OLD PRISON MUSEUMS

Educators Kit

Old Prison Museums Lesson Plans

Conley's Legacy: Questions & Answers

1. Conley held a party at his home in Deer Lodge in 1920. Who was it for and what was the occasion?

Franklin D. Roosevelt, "FDR". Vice presidential candidacy.

2. How long was Conley in control of the prison's administration?

35 years

3. Where and when was Conley born?

Havre de Grace, Maryland on February 28, 1864

4. What other public job did Conley have while he was the prison warden?

Mayor of Deer Lodge

5. When did Conley first arrive in Deer Lodge and why?

He arrived in Deer Lodge in March of 1886. At age 22, Conley was an under sheriff for Custer County and he was delivering an inmate to the territorial prison.

6. What was Conley's annual State salary as warden?

$4,000 a year.

7. When was Conley removed from his position as warden, and by whom?

In 1921 by Montana Governor Dixon.

8. Who was Conley's business partner?

Thomas McTague

9. Conley believed convicted criminals could be rehabilitated by having them do what?

He felt hard physical labor could cure deviant behaviors.

10. When Conley and his partner were awarded the contract with the State to operate the prison, how much did they charge to house each inmate who was serving time?

The State paid the men 70 cents per inmate.

11. Why was Conley removed from his position as warden?

Conley's actions, professional and personal, became an embarrassment for the State government, in particularly Conley's use of the prison, its ranches, and free inmate labor to further his own personal wealth.

12. Who was ordered to investigate the administration of the prison for the years that Conley was the warden?

T.H. MacDonald

13. How much did the government accuse Conley of taking from the State?

$200,000 worth of money and property.

14. Who was Conley's trial lawyer?

Former Montana Attorney General C.B. Nolan.

15. Who was the judge that presided over the State vs. Conley and where was the trial held?

Judge Horsky in Helena

16. What were some of the offences Conley was accused of?

- **Gutting the penitentiary's warehouse, garage, and machine shop just prior to his removal**
- **Appropriating beef, assorted groceries and produce, cream, and butter for his private use in the amount of some $8,330**
- **Using over half a million tons of state coal for his private residence: a gas, oil, and maintenance bill of over $12,000 per year on the vehicles**
- **Using the prison's ranch to feed his private dairy herd and employing free inmate labor to care for and feed his livestock**
- **Selling to the state (for use in the prison), dairy products and beef produced by the herd at market rates**
- **Selling pork to the prison, from his own herd, which had been fed on prison swill**

17. Conley's lawyer filed a counter suit for what amount?

For $120,000 in unpaid claims.

18. Which of Conley's personal friends donated funds to build a theater at the prison?

W. A. Clark Jr. donated the funds in 1917

19. What was Judge Horsky's ruling in the trial against Conley?
Judge Horsky decided the main issue was whether Conley had violated any written laws, The State never clearly defined the administrative relationship with Conley after 1908, other than naming him as warden. The lease had been terminated but the State retained Conley and the personal property he was using to operate the prison. Conley was acquitted because no written laws had been violated. Conley was awarded $632 for his counter suit. Judge Horsky also ordered the State to pay for the cost of the trial. The judge noted in his closing statement that Conley had always acted in the best interest of the State of Montana.