

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THORACIC SURGERY

EDWARD WILLIAM ARCHIBALD (1872-1945)

Edward W. Archibald, eighth president of The American Association for Thoracic Surgery and first Canadian to hold that honor, was born in Montreal in 1872. His talented Scottish forebears emigrated in the seventeenth century from the Midlands to Northern Ireland, and in the eighteenth century through New Hampshire and Nova Scotia where they favored the colonial cause during the American Revolution, to Montreal. In his youth, Edward was brought up totally fluent in French and later interrupted his third year medical course at McGill to spend one year at Montpelier. His admiration for nineteenth century French medicine and surgery is clear in his brilliant discourse on receiving the Bigelow Medal of the Boston Surgical Society in 1937.

Archibald received his formal education in the Montreal Schools and McGill—BA, 1892; MD and CM, 1896. After a surgical internship at the Royal Victoria Hospital he traveled abroad to visit the major surgical clinics in Britain, France, and Germany and pursue his interest in surgical pathology at Freiburg. He returned to McGill in 1902 as demonstrator of clinical surgery and progressed in a linear fashion to become professor of surgery and director of the department, 1923 to 1937, and chief surgeon at the Royal Victoria Hospital, 1918 to 1932. He was also surgeon to Children's Memorial Hospital, Montreal.

At the outbreak of the first World War he joined the Canadian Army Medical Corps and served more than two years overseas with No. 3 Canadian General Hospital, including four months at the front with No. 1 Canadian casualty clearing station. He presented this first hand experience in the treatment of shock, including his disappointment in his pioneer efforts to reverse shock by the limited transfusions then available, to the American Surgical Association's meeting in June 1917.

Archibald's interest in thoracic surgery may well be attributed to the tentative treatment of chest wounds he witnessed during his army service. On returning home his interest rapidly extended to the surgical treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis. Familiar with the German scene, and particularly the work of Sauerbruch, and with Saranac not too far away, he introduced to this continent extrapleural thoracoplasty for predominantly unilateral cavitary disease. As a condition favoring operation, he set a great store on evidence of patient's resistance as manifest by fibrosis and scar contraction,

delivering the following dictum: *Do not operate if the trachea is in the midline.* Persistence of exudative disease meant poor resistance by the patient, a surgical red flag. He stressed the obvious—intelligent cooperation between the surgeon, the patient's physician, and the radiologist.

After returning from the army at the age of 46 years, Archibald devoted his professional career to founding a school of surgery at McGill that combined scientific research with clinical practice and still emphasizes this scientific basis beyond the technical explosion that anesthesia and asepsis allowed. His advocacy of thoracoplasty is an example. His own special study centered on edema of the pancreas and its relationship to the biliary tree. His organizational foresight is well demonstrated in the founding of the Montreal Neurological Institute under his colleague Wilder Penfield.

Archibald played a very active role in surgical societies, not only the American College of Surgeons and the AATS, of which he was president in 1926, but also the American Surgical Association. His presidential address before the latter in 1935 called for a system of accreditation of surgeons beyond that set up by the American College. To prevent the aspiring surgeon from gaining experience at the expense of the patient, he proposed a system of accreditation that would require "a sound knowledge of the basic sciences and a long apprenticeship under a Master in the Guild. . . ." His address and a symposium on undergraduate and graduate teaching that followed presaged the founding of the American Board of Surgery in 1937.

Archibald had an enormous circle of friends in Montreal and among his surgical colleagues throughout North America, Europe, and Australasia. He was honored by the University of Paris, the Royal College of Surgeons, and the Australasian College. He was the recipient of the Trudeau Medal of the N.T.A. and the Bigelow Medal of the Boston Surgical Society. His death in 1945, at age 73 years, prompted an outpouring of friendship befitting an unselfish and generous man. In such a person, being absent-minded and generally late were virtues; a gentle sense of humor, a charm of manner, dedication to his patients, and a cultivated mind prevailed.



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