



# **“Vintage Voices” Brings Altonian Angie Rand Schweppe To Life**

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter  
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ALTON - Angie Rand Schweppe was a prominent Altonian, animal lover, women’s suffrage activist, and much more. She was recently portrayed by Debbie Maneke for this year’s Vintage Voices Tour at the Alton Cemetery.

“I’m Angie, and I do love animals - I love all creatures, really,” Maneke said as Schweppe. “My dear friend Sophia Duluth and I founded the Alton Chapter of the National Humane Society.”

Schweppe then recalled a tale about a high school biology teacher who had been practicing “feline dissection” in his classes. After learning about this, she rounded up the school board and State’s Attorney, who helped write a new law against feline dissection practices. The biology teacher not only stopped the dissections, but suffered a cut to his salary - Schweppe passed copies of the new law around the school district to ensure such an incident would not happen again.

While she was originally from Maine, Schweppe settled in Alton and opened a dry goods and grocery store on 2nd Street with her husband, Harry. Their home on Prospect Hill, overlooking the Mississippi River, was known as the “Piasa Bird Lodge” as it sat directly above the Piasa Bird painting on the bluffs. The house was designed by Lucas Pfeifferberger, the well-known Alton architect behind the Beall Mansion and McPike Mansion.

Schweppe was also a charter member of the Alton Woman’s Home Association and fought for women’s suffrage. After hearing word of excess property offered by the Old Ladies’ Home near her home, she also coordinated the creation of Riverview Park.

“I decided that the City of Alton needed to buy that property and build a park looking out over the Mississippi for all to enjoy,” she said. “So, I thwarted every possible sale of that property, and may have held it in my own name for a time, until the City of Alton could come around to my way of thinking. Well, they did come around to my way of thinking, and they built what is now known as Riverview Park.”

A wax figurine depicting Schweppe is currently on display in the Illinois State Museum. Her figurine is one of a collection of 129 figurines, each depicting outstanding women in Illinois history. The collection was donated to the Illinois State Historical Library in 1929.

“My greatest, hardest, most passionate battle was that of women’s suffrage,” Maneke said as Schweppe. “I joined every committee, every organization, and may have practiced just a little bit of civil disobedience in my pursuit for every woman in our nation to get the right to vote.”

The annual Vintage Voices Tour features authentically dressed actors portraying historical figures and telling their stories. A full recording of Maneke’s performance as Schweppe is available at the top of this story or on [Riverbender.com/video](https://riverbender.com/video).

