

**"The trouble around (University Circle) is that everyone is resentful of nonconformity."** <sup>xi</sup>

—Rev. Cleo Malone, lay minister of the United Church of Christ and director of The Well and The Coffeehouse

*"I noticed in '67 really... the underground was bubbling over. I would say it wasn't until later, probably about '68, '69, before it started becoming the counter-culture. By the time that they had Woodstock it was all over for the underground. It was actually all over before that for a long, long time."*

—Geoff Swisher

In the mid-60s, University Circle was a gathering place for motorcycle gangs, beatniks, hippies, counter-culture personalities, musicians, and every kind of rough-around-the-edges personae that the east side of Cleveland had to offer. The main centers for these activities at this time were Adele's Lounge<sup>5</sup> ("You were a good person until you were found at Adele's" remembers Wende Miller) and The Coffeehouse, both located within the same block on Euclid Avenue at E. 115th Street. Headquarters, "a bookstore and gathering place for hippies"<sup>xii</sup>, was opened next door to Adele's in August 1966 by Stan Heilbrun. It changed hands and became the Graffiti head shop in the Spring of 1967 and then the Mach III<sup>6</sup> in late November 1967. Further up Euclid just beyond University Circle was The Well<sup>7</sup>, a meeting place sponsored by the East Cleveland Congregational Church. The liberal-minded and somewhat revolutionary congregation was headed up by the Rev. Dewey Fagerberg.



Bill Miller, Wende Katz and Jeff Kelly at The Well, February 1967  
(COURTESY OF CLEVELAND MEMORY PROJECT)

**Wende (Katz) Miller (married to Bill "Mr. Stress" Miller 1970 – 1980):** "I was in nursing school, and The Well was a block away from the dorm. That's how I met Bill. I don't think he was that into the intellectual stuff, but it was also multi-racial, multi-cultural...nobody (there) cared. In those days—'65/'66—little white Jewish girls did not go places where there were black people nor did little white student nurses. There were no black women in our class, there were also no men in our class either. Nursing education was so different in those days; it was like going to a convent. You weren't allowed to wear certain things and you weren't allowed to do certain things."

The Wade Park lagoon in front of the Cleveland Art Museum, located off Euclid Avenue between East Blvd. and what was then Liberty Blvd. (now Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr.), was also a gathering place for the underground. Controversial underground poet d.a.levy and his associates such as John Scott of The Underground Thought Patrol and the poets rjs and t.l. kryss would also often distribute their writings and publications there. Street preacher and noted painter Basil E. Kalashnikoff could be found at the lagoon when he wasn't spreading the gospel at the Mach III or downtown in Public Square.<sup>8</sup> It was also the site of Cleveland's first "Be-In" on Sunday, April 3, 1967.

**Wende Miller:** "You'd walk around the Art Museum and the lagoon on a Sunday and half of the people had sunglasses on because they were so stoned their pupils couldn't tolerate the sun. It was Cleveland's answer to the west coast; it was a very small answer. It was basically hippietown."



Poet d.a.levy, 1967  
(COURTESY OF CLEVELAND MEMORY PROJECT)

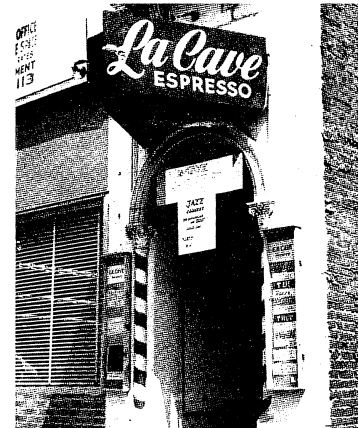
Members of the Cleveland chapter of the Hell's Angels hung out at Adele's, rubbing shoulders with scenesters, musicians, and writers (the tragic Cleveland poets Vachel Lindsay and Hart Crane are said to have drunk there in years prior). Drugs such as marijuana, LSD, and speed (amphetamine) were dealt, but so were underground publications such as d.a.levy's *The Buddhist Third Class Junkmail Oracle* as well as the *Marrahwanna Quarterly* which he edited and contributed to.

**Geoff Swisher:** "Adele's was a biker bar...a pretty wild place. Mr. Stress took me there while I was still in high school. The lighting was real severe and it just looked like it was black and white. I remember there was a guy inside who had a chicken and he's swinging the chicken around. I don't know what the fuck that was about. Some guy took a mouthful of beer and spit it all over this guy. I'm thinking 'so this is how the adults act'. It was a pretty strange scene."

**Jimmy Ley:** "There was a biker gang from Cleveland Heights (that) used to come down on the bus to hang out in front of Adele's because they didn't have any bikes! All they had was colors and attitude but they called themselves a biker gang. It was hysterical! But everybody took them seriously...because it was serious times."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Kalashnikoff, who ran an eponymous art school in Cleveland for 25 years until 1961, was a bit of a local celebrity and continued to preach on the streets of Cleveland until his death from cancer on September 11, 1973.

<sup>9</sup> "Cycle Gangs, Nazi Symbols And All, Seek To Shock", a somewhat mocking profile of area biker gang members by Michael D. Roberts that did not mention any motorcycle clubs by name, ran in the *Plain Dealer* on March 15, 1967.



La Cave entrance, circa 1964  
(PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN)

Jazz, folk, and blues could be heard at The Coffeehouse and The Well as well as at The Olive Tree, a coffeehouse located on what is now the Case Western Reserve University campus. Jazz could also be heard further down Euclid Avenue at the Esquire Lounge on E. 105th and – until it burned down in 1966 – Club 100 at E. 100th. There also were and had been numerous jazz clubs<sup>10</sup> two blocks away on Cedar Avenue, such as the Lucky Bar and the Cedar Gardens, both on E. 97th, and the Corner Tavern at E. 78th.

**Geoff Swisher:** "At (around) 104th and Euclid there was an adult newsstand that sold nudie magazines. It wasn't a hard-core, triple X rated place because those didn't exist at that time in Cleveland but they sold regular magazines and men's glamour magazines. But also they had all the B.B. King and Howlin' Wolf albums on Crown for like a buck (each). They were all cheaply made albums but that was a place to go (to get that music)."

It is said that soon-to-be-famous cartoonist Robert Crumb lived near this area on Hessler Road while working for American Greetings as an illustrator before departing for San Francisco in January 1967. It's very likely that Crumb and his good friend and fellow jazz buff Harvey Pekar were checking out some of the music at

Complete with photos of bikers flaunting swastikas and iron crosses, the piece probably spread a bit more than just shock and fear throughout the outer neighborhoods and suburbs.

<sup>10</sup> An excellent list compiled by Cleveland jazz historian Joe Mosbrook of the numerous jazz clubs that existed in Cleveland from the 1920s through the 1990s can be found here: [http://www.cleveland.oh.us/wmv\\_news/jazz49.htm](http://www.cleveland.oh.us/wmv_news/jazz49.htm)