

= Last Exit on Brooklyn =

The Last Exit on Brooklyn was a Seattle University District coffeehouse established in 1967 by Irv Cisski . It is known for its part in the history of Seattle 's counterculture , for its pioneering role in establishing Seattle 's coffee culture , and as a former chess venue frequented by several master players .

= = History = =

The Last Exit on Brooklyn opened on June 30 , 1967 at 3930 Brooklyn Avenue NE near the University of Washington campus in a small light @-@ industrial building leased from the University . It was one of the pioneer espresso bars in Seattle , adding an espresso machine shortly after Café Allegro opened the first in 1975 . The Last Exit was known for its original espresso concoction named the Caffè Medici ? " a doppio poured over chocolate syrup and orange peel with whipped cream on top " . Described in 1985 as " America 's second oldest , continuously running coffeehouse " , it was also known for its inexpensive food and as a venue for folk music and bohemian conversation .

The Last Exit was also notable as a popular destination for Seattle 's amateur and professional Go and chess players including Peter Biyiasas , Viktors Pupols , and Yasser Seirawan , who wrote of the venue , " Those first chess lessons soon led me to the legendary Last Exit on Brooklyn coffee house , a chess haven where an unlikely bunch of unusual people congregates to do battle . " Interviewed by Sports Illustrated in 1981 , Seirawan described the Last Exit as " Scrabble players , backgammon players , chess and game hustling ... This became my home . This was to become my family . "

When interviewed by Mary Lasher of Chess Life in 1985 , owner Irv Cisski said , " So what if games @-@ people turn away business . They add flavor . Chess and Go are assets to a coffeehouse . " The Last Exit was the subject of a 1987 retrospective in The Seattle Times in which Cisski described his intent to " create a haven where students and the benign crazies " were welcome and where " everyone felt equal and there were no sacred cows " . It was later described by Seattle writer and journalist Knute Berger as

one of Seattle 's great ' 60s landmarks , a gathering place for UW students , radicals , poets , nut jobs , chess masters , teens , intellectuals , workers , musicians , artists , beatniks , and hippies ... I remember the din , the open @-@ mike music , cigarette smoke , impromptu poetry readings , the arguments of lefties , libertarians , crackpots , and cultists . You could hear the rhythm and roar of the counterculture as it lived and breathed .

Cisski died on August 25 , 1992 . In 1993 the University repossessed the building occupied by the coffeehouse , and the Last Exit 's new owners moved it to upper University Way . The Last Exit on Brooklyn closed in 2000 . The space the original Last Exit once occupied now houses staff members from the University of Washington 's Human Resources Department .

= = In popular culture = =

The Last Exit was included in Clark Humphrey 's 2006 book of historical photographs , Vanishing Seattle .

Descriptions of the interior and atmosphere of the Last Exit appear in Kristin Hannah 's 2008 novel , Firefly Lane , in David Guterson 's 2008 novel , The Other , and in Marjorie Kowalski Cole 's 2012 The City Beneath the Snow : Stories .