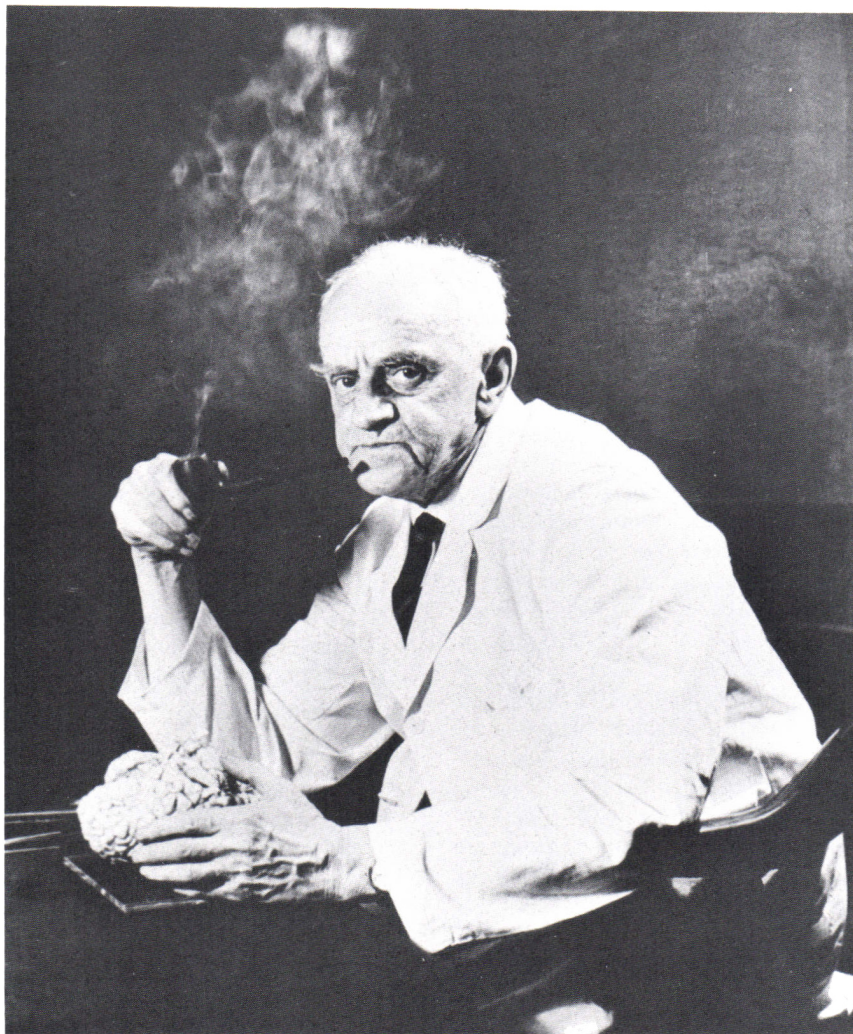


In Memoriam:

Eric Ambrose Linell 1891-1983



Photograph taken in the Banting Institute by the late Professor Erich Baer.

Eric Ambrose Linell, Professor of Neuropathology at the University of Toronto from 1932 to 1957, died in Toronto on April 1, 1983 at the age of 91.

Dr. Linell was born in Ashton-on-Ribble, England in 1891. He received his early schooling at nearby Preston in Lancashire. When he was fourteen he was sent to boarding school at King William's College in the Isle of Man. After receiving a prize in his final year at King William's College, he was admitted to the medical school at Victoria University, now the University of Manchester and graduated Bachelor of Medicine in 1914.

On November 12, 1914 he received a commission in the Royal Navy as temporary Surgeon Lieutenant. During World War I he served on the minesweeper HMS *Skip Jack* in the North Sea. In 1918, near the end of the war, he was posted to the Naval Hospital at Pembroke Dock in Wales while awaiting his demobilization. After the war he returned to his old medical school to prepare for the higher degree of Doctor of Medicine which the University granted him in 1920. Although this degree signified advanced knowledge in clinical medicine, Dr. Linell

set about making anatomy his field of interest. It was as an anatomist, charged to teach neuroanatomy in particular, that he was appointed to the University of Toronto in 1923 on the recommendation of Playfair McMurrich, Professor of Anatomy.

As a result of his interest in neuroanatomy, Dr. Linell was lured to neuropathology by Dr. K.G. McKenzie, who, as the founder of Canadian neurosurgery at the University of Toronto, had relied in the early years almost exclusively on his own interpretation of surgical microscopic material. Like McKenzie, Linell entered a specialty that had not previously existed in Canada. Full-time neuropathologists were even rarer in the world even than neurosurgeons. Cajal had demonstrated the neuronal structure of the nervous system and, subsequently, with Hortega, had described the histogenesis of primary brain tumours. As an anatomist Linell was familiar with their work, but he had to rely upon self-education to develop further his skill and knowledge in neuropathology.

In 1931 Linell transferred from Anatomy to the Department of Pathology, under Professor Oskar Klotz, to set up the Divi-

sion of Neuropathology. In this transfer from Anatomy he was accompanied by Mary Tom whose skill and knowledge he often acclaimed. They remained together for the whole of their academic careers. The third member of the team was the divisional secretary, Cay Bell, who held the appointment from 1934 until 1971, some years after the principals had retired.

Linell and Tom, with their postgraduate students in clinical neurology and neuropathology, produced a steady flow of articles with a strong bias towards the solution of clinical problems. They accumulated an exhaustively catalogued inventory of neuropathological material, a resource which was unique in Canada and which served not only successive pathologists but also investigating clinicians whose personal and hospital records by comparison were often incomplete. Linell's close clinical association with McKenzie had set the pattern for his partnership with later neurosurgeons and neurologists. The pathological material in his department was freely available to all bona fide investigators.

Even late in his career Linell was often diffident in his opinion in conference, as though he could not entirely shake off the uncertainty he must have felt in himself when he first set foot in the little known world of neuropathology. But, paradoxically, intellectual humility lent strength and conviction to his views.

In 1950 Dr. Linell was elected President of the Academy of Medicine, Toronto, and at that time played an important part in the planning of Osler Hall at the Academy, laying the corner stone in 1951. He received honorary and life memberships in many national and provincial societies including the Ontario Medical Association, the Ontario Psychiatric Association and the Canadian Neurosurgical and the Canadian Neurological Associations. In 1977 he was presented with the Sesquicentennial Distinguished Service Award of the University of Toronto. In 1961 the medical students of the Faculty voted him the best teacher of the year. It was their irreverent but affectionate gesture to present the elected teacher with the symbolic shovel reserved for the annual ceremony. This tribute was an echo

from 1927 when, the students of his first class in anatomy had given him a gold-banded walking stick in recognition of their respect for him and his teaching.

Eric Linell was slow to blame and quick to encourage which along with his whimsical sense of humour, made him many friends, particularly amongst his students. Although he considered himself a liberal in his political views, he was ultraconservative in his daily habits and must have been the last man in Toronto to wear a bowler hat to work. At the end of the morning he could be seen stumping down College Street from the Banting Institute, complete with cane and bowler, to Lawrence's Lunch, a slit in the facade of stores and offices at College and Bay which have now disappeared. His menu never changed. As he swivelled onto one of the bar stools that rimmed the edge of the worn marble counter, the usual slice of raisin pie would be sent sliding down like a puck to end up exactly at his place. A glass of milk and a cheerful exchange with the proprietor completed the meal and Eric would leave for his laboratory in a cloud of pipe smoke.

He was not an eccentric in the studied, self-conscious manner, but he was undoubtedly unusual. Even the angle at which he chose to slice brains was unique. Add to the picture half a dozen loaded pipes ranged and ready to go in front of him on the formalin-sodden cutting board, the enormous brown tea pot that needed both hands to lift and pour, and you have an image that is not forgotten. Behind these and other oddities, were his generous, humorous spirit and his total dedication to the scientific and professional welfare of his colleagues and students.

Dr. Linell is survived by his wife Frances and daughters Ruth Walmsley and Penelope Kennedy to whom we extend our sympathy.

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