

The Artist's Almanac
March 2009

.....daffodils
*That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty*
Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*

This morning the daffodils take the wet March snow, the schools are closed for the day, and thousands of Mothers scramble for arrangements as the children whoop.

With sleet, heat, drying winds, thunder, and driving rains, March is as volatile as today's markets, and we can only hope all the swirling weather patterns do not develop into another tornado such as the ones we have suffered the last two years. The economic tornado sweeping away our jobs and our retirement plans is bad enough; spare us the roof over our heads.

Spring comes suddenly and passes too soon to summer's heat. But today is all promise: willows show green and the blossoming fruit trees risk a late freeze. Our roses are flourishing tender new growth, and require a hard first pruning for the season.



Last Spring's Tulips

The deer have noticed the tender new growth and they grow bolder and more numerous. But they have made a serious mistake this year. They have cropped the shoots of all the tulips my wife planted last year. I doubt the red pepper and chili powder she sprinkled on the forlorn stumps will do any more good than closing the proverbial barn door.

Wildlife begins as adorable, then turns brazen, and finally, moves in as unwelcome guests. Raccoons open trash cans and shred plastic bags and contents over the yard. A coyote took Tufts, our beautiful cat, and, Hunter, her twin has been in lonely mourning since. The seed we put out for the songbirds attracts pesky squirrels and a metropolis of moles.

When the turkeys invaded our patio to litter and to preen themselves in the reflection of our windows, they were not welcomed. Now large flocks of them block a main thoroughfare a mile from our house, sauntering between homes where they are fed, too stupid to move out of the way. The same Tennessee Wildlife Agency that imported them will, at the request of an overrun landowner, net and remove them to another landowner, much as they do black bears in the Smokies. Canada geese that were brought here and that no longer migrate create similar problems, and can be aggressive, as well.



These cute deer pose even bigger problems to humans, and they are growing. In the 1950s, the Tennessee Wildlife Agency began importing whitetail deer into the area. They can be a deadly menace to road traffic, and are invisible at dusk. They harbor the dangerous deer tick, which last summer cost me a day in the emergency room and two anxious weeks of waiting on a lab culture which, fortunately, was negative. Deer tick fever is a crippling, painful, chronic and incurable malady, but not all bitten contract it. Parents should check their children for this tiny insect and think twice before putting out salt blocks.

Fireworks and BB guns no longer deter our deer. They look at us with curiosity, waiting to be fed. I am thinking of borrowing a paint ball gun from my warrior grandsons and marking first offenders. The pellets hurt, but do not injure.

We no longer eat what we kill. Once, in leaner times we fed off the wild game around us; now, in fat times the game we imported feeds off us. Perhaps the economic storms sweeping our land will change that back, back to a simpler life, restoring a natural balance to nature. And to our other needs, and wishes, as well.

Book and Venues

View the prospectus for our forthcoming book, [*The Founding of the Cumberland Settlements*](#). (This is a PDF file and you will need Adobe Reader to open it. Most of you probably already have the program on your computer; if not, you can [download it free here](#))

Founding of the Cumberland Settlements

The First Atlas 1779-1804
SHOWING WHO CAME, HOW THEY CAME, AND WHERE THEY PUT DOWN ROOTS

Features include:

- 100 color pages (plus 1,000 hand-drawn, looking-through-the-colors) laid out in a modern style.
- A compact disk with more maps and original survey maps of 1,000 acres. Original survey documents and books of the late 18th and early 19th centuries will be provided for those who want a complete library of these original survey documents.
- A complete listing of what became each of the 44 signers of the Cumberland Compact.
- A complete listing of every location and citizen.
- Charts and graphs of population, migration, and demographics, with flow from the Cumberland Compact.
- Twenty-eight pages of pioneer road maps, showing backroads and side trails, Indian villages, and pioneer forts and stations.
- Twenty-seven pages of color photos of pioneer roads, showing the way they were used to transport goods and people to the west.
- Charts and maps showing dates and locations of 14,000+ settler deaths.
- Maps of the area, including the area, and extensive photographs, with historical context of the area, 1779-1804.

This is a tale told by survivors — an epic, related by those who explored and hacked out a way through a howling wilderness, built cabins, cleared land, planted crops, and fought for survival against European armies and the tribal nations. They formed their own government, started out justice and mercy, and, ultimately survived. We, their children, and those who came after, live today to enjoy this rich and verdant land where all are free.

This is how they did it.

This is a 100-page book of 100 color photographs that describes every aspect of the lives of the settlers over an entire century west of today's Middle Tennessee, including all or parts of Davidson, Sumner, Robertson, Williamson, Montgomery, Smith, Cherokee, Trousdale, Smith, Harco, and Jackson Counties.

The Founding of the Cumberland Settlements prospectus

Gallatin Junior Service League – Tenth Annual Art in Bloom Show – March 27-28, 2009, Bluegrass Country Club, Hendersonville, Tennessee

Fall Into Art – Third Annual Art Show benefiting Hendersonville High School's Academic and Arts Program, October 2-4, 2009