



## 2012 Vintage Voices

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The 2012 Vintage Voices Theme, "Leading Ladies & City Fathers" celebrates the City of Alton's 175th Anniversary and shines the spotlight on some of the influential people who shaped Alton's best qualities (though they may not be household names). Many of the characters will reference houses that are still standing in Alton and Kerry Miller is putting together a display of pictures of homes for those visitors who would like to tour the city after a leisurely walk through the City Cemetery. The Mayor will be on hand on our opening day and other city officials are cordially invited to attend any of the four Saturday afternoon tours or the non walking tour staged in the ALT Showplace on October 14th at 2pm. We would like to order up the delicious Fall weather we had last year which allowed us to run a record number of tours from 1-3pm over four Saturdays. Well over 600 people have been visiting Vintage Voices in recent years and I am particularly pleased that we have so many return visitors and so many folks coming to Alton from St. Louis. The event is the major Fall Fundraiser for the Theater but it also benefits the upkeep of the City Cemetery. The event, now in its 11th year is supported by Alton Memorial Hospital (who produces the souvenir programs) and by The Simmons Law Firm (who provided a gift for costumes and publicity). All of the actors and tour guides and community organizers donate their time and many of these individuals have worked on the event for most of the 11 years. ALT can not thank Margaret Hopkins, Charlotte Stetson, Charlene Meyer, Barb Hinson, Verla Moyer and Don Huber enough for organizing this project initially.

This year, several of the 8-stop, 3/4 mile stroll will feature two actors and some of the actor/historians had to be double-cast during to unforeseen circumstances. It has been challenging but the actors who participate have a real love of Alton and of history and enjoy sitting around tables and sharing research and storytelling with each other. We even have Michael Cox portraying Alton "founder" Rufus Easton at the last "History Stop". Easton is not buried in the Alton Cemetery but we frequently feature a "guest" appearing on the tour who can give the crowd some other perspective on Alton's

History - and Mr. Rufus Easton and Miss Viola Voss are just such two individuals. They have extensive history about the settlement of the town and the various small settlements that evolved into one incorporated city. The information is not recited in some dry style with dates - the emphasis is on storytelling and entertainment and even humor. Yes, Alton has had its sad chapters (and we have covered those) but this year's tour has a air of hope and resilience to the featured characters - and hopefully will serve as an inspiration in this election year as others seek to take up the reigns for our fair city.

Wilhemina Trenchery will be portrayed by Jean Heil (who will sing a few strands of music written by her family and focus on the rich cultural heritage of the arts in our community) Sarah Duncan, portrayed by June Elliott, will focus on philanthropy and the call for industry to truly support a community (as Duncan Foundry did for many years).

Edward Bowman, portrayed by Jeff Pruett, has an interesting challenge because apparently Mr. Bowman ran from any public acknowledgment. He was the model of humility and believed that accolades weakened a man's try goodness. Yet, Bowman was referred to in the history books as "the most useful man in Alton". Perhaps a McQuyevery kind of man from the past.

The "Brewers" stop will be handled by Tim Foley and Margie Barban (with Elizabeth Foley appearing on October 6th). Tim will be portraying Antone Reck and Margie will be portraying Maria Raible. The brewing industry and then the glass industry needed to support the product was very prominent in the early wealth of Alton and Prohibition of course was devastating to a group of very wealthy families who gave much to the city in the very early 1900's. It will be left for the audience to decide the good and evil of the alcohol questions.

The next stop is called the "Supporting Cast" and two young women, Sarah Elizabeth Blair and Lucy Long Breckenridge (portrayed by Kayla Mack and Laura Shansey respectively) speak of the many accomplishments of their male relatives (as was the way of many women in the 1800's) and yet both were very accomplished, educated and beautiful women in their own right.

Kerry Miller will portray Lewis Kellenberger, who befriended Benjamin Godfrey and who founded the Alton Marine Fire Insurance Company (the largest company of its time). Mr. Kellenberger had an extensive family and connection with most of the founding families of the town, with descendants and homes still in the area.

Florence Dolbee is the planned next stop. She was a woman of letters and worked as a librarian. She fostered the love of books and the public preservation of libraries. Hopefully, Ann Bromaghin (a former librarian herself) will be portraying this role but Ann is recovering from surgery and so Lee Cox will be prepared to step in for at least a

couple of Saturday tours if need be.

The final stop, as mentioned previously, will be Mr. Rufus Easton (Michael Cox) and Miss Viola Voss (Linda Nevlin with Patti Kruegel appearing on October 6th). Hopefully as the tour concludes the visitor's curiosity about Alton will be increased and encourage return visits.

Advance tickets are available at the CVB in downtown Alton and are sold at the Season Ticket Table during the run of SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY, September 21st through 30. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$6 for students (with ID). Tickets will be sold at the gate to the Cemetery each Saturday beginning at 12:35.