

Jo Baker Hides From Town Where She Made Her Start

The amusing battle of color that is being waged by Miss Josephine Baker, late of Paris, and the colored citizens of this country, continued last week when Miss Baker came here in the 1936 edition of "Ziegfeld Follies."

Although the artist, then plain "Jo" Baker, got her start in Philadelphia in the colored district, no one would have known it from the way she very frigidly ignored the existence of such a place. Attempts to contact her were fruitless and met with artistic rebuffs on the part of the various flunkies that stood between the star and her "public."

About the same time as the show arrived in Philadelphia there appeared an interview in which Miss Baker said that her father was Spanish and her mother half Indian, which left the other half colored. This she said in denying the fact that she was colored or anything near colored.

With the advent of the show there were many in this city who could remember when "Jo" Baker's father had a restaurant on South street near Sixteenth and when the star herself, then an unknown, entertained at "Vic" Hamilton's old place. Residents near "Mom" Charleston's on Bainbridge street remember when Miss Baker would stop at that well known boarding house for stage people.

But according to Miss Baker this is not so.

More interesting is the fact that there is a series of articles being run in a Paris newspaper, supposedly written by Miss Baker, in which she recounts her experiences since she returned to the United States. These articles which are discussed in another story on this page, take colored people to task for the way they treated her before and after she became a success. This fact does not gee at all with Miss Baker's assertions on this side of the water that she is not colored.

It might seem that in Europe where color isn't the handicap it is here, that Miss Baker does not mind being known as a Negro, but over here it is something else again.

And who can blame her?