

# **CHRISTIAN G. DOSLAND**

**( October 14, 1872 - February 7, 1945 )**

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In 1899, twenty-seven year old Christian Dosland began practicing law in Moorhead, Minnesota. By then he had attended five colleges - an education far more extensive than other residents of the area - and had two graduate degrees. He had attended college in Willmar and Montevideo, then Concordia College in Moorhead, next Valparaiso University from which he received a B.S. and LL.B. in 1895-6, and finally, the University of Minnesota Law School, which awarded him a second LL.B. in 1898. About twelve years later, he took classes at Yale University.

He practiced with other lawyers until 1910, when he went solo. Five years later, he subscribed to Henry A. Castle's *Minnesota: Its Story and Biography* which permitted him to have a biographical sketch included in one of the volumes - though it may be more accurate to call it an "autobiographical sketch" inasmuch as he wrote it. This sketch emphasizes his family history, extensive education, and public service work but little about his law practice, suggesting that he was still striving for success. He does not mention his clients.

**CHRISTIAN G. DOSLAND.** A Moorhead lawyer whose ability has been marked by numerous professional successes and by the honors of public office, Christian G. Dosland is now serving as county attorney of Clay County, and has an effective part in local affairs both as a lawyer and business man.

His birth occurred in Clinton County, Iowa, October 14, 1872. His parents were George and Bertha (Christensen) Johnson. Both these parents were natives of Norway, his father born near Bergen in

1828, and passing away in Norman County, Minnesota, in 1904. The mother was born in 1830 and died in Norman County, in 1899. George Johnson came to the United States in 1853, and the first year was engaged in farming on the outskirts of the then small City of Chicago, the fields which he cultivated being now incorporated in the city and covered with streets and buildings. In 1854 he went farther west, locating in Clinton County, Iowa, and in 1882 settled as a pioneer in Norman County, Minnesota. In both these western states he was one of the early settlers, and secured land from the Government. The children of these parents were: John, who is a farmer and owner of a flour mill in Norman County; Berthana, wife of Rev. J. J. Heie, a Lutheran minister in Colorado; Chris, a farmer and merchant at Perley in Norman County; Elizabeth, wife of Hans Peterson, a merchant and farmer at Calamus, Iowa; Christiana, now deceased, was the wife of E. B. Charlson, engaged in the real estate business at Fargo, North Dakota; George, a farmer at Perley, Minnesota; Bertha, wife of S. N. Peterson, a merchant at Perley; Mary, now deceased, was the wife of the late Albert J. Kroshus, who was a general merchant at Perley; and Christian G.

Christian G. Dosland spent his childhood in a home of modest comforts, had the stimulating environments of the country, and was encouraged by his parents to make the best use of his time and opportunities. His early education was acquired in the public schools of Norman County, after which for three years he attended Willmar Seminary, and one year at Montevideo College. In 1893 he graduated in a business course at Concordia College at Moorhead. His higher studies were continued in the Valparaiso University in Indiana, where he pursued courses in both law and the scientific department, receiving his degree LL. B. from that institution in 1895 and his

degree Bachelor of Science in 1896. After returning to Minnesota he further fortified his legal knowledge by a course in the university, and was given his law degree with the class of 1898. Twelve years after his admission to the bar he went East and took postgraduate studies in Yale University during 1910. Few men have a more admirable equipment both by nature and by scholastic training for their profession than Mr. Dosland.

His active practice as a lawyer began at Moorhead in 1898, and he has since been connected with a large amount of the litigation both civil and criminal in the local courts. He has offices in the First National Bank Building. Mr. Dosland is an independent republican, served one term of four years as county attorney, and on November 3, 1914, was re-elected for another period of four years. For the past two years he has been resident director of the Moorhead State Normal School and has served twelve years as a trustee of Concordia College, which he attended as a student more than twenty years ago. He is now serving as vice president of the Thief River Falls Manufacturing Company and was president of that concern three years. Mr. Dosland is fond of social activities and interests himself in church and fraternal affairs. He has served as trustee of the Norwegian Lutheran Church at Moorhead, is past master workman of Phoenix Lodge No. 73, A. O. U. W., and is past consul of Hazel Camp No. 3079, M. W. A., and also affiliated with the Royal Arcanum. He belongs to the Moorhead Commercial Club and to the Progress Club.

In 1902, at Fargo, North Dakota, Mr. Dosland married Anna Lobben, daughter of H. O. Lobben, who is superintendent of bridge construction for the Northern Pacific Railway at Fargo. Mr. and Mrs. Dosland are the parents of two children; Goodwin

and Corrine, both of them attending the public schools of Moorehead.<sup>1</sup>

He served two terms as Clay County Attorney and was mayor of Moorhead in the mid-1920s. He was on the boards of schools, churches and professional organizations. He mentions these activities in another biographical sketch in *Minnesota and Its People*, compiled by Joseph A. A. Burnquist, a former governor and future attorney general, published in 1924. But he also spends more space on his law practice. By this time he had "made it." He had an enviable corporate clientele, which he names:

Christian G. Dosland, a prominent member of the Minnesota bar and mayor of Moorhead, was born in Clinton, Iowa, on the 14th of October, 1872, and is the son of George D. and Bertha (Christianson) Dosland. The father, who has passed away, was born in Norway and came to the United States in 1853, locating on a farm in Norman county, this state. He made the trip to Minnesota by ox team and suffered the usual hardships of that day. He became a successful agriculturist and was prominently known and respected for his honesty and integrity. He conducted a mill for some time in connection with his farm.

In the pursuit of his education, Christian G. Dosland attended the Norman College at Willmar, Minnesota, and also Concordia College and Yale University. He received the B. S. degree from Valparaiso in 1896, the LL. B. degree from that institution in 1897, and in 1898 the LL. B. degree was conferred upon him by the University of Minnesota. He was admitted to practice in Indiana in 1898 and in Minnesota in 1899. In the latter year he began practice and has

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<sup>1</sup> Henry A. Castle, ed., II *Minnesota: Its Story and Biography* 1263-4 (Lewis Pub. Co., 1915).

since resided here. He was first associated with Judge Cole, that association being maintained for some years. He later became the partner of Carroll A. Nye and practiced under the name of Nye & Dosland until Mr. Nye was elected to the bench in 1910. Since that time Mr. Dosland has practiced independently and has achieved well merited success at the city and state bars. He brought to the profession thorough training and innate ability and he enjoys an extensive and important clientele. He represents as counsel the First State Bank of Moorhead, the State Bank of Georgetown, the State Bank of Comstock and the Fargo & Moorhead Street Railway Company, as well as other large concerns. From 1906 to 1908 Mr. Dosland was county attorney of Clay county and he was reelected to that office and served another term from 1912 to 1918. He was elected chief executive of Moorhead in 1923 and is giving to this city a progressive and prosperous administration. He was a member of the board of the State Normal School from 1913 to 1915. Mr. Dosland is a man of strong personality and sterling worth and has been influential in the development and improvement of Moorhead. He ranks high in the profession and occupies a position of importance among the foremost attorneys at the city and state bars.

In 1901 Mr. Dosland was married to Miss Anna B. Lobben, a daughter of H. O. Lobben, who was a prominent railroad bridge builder. Mrs. Dosland is a woman of culture and refinement and she is prominent in club and social circles, being ever a gracious hostess. To Mr. and Mrs. Dosland three children have been born: Goodwin L., who is a graduate of Concordia College from which he received the B. A. degree, and he is now studying law at the University of Chicago; Corine A., who is a

student in the Moorhead high school; and Dorothea Bernice, an infant.

In his political views Mr. Dosland is a staunch republican and he has ever maintained an active interest in party affairs, both locally and nationally. His religious faith is that of the Lutheran church and fraternally he is identified with the Modern Woodmen, the Ancient Order of United Workmen and has held all offices in the Royal Arcanum. He is president of the Commercial Club of Moorhead and has served as chief executive of the Kiwanis Club. Along strictly professional lines he holds membership in the Clay County Bar Association, the Northern Minnesota Bar Association, the Minnesota State Bar Association and the American Bar Association. During the World war he was active in the furtherance of the government's interests and took a prominent part in all drives and in the promotion of other worthy causes. Mr. Dosland is one of the most popular men in Clay county. He is a man of great intelligence and has ever remained a deep student, is thoroughly versed in the law and has proven himself capable in the discharge of the many important duties connected with the mayor's office.<sup>2</sup>

He died on Wednesday, February 7, 1945, at age seventy-two. The afternoon *Moorhead Daily News* carried his obituary:<sup>3</sup>

## C. G. Dosland Dies Suddenly

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<sup>2</sup> J. A. A. Burnquits, ed., 4 *Minnesota and Its People* 340-3 (S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1924). A full page photo of Dosland on page 341 is omitted. This is the same photo that accompanied his obituary in *the Moorhead Daily News* on February 7, 1945.

<sup>3</sup> *Moorhead Daily News*, February 7, 1945, at 3.

## **Onetime Mayor of City Succumbs This Morning**

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**Christian G. Dosland, 72, 430 Seventh street south, onetime mayor of Moorhead and former Clay county attorney, died at his home early this morning from a heart attack.**

**Dosland was born in Clinton County, Iowa, on October 14, 1872, and attended Perley schools, Willmar seminary, Windom Institute, graduated from Concordia, took graduate work at Yale, and received bachelor of law degrees at Valparaiso university, Indiana, and the University of Minnesota.**

**He was admitted to the bar in 1895, in Indiana; 1898 in Minnesota, and in 1899 in North Dakota. He served as Clay county attorney from 1906 to 1908, and again in 1912 to 1918. He was a member of the State Normal school board from 1913 to 1915; mayor of Moorhead from 1923 to 1927; member of Clay County, Minnesota state and American bar associations.**

**President of the board of directors at Concordia College; chairman of the county republican committee and member of Great Lakes Tidewater association; he also served on the National church council for the Norwegian Lutheran churches of America. He was a member of the Brotherhood at Trinity Lutheran church, Kiwanis, Executives club, AOUW and resident director of the Minnesota state teachers board.**

**On September 11, 1901, he married Anna Lobben in Fargo and is survived by his wife, one son, Lieu-**

tenant Commander Goodwin Dosland, serving with the navy somewhere in the south Pacific; two daughters, Mrs. J. T. Schwafel, teacher in Twin Valley, and Dorthea, teacher at Hendricks; three grandchildren; a brother, C. O. Dosland, Perley, and a sister, Mrs. Bertha Petersen, Perley.

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### ADDENDUM

Dosland was admitted to the bar in 1898; by court order his name was changed to Christian G. Dosland on May 16, 1904; the order was filed in Norman and Clay Counties. See 1 *Roll of Attorneys: Supreme Court, State of Minnesota, 1858-1970* 45 (State Law Library, 2011). ■

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revised August 27 & October 15, 2012.