

# Vintage Voices Performance At APCE Convention Again Puts Alton On National Map

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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ALTON - An Alton “Vintage Voices” cast recorded what Julie Gvillo described as “a profound performance” on Friday night at an Association of Partners in Christian Education (APCE) Convention at the Union Station Ballroom. The cast did a portrayal of the Elijah P. Lovejoy story and the Underground Railroad and Alton’s connection.

“Vintage Voices’ performance impacted APCE participants in a way that will not soon be forgotten, Gvillo, local committee chair, said. “Their excellent command of their craft and their intentionality about and faithfulness to the history of our region left us all thirsting for justice.”

The Vintage Voices cast consisted of:

- Debbie Maneke portraying Celia Lovejoy.
- Jared Hennings portraying William “Scotch” Johnston.
- Latasha LeFlore-Porter portraying Amanda Chavers.
- Ron Abraham portraying Thomas Dimmock.
- Sean Williams portraying Isaac Kelly.

Jody Basola, Chair of Vintage Voices, said the following: “Vintage Voices is dedicated to preserving Alton’s rich history and contributing to the community. This performance presented an exceptional opportunity to showcase the history of Alton not only to a regional audience but to hundreds of individuals from across the United States. I am so proud of everyone who contributed to this performance – the dedicated researchers, the directors and the exceptional actors who wrote their own narratives. Their collective efforts resulted in a truly remarkable performance.”

Diane Enloe, who has a long-time association with Vintage Voices and Alton Little Theater as a director and coordinator, said the performers were just magical.

“They brought the audience to tears and received a standing ovation when they told the story of Lovejoy and Alton’s connection to the Underground Railroad in addition to the monument established for Lovejoy. Everything was all woven together with the five performers.”

Elijah P. Lovejoy, was an American Presbyterian minister, newspaper editor and abolitionist. He was shot and killed by a mob in Downtown Alton on Nov. 7, 1837. After his murder, he became a martyr to the abolitionist cause opposing slavery.

"This event really put Alton on the national map," Enloe said of the weekend performance at Union Station Ballroom.