

# Beltrami Ethnic History Project

Beltrami is a neighborhood, a small pocket community of some five hundred homes in Northeast Minneapolis. It is also a unique ethnic community rich with history. The Swedes were the first to settle; later came the Italians, Poles, and other ethnic minorities. Some fell into the "melting pot," others did not. Today, few remember Swede Alley, mainstreet for the Nordic immigrant. Tomorrow, perhaps, few will recall Beltrami Park, once a Civil War cemetery, now a growing park and recreation center.

Three or four generations can still be found in many Beltrami homes. The neighborhood is as colorful and complex as ever, but the cultural community is changing -- both in face and spirit -- and the young are leaving without the knowledge of their own heritage.

Now, with the prospect of losing the past entirely, the residents of Beltrami, through a community council, will recapture and document their history as they remember it. Conceived and directed by the community, the project will result in a video tape production of the history of Beltrami as remembered and told by its residents. This includes oral history as well as performance and exhibition of cultural activities -- virtually anything the community wants to preserve.

The project is attracting community volunteer help from students' groups, professional sources from the community and the University of Minnesota, and from residents in general. At regularly scheduled meetings of the resident council the video tapes recorded up to that point will be reviewed. Here the residents can suggest additions, deletions, and other changes, and aid in outlining the next shooting schedule. Distribution of the tapes will be left to the discretion of the community. Conceivably, copies of the tapes can be made and distributed to various institutions, communities,

and other interested parties.

The Beltrami Ethnic History Project not only introduces video tape ( $\frac{1}{2}$  inch) as an excellent community tool, but also draws the neighborhood closer together in understanding and appreciating its past -- preserving community tradition that might otherwise have been lost.

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## Video Involvement Project

South Minneapolis has a large Black community, the Afro-American Cultural Arts Center, and little video/cable information. The Cultural Arts Center, with the aim of improving communications in the community, offered its space to the Twin City Urban Corps and the Minneapolis Public Schools to put together a summer program in the instruction of video for Black youth in the area.

The program that developed, the Video In-