

American Pie

By Don McLean

WEBBQUEST: POPULAR CULTURE

- Answer the following questions based on the song American Pie.

listen to the song

- Find the information you need to answer the questions below (on the web or in printed press). Please make sure you include the list of references where you got the information from at the end of each question.

Question 1. What does "Miss American Pie" refer to in popular culture?

Question 2. What does the line "Drove my Chevy to the levee" allude to?

Question 3 . What does Altamont refer to?

Carmen Gregori Signes

Altamont

Carmen Gregori Signes

The following excerpt is from Todd Gitlin's book "The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage:"

The tale has been told many times of how, at Altamont, among three hundred thousand fans, the Hell's Angels, serving as semiofficial guards, killed a young fan, black, who had a white date and the temerity to offend the Angels (by getting too close to them, or their motorcycles, or the stage), and then, at some point, pulled a gun—all the while Mick Jagger was singing "Under My Thumb." I heard about the killing that night, on the radio, having left before the Stones took the stage. But by the time I left, in the late afternoon, Altamont already felt like death. Let it sound mystical, I wasn't the only one who felt oppressed by the general ambience; a leading Berkeley activist told me he had dropped acid at Altamont and had received the insight that "everyone was dead." It wasn't just the Angels, shoving people around on and near the stage, who were angels of death. Behind the stage, hordes of Aquarians were interfering with doctors trying to help people climb down from bad acid trips. On the remote hillside where I sat, stoned fans were crawling over one another to get a bit closer to the groovy music. Afterward everyone was appalled and filled with righteous indignation. But exactly who or

what was at fault? On a practical plane, there were movie-rights squabbles; greed had played its part in preventing adequate preparations. But the effect was to burst the bubble of youth culture's illusions about itself. The Rolling Stones were scarcely the first countercultural heroes to grant cachet to the Hell's Angels. We had witnessed the famous collectivity of a generation cracking into thousands of shards. Center stage turned out to be another drug. The suburban fans who blithely blocked one another's views and turned their backs on the bad-trippers were no cultural revolutionaries. Who could any longer harbor the illusion that these hundreds of thousands of spoiled star-hungry children of the Lonely Crowd were the harbingers of a good society?