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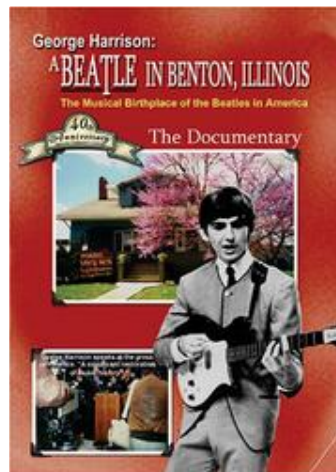
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George Harrison: A Beatle In Benton, Illinois (Special Interest)

Picture: C Sound: C Extras: D Main Program: C+

Though it may not be the best-edited amateur piece and takes a while to pick up before it is obvious it is not just another lame cash-in release, **George Harrison: A Beatle In Benton, Illinois** (starting in 1996) tells the story of how Harrison arrived in America a year prior to The Beatles big splash because his sister lived in Benton, Illinois. Bob Bartel is a big fan and he got the ball rolling to save the Harrison sister's house from demolition and to get it declared an historic landmark. The early footage becomes simple eyewitness accounts about the meetings, encounters and music made while George Harrison visited.



Sister Louise Harrison-Caldwell finally surfaces herself, sealing the deal and brings everything else to fruition. Not only does she confirm everything, she helps to contribute further and shares additional stories none of the locals could. Instead of being trivial and tired, all of the stories add up to an important part of Beatles history that really has not been discussed much, killing the mythological idea that the group just landed on U.S. soil out of nowhere and it was suddenly a whole new world. This is worth a look, however rough it is.

The full frame 1.33 X 1 image is shot on several types of analog NTSC video, which show their age and limits, but the problematic editing is a bigger issue. Perhaps this could be updated and reedited down the line, as the story is far from over. The PCM 2.0 sound is only stereo where the laid-in music exists but is monophonic otherwise and reflects the age of the tapes further. There are no extras, but the final results of all these activities are never shown and that is a problem. Otherwise, it is a cheap disc to enjoy.

- Nicholas Sheffo

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