

Welcome to a deep dive I'm Reggie. In this bonus episode, I thought I might share a little known event in San Francisco that occurred several years after the 1906 earthquake, and a few years before the Panama Pacific International Exposition of 1915. The Hayes Valley Carnival of 1911 was a one-time event with all the attendant drama and personalities you might expect. It also drew an enormous response from the community who seemed eager to participate in what the organizers called a celebration of Hayes Valley and its people. Thanks for joining me for the San Francisco Go Hayes Valley Carnival of 1911. By 1909, a number of neighborhoods across San Francisco began holding large public events in an effort to promote the city and to remind its residents and the rest of the world that San Francisco was vibrantly back in business and civically active. So it didn't come as too much of a surprise when in 1910, the Hayes Valley Improvement Association and the women's auxiliary Association combined their efforts to form the Hayes Valley George Washington birthday Carnival Association. What a mouthful.

As I say, a number of neighborhoods were doing this across the city. And what started to develop was that every successive neighborhood was trying to do the carnival or festival that had come before it. And that would prove to be very much the case. With the Hayes Valley carnival. The Hayes Valley Carnival was a four day celebration. Starting on February 23 1911. Hayes Valley is an interesting neighborhood. At the time of the 1906 earthquake, it was the home of many wealthy families do a no small part to its proximity to City Hall. After the earthquake, many of those rich families moved up the hill, or up all of the hills for better views and vistas, and away from the working class people who now inhabited places like Hayes Valley.

A few years ago, I did some research about some of the buildings on Fell Street, which is just a block away from Hayes Street, which we'll get to in a minute. And what I discovered was really interesting, which was that many of the businesses and buildings that were purchased after the 1906 earthquake were owned by women. Everything from manufacturing to small hotels.

The neighborhood gets its name from Hayes Street, which was named for Thomas Hays, San Francisco's county clerk from 1853 to 1856. He started the first Market Street railway franchise, which would account for the fact that Hayes Street had a prominent railway running up and down its streets as well. At the time of these events, Hayes Street was and is one of the most popular streets in Hayes Valley. It was so well traveled and liked that it was the location for the big royal ball that ended the Hayes Valley carnival.

The San Francisco Chronicle on Wednesday, February 22, of 1911 wrote an account of what was to come the following day when the carnival started, and I'll just read that to you. electricians having worked all night and various committees up to the last minute. Hayes Valley is at last in readiness for the opening of its Carnival this morning.

In a night, the streets have been transformed into holiday avenues with red and yellow banners, streamers and bunting and innumerable incandescent lamps strung with boulders overhead. You know, I have to say having organized a few events in my life. The events of just the first day of this Carnival seemed extraordinarily ambitious. So the carnival began with a rifle crack that began a marathon footrace that started at the beach at Fulton Street. This race featured 70 runners, including the best amateur marathon runners from across the city. When the five and a half mile race ended at Hayes Street and van as it had been won by a Hayes Valley School boy named John F. McKittrick, who was 14 years old. He attended the John Sweat

Grammar School. As his reward he was given a silver cup and a hearty congratulations. This is a newspaper said from Mayor McCarthy, who greeted him at the finish line.

One of the things about his winning this, aside from the extraordinary fact that a 14 year old beat out some of the best amateur runners from across the city was that in putting together this race, it was a great deal of tumbled about whether or not schoolchildren should be allowed to run in the race. And obviously they were allowed to and look what happened. One of them one. The fact that John McKittrick was from Hayes Valley started the day off with quite a bit of a jolt of excitement for the organizers and of course the residents of the neighborhood. So I want to go through some of the parade the procession. It started at 10 o'clock in the morning, and it started at Van Ness Avenue and Oak Street.

I promise I won't go through all of the streets in San Francisco, which is really kind of annoying if you don't live here, and you're not familiar with the city, but I'll put up a map of some of the routes and some of the streets where some of these events took place in Hayes Valley but Van Ness Avenue is one of the main thoroughfares in San Francisco and it sort of intersects with Market Street, which is the major through street through the entire city or through the main drag of the city as they, as they say, Do they still say that?

Anyway, so it started in Hayes Street and Van Ness, and it went pretty much through the neighborhood. It consisted of tons and tons of people. I mean, Hayes Valley, and its streets are not that wide or broad. So we're talking of hundreds and hundreds of people in the parade alone. There were 300 children, school children in the in the parade procession alone. So there were floats the kids of the parade had his own float with his quarter years, and the queen of the parade had the same thing with her ladies and waiting and so on. In addition to the king and queen of the carnival, there was schoolchildren who represented George and Martha Washington. In the second section of the parade, there were members of the parades committee and carriages and they were followed by large representations, with their drum and fife course, from local lodges of Eagles foresters of America, native sons, molders. unions, I love that molders and Columbia Park Boys, the Columbia Park Boys were a band of young people sort of like the Boy Scouts. I found a picture of them about to play at the White House, and I'll post that on the deep dive website as well.

According to the San Francisco Chronicle, it's feature the day after the parade. A feature of the parade was a delegation from the fire department, which made special efforts in the way of decorations in honor of King Henry Hock, who was a member of the fire department. So the king of the carnival was a fireman. In its report of the first day of the carnival, the San Francisco Chronicle concludes this way. That after the parade, the king and queen were driven to the ocean shore at Ocean Beach, where there was an exhibition baseball game being played between the Buffalo and Elko Athletic Clubs, the former winning by a score of seven to two. The rest of the afternoon was taken up with a reception by royalty in the pavilion at golf and hay streets. Golf and hay streets are pretty much the heart of Hayes Valley, and they're only steps away from the site of the hammer. An egg fire that basically started the fire after the San Francisco earthquake in 1906. Those who stuck around at golf in haze were able to witness the coronation of the king and queen. They had been named but not officially coordinated. And that happened that was bestowed upon them by the mayor, Mayor McCarthy. Then there was a big dance in that pavilion to commemorate the day's events and I'm sure as it's always been, the people who attended that big ball on the first night were those high powered well

connected people, and the rest of the people the hoi polloi enjoyed the features of the carnival. I don't know about you, but I know exactly where I would have wanted to be. On day two, in addition to the features of the carnival itself, there were performances by the harmony singing society. The entire second day ended with a giant Mardi Gras that went well into that Second evening. Oh, before we move on, there's just one other thing. So in the middle of this parade procession, you know, San Francisco and its legendary hills. So coming down one of these hills. Apparently, the gondola or float that was built, didn't have brakes. They were being led by horses. And at some stage, one of the animals tripped over something and the harness became disengaged from the float itself and it began to sort of careen down the hill, you get the picture, and the person who was driving it had the forethought, the presence of mind to jump off of it to enter take it by the pick one of the horses by the reins, to steer it to the side so that it went towards the curb and not continued to go down the hill. Thus averting an entire you know, a melee. Whew.

On the morning of the beautiful baby contest Mrs. Richard Reese, who is a member of the Hayes Valley committee, who organized the carnival serenaded everyone with a little Scottish ballad as the newspaper says, accompanied by 300 school children don't think you're getting away from the baby contest. Well, we'll get back to that in a minute.

I think and I don't know for sure, and some of you listening will correct me if I'm wrong, but I think these beautiful baby contests are things of the past. People would bring their babies and have them judged as to, you know, the fattest baby, the cutest baby, the tallest baby, the smallest baby and so on. I will post a picture of the winning babies. On the deep dive website. I'm telling you right now, none of these kids look overly excited to have been a part of any of this. As a feature of the nightly Mardi Gras, there was a procession called the horribles which featured people in grotesque masks parading the streets. There were comedy routines and so on. As one of the major features of the carnival expositions was a setup of the 40 Niners how they lived, how they panned for gold, all of that to the reenactments went on all day during the course of the carnival.

On the second to the last day of the carnival, or maybe it was the last day of the carnival, there was a motorcycle demonstration. The newspapers referred to it as a hill climbing contest between 25 motorcyclists. There were even a few women involved in this exercise. From what I read, this was one of the first times that this kind of thing had ever happened in a major metropolitan city. One of the other features that must have left the crowd sort of in awe was the vision of the Curtiss biplane flying overhead. It flew briefly, and when the pilot landed, he met and answered questions from the crowd. This was 1911 and in 1903, the Wright brothers were still struggling to get a biplane of their own up in the air without crashing. Very few people in the United States or in the world had seen a plane of any kind.

So after four days of fun and excitement of animal exhibits, high-wire acts, games, and that lovely beautiful baby contest the Hayes Valley Carnival came to an end.

After 100,000 tickets sold, which far out seeded the expectations of any of the organizers, after George and Martha, in miniature had been selected and had served valiantly. After fireman Henry Hock had brought all of his fireman companions into the carnival and participated so beautifully.

The Carnival ended but We're talking about people here, you can't imagine that this kind of thing was pulled off without any drama. Oh, there was drama. The honor becoming king and queen was done through raffle. The tickets were sold and then the proceeds were going to be used to help people throughout the district of Hayes Valley. And so, on the day that the final tickets were tabulated, everyone gathered at the offices in Hayes Valley to see who had sold the most tickets. Rose Cohen was declared the winner and her nearest competitor Rose O'Brien wasn't happy at all. On the day the winner was announced Rose O'Brien and her lawyer showed up at the offices of the Hayes Valley Association claiming Ms. Cohen was not eligible because she did not live in Hayes Valley. Her wealthy parents lived in Hayes Valley, she lived elsewhere. The Carnival committee horrified that this was going to clog things up and in an effort to make peace, offered Rose O'Brien, a small float of her own, accompanied by attendants and an elaborate wardrobe. She declined. Somewhere between her protest and the carnival O'Brien began to see sense and she dropped the whole thing and Rose Cohen was crowned Queen of the carnival.

Scouring newspapers after the event I couldn't find any other reference to the carnival. Well, actually, there are two things. I found one reference to some ponderings about doing this again, because it was such an enormous success. I think that it was scrapped because of the Panama Pacific International Exposition that happened in 1915, which swamped any and all events that had ever happened in San Francisco between 1911 and 1915. There were districts that continued to have carnivals or parades, most notably in Chinatown and in the Italian neighborhood of North Beach. The only other references I could find in the Hayes Valley Carnival was an article about Henry Hock, the fireman who was 27 years old when he was crowned king of the carnival who had been kicked in the groin while currying one of the fire department's horses, which from what I understand could be fatal. He recovered fully and went on with his career. The other article involves Mr. and Mrs. Ulmer.

One of the most extraordinary developments reported during the two years after the carnival involved Henry Hock's Prime Minister Rudolph owner, a wholesale liquor distributor at 497 Hayes Street had competed to be king of the carnival himself, but his wife Mary Ulmer was not having any of it. As the newspapers reported, plainly and without equivocation, Mrs. Mary Ulmer admits in an answer and cross complaint filed yesterday to the divorce suit of Rudolph Ulmer, that she doesn't believe a married man with a family should strive for honor for the carnival King or aspire to parade the street. And regal robes and ate the heirs of sovereign heads. In his divorce complaint, Mr. Ulmer charges that his defeat and subsequent humiliation were brought about largely through his wife's antagonism to his candidacy and her efforts to swing the tide of victory to his opponent. He also declared that she was unreasonably jealous and intemperate in her habits. In her answer, Mrs. O'Byrne denied the latter charges, but very, very frankly admits the part she took in dashing her husband's hopes of wearing the carnival crown.

So you might be wondering, what does that mean? What part did she take in dashing his hopes? Well, this is where it gets kind of delicious to me. And a little shocking I have to admit, to ensure that Mr. Palmer would not succeed in becoming King. Mrs. Mary Ulmer said about a course of buying 1000 raffle tickets from his closest competitor to ensure that her husband would not win the crown. Mrs. Ulmer said that while it's true that she bought 1000 tickets for her husband's opponent, he still lost by 17,000 votes. So how was the loss her fault? According

to the San Francisco call of 1912, the judge in the divorce case refused to grant Mr. Palmer a divorce. His reasons were not disclosed. In fact, it took another court ruling and a different judge before the armors were finally granted a divorce. with Mrs. Ulmer moving to Vallejo, California. So, that's my little story of the Hayes Valley Carnival of 1911. It seems like one of those events that happened that was an enormous fuss and bother that people enjoyed and that it sort of faded into history. But the story has even more sort of a Significant relevance to me now, because as we are embarked in this current situation of quarantine and social distancing you It puts one in mind of what will happen next, what will come next, because sooner or later, this will end and we will join one another, again, in community in neighborhoods and we none of us really know what that will look like. And so the possibility of it feels me with some small amount of excitement and anticipation. I will probably post a few more short versions of a few little moments in history that I think you might enjoy and might enjoy knowing about or learning about. In these bonus section. This is the very first bonus episode I've ever created for the podcast. So I hope you enjoy it. I'd like to thank Joshua rich for allowing me to use his beautiful music rain as the theme song for the podcast. If you'd like to learn more about the Hayes Valley Carnival of 1911 You can find pictures and a link to a story that I wrote for found San Francisco about the carnival. All at on the deep dive website at Reggie. Deep dive.com the San Francisco Hayes Valley Carnival of 1911 was researched and written by me. Thanks for joining me. See you next time.

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