

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

CHARLES CALVIN MOORE
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After growing up on a farm near Mound City in northwest Missouri, he attended a state normal school in Warrensburg long enough to qualify for a teacher's certificate. Then he taught in rural schools near Mound City (north of Saint Joseph) from 1886-1892. At that point, he shifted to an appointment as deputy county assessor. That job lasted for four years, until William Jennings Bryan's farm campaign swept Moore and his Republican political associates out of office in 1896. Then in June 1899 he moved to Boise long enough to locate a challenging teaching position not far from Saint Anthony.

Soon he joined in operating a drug store, and after winning election to Idaho's legislature in 1902, he switched to a Saint Anthony real estate business in 1904. His success in gaining legislative approval for Idaho's Industrial Training School in Saint Anthony ensured his reelection to another term, after which he left politics to join in founding Ashton as a rail center in 1906. Along with his real estate enterprises, he became an unusually successful postmaster for Saint Anthony (1908-1913), followed by a career in sugar beet farming, supplemented by successful wartime hay and grain crops. By that time he had all kinds of useful experience in different occupations.

Entering state politics as a successful candidate for lieutenant governor in Idaho's tumultuous campaign of 1918, he gained experience as acting governor when D. W. Davis was out of state. Then he advanced to two terms of his own, getting elected by a plurality in 1922 and 1924 during a time in which Idaho's

Non-partisan League had, because of legislative repudiation of direct primaries, to operate as an Independent or Progressive party. Moore represented a conservative Republican minority that retained power only because their opponents were split into two parties. In 1922, Senator William E. Borah took a strong stand in favor of restoration of direct primary elections, but Moore and his associates had strong enough party organization support to defeat that plan. His primary achievements, during an era of severe farm depression, were sales promotion of Idaho products, development of a state highway system, organization of a state budget office, and penitentiary reform. His business success accounted for most of his governmental contributions during an era of severe agricultural discontent. His association with his predecessor, D. W. Davis, who had become commissioner, United States Reclamation Service, helped to develop Idaho's major American Falls dam and irrigation project. In May, 1929 President Hoover appointed Moore as Commissioner of Reclamation, so he was able to continue Davis' tradition in administering that Service.

After retiring from federal office in 1933, Moore returned to Saint Anthony during an era of national depression followed by international war. During that time he remained an active participant of Fremont County's draft board. He continued his interest in public affairs after that, but had reached an age that his activity was directed to other areas.

(This information has not been edited.)

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