

The Henceforward Episode 21

Hazelburn

[0:00:00]

Eve: Aang aang. This is Eve Tuck, and this is The Henceforward, a podcast about connections between Indigenous and Black life on Turtle Island. Here we come to the table to discuss settler colonialism and anti-blackness but more, to imagine shared futures and the practices of theory and care that it will take to get there, to get elsewhere.

Nic: I'm Nic Yieu, and I'm originally from Hong Kong. For the past three years, I lived in Toronto, on Jarvis Street, and I walked by Hazelburn Co-op Housing every week. I've been an adamant city walker with a visual occupation of looking at everything. So, one day, instead of walking past a plaque, I walked towards the building to read it.

The bronze plaque mounted on the left side of Hazelburn Federal Co-op Housing ferociously prints something along the line of, Hazelburn Cooperative Housing is fully funded by the Canadian Federal Government. Or is it generously funded? I don't know, but the implication is there. This makes no mention of the history of Jarvis Street or the name, Hazelburn.

Kate: My name is Kate, and I'm a white settler currently living on Toronto-purchased territory. Simone, Nic and Kerry are at Hazelburn Co-op while I am on video chat on Kerry's phone.

Kerry: This is the bulletin board.

Simone: Can you read that?

Kerry: Jarvis Street was named after Samuel Peters Jarvis, a military officer during the War of 1812 and chief superintendent of Indian Affairs for Upper Canada. In 1824, Jarvis built a house on family land where Jarvis and Shuter is intersecting today, and he called it Hazelburn. Now the co-op is named after his old house, and the street was named after him.

Kate: So, wait, does it say anything about his actually history?

Kerry: No. It doesn't say anything about how he extorted money or that he was a slave owner even after the legislation.

Nic: Jarvis Street was named after Samuel Peters Jarvis who was the Chief Superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs. He was also a slaveholder even after Upper Canada's passing of anti-slavery legislation.

During the time of his appointment as the chief superintendent, Samuel Peters Jarvis was found guilty for defrauding 4,000 pounds of First Nations groups in the area. His property, Hazelburn, was later on sold to Toronto to pay this debt. Hazelburn is now a federally funded housing co-op at Jarvis and Shuter Street, mainly occupied by Black Canadians. Hazelburn becomes a place that connects histories of settler colonialism, slavery, to ongoing anti-Black violence.

In 2016, May, Janaya Khan of Black Lives Matter said, “Let’s name these folks who are celebrated but who have murdered, pillaged, and colonized. And let’s name those things they did.”

Eve: The Henceforward, Indigenous and Black life on Turtle Island.

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