

John Northrop

Chemist, Nobel Laureate (1891–1987)

Northrop, born in Yonkers, was a direct descendant of Joseph Northrop, who settled in New Milford, Connecticut in 1639, of Jonathan Edwards, President of Princeton University, 1758, and of Frederick C. Havemeyer, whose family presented Havemeyer Hall, the Chemical Laboratory, to Columbia University. His father, an instructor at Columbia, was fatally injured in a laboratory accident shortly before his birth. His mother, Alice, who formerly taught botany at Hunter College, returned to teaching and was responsible for the introduction of nature study into the curriculum of New York public schools.

Northrop entered Columbia University in 1908 to study zoology and chemistry under THOMAS H. MORGAN and J.M. Nelson. After receiving his Ph.D. in chemistry in 1915, he was appointed W. B. CUTTING Traveling Fellow and spent the next year at the Rockefeller Institute. He was appointed to the staff of the Institute and with the exception of his war service (1917-1918), he remained with the Institute most of his life. In 1949, he was appointed Professor of Bacteriology at the University of California, and later, Professor of Biophysics.

Professor Northrop was the author of *Crystalline Enzymes*, published in 1939. He edited the *Journal of General Physiology* (Rockefeller Institute) for some years and wrote numerous papers on the physical chemistry of proteins, agglutination of bacteria, kinetics of enzyme reaction, and the chemical nature of enzymes.

Northrop's researches at Columbia were chiefly concerned with carbohydrates and his early work at the Rockefeller Institute was connected with theories of the duration of life. For his work on the preparation of enzymes and virus proteins in a pure form, he received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1946.

Professor Northrop married Louise Walker in 1917. Their only son, John, was a distinguished oceanographer and their only daughter, Alice, married Professor Frederick C. Robbins, Nobel Laureate in Medicine, 1954. John Northrop died on May 27, 1987, a Centurion for five decades.

