

Aunt Hattie's Day

Today is May 16, 2016 and the sun is playing peek-a-boo among the "wanna-be" clouds above us as we sit between the James River and a long mountain at the East Alpine railroad signal (north of Buchanan, VA). We are 156 miles from Richmond.



On this day in 1912 my Aunt Hattie Saaijenga was born in a pretty home on a small farm in northern Illinois. She would have LOVED being along on this jaunt.



It is late spring and our world around us is just oozing with lush green components. The mountain across the river looks like a textured green sheet has been draped over a humongous heap of rocks.



Pale yellow Honeysuckle bushes reach over the guardrail and Daisy Fleabane plants are sporting their white or pale pink flowers.



Much of the grass is already pushing its seed heads Heavenward.



One lone flower pokes its head thru the fence.



A plethora of birds fills the air; they are busy with their age-old task of finding the PERFECT spot for their nests. One groundhog waddles across the road.

Blackberry Winter is what brother-in-law Kelly Sanden used to call this time of the season. When the blackberries are in full bloom, the weather takes a rest from spring and blows cold wind over us. Today is a perfect example of that. A brisk breeze pushes barely-60-degree air against our jackets.



Several purple periwinkle flowers stand guard over the drying daffodil leaves that were so pretty when we were here in April.



Growing thru a fence near those periwinkles stands a single bush of deep-magenta roses. This tells the tale of a long-ago home at this very spot. Close your eyes with me for just a moment and picture 2 little girls as they happily pluck roses and bring them in to their mommy. She carefully places the gifts of love into a chipped cream pitcher and exclaims how beautiful the flowers are.



Clumps of Yellow Sweet Clover and Purple Clover decorate the scene.



Behind the rock fence (In the event of a slide, the fence is designed to break loose from its ancient railroad rail posts, jerking against a spring, pulling a cable, and flipping an electrical switch that drops the signal to red. This keeps rocks from rolling off the mountainside onto the railway tracks) mulleins find their spot for the summer.



Dame's Sweet Rockets "strut their stuff" in the morning sunlight.



The relay case is built high above any possible flood problem but it certainly looks like a lovely place to sit and overlook all the beauty around here.



Pale lavender flowers and a drift of Honeysuckle cascade down the mountain beside us.



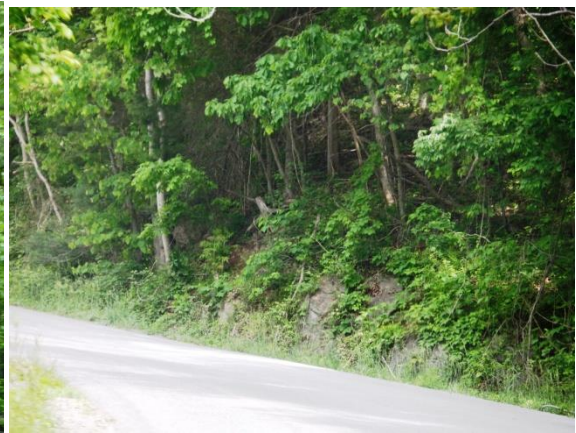
Much to Jim's delight, two trains pass by and, don't you just know, his camera is ready for action.



No trip to this gorgeous place would be complete without a drive past the old deserted barn about a mile up the road.



It is time to thread our way thru the trees and rock walls, back to the modern world.



We glide to a stop and the access road to Interstate 81 is before us.



Aunt Hattie is grinning.