

# A Glimpse into the life of Viola Savoy

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GitHub:<https://github.com/jportillo34/aboutViolaSavoy>

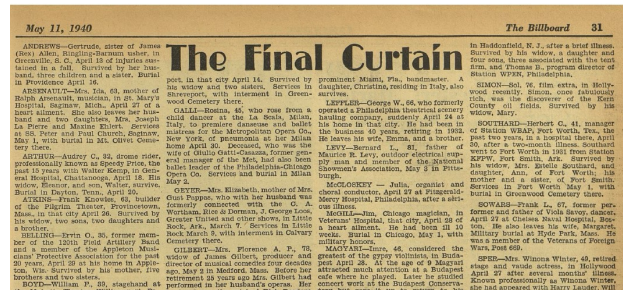
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## Introduction

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, MA [2].
- **July 23, 1899** – Viola Kingstone Sowars born to Mr. and Mrs. Sowars at 96 Calumet St. in Boston, MA [3][4].
- **September 21, 1915** – Lotta Savoy (Lotta Kingstone), Viola Savoy's mother, passed away in Bronx, NY [5]
- **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* [7].
- **July 15, 1929** – Viola Savoy participate with Orrin Sherman in *The Silent Partner* a comedy and singing act [8]
- **August 12, 1929** – Viola Savoy participates in a quartet act *Ye Old Hokum* [9]
- **March 16, 1931** – A reunion of old-time vaudevillians is announced. Guests includes Viola Savoy [6].
- **April 27, 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 are more information about her on those records (marriage, etc.) but I do not consider it relevant. There remain many unanswered questions about her life after 1940. Key areas still requiring further investigation include her exact date of death (1987), the cause of her passing, and whether she had any relatives, besides her parents, in acting. These details are important 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

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to John Calhoun from *Billy Rose Theatre Division The New York Public Library* for providing me with copies of the articles from that time. I would also like to thank *The Reference Staff of The Irma and Paul Milstein Division of United States History, Local History and Genealogy, The New York Public Library* for their research efforts in the archives.

## References

- [1] "The Final Curtain", *The Billboard*, May 11, 1940.
- [2] "Massachusetts, State Vital Records, 1638-1927"  
FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:N44N-C2Q>), Entry for Frank L. Sowars and Lotta M. Kingston, 15 Jun 1898.
- [3] "Massachusetts, State Vital Records, 1638-1927"  
FamilySearch(<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:FXFQ-Q4R>), Entry for Viola Kingston Sowars and Francis L. Sowars, 1899.
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- [5] "New York, New York City Municipal Deaths, 1795-1949", FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:2WDR-DMH> : 11 May 2022), Lotta Savoy, 1915.
- [6] "General News", *The Billboard*, March 21, 1931.
- [7] "The week on Broadway", *The Billboard*, December 22, 1928.
- [8] "Sherman and Savoy Using Ruskin Skit", *The Billboard*, July 20, 1929.
- [9] "Vaudeville", *The Billboard*, August 17, 1929.

