

Dr. Lucius Duncan Bulkley (1845-1928)

Eminent Dermatologist

Controversial Cancer Treatment Specialist

Pure Food and Exercise Advocate



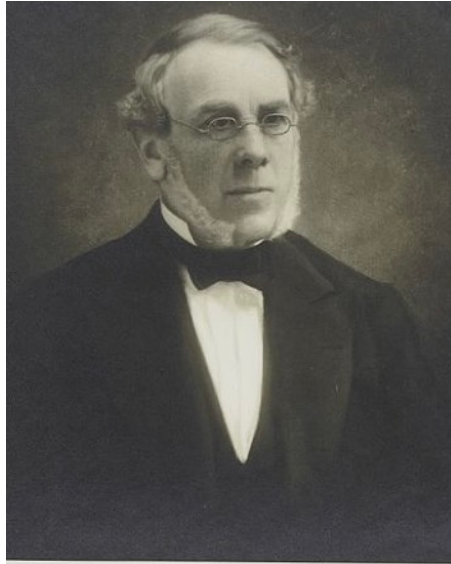
Dr. Lucius Duncan Bulkley, c. 1885

Celebrated Dermatologist of His Time and in His Prime

Dermatology - All in the Family

Dr. Henry Daggett Bulkley, father of Dr. L. Duncan Bulkley, is recognized as having been the first dermatologist in the United States. After graduating from *Yale Medical College* in 1830, the senior Dr. Bulkley studied in Paris at *l'Hôpital Saint Louis* (founded in 1610), which in 1801 became the 'lighthouse of dermatology for the world', the first hospital to scientifically treat skin and other cutaneous diseases as a dedicated medical specialty. Back in New York In 1836, Dr. H. Daggett Bulkley, opened **The Broome Street Infirmary for Diseases of the Skin**, the first of its kind in the country, well before the **American Dermatological Association** was formed fifty

years later in 1886. Dr. Bulkley gave free lectures on his research and knowledge to physicians and laypeople alike, thereby revolutionizing the treatment of skin diseases in the United States.



Dr. Henry Daggett Bulkley (1803-1872)

Dr. Henry Bulkley's preeminence in the nascent field of dermatology made an indelible impression on his son **Lucius Duncan Bulkley**, inspiring him to follow in his father's footsteps and become a dermatologist. After graduating from Yale in 1866, L. Duncan Bulkley obtained his medical degree from *Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons* in New York in 1869. He became the house physician at *New York Hospital* before traveling to Europe to study dermatology in Paris, as had his father, at *l'Hôpital Saint Louis* before traveling to Vienna and Berlin for further study.

In 1883, in continuation of his father's dermatological legacy, Dr. Bulkley founded *The New York Skin and Cancer Hospital*. Located on E. 34th St. in New York, it was yet another Bulkley dermatological innovation - the first hospital in the country devoted entirely to the treatment of skin and cutaneous cancerous diseases. Over 140 years later this hospital is now affiliated with the **New York University Medical Center**. Like his father, Dr. L. Duncan Bulkley gave free lectures to physicians and laypeople on his strongly held medical beliefs, many of which were later published, as were several other of his learned treatises.

For the majority of his career, Dr. Bulkley was highly respected in the realm of medicine. He won *The Alvarenga Prize* from the *Philadelphia College of Physicians* for his monograph, *Syphilis in the Innocent* in 1891 and simultaneously he was president of the **New York Academy of Medicine** and **The New York Dermatological Society**. In 1885, he wrote the first textbook on acne: *Acne, Its Etiology, Pathology and Treatment* which was widely praised and favorably reviewed by *The British Medical Journal*.

Steadfast in His Medical Convictions

When **Doctor Lucius Duncan Bulkley** died in 1928 at the age of 83, he was still known as having been a brilliant, innovative and benevolent New York dermatologist. During a career lasting nearly sixty years, he treated tens of thousands of patients and had written over 20 scholarly books on the causes and cures of skin diseases and various types of cancer.

But in the hallowed precincts of the medical intelligentsia of the early 20th century, Dr. Bulkley had come to be regarded later in his career as an eccentric, intransigent proponent of diet and exercise, as opposed to surgery (and early forms of radiation), as the keys to preventing and curing the myriad forms of cancer that had been plaguing the human race for eons. His obdurate attitude put him at odds with accepted medical practice of the time and alienated many of his medical colleagues, who (prior to the advent of chemotherapy in the mid-1940s) adamantly believed that surgery was the only effective treatment for cancer in its multiple iterations.

A letter written by one of his contemporary physicians describes what a controversial figure Dr. Bulkley had become late in his life.

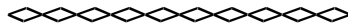
"I am addressing you concerning the new journal edited by Dr. L. Duncan Bulkley of New York, and christened 'Cancer'. Anyone reading current literature knows of the peculiar belief of this once eminent dermatologist that cancer is a medical disease and can be best treated by dietary and medicinal measures, eschewing surgery and radiotherapy. It would be bad enough, did he alone practice this delusion, but it is appalling when one considers that Dr. Bulkley is going about the country lecturing to medical societies and the laity on his pet delusion, and now comes this journal from his pen. That many uninformed physicians will be induced by his remarks to adhere to his doctrines, the death and suffering of numerous pitiable sufferers is appalling to all. One trip to the medical cancer clinic conducted at the New York Skin and Cancer Hospital, by Dr. Bulkley, as your correspondent made, observing the haggard, emaciated, living-dead cancer wrecks being assumedly wonderfully improved or cured by this Bulkley diet and medication will convince any physician. I myself know of two needless deaths because of this work".

- Albert G. Hulett, MD, East Orange, NJ
Journal of the American Medical Association, 1924

A 1922 front page article in *The New York Times* describes how Dr. Bulkley was ignominiously relieved of his duties at *The New York Skin and Cancer Hospital*, the pioneering institution he

had founded forty years before; below is an excerpt from Dr. Bulkley's obituary in *The New York Times* dated July 21, 1928.

“ During his last years *Doctor Bulkley devoted practically his entire time to the investigation of the medical and dietetic treatment of cancer. His attacks on the surgical treatment of [cancer] were violently opposed by many physicians and surgeons.*”



Cancer:

a large group of diseases that can start in almost any organ or tissue of the body when abnormal cells grow uncontrollably, go beyond their usual boundaries to invade adjoining parts of the body and/or spread to other organs.

- World Health Organization

The first known written description of cancer surgery (the word cancer is derived from the Greek and Latin words for **crab** due to the manner in which cancer spreads like a crab's tentacles), dates from **1600 BCE**, and was deciphered when *The Edwin Smith Papyrus*, an ancient Egyptian text, was translated in the 1930s by **James Henry Breasted**. Regarded as the oldest known surgical treatise, excerpts from the papyrus hieroglyphics describe removing breast tumors by cauterization.

The Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus (c. 1600 BCE)



It wasn't until the 16th and 17th centuries that doctors began dissecting bodies and gained a better understanding of the pathology of different cancers. In 1775, the first cause of cancer was identified when a British surgeon discovered that cancer of the scrotum was a common disease among chimney sweeps. Use of the microscope, beginning in the 18th century, led to the discovery in 1874 that cancers spread from primary tumors to other locations in the body, a process called '*Metastasis*'.

The use of surgery to treat cancer had become common over the years, but results were disappointing mostly due to poor hygiene. In the late 1880s, surgical hygiene conditions in operating theaters improved dramatically through *asepsis* (preventing infection from pathogenic microorganisms) and surgery became the primary treatment for cancer, as depicted in the Thomas Eakins painting below:



***The Agnew Clinic* - 1889 - Thomas Eakins (1844-1916)**

After years treating multitudes of patients, Dr. L. Duncan Bulkley came to firmly believe that the fundamental cause of cancer was faulty metabolism, influenced mostly by unhealthy diets and lack of exercise. Advising his patients to practice simple living and to avoid eating meat, drinking alcohol, coffee and tea, he attributed most cancers to be a function of the evils of modern civilization. He passionately believed that “the real, incidental cause of cancer is the toxins produced by the millions of micro-organisms generated through intestinal stasis”.

A staunchly religious man, Dr. Bulkley was a true believer whose diagnostic principles were steeped in a kind of righteous fervor. In addition to his public lectures, Dr. Bulkley published several books on his research, successful treatments and broad medical observations, including:

The Use and Value of Arsenic in The Treatment of Diseases of the Skin - 1876

The Skin in Health and Disease - 1880

On the Restriction of Meat in the Treatment of Psoriasis - 1897

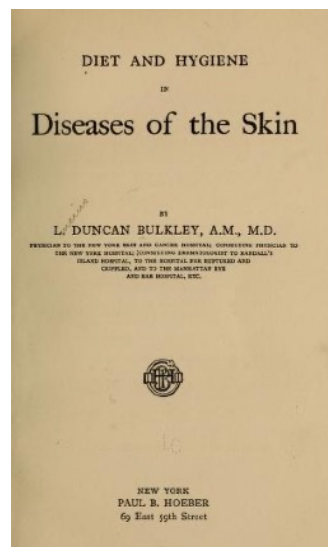
Manual of Diseases of the Skin: with an analysis of twenty thousand consecutive cases and a formulary - 1898

Eczema With an Analysis of Eight Thousand Cases of the Disease - 1901

Syphilis, A Symposium - 1902

The Influence of the Menstrual Function on Certain Diseases of the Skin - 1906

Diet and Hygiene in Diseases of the Skin - 1913



Cancer: Its Cause and Treatment - 1915

Medical Versus Surgical Treatment of Cancer - 1919

Proofs of the Constitutional Nature of Cancer - 1921

Cancer is Never a Purely Local Disease - 1923

Indicative of the significance of these and other medical books by Dr. Bulkley is that several of them have recently been republished as classic works of medical literature and are available to download or to buy online - including leather-bound volumes, such as *Ebenezer, I Samuel 7.12*; *Notes on a Busy Life*, Dr. Bulkley's memoirs, published in 1925.

Roughland

The Embodiment of Dr. Bulkley's Forty Years in Norfolk

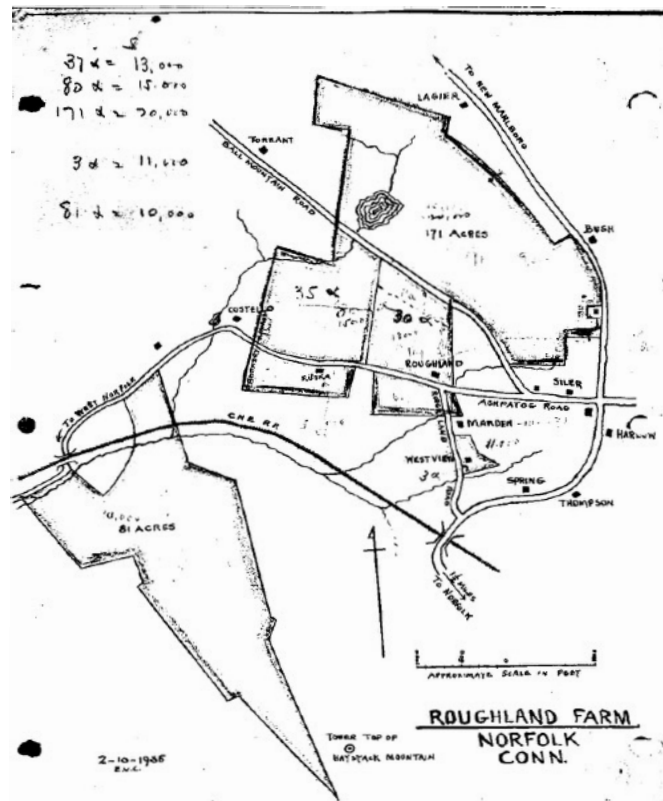
Close to 100 years after his death, the mention of **Dr. Lucius Duncan Bulkley's** name to Norfolk locals or weekenders is met with quizzical looks. Hard to fathom since Dr. Bulkley and his family spent forty summers in Norfolk and established deep roots in the northern reaches of town. Dr. Bulkley was introduced to Norfolk by his cousin, **David H. Rowland**, who was from an old Norfolk family that at one time operated a sawmill on Wood Creek. In 1887, Dr. Bulkley bought a farmhouse on Ashpohtag Road (not far from the Rowland property) from **Horace Bushnell Knapp**, whose family had been in Norfolk since before the Revolutionary War. Dr. Bulkley christened his house and property ***Roughland***, an evocative name he most likely conjured up and used several times to identify his extensive Norfolk real estate holdings.



The Bulkley Farmhouse on Ashpohtag Road - c. 1870?

Dr. Bulkley and his wife, **Katherine LaRue Mellick Bulkley**, were prominent members of the sophisticated 'summer crowd' that thrived in Norfolk for about 40 years from the 1890s until the Great Depression and they were original members of the *Norfolk Country Club* when it was established on Maple Avenue in 1912. Dr. Bulkley was a keen golfer who won "an exquisite silver cup made by Tiffany" at *The Norfolk Downs* in 1898, shooting a net 71. Also an accomplished musician, Dr. Bulkley often played the cello at ***Whitehouse*** with other guests of **Ellen Battell Stoeckel**, who played the flute in these musical ensembles.

Over time, the Bulkleys acquired several acres of land in the vicinity of their farmhouse which they eventually consolidated into one definitive entity they called ***Roughland Farm***, as can be seen outlined in the 1935 map shown below :



In the shard of land seen in the southwest portion of the map, Dr. Bulkley and his son-in-law, **Edward Vermilye Cox**, planted thousands of trees off of Ashpohtag Road in the early 1900s to reforest land cleared to fuel the many charcoal furnaces that flourished in the region in the 1800s. This land remains in the Bulkley family under the rubric, ***Roughland Farm*** (c. 1891).



Also in 1891, the Bulkleys acquired several acres of land just down the hill from their farmhouse on Ashpohtag Road and carved out a road connecting to North Street they named ***Roughland Road***. Here they built houses for two of their daughters as wedding presents, each with commanding views of ***Haystack Mountain*** (1680 feet), similar to the Bulkley's own front row view of Haystack from Ashpohtag Road.

In 1894, for their oldest daughter, **Elizabeth Ayers “Lillie” Bulkley (Janeway)** (1873-1952), they built **West View**, which is now the residence of NCC members, **Alissa Churchill** and **Tom Carley**.



West View, Roughland Road - 1894

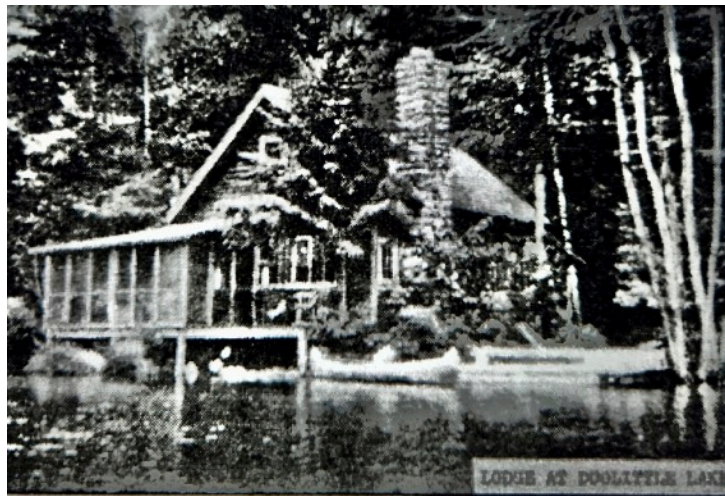
And in 1905, for their daughter **Julia “Yula” Bulkley (Cox)** (1874–1942), the Bulkleys built **The Maples**, where NCC member **Turi Rostad** lived with her family growing up. Once owned by investment banker **Francis Skiddy Marden**, The Maples is now the home of NCC members, **Renée** and **George “Geb” Byers**.



The Maples, Roughland Road - 1905

In 1917, David Rowland, decided to sell most of the land he'd acquired on Doolittle Lake. Dr. Bulkley bought one of the 8 parcels of land and gave it to his third daughter, **Kathleen LaRue Bulkley (Smyth)** who with her husband, **Nathan Ayer Smyth**, built a camp they called **Roughland Lodge** which had no plumbing or electricity. For many summers, the intrepid Smyths were the only family with the gumption to stay overnight in the dark Doolittle Woods which seemed much more forbidding and remote then than it does today.

The Smyth's daughter, **Anna "Nancy" Smyth (Berliner)** wrote a book about her parents, called: *A Legacy in Kind: Remembering Kathleen and Nat Smyth*, some of which describes how much fun it was spending summers on Doolittle Lake in the 1920s. The camp, part of **Roughland Realty, LLC**, which Dr. Bulkley established in the 1920s to incorporate his several Norfolk properties, is now shared by several of his descendants.



Roughland Lodge, Doolittle Lake - c. 1920

On December 23, 1901, Dr. Bulkley's eldest daughter, Elizabeth, married **Henry Harrington Janeway** (1873-1921), who would become an illustrious physician and pioneer in the use of radium for the treatment of cancer, a practice to which Dr. Bulkley was very much opposed. Radium is a radioactive metal which was discovered in 1898 in Paris by **Marie (Madame)** and **Pierre Curie**. Dinner conversations must have been quite stimulating when the Bulkleys and Janeways got together in Norfolk. Like his father-in-law, Dr. Janeway wrote prolifically about his experiments and experiences treating cancer, particularly with radium, including in 1917, the seminal work, *Radium Therapy in Cancer at the Memorial Hospital*. Dr. Janeway was chief of the Laboratory for Experimental Research of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University. Unfortunately, and ironically, Dr. Janeway died of cancer in 1921 at the age of 47: from the effects of overexposure to radium. Madame Curie died of *aplastic pernicious anaemia* (**radiation**-induced leukemia) at the age of 66 in 1934.



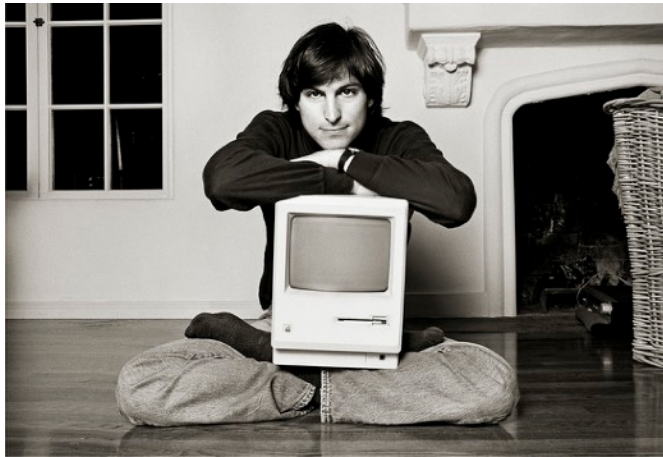
Henry Harrington Janeway (1873-1921)

As to...

The Ongoing Controversies Over Cancer Causes and Treatments

On October 5, 2011, **Steve Jobs**, the mastermind behind the phenomenal development and success of **Apple**, perhaps the most innovative and influential technology company of the modern era, died from the effects of *Pancreatic Neuroendocrine Tumor* (pNET) cancer. He was 56 years old.

After his diagnosis in 2023, Jobs resisted his doctors, who strongly recommended he have surgery immediately to remove the cancerous tumor from his pancreas. Jobs opted instead for alternative medical treatments such as vegan diets, herbal remedies, acupuncture, juice fasts, bowel cleansings and other experimental, non-medical remedies. Finally, nine months after his cancer diagnosis, Jobs underwent surgery that appeared to have successfully removed the cancerous tumor on his pancreas... but it was too late. Though he lived another eight years, his death was slow and painful and most cancer doctors agree that had he had surgery right away, he would have been cured. One integrative medicine expert said: "Jobs had the only kind of pancreatic cancer that is treatable and curable. He essentially committed suicide."

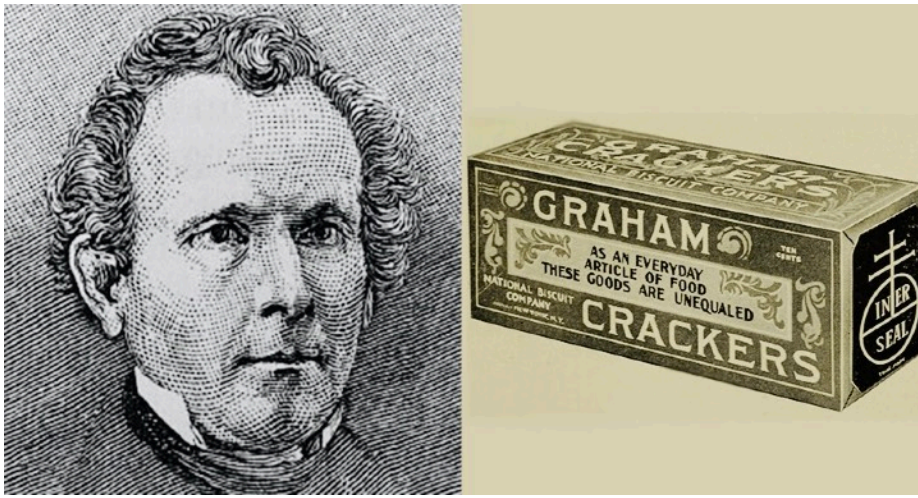


Steve Jobs (1956-2011)

In retrospect, based on his writings, Dr. Lucius Duncan Bulkley likely would have agreed with Jobs' unorthodox approach to dealing with his cancer diagnosis. But that was over a century ago. How is it possible that a brilliant man like Steve Jobs would still harbor questionable theories and ideas about the treatment of cancer that have been debated for decades and so far have come out in favor of chemotherapy and surgery as the best case approaches to dealing with such a deadly disease?

In Western cultures, ***Clean Living Movements***, (health reform crusades) have come in periodic cycles during which (often religious) reform-minded groups advocate temperance (anti-alcohol), social purity (sexuality), diet, physical exercise, eugenics (heredity), public health, anti-tobacco and anti-drug use. America's first clean living moment began during the *Jacksonian Era* (1830-1860) after the *Second Great Awakening*. Ethnic, cultural and religious minorities such as Irish immigrants and Roman Catholics were thought to be responsible for excessive drinking and unhealthy living that spread a myriad of diseases, including cancer. A fanatical Connecticut native, Presbyterian minister, **Sylvester Graham** (1794-1851), the *Father of Vegetarianism*, was a dietary reformer known for promoting vegetarian beliefs, temperance, tobacco abstinence and eating whole grain bread as the purest of paths to healthy living and redemption. His zealous health crusade was called *Grahamism* and inspired the development of graham flour, graham bread and graham crackers.

Unfortunately, despite his clean living lifestyle, Reverend Graham died quite young in 1851 at the age of 57 in Northampton, MA, from complications of receiving opium enemas. It's been said that Reverend Graham was so desperate for a cancer cure near the end of his life that he started eating meat and drinking alcohol.



Reverend Sylvester Graham (1794-1851) and his Famous Graham Crackers

The next Clean Living Movement which lasted from 1890 to 1920, during Dr. Bulkley's professional heyday, was called the *Progressive Era*. A spirited temperance movement resulted in **The Eighteenth Amendment** and the **Prohibition** of alcohol in 1920; there was a strong anti-tobacco outcry wherein many cities had anti-smoking laws in public buildings, restaurants and trains. The **Eldridge Gymnasium** was built in Norfolk in 1892; and the **Pure Food and Drug Act** was passed in 1906.

From the repeal of Prohibition in 1933 through the mid-twentieth century, restrictions on drinking and smoking went out the window. Who doesn't remember growing up in the 40s, 50s or 60s when smoking in bars, restaurants, movie theaters, buses, airplanes, etc. was a way of life and when alcohol was the essential elixir at parties and all social engagements (some might say, it still is). And **The Sixties** brought upon widespread acceptance and use of recreational drugs.

All of which resulted in the third Clean Living Movement which is called the *Millennial Era* (1970 to the present). As a reaction to the overindulgences of the Sixties, healthy, sometimes austere, lifestyles began to emerge. Thousands of gyms proliferated, running marathons became the rage, Yoga became a 'thing', *Vegan* diets became badges of honor, organic food became *de rigueur* and food people had been consuming for centuries, like eggs, butter, milk and red meat, became verboten. Smoking was banned in all public spaces and in 1971 Richard Nixon declared a "War on Drugs".

The compelling human health questions brought up by Dr. Lucius Duncan Bulkley in the early 1900s, resonate today: do lifestyle, diet and exercise play a significant role in whether or not an individual gets cancer?

Everyone has heard of individuals who have never smoked and mysteriously get lung cancer, an indication that there is a genetic component at work. Then we have the example of three British guitar gods. **George Harrison**, b.1943, was a lifelong smoker who died of lung cancer in 2001 at the age of 58 (23 years ago!). **Keith Richards**, b.1943 and **Eric Clapton**, b.1945, also lifelong smokers, in addition to being alcoholics *and notorious heroin and cocaine addicts*, today are octogenarians, alive and well enough to still go out on tour as musicians.

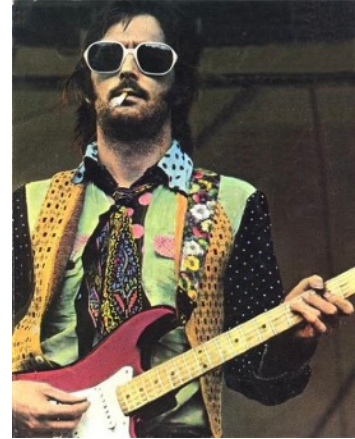
Guitar Legends



George Harrison



Keith Richards



Eric Clapton

To some degree, the strict views and beliefs of Dr. Bulkley and the Reverend Graham (and countless other Clean Living Movement ascetics) on the deleterious effects of consuming unhealthy food and toxic substances have been vindicated in the 21st century. Research has determined that smoking causes 80 to 90% of all lung cancers and **30%** of *all* cancer deaths (according to the CDC, **8 million** people worldwide, die from tobacco-related diseases every year), while alcohol consumption causes **4%** of *all* cancer deaths. Former First Lady, **Jaqueline Kennedy (Onassis)** smoked three packs of cigarettes a day (including when she was pregnant) for almost 50 years, which likely contributed to her death on May 19, 1994, at the age of 64, from complications of Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Heavy smoking increases the risk of getting this deadly blood disease by 50%.

The Always Glamorous Jackie O



But the long-term effects of diet and exercise, though much clearer today, are still being debated. The newly-elected 47th President of the United States is proud of his unhealthy diet. He often patronizes fast food establishments such as McDonalds, admits to drinking up to 12 diet cokes a day, loves Doritos, does no aerobic workouts or weight training (golf is not exercise), but he appears to be pretty good health as he closes in on his 80th birthday.

Much is being written lately about the alarming spike in cancer in young adults between the ages of 18 and 49. Called *Early-Onset Cancers*, they are thought by many cancer specialists to be the direct result of nutritionally poor diets and lack of exercise that is prevalent in the post-industrial 21st century.

What would clean-living, god-fearing, pure food proselytizer, Dr. Bulkley think if he were alive today when sedentary lifestyles abound, 74% of adult Americans are overweight and 40% are considered obese? The following quotes from Dr. Bulkley's 1915 book, ***Cancer: Its Cause and Treatment***, may have been prophetic:

"Deranged metabolism is the only remaining possible etiological element for the causes of cancer which induces changes in nutrition, and these in turn depend on diet and the proper or improper action of the secretory and excretory organs; these latter may still further be affected by nervous influences. Morbid changes in the cells are largely associated with deranged metabolism."

"The extension of cancer appears to depend largely upon the altered conditions of modern life, particularly along the lines of self-indulgence in eating, drinking and indolence."

"The augmentation in the consumption of meat, coffee and alcoholic beverages in civilized communities is seen to be coincident with the great and proportionately greater augmentation of mortality from cancer."

Dr. Bulkley died on July 20, 1928 in Englewood, NJ and is buried in **Woodlawn Cemetery** in the Bronx next to his wife Katherine, who predeceased him six months before at the age of 77.

Dr. Bulkley Plays His Cello 'Fido' for His Wife Katherine at Roughland Farmhouse



The End

by Mícheál Cummings Kelly
Club Historian
Thanksgiving, 2024

Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks to:

John Cox, Dr. Lucius Duncan Bulkley's great-grandson, who provided some of the photographs and shared family anecdotes used in this Profile. Mr. Cox and his relatives maintain ownership interests in *Roughland Farm* on Ashpohtag Road and in *Roughland Lodge* on Doolittle Lake, continuing and maintaining Dr. Bulkley's distinctive Norfolk legacy.

NCC member, **Edward Colt, MD**, highly-regarded New York diabetes and metabolism endocrinologist who shared his expertise and research on the effects of diet and exercise in the development of chronic diseases.

And thanks, as always, to NCC member, **Barbara "Babs" Perkins** and NCC Manager, **Peter Destler**, for their assistance in priming and posting this Profile.