion.

Unbridled's three-year-old campaign continued with a second in the Preakness Stakes to Derby runnerup, Summer Squall. Unplaced in the Belmont Stakes, Unbridled then won an allowance race and ran second in two grade-one stakes — the Secretariat and the Super Derby. He finished the year with a victory in the Breeders' Cup Classic (G1), and was voted Champion Three-Year-Old Colt of 1990.

During his four-year-old season, Unbridled went to the post seven times. Nafzger considers his victory in the Deputy Minister Handicap, when he defeated Housebuster and Shuttleman, one of the horse's greatest races.

"His three best races would have to be the Kentucky Derby, the Breeders' Cup Classic and the Deputy Minister," recalls Nafzger, "but the Deputy Minister was probably his most awesome race. He was 15 lengths behind and then came on to win by three over champion sprinter Housebuster. He beat a champion at his own game."

Unbridled captured an allowance race later that summer, then ran third in the Pacific Classic, and finished second in the Fayette Handicap (G2) to familiar rival Summer Squall. In his final career start, Unbridled returned to contest the Breeders' Cup Classic, finishing third to winner Black Tie Affair(Ire).

The game Tartan Farms-bred son of Fappiano retired with earnings of

\$4,489,475, and tops the list of Florida-Bred millionaires.

"Unbridled was the best horse I've ever trained," says Nafzger without hesitation. "You get good horses, but you don't get many Cigars or Unbridleds." Nafzger adds that Unbridled had a tremendous disposition. "Most good horses like people. He loved kids. He had more kids on his back than he did jockeys."

The Genter Stable dispersed in 1995, not long after Mrs. Genter passed away in 1992. Nafzger still speaks of Frances Genter with great fondness and respect. "What you saw there on television was exactly what she was. She was everybody's mother and grandmother. She was a lady beyond ladies."

Unbridled currently stands in Kentucky at Claiborne Farm. Nafzger notes that the stallion has already proven himself by siring horses with the conformation, soundness, ability and attitude necessary to succeed on the racetrack. At present, Unbridled is the sire of 99 foals of racing age and has already been represented by 1996 Kentucky Derby winner and millionaire, Grindstone. He is also the sire of graded stakes-winning millionaire Unbridled's Song, winner of the Florida Derby, Breeders' Cup Juvenile and Wood Memorial.

Unbridled's winning share of the Kentucky Derby purse was \$581,000. Thirty-four years earlier, Needles took home \$123,450 for winning the same race.

Far beyond purses, much has changed through the years. Florida-Breds have made a name for themselves as worthy and formidable competitors in top races across the continent and around the world. To those horses who paved the way, we owe a debt of gratitude. □