

**What the heck was a TELLTALE?**

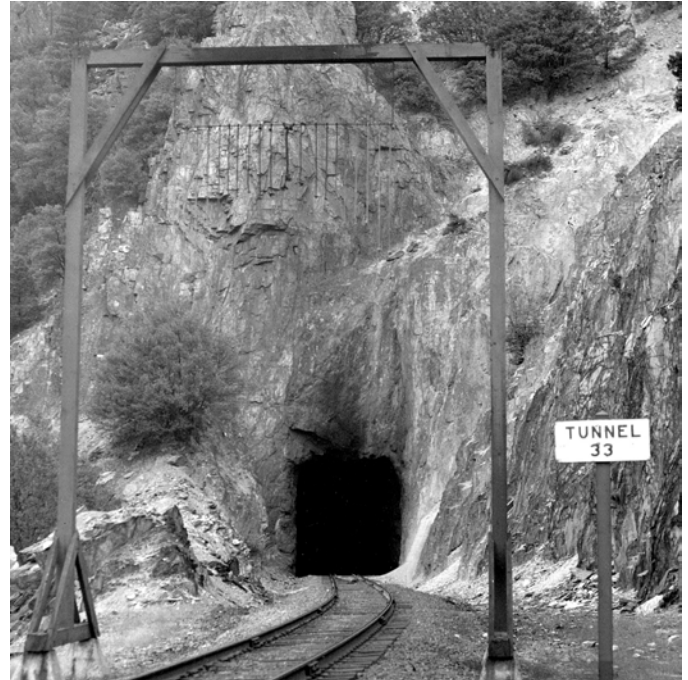
- Paul Finnegan

When brakemen walked the top of freight trains to set and release hand brakes while the train was in motion, they needed a warning when approaching tunnels or bridges for their safety. The "telltale" was the solution. A series of ropes were hung from a cross beam that would warn of an approaching limited clearance, giving the crewmember time to duck.

Running boards were eliminated on new cars entering service starting October 1, 1966. Over time, this eliminated the need for telltales since the practice of crewmembers riding on top of moving trains ceased.

It is reported that on the WP the telltale between tunnel 1 and 2 lasted until they redid tunnel 1 in 1981. In the canyon, the one at the Keddie tunnel 32 was still there in 1970, but gone by 1972.

As far as I know, they are all long gone into history now.



Telltale at entrance to Tunnel 33

- FRRS Archives/Meeker Collection

