

North Dakota Governors - John Moses

JOHN MOSES – Tree Recipient 1990

Twenty-second Governor

- **Residence:** Hazen, Mercer County
- **Years Served:** 1939-1945
- **Date of Inauguration:** January 5, 1939
- **Age at Inauguration:** 53
- **Politics:** Democrat
- **Born:** Strand, Norway - June 12, 1885
- **Died:** Rochester, Minnesota - March 3, 1945



Political Background:

- 1919-1923: State's Attorney for Mercer County
- 1927-1933: State's Attorney for Mercer County
- 1939-1945: Governor of North Dakota
- 1945: United States Senate

Born in Strand, Norway, in 1885, John Moses attended high school and junior college in Norway. He came to the United States in 1905 and worked for the Great Northern Railway from 1906 to 1911. He entered the University of North Dakota, receiving his A.B. in 1914 and his J.D. in 1915. He began practicing law at Hazen in 1917 and served as state's attorney for Mercer County for several years. In 1936 he came in third in the three-way governor's race, behind former governors Langer and Welford. Moses became governor in 1939, following William Langer's second term in the office. Moses worked hard to reduce Langer's influence. He sought to cut government spending and to balance the state's budget. Moses was in office during World War II. He tried to encourage war-time industries to locate in the state, but North Dakota ranked last in the nation for receiving war spending.



H. O. Saxvik, John E. Gould, Fred A. Copelin, and Governor John Moses (seated) in the Governor's office.

Despite the lack of wartime appropriations, Moses' administration was a time of prosperity for the state. Rainfall was plentiful and there was a ready market for agriculture products. Moses was a popular governor. During his election campaign he gave speeches in English, German, or Norwegian, depending on his audience. A Democrat, Moses was noted for his support from both political parties. In 1944 Moses defeated Gerald P. Nye for a seat in the United States Senate. He died on March 3, 1945, shortly after taking his place in the Senate.

John Moses was the second native of Norway to become governor of North Dakota. (Governor Nestos was the first.) Moses served as governor during World War II.

Sverdrup Sons of Norway chose to recognize Governor Moses, who was an active Sons of Norway member, by dedicating a tree, which was planted in the Sons of Norway Park in his memory.