



ACADEMY OF
THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
IN AUSTRALIA

“Indigenous diplomacy and the imperial queen in Australia and Canada”

Funding was provided to enable Dr Stacey Loyer, a recent graduate from Carleton University in Ottawa and a member of the Six Nations people, to travel to the Australian National University in late 2013 to participate in a two-day research symposium exploring histories of Indigenous people’s political engagements with the British Crown and with Queen Victoria in particular. The aims were to examine a range of meanings and uses by Indigenous people of the figure of Queen Victoria as the embodiment and symbol of the British crown and government within settler colonial contexts, especially Canada, New Zealand, Australia and southern Africa.

This focus was conceived as a means by which to interpret Indigenous and colonized people’s political ideas and strategies, and their intellectual and creative engagements with the colonial conditions of their lives.

Dr Loyer presented a paper entitled, “A Symbolic Alliance: Imperial Iconography on Objects from the Six Nations of the Grand River in Victorian Canada”, which explored the changing nature of the relationship between the British Crown and the Six Nations and which argued that over the course of Queen Victoria’s reign that relationship became increasingly symbolic. The paper was innovative for its use of museum collections as historical source material. Dr Loyer’s presentation drew upon selected objects in museum collections as points of departure for exploring the relationship between the Six Nations of the Grand River and the Crown during the Victorian period. She argued that: ‘Items with iconographic references to the Crown can be contextualized within political and social dynamics of Victorian Canada to shed light on how Six Nations turned to its imperial alliance in the face of colonial assimilation policies’. In addition to participation in the symposium, during her visit to Canberra, Dr Loyer met with curators at the National Museum of Australia and visited other cultural institutions.

As a result of the symposium, Dr Maria Nugent (Australian National University) and Professor Sarah Carter (University of Alberta, Edmonton) have been contracted by Manchester University Press to publish an edited collection of papers, provisionally titled: *Mistress of Everything: Queen Victoria in indigenous history, politics and imagination*. Dr Loyer is preparing a chapter based on her presentation for submission to the collection.

Maria Nugent, School of History, Australian National University
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