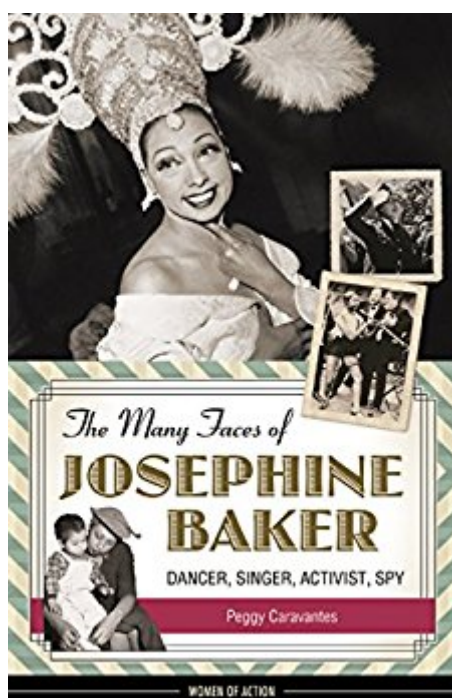


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# The Many Faces Of Josephine Baker: Dancer, Singer, Activist, Spy (Women Of Action)



## Synopsis

A complete biographical look at the complex life of a world-famous entertainer. With determination and audacity, Josephine Baker turned her comic and musical abilities into becoming a worldwide icon of the Jazz Age. *The Many Faces of Josephine Baker: Dancer, Singer, Activist, Spy* provides the first in-depth portrait of this remarkable woman for young adults. Author Peggy Caravantes follows Baker's life from her childhood in the depths of poverty to her comedic rise in vaudeville and fame in Europe. This lively biography covers her outspoken participation in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, espionage work for the French Resistance during World War II, and adoption of 12 children—her “rainbow tribe.” Also included are informative sidebars on relevant topics such as the 1917 East St. Louis riot, Pullman railway porters, the Charleston, and more. The lush photographs, appendix updating readers on the lives of the rainbow tribe, source notes, and bibliography make this a must-have resource for any student, Baker fan, or history buff.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

With magnetic charm and a willingness to do anything, Josephine Baker climbed her way to the top by putting herself on the stage at any opportunity. While she was still a teen she went from nothing to everything, dancing and singing her way to fame. People who met her instantly fell in love with her in a way that I have never read about before. Peggy Caravantes creates a very real Josephine, reminding me that she was just a girl placed in very difficult and extreme circumstances. Born in a segregated time, she was subject to many terrible acts of racism even though she was a star. She played a role in the civil rights movement in the United States, and she believed that all countries, ethnicities and religions could live together in harmony. Born in the St. Louis slums in 1906, Josephine McDonald (later Baker) was a nobody. She worked odd jobs around the city, being paid and fed close to nothing. She worked as a maid in several homes. She was beaten in one and almost raped in another. Using Josephine's own words, Caravantes highlighted a promise that Josephine made to herself when she was seven years old: she vowed that she would somehow become a star with beautiful gowns. Only ten years later, she made good on her promise. By the time she turned 19, Josephine was incredibly rich and owned ridiculously beautiful and expensive costumes that would be her trademark for the rest of her life. She was the Lady Gaga of her time, performing in shocking costumes and doing risqué dances so outrageous that people had to come see her for themselves. Caravantes did a wonderful job pointing out all the famous icons who came to see Josephine perform, including Ernest Hemingway, Pablo Picasso and even Mick Jagger. However, achieving outlandish wealth and a celebrity status at a young age took its toll on Josephine. She had vicious mood swings, was always late and had insane spending habits. Everyone loved her, but everybody hated to work with her. Caravantes really made it apparent that Josephine could be difficult by identifying all the times she canceled performances, and by using direct quotes from both Josephine and people close to her that referred to her craziness. Despite Josephine's faults, she had a big heart. She agreed to become a spy during World War II, hiding secret messages in invisible ink on her sheet music and later obtaining the title of War Hero. When she found out that she couldn't have kids, she adopted 12 children from many countries, calling them her "Rainbow Tribe." I loved reading the updates about the Rainbow Tribe at the end of the book, and think that additions like that would be great for all biographies. Every time Josephine met an important person or went to a famous place, Caravantes wrote a newspaper-style sidebar about it. It gave great temporal context and put Josephine's actions in perspective. If you are interested in American and French history, read this book. If you love theater, read this book. If you want to be inspired, read this book. Reviewed by Maya B.

I enjoyed reading this book. I did not know a lot about Mrs. Baker, but have been interested in her since I saw a documentary on her in the 1990's. She was a force, it would seem. I do recommend reading this book. It is well written, great bibliography.

I cannot add a whole lot more than what teen reader wrote other than the information that we are given about Josephine Baker was in a concise format. Now that I've read this little book I intend to read more about Josephine Baker and her life.

The book starts off by telling that this might be true or not and that other books are the same because they don't know. I would like to know more for sure or possibly more quotes by Josephine explaining herself.

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