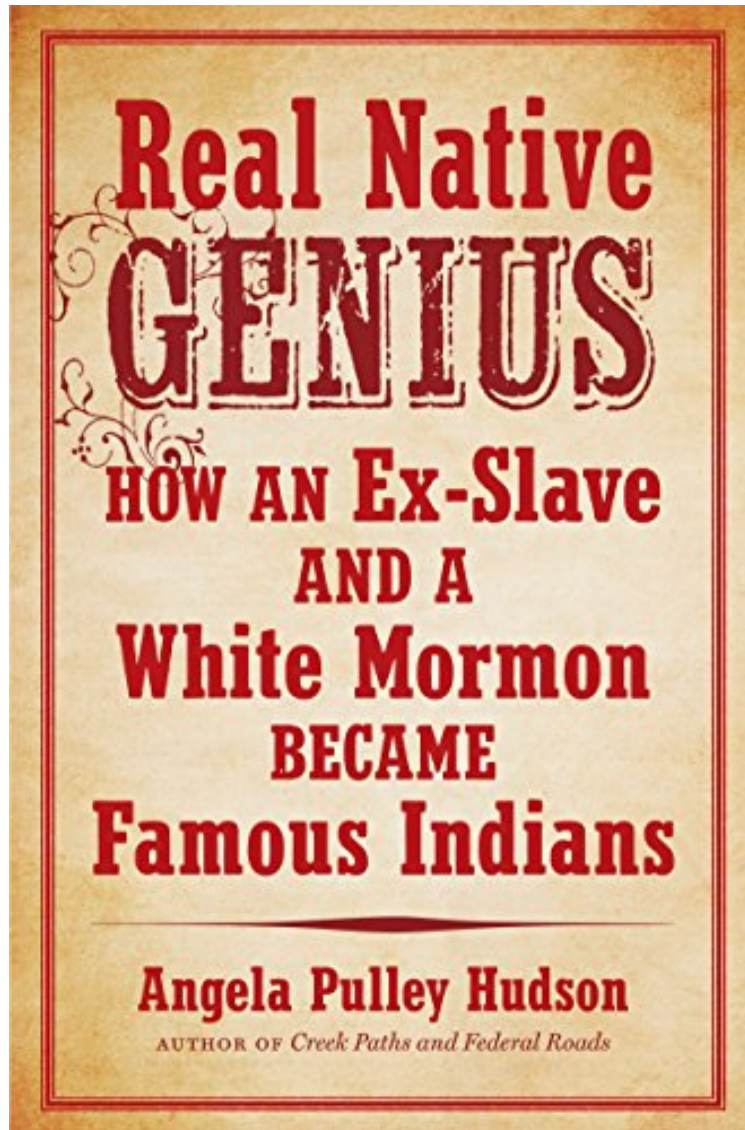


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Real Native Genius: How an Ex-Slave and a White Mormon Became Famous Indians

Angela Pulley Hudson
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In the mid-1840s, Warner McCary, an ex-slave from Mississippi, claimed a new identity for himself, traveling around the nation as Choctaw performer "Okah Tubbee." He soon married Lucy Stanton, a divorced white Mormon woman from New York, who likewise claimed to be an Indian and used the name "Laah Ceil." Together, they embarked on an astounding, sometimes scandalous journey across the United States and Canada, performing as American Indians for sectarian worshippers, theater audiences, and patent medicine seekers. Along the way, they used widespread notions of "Indianness" to disguise their backgrounds, justify their marriage, and make a living. In doing so, they reflected and shaped popular ideas about what it meant to be an American Indian in the mid-nineteenth century. Weaving together histories of slavery, Mormonism, popular culture, and American medicine, Angela Pulley Hudson offers a fascinating tale of ingenuity, imposture, and identity. While illuminating the complex relationship between race, religion, and gender in nineteenth-century North America, Hudson reveals how the idea of the "Indian" influenced many of the era's social movements. Through the remarkable lives of Tubbee and Ceil, Hudson uncovers both the complex and fluid nature of antebellum identities and the place of "Indianness" at the very heart of American culture.

Real Native Genius is a brisk and intelligent examination of a complex story of 'identity performance'.--
PatheosSometimes an author produces work of such cultural insight and creative research that it demands special notice. That historian is Angela Pulley Hudson and that book is Real Native Genius.--Western Historical QuarterlyAccomplishes the herculean task of constructing a book on identity, race, performance, and gender which undergraduate students and scholars will not only read, but eagerly devour.--American Nineteenth Century HistoryWith ingenious research, inventive interpretation, and an elegant style, Hudson relates an improbable, yet wholly American, gothic tale characterized by racial, religious, and gender ambiguities.--Journal of Southern HistoryRemarkably well-written [and] could be used in both undergraduate and graduate classes to cover various links among race, gender, and religion in America.--EthnohistoryHighlights the significant social and demographic changes sweeping the nation in the antebellum period.--Library JournalProvides useful connections between seemingly disparate topics and an intriguing discussion of how Indianness could be leveraged for power by non-Native people.--Journal of the North Carolina Association of HistoriansI recommend this provocative volume not just to historians studying the themes covered within its pages, but also to anyone desirous of reading a captivating book that will open their eyes to people and events nearly forgotten, yet so odd, it's almost hard to remember it's not fiction.--Association for Mormon Letters[Hudson] joins the best scholars in Mormon history in placing her work in conversation with wider developments in the field. She is equally adept at feminist theory, the antebellum South, and Native American history.-- s in American History With its exploration of American Indian self-representation and performance, Real Native Genius tells the story of how two people simultaneously capitalized on and subverted popular ideas about race and gender in the mid-nineteenth century. Angela Pulley Hudson has created an extraordinary contribution to our understanding of the American past.--Daniel H. Usner, Vanderbilt UniversityThis book is mesmerizing and ingeniously researched. Angela Pulley Hudson threads together Mormonism, Indian removal, popular culture, revolution, and slavery with engaging stories and beautiful writing.--Karen Halttunen, University of Southern CaliforniaAbout the AuthorAngela Pulley Hudson is associate professor of history at Texas AM University.