

...Just The Bare Facts

In early times before Hebrew-Christian-Moslem concepts were brought about, most of the tropical and temperate climates of the world were nothing more than one big nudist colony. The Greeks and Romans lived in a society of "clothing when necessary" frame of mind. Bathing, as well as sports, was enjoyed in the nude, as witnessed by the early Olympic games in Greece. The term Gymnos, Greek for naked, was how these athletes competed. They also trained nude in their respective sports. With the demise of the ancient civilizations and the beginning of a religion that stressed the sinfulness of sensuality, nudism began a decline.

A 16th century Christian group of Puritans strongly opposed the religious tolerance of the Church of England. With their exile to New England, they became the non-pleasure, morality enforcing people associated with puritanism. In Europe, the Renaissance period had raised the awareness of body acceptance in the field of art. In America, there were some so called, "radical thinkers", including Henry David Thoreau and Benjamin Franklin. They found benefits in their daily naked walks, or as they were called, "air baths", but they were in the minority.

By the turn of the twentieth century, mainland England was far more advanced and tolerant of the nude body than the United States. Many classic works of art considered masterpieces in England, were banned in the United States. One such work of art was "September Morn", a painting of a nude bather. While the U.S. was banning art work of naked bathers, the first nudists were freeing themselves of Victorian era prudence and bathing naked in Lubeck, Germany at Freilichtpark (free light park). (1903-1981). They stressed a healthy naked lifestyle. It included daily exercise, a Spartan-like outdoor living, and vegetarian diets. By 1929, immigrant Germans and visiting Germans brought this lifestyle to America. After some arrests, there was a favorable court ruling in New York allowing social nudity between men and women, without being lewd. For the first time in America, the concept of social nudism got national attention.

The National Nudist Conference was formed in America in 1933. It later became the American Sunbathing Association. By the mid 1930's, there were approximately eighty nudist camps across America. The new free spirit philosophy of the 1960s accelerated nudism. Sometimes called "The Free Beach Movement", the 1970 philosophy of open nudism would later be coined "Naturism." European tourist beaches have enjoyed a top-free environment for women. Nude beaches are not uncommon in many parts of Europe.

Modern nudism began in Germany and France. A nudist resort city on the Mediterranean, Cap d' Agde, now exists in France. Nudity in general has become acceptable in Denmark and The Netherlands. There have been many public nudist activities in both countries. All but two of Denmark's beaches are clothing optional.

Nationwide opinion polls taken in the years of 1983 and 1990 show that 72% of Americans polled approve of designated clothing optional beaches. To this date, roughly 30 million Americans have had some form of mixed social nudity. Other polls show that some 73% of Americans have skinny dipped with the opposite sex in their life. [from <http://web.infoave.net/~pixman/NUDHIST.HTM>]

[Ed. Note:so, where do they carry their matches??] [Info from <http://web.infoave.net/~pixman/NUDHIST.HTM>]

