

Thorp, Robert Taylor ^[1]

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by William S. Powell, 1996; Revised December 2021

12 Mar. 1850–26 Nov. 1938

Robert Taylor Thorp, lawyer and congressman, was born in the Goshen District of [Granville County](#) ^[2] near Oxford, the son of Benjamin Person, a moderately wealthy farmer, and Ann Eliza Norman Thorp. He attended [Horner Military Academy](#) ^[3] in Oxford and was graduated in 1870 from the law department of the University of Virginia, where he won the medal of the Jefferson Debating Society. Admitted to the bar, he established a practice in Boydton, Mecklenburg County, Va., in 1871 and also was commonwealth attorney for the county from 1877 to 1895.

Elected twice to Congress as a Republican, Thorp served from 2 May 1896 to 3 Mar. 1897 and from 23 Mar. 1898 to 4 Mar. 1899. An unsuccessful candidate for reelection, he moved to Norfolk and practiced law until 1934, when he made a home in Virginia Beach. In 1911 he became referee in bankruptcy in the federal district in which Norfolk lay. He was said to have been "regarded as one of the most brilliant members of the bar this section ever has known." An [Episcopalian](#) ^[4], he married Lucy Brent, and they had a son, Roland. He died at his home in Virginia Beach and was buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery, Norfolk.

References:

Biog. Dir. Am. Cong. (1971).

Granville County census returns, 1850.

History of Virginia, vol. 6, Virginia Biography by a special staff of writers (1924).

Richmond Times-Dispatch, 27 Nov. 1938.

Additional Resources:

"Thorp, Robert Taylor, (1850 - 1938)." *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*. Washington, D.C.: The Congress. <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=T000244> ^[5] (accessed March 26, 2014).

"Members of the United States House of Representative from Virginia." Encyclopedia of Virginia. http://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Members_of_the_United_States_House_of_Representatives_from_Virginia ^[6] (accessed March 26, 2014).

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Authors:

[Powell, William S.](#) ^[10]

Origin - location:

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[Oxford](#) ^[12]

From:

[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[13]

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