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HTY 400
Research Seminar
12/15/08

"Faster, Louder, More Fun!" The Downtown Lounge and The Development and Legacy of a Music Scene in Portland, Maine

Until the late 1970s, Portland, Maine was a musical wasteland. The city, dominated by old-fashioned sounds and styles, had no venue dedicated solely to original music. Disco had become a major part of the city's nightlife by 1979, but it offered little musical substance, particularly to a younger generation faced with increasingly difficult economic and social circumstances. Punk rock, evolving into a major urban phenomenon in the United States during the 1970s, arrived in Maine's metropolis in the second half of the decade, falling on fertile ground. Manifesting itself in several different forms and without a firm "institutional" foundation at first, it signified a raw alternative to the dreary status quo. Relying primarily on oral history interviews with the members of the founding generation, this paper traces the evolution of Portland's punk rock scene from its humble beginnings to 1980, when it culminated in the creation of an all-original music venue: the Downtown Lounge. Ultimately, the Wax Museum record shop paved the way for the local original music scene in Portland that continues to this day.

Major cities were not the only place where punk rock left a distinctive footprint. As Joe Harrington, author of *Sonic Cool: The Life of Death of Rock n' Roll* and publisher of the Portland-based music magazine *Kapital Ink*, stated in an interview, "There was a [punk rock] scene everywhere, it's amazing."[1] Punk rock truly made its mark on America. However, much of the history of these smaller punk rock scenes has been

[1] Joe Harrington, interview by author, tape recorded, Portland, Maine, October 10, 2008.

largely ignored, creating considerable gaps in the history of the punk rock movement. In fact, most academic writing on the subject of punk rock is sociological rather than historical, meaning that few academic punk rock histories exist. Of the existing academic writing on the subject of American punk rock history, most texts generally take one of two approaches, either an overview of punk rock history (where only the most major players are recognized) or a discussion of the history of punk within one of the major scenes. Roger Sabin, editor of the book *Punk Rock: So What?*, has noted this problem, commenting on the "narrowness of the frame of reference" from which many punk rock history texts suffer.[2]

There is, however, some literature available that addresses the issue of documenting the smaller punk rock scenes that existed. George Hurchalla's *Going Underground: American Punk 1979-1992* documents both punk rock scenes in larger, yet less studied, cities such as Boston and Chicago and in areas where punk rock seemed less likely such as the Midwest, Florida, and Kentucky. No mention of the Portland punk rock scene is made throughout the text however.[3] Another text that documents the smaller punk rock scenes is *American Hardcore: A Tribal History* by Steven Blush. Very small scenes in the Northeast such as Amherst, Massachusetts and Manchester, New Hampshire are mentioned at length, with almost every state given some kind of passing mention, at the very least. In this text, Maine is documented rather negatively and fleetingly. The complete mention of Maine punk rock is as follows:

> Maine, always lame, lagged especially in the [hardcore punk] years (1980-1986). The one exception was Portland's the Stains (later Ice Age), who did a cool

[2] Roger Sabin, *Punk Rock: So What? The Cultural Legacy of Punk*, (New York: Routledge Press, 1999), 2.
[3] George Hurchalla. *Going Underground: American Punk 1979-1992*, (Stuart, FL: Zuo Press, 2006).

> marble-colored 7" in '80. Portland misfits made the trek to Boston for shows and record shopping.[4]

This representation of Portland punk rock fails to do the scene that existed there justice. Portland's punk rock scene exploded during this era, hosting shows with close to 300 participants, a far larger scene than in Amherst, Massachusetts.[5] Also, Portland misfits did not always need to go to Boston for shows and record shopping, as almost all Boston punk rock bands came to the Downtown Lounge in Portland for shows during 1980, the year the club was open. Furthermore, although the Stains were indeed a notable and influential Portland band, they were hardly the only band to come from the city. In 1980 alone, Portland produced bands such as Bebe and the B-sides, the Contractions, the Mirrors, the Foreign Students, and the Pathetics, among others.[6]

In Portland, a case can be made that socioeconomic factors played a role in the punk rock movement taking hold. This point is perhaps best illustrated by comparing conditions in Portland at the time to conditions in an area where socioeconomic factors undoubtedly played a role: London. The 1960s in England were an era of great hope and optimism, as historian Edward Royle wrote "it was widely believed that poverty had at last been conquered."[7] British popular culture even reflected this optimism through groups such as The Beatles and the hippie movement. By July of 1975, however, this hope had largely been shattered as Great Britain was in recession, suffering from a rapidly rising cost of living, and posting its highest unemployment rates in the post-World War Two era. As Alex Ogg, author of *No More Heroes: A Complete History of*

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[4] Steven Blush, *American Hardcore: A Tribal History*, (Los Angeles: Feral House, 2001), 245.
[5] Blush, 244.
[6] Dyke Hendrickson, "Corner Night At The Lounge," *Portland Evening Express*, August 14, 1980.
[7] Edward Royle, *Modern Britain: A Social History 1750-1997*, (New York: St Martin's Press Inc., 1997), 175.

UK Punk from 1976 to 1980, stated, "The optimism of the 60s had been gainsayed by the grim reality of the mid-70s."[8]

For Portland, a case can be made that the optimism of the early 1970s had been "gainsayed" by the grim reality of the early 1980s. This notion is particularly true in the areas of Portland that embraced the punk rock movement. As Jay Moores, the drummer for several Portland punk bands such as T2, Ghost Walks, and the Pilots expressed, Portland was the "perfect atmosphere for punk to take root. [Due to] the lack of jobs and poor economy."[9] 1970 and 1980 census data supports these claims. The center of the Portland punk rock movement is census tract 7, since it hosted the Deli One, the Downtown Lounge, and the original location of Geno's, three punk rock venues that will be discussed below. Surrounding tract 7 are tracts 4, 6, 8, and 9 which, when combined, create a 0.7 square mile hub in which punk rock thrived. Between 1970 and 1980, this area of downtown Portland underwent a dramatic socioeconomic shift. For instance, in 1970 unemployment in these five tracts was just 3.1 percent. By 1980 this figure had more than tripled to 9.4 percent.[10] In 1980 poverty in this area of Portland was also a significant issue, with 29.5 percent of the population living below the poverty line at a time when the national average was a relatively low 12.4 percent. Furthermore, the average income of unrelated individuals ages 15 and up had fallen even more behind the national average throughout the course of the decade. By 1979 the per capita income in these downtown Portland tracts was just 5,657 dollars (adjusted for inflation to 1999),

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[8] Alex Ogg, *No More Heroes: A Complete History of UK Punk from 1976 to 1980*, (London: Cherry Red Books, 2006), 9.
[9] Jay Moores, interview by author, email correspondence, October 13, 2008.
[10] "1970 and 1980 United States Census,"database, Social Explorer, *Social Explorer Maps and Reports* (http://www.socialexplorer.com: accessed 20 October 2008), entry for tracts 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, Portland, Maine.

significantly behind the national average of 7,298 dollars.[11] In any area stricken with poverty and unemployment, it is natural for those who have the means or the motivation, such as a family to raise, to leave to search for opportunity elsewhere, especially when Cumberland County, the state of Maine, and the United States as a whole were doing better economically. Perhaps it is not surprising then that, during this decade, the population of these five tracts greatly decreased, from 7,636 in 1970 to 5,775 in 1980, while the populations of Cumberland County, Maine, and the United States rose significantly. Furthermore, between 1970 and 1980 the group most likely to be lost due to natural attrition, those ages 65 and up, decreased from 1,952 to 1,387. While this is certainly a noticeable decrease, it is relatively small compared to the close to 2,000-person decrease the area as a whole experienced. During this time significant decreases among ages 0-14 and 35-54 occur, suggesting that families and those who might have started families were leaving the area.

What was left in the wake of downtown Portland's dramatic socioeconomic shift was the perfect environment for a punk rock movement to take its own distinctive shape. For instance, Portland punk rock was noted for having a slightly older demographic than many punk rock scenes, which typically were made up of teenagers between the ages of 14 and 18. While some high school students did get involved, the Portland punk scene routinely had participants who were well into their 20s and in some cases in their 30s. Will Jackson, a local radio show host and music writer for *Sweet Potato*, was 28 when he started booking the Downtown Lounge in 1980, Richard Julio, owner of the influential record store The Wax Museum, was 34 when he was a DJ there, and Nancy Chalmers,

[11] "1980 United States Census,"*Social Explorer Maps and Reports*, database entry for tracts 4,6,7,8,9, Portland, Maine.

who would later go on to briefly book shows at Geno's, was older than 40 when she used to come and watch the bands.[12] They were hardly alone. As Dennis Bailey noted in the *Maine Times*, those at the Downtown Lounge "[were] not all teenagers, either. On any night, the crowd contains numerous people in their late twenties and early thirties, and some who are even older."[13] This was because the Downtown Lounge, which almost exclusively hosted Portland punk in its early years, was a bar. Even though the drinking age was only 18 at the time, it still excluded quite a few, such as Joe Harrington, who otherwise would have been more active in Portland punk. During this decade, the percentage of the population in the previously defined hub of Portland punk that was between the ages of 18 to 24 increased from 16.0 percent in 1970 to 20.5 percent in 1980 and the percentage of the population that was between the ages of 25 to 34 increased from 8.4 percent to 19.8 percent.[14] Family life, as it had been known just a decade earlier, was also no longer a dominant theme in the area as non-family households (which might consist of single individuals or a group of unrelated individuals that live together) increased from 34.5 percent of all households in 1970 to 75.4 percent in 1980. The percentage of the population ages 14 and up that identified themselves as single also increased during this time, from 32.7 percent to 43.5 percent. The population of this part of downtown Portland also became noticeably better educated throughout the course of this decade. For instance, in 1970 the highest level of education that 33.3 percent of the hub had received was elementary school, grades K through 8. By 1980 this figure had

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[12] Will Jackson, interview by author, email correspondence, October 28, 2008.
[13] Dennis Bailey, "Don't Worry. He Only Comes Out At Night," *Maine Times*, May 9, 1980.
[14] "1970 and 1980 United States Census,"*Social Explorer Maps and Reports*, database entry for tracts 4,6,7,8,9, Portland, Maine.

dropped to just 23.5 percent.[15] Furthermore, college education more than doubled in the area throughout the course of the 1970s, with just 14.1 percent of the population having college experience in 1970, compared to 30.6 percent in 1980. As a matter of a fact, 52.1 percent of the population that was enrolled in some form of schooling at the time was enrolled in college.[16] A young, well educated, and poor population that is largely free from family obligations and is confronting extraordinarily grim socio-economic conditions, is, without a doubt, predisposed to the ethic of punk rock and therefore an ideal candidate as a whole to embrace the punk rock movement.

In many ways, it its also not surprising that census tract 7, which featured the notable Portland venues, the Deli One, the Downtown Lounge, and Geno's, became the epicenter of the Portland punk rock movement, because conditions there were worse than anywhere else in the downtown area. For instance, tract 7 in 1980 had the highest percentage of vacant housing units in the city, at 21.3 percent, resulting in low rents throughout the tract.[17] Furthermore, tract 7 also featured one of the higher unemployment rates for the area at 10.2 percent and a high poverty rate of 29.5 percent, factors that would also have great effect on conditions in the area. Tract 7 also seemed to have an already built-in population that could possibly embrace punk rock. Indeed, the area had both the highest percentage of people ages 15 and up who are not married (45.7 percent) and the lowest percentage of population who were married couples with a family at 4.6 percent. Also, tract 7 had one of the higher percentages of people ages 18-24 in the city at

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[15] "1970 and 1980 United States Census,"*Social Explorer Maps and Reports*, database entry for tracts 4,6,7,8,9, Portland, Maine.

[16] This fact raises the possibility that the poverty in the area could have been partly due to the large college population. Even if this was the case, however, it does not make the poverty felt any less significantly as one could argue that those in college would only be more aware of and discouraged by their poverty.

[17] "1980 United States Census,"database, Social Explorer, *Social Explorer Maps and Reports* (http://www.socialexplorer.com: accessed 20 October 2008), entry for tract 7 Portland, Maine.

20.7 percent. It is not surprising that a young and uncommitted population would look to area bars and clubs such as the Downtown Lounge as a means of escape from the everyday bleakness of their lives.

Another factor that might have led to punk rock taking hold in Portland was boredom. Indeed, like poverty and unemployment, boredom had also been a factor in London's punk rock explosion, as middle class youth sought to escape their routine, day-to-day lives. Portland in the mid to late 1970s did not have much original musical entertainment to offer, particularly for the young 18 to 24 demographic. As George Ripley, guitarist for the Portland punk band the Stains, remembered, "there wasn't a lot happening in [Portland] prior to punk rock."[18] Will Jackson remembered the area in 1979 as "a grungy little city subsisting on the remains of 70s hard rock, disco, and rancid folk music."[19] In fact, as late as 1975 there were no rock clubs in Portland, just hotel bars and restaurants that would occasionally have a band play.[20] This changed when Bill Dowd opened the Loft, the first club in Portland dedicated to live music. The enterprise met with great success. As Dowd stated, "The time was ripe…there was such a demand for it, you know. And there was a line almost every night for the next two or three years."[21] What the Loft did not do during this two or three-year period, however, was provide consistent original entertainment, as many of the rock bands that played there continued to be cover bands. In fact, perhaps the most recognizable local band during this time was the cover band Oak who played Styx and Steely Dan covers during their sets.[22] What was

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[18]George Ripley, interview by author, tape recorded, Farmington, Maine, October 17, 2008.
[19] Jackson, interview by author.
[20] Josh Rogers, "Rock Archival: As Geno's Turns 20, A Look Back On The Clubs That Were," *Portland Phoenix,* March 20, 2003.
[21] Rogers, "Rock Archival."
[22] Rogers, "Rock Archival."

worse than the cover bands though, from the perspective of those who would go on to make up the foundation of the Portland punk rock movement, was the disco craze that had seemingly swept the Portland nightlife. In the Thursday November 1st, 1979 "Around Town" section, a weekly article dedicated to listing what events and acts were scheduled in the Portland bar scene that weekend, of the *Portland Evening Express*, four separate disco bars are listed: the Landing, the Max, the Phoenix, and Park Avenue, the last of which claiming to have "a DJ spinning disco and pop music in a sophisticated setting including backgammon bars."[23] As a matter of fact, both the Phoenix and Park Avenue were located at what would eventually become the epicenter of Portland punk rock, 1980 census tract 7. Furthermore, the Landing and the Max were located just outside of tract 7 but still in the hub of Portland punk rock, in census tracts 4 and 8 respectively. Clearly, disco was a noticeable factor in the lives of those who would come to embrace punk rock in Portland. For various members of the Portland punk rock scene, the rejection of disco that punk offered had a great deal of power in drawing them to the scene. As Beth Blood, member of the Stains and owner of the Tijger Trading clothing store, stated, "You don't know how much I loathed the music of that time. I hated the music, the disco and all that crap, it was boring."[24]

Clearly by the late 1970s there was a cultural underground in Portland that was predisposed to the ethic of punk rock and sought to keep things lively in the city. This ethic consisted of a rejection of the unemployment, poverty, boredom, and unoriginal music that had come to define their youthful lives. The city still lacked a place for punk bands to play, though. Through the efforts of a couple people, however, a select few in

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[23] "Around Town," *Portland Evening Express*, November 1, 1979.
[24] Beth Blood, interview by author, tape recorded, Farmington, Maine, October 15, 2008.

Portland were beginning to become exposed to punk rock on a more regular basis. Indeed, during this time period Richard Julio's Wax Museum, Beth Blood and Heidi Wolfe's Tijger Trading shop, model Bebe Buell, and Will Jackson's New Wave Hour exposed the people of Portland to the energy and freedom of punk rock and paved the way for the Portland punk rock explosion of 1980.[25]

What Portland lacked in an original music scene it perhaps made up for by hosting "one of the best record stores in the country" at the time, Richard Julio's Wax Museum.[26] Richard Julio, who had previously earned his living by selling records on the streets of Boston, recognized the area's need for a record store and opened the Wax Museum in 1970. It was the first used record store in the area and, as local music writer Josh Rogers noted, "[Julio] attempted to treat vinyl with the reverence due museum artifacts," specializing in rare and valuable records.[27] Richard Julio took a unique approach for the time, having in stock "more variety than just the top 40 and…[carrying] underground records," making his store intentionally a collectors record store.[28] Other record stores in the city at the time carried the major releases and very little else.[29] This approach put the Wax Museum on the map, so much so that when Bob Dylan played at the Cumberland County Civic Center he made time to visit the Wax Museum, go through its out of print, collectable, and rare records, and ultimately spend a considerable amount of money. In the years to come, Bob Dylan was hardly the only notable musician to

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[25] Jackson, interview by author.
[26] Ripley, interview by author.
[27] Rogers, "Rock Archival."
[28] Richard Julio, interview by author, tape recorded, Freeport, Maine, October 11, 2008.
[29] Julio, interview by author.

purchase records from Julio, as he later sold records to both the influential punk musician GG Allin and Black Flag vocalist Henry Rollins.[30]

The Wax Museum, as one might expect, had a considerable influence on people in the area who were interested in music. In fact, almost everyone who would come to be a major player in the Portland punk rock scene spent time at the store. As Josh Rogers argued in an article entitled "Keep on Turning" that appeared in the *Portland Phoenix*, "It's a record shop phenomenon well documented: They attract a stray kid here and there. Every once in awhile someone...will just start hanging out."[31] Indeed, record stores have a tendency to both attract and educate young people on music and, because of the Wax Museum, the youth of Portland were no exception. Richard Julio in many ways embraced the role of Portland's musical mentor, featuring and talking up artists that he played regularly in his store with a great deal of energy.[32] Many of the artists that Julio featured were the direct predecessors to the punk rock movement, proto-punk bands such as the New York Dolls, MC5, and the Stooges.[33] With this approach and an emphasis on less mainstream music, local budding musicians embraced the Wax Museum. One such musician who spent a great deal of time in the store was Kip Brown, who eventually came to play in several Portland punk bands such as the Pontiffs and the Technicians.[34] Another budding Portland musician who was attracted to the Wax Museum was George Ripley. As Richard Julio remembered, "George hung out in my store quite a lot...he came out of the service, stationed in Germany, and when he got out he would come to the

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[30] Richard Julio, "About Me," Richard Julio, http://www.groovytunesday.com/about.html (accessed November 11, 2008).
[31] Josh Rogers, "Keep On Turning: The Run-Out Groove Of Portland's Vinyl Record Stores," *Portland Phoenix*, August 1, 2002.
[32] Christine Horne, interview by author, tape recorded, Freeport, Maine, October 11, 2008.
[33] Julio, interview by author.
[34] Jordan Kratz, "Punks In Maine," Jordan Kratz, http://www.bigmeathammer.com/punks.htm (accessed November 11, 2008).

store all the time, he would spend entire afternoons there, entire days in the record store talking music."[35] For Ripley, the attraction to the record store was clear, "It was a hotbed of getting turned on to stuff that you hadn't heard before," he explained.[36] Throughout the years, George Ripley and Kip Brown were hardly the only two people who were known to spend time regularly in the Wax Museum. "[The Wax Museum] is where they gravitated towards, because of the excitement," explains Christine Horne, who played in the all girl Portland punk rock band the Brood in the early 1980s. Before the Brood, however, Horne had formed a punk band called the Contractions with her two brothers "basically because of Richard's store and punk rock, we were very excited."[37] Will Jackson also spent a considerable amount of time at the Wax Museum, initially resisting Richard Julio's attempts to get him to like the Ramones. After a couple months of trying, however, Jackson eventually wore down and came to enjoy the group.[38] Furthermore, Heidi Wolfe, who would go on to run Tijger Trading with Beth Blood, actually worked at the Wax Museum for a period of time, and Lenny Smith, member of various Portland punk bands such as the Pontiffs and Big Meat Hammer, spent time regularly at the store with a consistent entourage of people.[39]

When the punk rock movement was first gaining momentum in New York and London, Richard Julio was one of the first people to discover the music and the first person in the city of Portland to stock records by the Ramones, the Dead Boys, the Sex Pistols, and the Clash.[40] Julio had long been a listener of 60s garage punk bands and a

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[35] Julio, interview by author.
[36] Ripley, interview by author.
[37] Horne, interview by author.
[38] Julio, interview by author.
[39] Julio, interview by author.
[40] Joe Harrington, "Hairlip Don't Grow On Granite Farm: The Same Band Naked and Stark," *Kapital Ink*, Issue #2, Spring 2006, 17.

reader of rock n' roll magazines such as *Rock Marketplace*, which featured an article in 1976 on an emerging New York City music scene based around the club CBGB's. It had become apparent that, in New York City at least, something was happening, a realization that was met with excitement. Through this article Richard Julio learned about *Punk Magazine* and was able to carry it from the first issue on.[41] Julio had also kept an eye on the British music scene, purchasing records directly from the United Kingdom regularly. As he explained, "When '76 and '77 came around I was all over it because [I had] read a lot of glowing reports about the Sex Pistols…as soon as these records came out, I jumped on it because I had to hear what all the excitement was about."[42] Joe Harrington also remembered Richard Julio's Wax Museum as the only place in the city to purchase punk records initially. As Harrington stated, "When punk happened we used to go there to buy singles from the UK and Ramones singles, there just was no other place in Portland to get it…and [Richard Julio] was really into it."[43]

Outside of the Wax Museum, Richard Julio also sought to expose Portland to punk rock through other venues. One alternative venue with which Julio had a great deal of success was evening cruises. Indeed, Julio booked Boston punk bands such as the Real Kids and DMZ to play on Portland ferries in an event called the "Moonlight Cruise and Dance", also known as the "Casco Bay Booze Cruises."[44] In the following years, Julio would also book Boston punk rocker Lou Miami to perform on a similar event.[45] These cruises were met with excitement by the local media who characterized the Real Kids and

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[41] Julio, interview by author.
[42] Julio, interview by author.
[43] Harrington, interview by author.
[44] Moores, interview by author.
[45] Richard Julio, "Casco Bay Lines Promotional Flyer" (Paper presented at interview meeting, Freeport, Maine, October 11, 2008).

DMZ as "two of the best new bands in Boston who are returning to the basics of rock 'n roll."[46] Attendance was good for these cruises, with the first cruise (which featured DMZ) alone drawing 100 people who were in search of a genuine rock and roll experience. Unfortunately, such successes would not continue for Julio. Despite an enthusiastic clientele, the Wax Museum was ultimately forced to close in 1979 due to the development of the Old Port tourist district, which caused rents to dramatically increase. The end of the Wax Museum, however, was hardly the end of Richard Julio's record selling experience. Throughout the years Julio has continued to sell records, utilizing tools such as mail-order via his site groovytunesday.com with sales beyond Portland.[47]

Another important venue through which the people of Portland were exposed to punk rock during the pre-Downtown Lounge years was Tijger Trading. For those who were interested in achieving the punk rock aesthetic of ripped jeans, safety pin jewelry, and untraditional hairstyles, there was only one place in Portland, the Tijger Trading shop that was run by Beth Blood and Heidi Wolfe. Beth Blood, who had always been interested in fashion and, as previously mentioned, hated disco, first discovered punk rock while visiting her stepfather in 1977. This was the same year that the Sex Pistols came to the United States, drawing considerable media attention. While with her stepfather, she saw a newscast covering one of the Sex Pistols shows in Texas and was captivated thinking, "man there's something new out there, that's great!"[48] Upon returning to Portland, Beth Blood would routinely make the trip to Boston to see bands such as the previously mentioned Real Kids play. Beth Blood also convinced Heidi Wolfe to transform their surplus and salvage shop into a punk rock clothing shop, Tijger

[46] Suzanne Murphy, "Crusing With The New Wave." July / August 1977.
[47] Julio, interview by author.
[48] Blood, interview by author.

Trading. Tijger Trading did more than just stock punk rock clothing, however, as the store also offered punk rock singles, zines, and other things not widely available in the Portland area. Josh Rogers described Tijger Trading as "a hip store that stocked hair dye, vintage '50s and '60s duds, shoes, sunglasses, fanzines, punk 45s, and skinny neckties."[49] Tijger Trading soon became one of the places, much like the Wax Museum, for those who were interested in punk rock in Portland to spend time, even if they did not spend a lot of money in the store. As one might expect with the economic situation that was detailed previously, the people of Portland did not have a lot of money to spend on punk rock clothing in general, but, as Beth Blood remembered, "a lot of kids came to hang [and] on occasion they would save their money for something that they really wanted."[50]

Another source that might have brought some people's attention to punk rock in the city of Portland was model, Playboy Playmate, and eventual musician Bebe Buell, the mother of actress Liv Tyler. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, Buell had a family summerhouse in Maine, giving her a link to the Portland area. In the world of rock and roll, Bebe Buell was a well-known figure, romantically linked to Iggy Pop, David Bowie, Mick Jagger, Jimmy Page, Steven Tyler, and actor Jack Nicholson. By 1978 or so, Buell had begun to gravitate towards punk rock, dating Elvis Costello (who at the time was producing music considered to be bordering on punk rock) and Richard Butler of the Psychedelic Furs while maintaining an open relationship with New York Dolls / Patti Smith producer Todd Rundgren.[51] Buell brought Costello to Portland in 1978, publically dating him. By 1979, she had moved on to Stiv Bators, guitarist and vocalist for the influential New York punk band the Dead Boys. At one point, Bators had actually moved

[49] Rogers, "Rock Archival."
[50] Blood, interview by author.
[51] Harrington, interview by author.

and set up residence in Maine with Bebe Buell and young Liv. In general, Bators significance is that he turned Bebe Buell on to the punk rock scene and brought like-minded people up to Portland to visit. As Joe Harrington commented, "[Bebe's] connection to the scene is actually pretty big because she was that person when the [Portland] scene started…[that was] bringing people here from Creem magazine, Stiv, and Costello…Bebe was coming up here with punk legends, shedding light on the scene…"[52] Later on, Buell, in tune with the music that accompanied the punk rock movement, would form her own band, Bebe and the B-sides, that preformed regularly at the Downtown Lounge, and Geno's.

The final place that turned the people of Portland on to punk rock between 1977 and 1980 was Will Jackson's punk rock radio show. Initially, Jackson was hired by FM 101 in Portland to be a part-time DJ during a six-hour shift on Sunday nights. This arrangement was soon altered, however. As Jackson remembered, "when they realized I knew a lot about music that was off their format (1960s and 70s psych/prog; punk/new wave) they decided to break format and offer me two shows."[53] Jackson, who by this point had embraced the exploding punk scene, jumped at the chance to play punk and new wave music throughout the course of his show. Though the station's selection was limited, Jackson bolstered the playlist with selections from his growing collection, playing artists such as the Buzzcocks, the Clash, the Talking Heads, the Ramones, and the Stooges regularly.[54] As Joe Harrington remembered, Will Jackson's radio show made punk rock and new wave accessible to those who were not old enough to go out to

[52] Harrington, interview by author.
[53] Jackson, interview by author.
[54] Jackson, interview by author.

the clubs and see bands live, "I was like a kid, but I could still listen to [Will Jackson's radio show], in fact that was a big part of my life."[55]

Those who longed for the formation of an original music scene in Portland would soon find some hope when the Ramones visited the Loft in the summer of 1978. Opening for the Ramones that night was the self described "jazz-punk" group the Same Band from Brunswick, Maine, perhaps the only band in Maine at the time to have jumped on the punk bandwagon. Incorporating the use of found sounds, dialogue, and horns into their music, the Same Band was anything but the typical three-chord punk band. Perhaps Joe Harrington characterized the band best when he described the Same Band as "ex-hippies perhaps schooled on jazz or Beefheart, who caught the energy of punk, and the musical freedom it offered, without necessarily subscribing to the straight 4/4 punk-is-as-punk-does structure of the Ramones and their off-shoots."[56] "We were all impressed and excited by the punk thing," explained guitarist John Etnier. In the same year as the Ramones show, the Same Band also released a 7-inch single entitled "Radiation" that featured two songs, "Radiation" and "The Desert is a Bitch". The songs discussed topics such as the dangers of nuclear power and Middle East foreign policy that were likely ahead of their time.[57] Despite the fact that the show at the Loft was likely the first time that many in the audience had heard live punk rock, much less jazz punk, the feedback from the performance was positive, suggesting an audience that was starved to hear something new. "That was the first time I ever got genuine applause…I remember being

[55] Harrington, interview by author.
[56] Harrington, "Hairlip Don't Grow On Granite Farm",12.
[57] Harrington, "Hairlip Don't Grow On Granite Farm," 13.

quite floored that after we finished our first song, I almost expected boos and catcalls, we had applause," stated vocalist Mike Lasky.[58]

The importance of having the Ramones, arguably one of the most influential punk bands of all time, visit Portland is adequately recognized by those who were there that night. Joe Harrington characterizes the show as "Portland's equivalent of that legendary Sex Pistols gig in Manchester [England] in 1977 when half of the audience comprised the virtual future of British punk itself, from various members of the Buzzcocks and Joy Division to a lad named Morrissey…that gig really was the Portland punk community-what little of it there was at the time-announcing itself to the world."[59] Harrington indeed has a valid point, since Richard Julio, Beth Blood, and Gilbert Doughty and Noel Ventresco of the Kontradictions all were in attendance that night.[60] Others, such as Richard Julio, agree with Harrington that the show was important, but stopped short of holding it in quite as high esteem. "I wouldn't call it a defining moment, but I would call it a milestone," Julio stated.[61] What perhaps is most important though is that a precedent had been set with booking punk bands from out of town in Portland, as the Ramones show, despite a few confrontations regarding equipment, went over surprisingly smoothly. In fact, the Loft's owner, Bill Dowd, even received a promotional money clip as a thank you for doing the Ramones a favor. Over the club's final few years, the Loft booked a considerable number of punk and new wave bands from New York.[62]

With enough people aware of punk rock in Portland through the previously mentioned people, stores, and shows, it was only a matter of time until the city produced

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[58] Harrington, "Hairlip Don't Grow On Granite Farm," 25.
[59] Harrington, "Hairlip Don't Grow On Granite Farm," 25.
[60] Harrington, "Hairlip Don't Grow On Granite Farm," 11.
[61] Julio, interview by author. Julio saw the Ramones a few months earlier at Salsbury Beach, NH only 1 hour away.
[62] Rogers, "Rock Archival."

its first homegrown punk band. In the summer of 1978, at essentially the same time as the Ramones and Same Band show at the Loft, guitarist George Ripley began to think about putting together a punk rock band with drummer Joe Potter. Ripley had first experienced punk rock in 1977 while on a trip to visit his older brother who was stationed in the military in San Antonio, Texas. While there, Ripley got to see the Sex Pistols play at a venue called Randy's Rodeo. This was the same tour that Beth Blood had seen a newscast about that ultimately led her to the punk rock movement. Ripley has particularly fond memories of the Sex Pistols show. As he describes it, when the band came out to perform "the air immediately turned into a sea of bottles headed towards the stage and the band ripped into "Anarchy in the UK" and it was like wow! This is what I want to do!"[63] In the following week, Ripley also got to see the Ramones play at Randy's Rodeo, but was not as impressed. "It was like night and day," he explained.[64] Like the members of the Same Band, Ripley was also very attracted to the energy and freedom that punk rock offered. "It was the energy and the whole idea that anybody can do it…you don't have to study guitar for 20 years and sound like Jimmy Page or Jimmy Hendrix to be able to get on stage and do your thing."[65] At the time, Ripley and Potter worked at the Deli One and convinced coworker Dave Buxton to sing for them. The allure of Buxton was obvious, as he was an English illegal immigrant, perfect for punk rock. After initally being known as the Wank Stains, the group shortened the name to the Stains. The Stains' first show, held on Halloween 1979 in the Deli One, illustrates just how much the population of Portland was craving punk rock. As Ripley explained, "We did our fist show, we knew one song, we did the Sex Pistols "Submission" like 6 or 8 times and just made a lot of noise…the

[63] Ripley, interview by author.
[64] Ripley, interview by author.
[65] Ripley, interview by author.

strange thing was that Portland was such a cultural wasteland at the time that we actually got like 40 or 50 people and they actually liked it."[66] The city of Portland had its first punk band and the stage had been set for what would ultimately become the year of Portland punk, 1980.

"You know who designed the acoustics of this place? I'll tell you, it was me. So I know it's going to sound good," declared Fred Muccino, owner of the Downtown Lounge, in a December 6th, 1979 Portland Evening Express Article that announced the opening of the venue.[67] The article went on to state "Thursdays will be set aside for 'punk night' when new forms of rock 'n roll will be rolled out." Ultimately, punk night would go from just Thursday night to essentially every night the Downtown Lounge was open as the punk rock scene in Portland grew. The Downtown Lounge was located in the Plaza Hotel, an establishment that had a reputation as seedy and decrepit. Will Jackson, who would book the Downtown Lounge throughout most of its existence, described the place as "the empty dance room of this utter fleabag hotel…owned and run by a good old slumlord named Freddie."[68] As journalist Kim Murphy, assigned to do a story on the Downtown Lounge, stated, "The last time I was at the Plaza Hotel on Preble Street it was 1972. I covered a murder. A 63 year old man who lived there was stabbed with a screwdriver."[69] Furthermore, those who went to the Downtown Lounge had to first enter through another bar that was, according to John Etnier, "occupied by aging winos and a slew of extremely ugly prostitutes who rented the rooms upstairs."[70] The hotel had long since fallen into disrepair, with its essentially unheated and unfurnished rooms literally

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[66] Ripley, interview by author.
[67] "Downtown Lounge Opens In Plaza Hotel," *Portland Evening Express*, December 6, 1979.
[68] Jackson, interview by author.
[69] Kim Murphy, "Rockin' At The Lounge," *Portland Evening Express*, June 30, 1980.
[70] Harrington, "Hairlip Don't Grow On Granite Farm", 27.

overrun by cockroaches and rats. Lou Miami, who came up from Boston to perform at the club regularly, once noted on stage that he woke up in his hotel room one night, only to find a rat staring back at him.[71] Will Jackson was not discouraged though and, recognizing the need for a place for punk rock and new wave bands to play in Portland, convinced Muccino to let him book the Downtown Lounge with whatever music he wanted on Wednesday nights. Jackson's success was instantly apparent to the owner. As Will Jackson remembered, "after two Wednesdays Freddie begged me to take over weekends too; henceforth for the next 11 months of 1980 (January through November) the Downtown Lounge ruled."[72]

And rule the Downtown Lounge did. Throughout the city, many people were excited to finally have a venue that was dedicated to live, original music. For the most part, however, this live, original music was referred to as new wave by the local media. This does not necessarily mean that the music played at the Downtown Lounge was not punk though. In fact, at this time, the terms new wave and punk rock were essentially synonymous. It was not until later that the two genres really diverged. As Richard Julio stated, "I don't think people separated new wave and punk that much at the time…it was all the same, it was the same term."[73] Will Jackson explained his take on the music that was played:

> Playing originals was possibly the only thing that united disparate bands under the alleged punk umbrella. I mean, the band that launched The Downtown Lounge on January 7th, 1980 was Quill, who sounded like King Crimson! But who was hearing live sets of King Crimson-like music anyway…fucking loud and fast, completely pogo-able: sounds punk to me![74]

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[71] Julio, interview by author.
[72] Jackson, interview by author.
[73] Julio, interview by author.
[74] Jackson, interview by author.

As Will Jackson was quoted in an article entitled "And New Wave? It's Rolling This Way" in the January 10th, 1980 edition of the *Portland Evening Express* "If there's a scene, there's a scene."[75] In all, over 200 people turned out for the first new wave night at the Downtown Lounge. This figure is particularly impressive since the Downtown Lounge, as previously stated, was a bar. "Though it wasn't clear until last night that Portland is large enough to host a new wave scene, it is quite clear now that it is," declared *Evening Express* columnist Dyke Hendrickson.[76] For those who had been longing for a place to go to see original music consistently in Portland, their thirst had been quenched at last. As John Etnier remembered, "When the Downtown Lounge opened, it was like Christmas…by that point it was like, let's all go there."[77] Christine Horne also commented on the excitement that surrounded the Downtown Lounge, "It kind of felt like it could have been shut down at any time…it was almost too good to be true, because it was really fun and you had great bands and great music and it was in this place that it didn't really belong, but yet it was there."[78] Interest in the club, a low cover charge of just 99 cents, and a lack of anything else going on meant large audiences at the Downtown Lounge from the outset. George Ripley was impressed and surprised by the turn out that the Stains received at their first show at the Downtown Lounge, "It freaked us out…the first time we played there…January 30th, 1980, we got 200 people in the place…basically because there was nothing else happening."[79]

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[75] Dyke Hendrickson,"And New Wave? It's Rolling This Way," *Portland Evening Express*, January 10, 1980.
[76] Hendrickson, "And New Wave? It's Rolling This Way."
[77] Harrington, "Hairlip Don't Grow On Granite Farm," 17.
[78] Horne, interview by author.
[79] Ripley, interview by author.

One person of note who was involved with the early days of the Downtown Lounge is Tim Warren, who traveled to the Lounge on a regular basis from his home in Lewiston to DJ between band sets. Warren was the one who came up with the slogan that came to epitomize the spirit of the Downtown Lounge: "Faster, Louder, More Fun!"[80] As Will Jackson remembered, Tim Warren was "tuned into the punk rock zeitgeist in 1980 as much as anyone I knew."[81] Throughout the year of the Downtown Lounge, however, Warren increasingly spent time in New York, where he became an expert on 60s garage rock.[82] Ultimately, Tim Warren moved to New York and started the highly successful Crypt Records, which specializes in releasing rare recordings from predominantly the 1960s, and Richard Julio stepped in to DJ.

For those who visited the club regularly, dancing was another big part of its appeal. The club itself was set up in such a way that tables surrounded the "largest dance floor in the city" as stated by Muccino.[83] This set up offered an escape from Portland and made many such as Barb Moran, who would later book bands for Geno's, forget about the Lounge's less than ideal setting:

> "[The Downtown Lounge] was sophisticated. You sat down at a lit table with a little candle, and you just felt like you were in New York City instead of Portland, Maine. It had great ambiance. The décor was early '40s-you just felt like you were going to talk to Bogart any second…you had views all the way around of the dancers and that was really cool and kind of sedating: you could get loaded and watch these people dance."[84]

Indeed, dancing was a particularly important part of the music scene at the Downtown Lounge, as an article in the *Maine Times* noted, "This group is here to have fun, which to

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[80] Jackson, interview by author.
[81] Jackson, interview by author.
[82] Julio, interview by author.
[83] "Downtown Lounge Opens In Plaza Hotel," *Portland Evening Express*, December 6, 1979.
[84] Rogers, "Rock Archival."

them means a few hours of wild, uninhibited, nonstop dancing."[85] Dyke Hendrickson, writing for the *Portland Evening Express*, noticed the Downtown Lounge's focus on dancing as well. Hendrickson wrote, "by the end of the evening, virtually everyone in the room had been lured onto the [dance] floor."[86]

At the beginning of the Downtown Lounge, there simply were not enough local bands to fill up the club. At this time the only punk band in town was essentially the Stains (the Quill was from Brunswick) and although several other local bands started up within weeks of the Stains first performance at the Downtown Lounge, it would not be until the summer of 1980 that other local bands such as the Kontradictions, the Mirrors, the Foreign Students, and the Pathetics would be ready to play there.[87] In the meantime, Jackson booked the club predominantly with bands from Boston, a city that had a great scene as early as 1977. As George Ripley stated, "during that 10 months [that the Downtown Lounge was open] anybody and everybody that was worth a fart from Boston came up."[88] Notable Boston band such as Lou Miami and the Kozmetix and Mission of Burma made the trip to the Downtown Lounge.[89] The club was even an early launching ground for a certain punk legend from Manchester, New Hampshire. As Will Jackson stated, "some people don't believe me when I tell them that a 16-year old yahoo from New Hampshire named GG Allin played [at the Downtown Lounge] with his 14-year old little brother in tow. Let the record show that the band was horrible."[90] Most of the bands from out of state were not horrible, however, and ultimately inspired the aspiring

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[85] Bailey, "Don't Worry. He Only Comes Out At Night."
[86] Hendrickson, "And New Wave? It's Rolling This Way."
[87] Ripley, interview by author.
Hendrickson, "Corner Night At The Lounge."
Joe Harrington. "I Wanna Hear Lyntch!" *Portland Pipeline*, 1980.
[88] Ripley, interview by author.
[89] Bailey, "Don't Worry. He Only Comes Out At Night."
[90] Jackson, interview by author.

Portland punk bands to step their game up.[91] One thing that is worth noting is that, since Boston, like most major cities at the time, had an established pub rock scene and a market for rock music, there were those in Boston who were skilled musicians who adapted their music to fit the punk rock style, much like those in the first-wave of British punk.[92] In Portland, since there really was no established rock music scene, this was not the case, a fact that makes the Portland punk rock scene distinct and unique from America's larger punk rock scenes. Portland, one could argue, was much closer to the spirit of punk rock, with the punk rock scene developed though a grassroots movement from the bottom up. As Christine Horne explains, Portland bands were "upstart bands [that] were the ones who were excited by the anyone can do it philosophy…start a band, learn how to play."[93]

Overall, the local media portrayed the Portland punk rock movement as a whole through a very positive lens. This is surprising, since much of the contemporary national media had not. The Associated Press, for example, had published an article entitled "New Craze: Punk Rock Scene Scarred by Violence," during the summer of 1980.[94] Throughout the course of 1980, the Portland media responsibly drove home the point that those who were involved in the Portland punk rock scene were not like their nihilistic and anarchistic counterparts elsewhere, but rather people who were just out to seek good times, dance, and briefly escape their day-to-day lives. Articles such as a May 9th, 1980 *Maine Times* article illustrate this judicious coverage. The articles sought to correct misconceptions on those who were involved in the Portland punk rock movement, stating that the "young, energetic fans…aren't nearly as weird as some of them look," and that

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[91] Ripley, interview by author.
[92] Julio, interview by author.
[93] Horne, interview by author.
[94] "New Craze: Punk Rock Scene Scarred by Violence," *Associated Press*, July 10, 1980.

those who went to the Downtown Lounge were not the "vacant-headed teenagers that much of the media would have one believe."[95] This point is driven home by Beth Blood who is quoted as saying, "The music is really creative, it's fun just to go and dance instead of going someplace to sit and getting drunk or high until you can not function." Other media outlets such as the *Portland Evening Express* also presented the Portland punk rock movement in a positive light. For instance, reporter Kim Murphy, although initially shocked by the fashion that was displayed at the Downtown Lounge which included a boy wearing blue lipstick, wrote "Now before some of you old folks get irritated and disgusted and intolerant, consider what's happening at the Lounge. All these funky clothes are an expression of something that is really a lot of fun…at the Downtown Lounge it all seems healthy."[96] Furthermore, another *Portland Evening Express* writer, Dyke Hendrickson, also stated that the Portland punk rock movement "[did] not resemble the nihilist media happenings…rather, it was funtime rock 'n' roll" and that the Downtown Lounge had "become known throughout New England as one of the region's foremost new wave nightclubs."[97]

Despite all of the success the Downtown Lounge experienced, by November of 1980 the club was at its end. Essentially, the downfall of the Downtown Lounge can be attributed to the entry of Keith Ward into the Portland punk rock scene and the growing frustration of club owner Fred Muccino. Indeed, Muccino had been losing money with the Downtown Lounge, a fact that he attributed to the punk rockers habits while at the club. "The punk rockers don't drink, they just listen to the music and dance," Muccino

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[95] Bailey, "Don't Worry. He Only Comes Out At Night."
[96] Kim Murphy, "Rockin' At The Lounge."
[97] Dyke Hendrickson, "A Look Back at 1980: City's Calender Was Full," *Portland Evening Express*, December 26, 1980.

stated.[98] Ward, who had previously worked with groups such as Three Dog Night and Steppenwolf, had been a resident of Portland for just three months when he successfully handled the sound and administered an October 30th, 1980 Halloween show featuring Bebe and the B-sides and "an evening of horrible music from the archives of the Wax Museum."[99] After the show, Muccino, who wanted to know if Ward would run the place and handle the club's booking, approached Ward. Ultimately, Ward agreed after Muccino "made a commitment to improve the [Downtown Lounge] and really support it."[100] This change was news to Will Jackson who at the time said, "One day I come in and Keith Ward is sitting at my desk asking me if I've heard that he's taking over the club. It just wasn't handled in a responsible way."[101]

Those who were regular patrons of the Downtown Lounge though, were unwilling to let the venue change hands to outsider and newcomer Keith Ward without a fight. In response to the management change, the Stains wrote a song sarcastically titled "You've Been Here Too Long" which featured verse lyrics such as "You set us up, you set us back, you fed us a line, you wasted our time" and "you're so fucking sleazy when you're around I get ill" and a chorus that stated, "Keith Ward, what a sick joke, Keith Ward, your pipe dreams are just a hoax, you're just a fucking creep, you're just a fucking geek."[102] Furthermore, a protest group called C.A.S.T., which stood for Committee Against Sleazy Takeovers, was founded. The group, with which Jackson was not involved, focused on making people aware that "sleazoids [were] in control and righting the wrongs of the management change by returning Will Jackson to his rightful

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[98] "The Invasion of the Sleazoids," *Portland Evening Express*, November 13, 1980.
[99] Rogers, "Rock Archival."
[100] "The Invasion of the Sleazoids."
[101] "The Invasion of the Sleazoids."
[102] The Stains. "You've Been Here Too Long." *Portland Pipeline*, 1980.

position.[103] While it seems logical to think that perhaps this protest movement was due to Ward being from outside of the Portland punk rock scene, this was hardly the only reason for the protest. Indeed, many in the punk rock scene were much more upset by Ward and Muccino's efforts to transition the club's musical format away from punk rock and new wave. Although Keith Ward eventually quit and Muccino made the offer for Will Jackson to stay on and book the Downtown Lounge part-time, Jackson ultimately rejected this offer stating that, "I feel burned by the whole thing."[104] Although Bebe Buell played one more sold-out show there, with members of the Cars Rick Ocasek, Greg Hawkes, and Benjamin Orr in attendance, it was too late. Towards the end of November 1980, the Downtown Lounge permanently closed its doors.[105]

Although the Downtown Lounge was open for just 10 months, the spirit, energy, and freedom that the venue embodied lives on in Portland today at Geno's Pub. Geno's is an all original rock venue that has thrived for over 25 years in Portland, hosting acts such as Murphy's Law, DOA, and Nirvana and drawing comparisons to famous punk rock venues such as the Rat in Boston and CBGB's in New York.[106] There are those who have been involved with the club that consider Geno's to be "an institution."[107] One could argue that Geno's directly owes its success to the efforts of those who had been involved with the Downtown Lounge. Indeed, many people who had been active in the Downtown Lounge punk scene came to be involved in the Geno's punk scene. Richard Julio, for instance, handled the booking at the club during its early years. Drawing on contacts made

[103] "Invasion of The Sleazoids."
[104] "Invasion of The Sleazoids."
[105] Rogers, "Rock Archival."
[106] Rogers, "Rock Archival."
[107] Justin Ellis. "Keep It Local? From '80s to '08, It's Been the Geno's Way." *Portland Press Herald*, March 10, 2008.

from his record selling days , Julio was able to get artists such as Lou Miami and GG Allin to play at Geno's, putting the venue on the map.[108] When Julio stepped down from his position as the club's booking agent, he was replaced with two other veterans of the Downtown Lounge: Barb Moran and Nancy Chalmers. Chalmers continues to book one show a month at the club to this day and Moran booked the club consistently up until 2007.[109] Furthermore, musicians who had played at the Downtown Lounge became active in the Geno's punk scene. Beth Blood and George Ripley, both former members of the Stains, formed the band Ghost Walks that played at Geno's regularly up until 1989.[110] Kip Brown, who had been a fixture at Richard Julio's Wax Museum, also continued to play music forming bands such as Average Rage (the first band to play at Geno's), Rock Candy, the School Boys, Idol Threats, and the Wild Heart that would play at Geno's throughout the years.[111] Brown continues to play music at Geno's to this day with his band the Pontiffs. Christine Horne, who had previously played in the Contractions, formed the all girl punk band the Brood who were able to use Geno's as a launching ground, ultimately going on several tours and producing records.[112] Today, Horne continues to perform at Geno's with the group Lady Kensington and the Beatlords. Finally, until recently Lenny Smith, who like Kip Brown was also regularly at the Wax Museum, played in perhaps Maine's longest running punk band, Big Meat Hammer.[113] Throughout the years, Geno's has stayed true to the original ethic of the Downtown Lounge by providing a place for local acts to perform. As Sarah Beaulieu, who replaced

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[108] Julio, interview by author.
[109] Julio, interview by author.
[110] Ripley, interview by author.
[111] Ellis. "Keep it Local?"
[112]Richard Julio, interview by author.
[113]Jordan Kratz, "Big Meat Hammer Biography," Jordan Kratz, http://www.bigmeathammer.com/hammer.htm (accessed November 11, 2008).

Barb Moran as the club's primary booking agent, stated in an article in the *Portland Press Herald*, "We try to support a lot of local acts…We would like all bands starting out in Portland to play here."[114]

Certainly, between the years 1975 and 1980 Portland's musical landscape underwent a dramatic overhaul, the effects of which echo into the present day. Indeed, up until the late 1970s, the city was a musical backwater dominated by old-fashioned sounds and styles. Cover bands dominated Portland's music scene and the city lacked a venue dedicated solely to original music. Disco, which had come to be a major part of the city's nightlife by 1979, fell increasingly out of favor with those in Portland who desired more substance to their music. To make matters worse, throughout the city a new generation of Portland's youth were facing increasingly difficult economic and social circumstances. It was not until the development of the punk rock movement in the United States, however, that Portland's music scene finally began to change. In many ways, Portland had the perfect atmosphere for a punk rock movement to take root, with socioeconomic conditions that paralleled those experienced in London roughly five years earlier. Many in Portland were predisposed to the ethic of punk rock, transcending the unemployment, poverty, and boredom that had come to define their lives in the city. Although throughout the late 1970s there continued to be no consistent venue for live, original music in Portland, the energy and freedom of punk rock did begin to appear in several different forms within the city during these years, in essence developing a grassroots punk rock movement. It was not until 1980 though that this energy and freedom finally manifested itself in the form of Portland's first all-original music venue: the Downtown Lounge. The Downtown Lounge had some impact on the development of the city's music scene, as

[114] Ellis. "Keep it Local?"

many locals were inspired by the anyone can do it ethic of punk rock to pick up instruments, form their own bands, and get involved. Furthermore, the Downtown Lounge paved the way for a thriving original music scene that continues to this day in Portland through venues such as Geno's Pub. Ultimately, that original music scene is the direct legacy of the Wax Museum and the Downtown Lounge.

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