



The American Association for Nude Recreation – Western Region

P.O. Box 6313, Santa Barbara, CA. 93160
Email: Information@aanrwest.org



The Pioneers:

Biographies of Nudists Leaders Who Made a Difference



Matthew Bullock

(APRIL 4, 1920 – JULY 7, 2013)

Civil Rights Advocate, Judge, Integrated Nudist Clubs on the East Coast

*These are Autobiographical Notes by Matt Bullock, a few years before he died
Part 1 of this article appeared in the Fall 2006 issue of GN/AN.*

I am a very fortunate person, I had great parents, a good brain, a good education, and good health. Although some might consider that being born Black was unfortunate, I have never felt this way. I think the difficulties involved in being so have made me a stronger person.

I was born in Boston in 1920, a few months before women got the right to vote. My first nude experience was when he was nine, when he and the other boys in summer camp skinny-dipped in a lake. In 1938, when I was in college, I read *Among the Nudists*, by Frances and Mason. Merrill. My immediate reaction was "This is for me!"

In 1950, the headquarters of the American Sunbathing Association was in **Mays Landing, New Jersey**. I wrote to its associated club there, Sunshine Park, expressing my interest in bringing my family to visit. At the end of the letter I said I was Black; I did not want to risk going and being turned away at the gate. In 1965 a friend got me an invitation to a social event at which were present the owners of Sunny Rest, a nudist resort in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. This meeting resulted in my going with my wife Etta and two other couples, one of whom were members, to Sunny Rest a few weeks later.

I told the husband-owner of my writing a letter to a newspaper about censorship of pictorial nudity. A couple of weeks later he advised the members with whom we had visited that my wife and I were not

acceptable to join Sunny Rest. The reason given was: I was too assertive and might not take any racial insults lying down, and he did not want any trouble.

A member of **Sunny Rest** heard of our rejection and was incensed. He was determined to find a nudist resort that would accept us. Consequently, a few weeks later he took me, my two daughters (12 and 18), and the two other couples who had gone to Sunny Rest, to Circle H Ranch, near Clinton, New Jersey. (My wife had been called out of town on an emergency.)

We all had a very enjoyable time and met many friendly people. The owners told us they would be glad to have my family join the resort. However, a few hours later, the offer was withdrawn. The wife-owner took one of the women in our party aside and told her there had been a complaint that I had spit in the swimming pool, which was of course not true.

A couple of weeks later the invitation was reinstated. Apparently, the owners had reconsidered, and the young couple that had reported me resigned.

After a couple of visits, we were told that we could not return together since we were not married to one another. We knew for a fact that there were several couples who regularly visited the resort together but who were married to others.

Thus, my attending nudist resorts ended for the time being.

In 1971 the friend with whom I had gone to **Circle H Ranch** was invited to go to **Beechwood Lodge** in Ashfield, Pennsylvania. She was very enthusiastic and told me there was a mobile home for sale there. She suggested that we find a couple of other people and buy it together.

I was interested, but at the time I happened to be running for judge of the Common Pleas Court in Philadelphia and thought it would be prudent for me to avoid nudist resorts during the election campaign.

My friend found a mutual friend and her mother who were interested, so we bought the mobile home without my ever having seen it. I was elected judge in November 1971 and a few days later visited the mobile home for the first time.

For the next ten years, I spent most of my weekends at Beechwood, where many of my friends visited. I never had a moment's trouble because of my being Black. Moreover; it was there that I met Bert (Bertha), the woman who subsequently became my second wife.

In 1969 I made my first trip to Los Angeles to a legal conference and was taken to **Elysium Fields**, a nudist-oriented "growth center." For the next twelve years, before I retired and moved to California, I visited California twice a year and experienced a variety of workshops, most of them nude. I also joined an "alternative lifestyle" organization called **Family Synergy** in Los Angeles. Many of their events were nude.

During the 70s I visited several places in the Caribbean which had nude beaches or nude sunbathing areas. These included Club Meds in Martinique and Guadeloupe, St Martin, and Jamaica. My favorite place was Negril Beach Village in Jamaica [*now Hedonism II – Ed*], which I visited five times.

Back in California

In January 1981, shortly after my second wife and I had married, we drove across country and settled in a multi-unit property in Long Beach, California.

In 1985 we visited friends in Florida who took us to **Paradise Lakes** Resort. The following year we bought a condo there. Thereafter, until my wife's death in 1992, we spent about twelve weeks a year there in four-week stints.

In 1994 I married again and moved into my wife Aida's home in Santa Barbara, California. In 1998 we were part of the first group to take a trip sponsored by the American Association For Nude Recreation to Paris and Provence.

Why is there only a handful of Black people in nudism? I'm not the one to ask, since I am an ardent Black nudist. However, I can venture some thoughts on the subject.

The United States, with its history of over two centuries of Black slavery, followed by many decades of legalized

racial oppression, discrimination, segregation, and injustice, is still a racially divided country. White prejudice, condescension, and hostility and the Black sense of victimization do not die easily. Socially, the vast majority of both races confine their socializing to their own race.

NUDISM AND SEXUAL EQUALITY

By Judge Matt Bullock

Published August 5, 2018 in the SCNA Newsletter

We live in a culture which, for millennia, has denigrated the human body, human sexuality and females. Sexual equality was never an issue; women were considered inferior and subject to men's control, period.

According to both the law and the church, sexuality was regarded as a base, but necessary, aspect of humanity; it was solely for procreation, not recreation. But wait! Males knew how much fun sex was and created a kind of underground avenue of satisfaction for themselves. They created a class of women, legally condemned, officially deemed "bad" and socially outcast, who existed for men's sexual pleasure.

"Good" women were the wives and mothers who were expected to be pre-martially chaste and to regard sex in marriage as a duty. If a woman showed signs of enjoying sex, she was suspected of being "bad" at heart. If a woman had the misfortune to be raped, the sexual experience was regarded as morally tarnishing her. Human bodies were regarded as shameful and "physical modesty," was universally required, except in art.

The movement for women's equality in this country had its beginning in 1848, with relatively modest goals. Its focus was on gaining legal rights equal to those of men. It is noteworthy that, only in my own lifetime, were women guaranteed the right to vote. (I was born in April 1920; the Constitutional Amendment guaranteeing women's suffrage was adopted in August 1920.) In the second half of the 20th century the movement for sexual equality blossomed, along with the Civil Rights Movement and the Human Potential Movement. Unfortunately, in my opinion, the movement for sexual equality has become sidetracked by the feminist movement, which I see currently emphasizing males oppression of females, sisterhood in victimhood and lesbianism. Nowhere do I see dialogue between males and females about the meaning of sexuality and how it is to be achieved.

Sexual equality may be considered on two levels, the legal level and the individual psychological level. It is not enough for the laws to require sexual equality; it is essential the men and women feel equal in their heads and hearts.

Nudism, in my view, fosters the feeling of equality in both men and women in various ways:

- (1) The mere fact of men and women joining together and engaging in asocial practice greatly at odds with conventional standards for male-female interaction, tends to foster the feeling of equality.
- (2) The nudist emphasis on Nature, with a capital "N," encourages both men and women to view human sexuality as a complementary egalitarian aspect of humanity.
- (3) Social nudity, in rejecting clothing and all it symbolizes, encourages men and women to share their basic feeling of humanity, rather than emphasizing cultural differences.

(4) Social nudity discourages the pretense, flirting and game-playing of conventional society. Its emphasis on enjoying the present moment, the sun and air, the here-and-now, discourages ulterior-motivated predatory and seductive behavior.

(5) For both sexes, nudism enhances self-esteem by encouraging people, especially women, to accept and appreciate their bodies as they are. The greater a person's feeling of self-esteem, the greater a person's feeling of equality.

One area in which men and women have sometimes not been equal in nudist environments is membership fees. To encourage greater female participation various clubs at times have charged women lower fees. Also, whereas women have been encouraged to join nudist groups, some clubs have denied membership to single males, presumably to preserve a numerical balance. In my forty-three years of nudist experience I have not known either of these non-equal treatments of men and women to have a negative effect on the basic equalitarian atmosphere of the groups involved.

Follow-up on Matt and Aida

Matt's third wife Aid died in 2012 at age 92.

A year later, Matt died following an extended battle with chronic leukemia. Bullock was 93 years young and a good friend and mentor to the SCNA club.