

John Fitz Alan Howard - My Father, Pioneer, Physician of Body, Mind and Spirit
By his son, Lloyd Ellsworth Howard (1916 - 2006)

"A man who had found his work, his worship and his wife, and was devoted to all three."

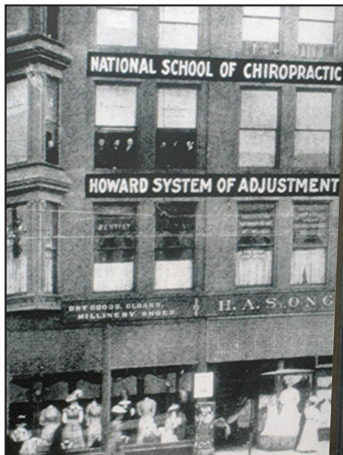


John Fitz Alan Howard

He was a physician skilled in the art of healing. He devoted his life to the study of medicine, surgery and related skills, as well as the natural healing processes of body, mind and spirit. People said there was healing in the touch of his hands, his voice, his words. They spoke of the miracle wrought with a paralyzed neighbor girl he restored to health with many hours of therapy, freely given, in evening hours, after he had returned home from his busy practice in down town Chicago.

But as a boy I knew little of his formative work pioneering the American born profession of Chiropractic, drugless, therapy. Much more important to me was the love and devotion he gave to mother and the family, and his simple, yet powerful faith. Mother shared his faith and early struggles (and there were many) and loved him devotedly. Together they created a home that glows in the golden haze of memory as *"a little bit of heaven on earth."*

My father, John Fitz Alan Howard, was born in Salt Lake City, November 27, 1869. One of his early boyhood friends was George Albert Smith. Later these two would travel together as salesmen for ZCMI, cementing



a lifetime friendship. Both were destined to spend their lives in service to their fellow men - George Albert Smith as missionary, Apostle, and President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints - John F. A. Howard as missionary, Physician, President and founder of *The National College of Chiropractic*, a uniquely comprehensive system of chiropractic health care that has benefitted, and still benefits thousands each day throughout the world.



John Fitz Alan Howard and
George Albert Smith

Father entered the life of work and service early. When eight years old he was employed at ZCMI as a cash boy. His income was needed at home. He continued to work for ZCMI for the next seventeen years, getting his schooling in evening hours.

His interest in health care was fixed by the death of his still youthful mother when he was fourteen years old. *"Why do good people sicken and die?"* The boy brooded on this question. He determined to dedicate his life to discovering the secrets of restoring and maintaining health. Ultimately he would become a physician who added new dimensions to the art of healing.



Harriet Spinks Brooks
Howard, John's mother

There is little doubt that his Mormon background greatly influenced his philosophy of health care. From the beginning he mistrusted the injudicious use of drugs and surgery. An independent thinker he questioned many common practices of the day and by 1906 had formulated a system of restoring and maintaining health - where possible - by the simple process of wholesome food, fresh air, exercise, proper rest and a positive mental attitude. Today, almost ninety years later, such health care is recognized as essential and popularly followed worldwide.



Sarah Drucilla Sears

Shortly before his planned marriage to mother, father was called on a Church mission. He accepted the call, but he and mother did not postpone their marriage date. They were married in the Salt Lake Temple, September 26, 1895. A few days later father left on a Church Mission to Switzerland. He would be gone almost three years, while mother worked to support him as secretary to attorney John M. Cannon.

In Switzerland he contacted Father Sebastian Kneipp, a parish priest and healer, who had developed -*Mein Wasserkur*- (My Water Cure) a system of hydrotherapy. Father was impressed with this system.

By 1904, in company with two other physicians, he was employed in a Salt Lake City sanitarium utilizing hydrotherapy. At that time the accidental adjustment of the spine of a man who had been semi-paralyzed restored him to complete health. This directed father's interest to chiropractic adjustment of the spine. He enrolled in the Palmer School of Chiropractic in Davenport, Iowa in 1905.

In 1906 he founded the *National School of Chiropractic* in Davenport, Iowa. This school utilized the "*Howard System of Chiropractic*," a system that embraced and recognized other systems of health care other than the adjustment of the spine. In 1908 he moved his school to Chicago to be near the large centers of learning and hospital experience available there. Here he entered medical school. For the next seven years he studied medicine, surgery and related skills, while supervising his growing school of Chiropractic. At this time, with the aid of several Medical physicians, employed on the faculty of the Chiropractic school, he developed the broad-based and comprehensive training of chiropractors as primary care physicians thoroughly trained in the science and diagnosis of disease, but specializing only in natural and drugless forms of therapy. The high standards he set for the training of Chiropractic physicians, at that time, has become the benchmark for leading schools of chiropractic ever since.

Today he is recognized as a man whose ideas on health care were ahead of his time and the *National College of Chiropractic*, which he founded, remains on the leading edge of employment of new science and technology, but ever faithful to its drugless approach to healing.

This, in brief, is the public record of the accomplishments of my father.

But in my own memory his greatest achievement was that of husband and father to a fortunate family of children. All of his great power of thought, high purpose, inspiration and compassion of spirit came to full flower at home.

Privately, John Howard was a humble man with a simple, yet powerful faith. His worship was truth. He spent his life in pursuit of it. His religious training, coupled with his studies of life sciences, convinced him that the evolutionary process demanded intelligent direction. Intelligence was an eternal element. Its very nature was progressive, capable of increase. Who could measure the worth of great individuals who had caught the divine spark and lifted the human race? He had the same reverence and concern for the potential worth of human diversity that some, today, hold for the rain forests. How could you risk the loss of one potential creative human intelligence?

He believed this the best possible world for stimulating creative intelligence. "*God left oil in the rock, electricity in the clouds. He left the rivers unbridged, the forests unfelled, the towns and cities unbuilt, the laboratories unopened.*" He left the songs unsung, the mysteries of health and happiness yet to be learned. He left the peace unmade. God left an imperfect world to imperfect man. Then he placed in the soul of man the dream of Utopia. The dream was a prophesy. Individually, if not universally, it could become reality. There was a lot of heaven that could be realized right here on earth.

Father believed that a philosophy that taught people to love and serve one another was not only essential to enduring civilization and freedom, it was also important to enduring physical, mental and emotional health. People interested in helping others do not die of loneliness and self-pity.

He believed that kindness and helpfulness to others was synonymous with happiness. We children were taught not to quarrel, but to love and serve one another. And it worked. All of my brothers and sisters were wonderful to me, and to each other, and to their parents, through all the years of life. I reverence the memory of the joys we shared together. Father believed that strong families and wise parents, who could teach these civilizing truths to their children, were the world's greatest need.

But most important in my own memory is the devotion father gave to implementing these ideas in his own family. No matter how pressed with work and study he regularly devoted an hour or two to be with the family at supper time - and what a happy and inspirational time that was. With the family seated around the big oval of the dining room table father's eyes would seem to caress each child. He liked what he saw. Faults were small, easy to overcome. Every one was bigger than their faults. That was the essence of being human: to have the intelligence to see your faults and the moral courage to overcome them, and equally important, the ability to see your strengths and cultivate them to serve your own needs and the needs of others.

Father and mother enjoyed the challenge of raising a large family. They could teach the most serious lesson with easy good humor. "Boys," father would say, with a twinkle in his eye and a quick sly wink at mother, *"If you want a happy home you must have a happy wife. Find a hard working girl with good intelligence and a good sense of humor. Then treat her like the queen she is. Don't allow her to become a mere household drudge. Continue to court her and help her to the full flowering of her talents and dreams. Be true to her always. Make love to no other. There is no romance so sweet, no sense of honest integrity so fulfilling as to be ever true to your one and only love."* Then mother, with her irrepressible sense of humor might say something like, *"Yes boys, listen to your father. All a woman wants from a man is loyalty. Some one who will stick by her and support her through all the trouble she never would have had if she hadn't married him."*

John and Drucilla Howard
Family in 1917.

Standing left to right:
Alan, Mark, Lucie, Jessie,
Gordon, Drucilla, John,
John Richards,
On Floor:
Winnie, Lloyd, Lora



On the wall behind father's chair was a blackboard upon which a single word or quotation might be written. Father believed in good food for the mind as well as for the body. If you want a great mind you must feed it great thoughts and noble desires. And so we played the word game. The distilled wisdom of the ages is securely stored in words. What is truth? Truth is reality - fact - that which is everlastingly true. What does it mean to be true? To be true is to conform to fact, not false; free from deceit; loyal; trustworthy; faithful; steadfast in adherence to a promise - to a marriage vow. How quickly the simple definition of a word can become a lesson in basic human need.

Perhaps the world was simpler in my father's day: the big common sense picture of man's physical, mental and emotional needs easier to see. Today knowledge is so vast specialization is necessity. The specialists concentrate on learning more and more about less and less. The big common sense picture is lost. What is good? What is bad? Who can say? So many are lost in confusion.

Once again I can hear my father's voice saying, *"Boys, if you want a happy home be true to your wife. These fellows who chase sporting women cheat themselves. They have never learned the difference between temporary pleasure and true happiness. Illicit pleasure is but a moment of passionate frolic in a dark and beastly kingdom. Once entered, a man may find escape difficult and penalties severe. But happiness is eternal. It is the object of our existence. There can be no lasting happiness, no true success, or health of body mind, or spirit that can be separated from right living."*

Father died in 1953, yet today, I can never think of my father without tears of gratitude filling my eyes for the life and work of this great and valiant physician of body, mind and spirit, who, inspired by love of his mother, filled his own life with service to others. His hard won wisdom and example of love and devotion to wife and children, if followed by future generations, would cure most of the physical and social ills that plague our society today.

[Talk given by Lloyd E. Howard at the 100 Year Celebration of the National College of Chiropractic in 2006]



John Fitz Alan Howard



Lloyd E. Howard