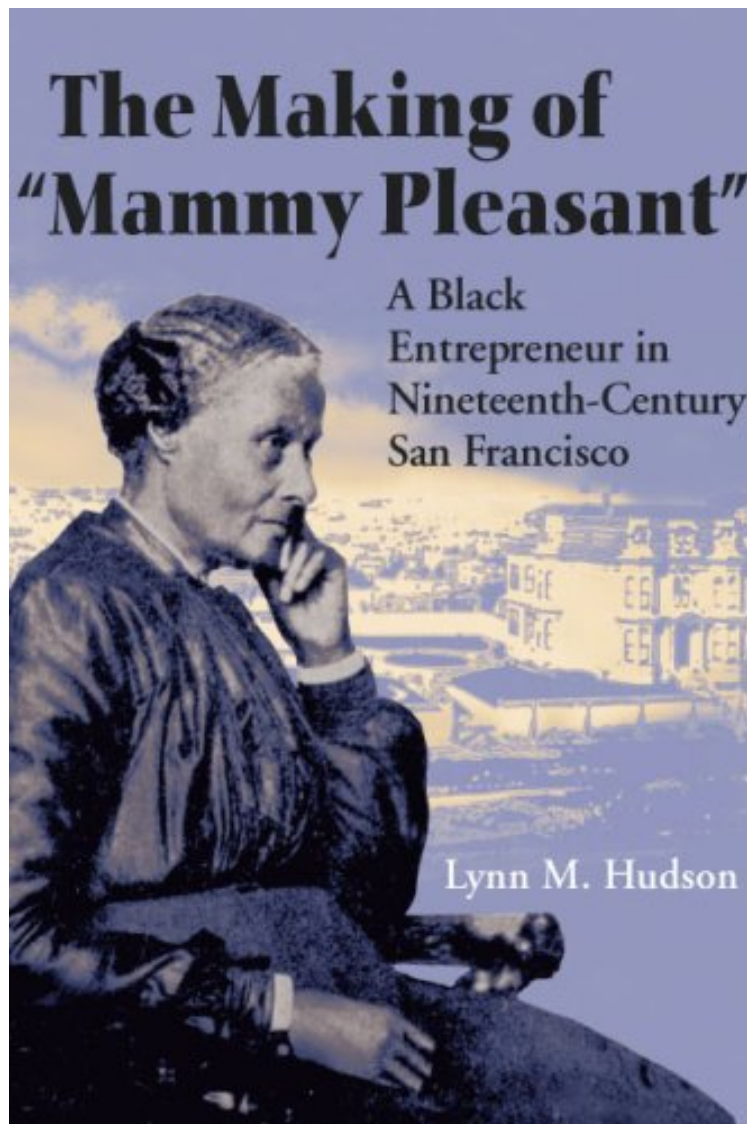


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## The Making of "Mammy Pleasant": A Black Entrepreneur in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco (Women in American History)

Lynn M. Hudson

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Lynn M. Hudson : The Making of "Mammy Pleasant": A Black Entrepreneur in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco (Women in American History) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Making of "Mammy Pleasant": A Black Entrepreneur in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco (Women in American History):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars  
By august c.as listed  
9 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Well done history of interesting person and time  
By Alex Stewart  
One can only criticize this book for the word "Mammy" in the title if one has not read the book. Note the quotation marks. A central theme in the book is the racial stereotypes and misperceptions of Mary Ellen Pleasant. Actually the book needs to focus on the racial context because of Pleasant's struggles for equality and because of her need to keep opaque many details of her life, personality and business affairs. Despite the somewhat sketchy nature of what we know of these matters, the topic is still fascinating and the book is pleasantly written.  
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars  
By Sabrina  
I'm very interested in San Francisco history, and during my research I've come across numerous references of Mary Ellen Pleasant. The references ranged from extraordinary claims of being a Voodoo priestess to a courageous abolitionist, and everything in between. Her lineage, birthplace, and even appearance remain subjects of debate. I was thrilled to find that this book was meticulously researched and addressed the wide-range of stories and discrepancy of facts. It addresses racism in the West, stereotypes, all the different stories surrounding Pleasant, and how silences can speak volumes when history has tried to erase or mask the voices of black women. And yet Pleasant amassed a fortune despite being a black female living in the 19th century. She refused to be constricted by gender or race, overcoming barrier after barrier as an entrepreneur and a 'capitalist by profession'  
I liked this closing comment, and I think it summed her up nicely: Pleasant cannot be reduced to a single identity or legend.  
A fascinating read for researchers interested in San Francisco history and racism.

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.

For more than a century, Mary Ellen Pleasant's reputation was as a voodoo queen, sorceress, madam and murderer. But thanks to [Hudson's] new book, the legendary San Franciscan is reclaiming her identity as a savvy businesswoman, gutsy heroine, and early champion of civil rights.--Los Angeles Times