

A Glimpse into the life of Viola Savoy

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Introduction

This is a brief chronicle of little-known events in the life of Viola Savoy, an actress of theater plays and films. Today, there are several publications about the life and performances of the actress. However, many of these publications do not provide exact references and only refer to articles that also lack precise references. In this regard, and the reason for writing this work, was the opening of a gap that occurred just this year (2025). A couple of months ago I contacted *The Billy Rose Theatre Division of the NYPL* for information. A publication on *The Billboard* announced the death of Frank L. Sowars father of Viola Savoy [1]. This brief note was the starting point of the investigation that led to request and later consult the birth, death, and marriage records in Boston, MA and New York area.

This year (2025) marks the anniversary of the *Alice in Wonderland* reels (1915). Let this short piece serve as a complement to the existing articles and information about the actress, as well as the theater and cinema scene in New York City during her era.



- **1876** – Lotta Kingstone born to James Kingstone and Mary Stillman in Canada (Buffalo NY?) [2].
- **June 15, 1898** – Lotta Kingstone married Frank L. Sowars in Boston, MASS [2].
- **July 23, 1899** – Viola Kingston Sowars born to Mr. and Mrs. Sowars in Boston, MASS [3][4].
- **December 22, 1928** – Viola Savoy returned to New York from Australia, where she acted in *Good News*. The note also says that she has been in road companies of Broadway productions as *Little Jessie James* and *The Passing Show* [6].
- **July 15, 1929** – Viola Savoy participate with Orrin Sherman in *The Silent Partner* a comedy and singing act [7]
- **August 12, 1929** – Viola Savoy participates in a quartet act *Ye Old Hokum* [8]
- **March 16, 1931** – A reunion of old-time vaudevillians is announced. Guests includes Viola Savoy [5].
- **May 11, 1940** – Frank L. Sowars, Viola Savoy's father, passed away in Boston MA [1]

Conclusion

Though this research chronicles some Viola Savoy's contributions to early theater, there remain many unanswered questions about her life after 1940. Key areas still requiring further investigation include her exact date of death, the cause of her passing, and whether she had any children. These details are crucial to fully understanding the scope of her life and legacy. I encourage future researchers to take up these questions and continue to build on the findings presented here.

Acknowledgments

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References

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- [5] "General News", *The Billboard*, March 21, 1931.
- [6] "The week on Broadway", *The Billboard*, December 22, 1928.
- [7] "Sherman and Savoy Using Ruskin Skit", *The Billboard*, July 20, 1929.
- [8] "Vaudeville", *The Billboard*, August 17, 1929.