



# **The Making of "Mammy Pleasant": A Black Entrepreneur in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco (Women in American History)**

*Lynn M. Hudson*

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In *The Making of "Mammy Pleasant,"* Lynn M. Hudson examines the folklore of Mary Ellen Pleasant's real and imagined powers. Addressing the lack of a historical record of black women's lives, Hudson argues that the silences and mysteries of Pleasant's past, whether never recorded or intentionally omitted, reveal as much about her life as what has been documented. *The Making of "Mammy Pleasant"* integrates fact and speculation culled from periodicals, court cases, diaries, letters, Pleasant's interviews with the San Francisco press, and various biographical and fictional accounts. Through Pleasant's remarkable life, Hudson also interrogates the constructions of race, gender, and sexuality during the formative years of California's economy and challenges popular mythology about the liberatory sexual culture of the American West.

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