



## Native Acts: Indian Performance, 1603-1832

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# Native Acts: Indian Performance, 1603-1832

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Long before the Boston Tea Party, where colonists staged a revolutionary act by masquerading as Indians, people looked to Native Americans for the symbols, imagery, and acts that showed what it meant to be “American.” And for just as long, observers have largely overlooked the role that Native peoples themselves played in creating and enacting the Indian performances appropriated by European Americans. It is precisely this neglected notion of Native Americans “playing Indian” that *Native Acts* explores. These essays—by historians, literary critics, anthropologists, and folklorists—provide the first broadly based chronicle of the performance of “Indianness” by Natives in North America from the seventeenth through the early nineteenth century.

The authors’ careful and imaginative analysis of historical documents and performative traditions reveals an intricate history of intercultural exchange. In sum, *Native Acts* challenges any simple understanding of cultural “authenticity” even as it celebrates the dynamic role of performance in the American Indian pursuit of self-determination. In this collection, Indian peoples emerge as active, vocal, embodied participants in cultural encounters whose performance powerfully shaped the course of early American history.



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