

it gave me. Excavating the palings, silverware and china from a fort my ancestor built and lived in over two centuries ago has to rank as one of the most memorable events of my life.”

Masters agrees that all the time and effort have definitely been a labor of love. “The most rewarding part is being able to document and supply people a link to their pioneer ancestors through land ownership and basic pioneer information previously unavailable,” he says

This third atlas, like the first two, is illustrated with striking artwork by Puryear and David Wright, noted painter of historical subjects. They say a picture is worth a thousand words, and these pieces of art definitely help to tell the story of those early Tennesseans, both Native American and European immigrants. But perhaps of most interest to fellow historians and genealogists is the collection of maps showcasing early land grants, roads and landmarks.

Now that this huge undertaking is coming to a close, what’s next for these dedicated history buffs?

For Masters, it’s time to explore other historical subjects. “It has been difficult to stay focused on the core subjects we have been researching for the past several years,” he says. “With no more book deadlines, I’ll be able to get into interesting areas of history I have previously not been able to research. I am also planning a trip to West Virginia to metal-detect some early Civil War sites as well.”

Puryear plans to spend time blending two of his loves. “I’ll probably return to painting landscapes and historic sites. A lot of my time is also taken up by answering questions and following leads submitted to me by readers of our series from all over America, which has brought me many new friends.”

Wherever the road leads them, there’s little doubt that Masters and Puryear will bring their love of history and devotion to accurate detail with them. And the historical record will be better for it. ■



*Jack Masters, left, and Bill Puryear will soon release their third book on the Cumberland Settlements, "The First Southwest."*