

Holiday Stress? Oh, for a Time Machine.

By Vic Bary

With the holiday season approaching, our stress level often goes up. What to buy for whom? Why does everything cost so much? Can I find everything I need?

If you find yourself in this position and are looking for relief, why don't you step into my time machine and transport yourself back to late 19th Century Cranford. According to the *Cranford Chronicle*, Christmas (we didn't concern ourselves with other religions' holidays then) bargains abound. "Two to beam down, Scottie; Star date..."

December 1894

- L. Lehman and Company of Elizabeth is offering a free bottle of port wine, sherry wine, or whiskey with your purchase one pound of mixed Oolong, Japan, English Breakfast or Gunpowder tea at a mere 60 cents per pound.

December 1895

- Marshall and Ball, Broad Street Newark, is offering men's overcoats from \$8, men's suits from \$6.
- J. Potts & Sons, Opera House Block Cranford, offers you three quarts of Cape Cod Cranberries for 25 cents.
- The American Steam Laundry, West Jersey Street Elizabeth, advises against throwing away shirts merely because the collar has worn out. For a mere 15 cents they will sew on a new collar. Best of all, they have a wagon in Cranford Mondays and Thursdays for pick-ups and deliveries.

December 1899

- R. Walsh & Company Market and Broad Street Newark is offering "Candy for Children" at 10 cents a pound for either the American Mixture or the Old Fashioned selection.
- Hart's Pharmacy in the Opera House Block wants your candy business, and is offering Huyler's Candy "at New York prices". (That must have been a good thing.)
- Need new furniture? Amos H. Van Horn Limited, 73 Market Street Newark can offer you: \$4.50 value cherry rocking chairs for \$3.49; or "a swell front golden oak desk" – a \$8.50 value - for a mere \$5.75.
- Or how about a new Wester Brothers upright piano? This \$165 instrument can be yours for only \$10 down and \$6 monthly.

December 1900

- The new century is upon us and Union Business College, Dix Building, Broad Street Elizabeth, admonishes you to “Make a New Year Resolve to prepare for a 20th Century position” by enrolling in courses with them.

For the completely clueless, the following two suggestions may offer relief:

- Boston Dentists, Broad Street Newark, are offering “Teeth like you used to have” - \$8 for Best Teeth, \$5 for gold crowns or for bridgework
- George N. Wanser, an Equitable Life Assurance Society agent in Cranford offers the following advice to “Mr. R. U. Prudent”. “Dear Sir – are you puzzled about an appropriate Christmas present to your family. Mail me form, below, and I will estimate the cost of a very nice present.” I can’t wait to see the faces of the Mrs. And the kiddies when they unwrap your brand new life insurance policy!

December 1901

Preparing the holiday meal is always a source of stress, including questions of what to serve:

- Mendel’s Cash Meat Market, Broad Street Elizabeth, can offer you pork chops at 10 cents a pound, 3 pounds of lamb chops for 25 cents, 8 pounds of chopped beef also at 25 cent, and fancy turkeys at 12 cents a pound. Best of all, they offer free delivery throughout Elizabeth and Elizabethport.

Or if preparing a holiday meal is just too much of a hassle...

- Consider dinner at J. D. Meyers Restaurant in the Fett Building Cranford, “for a satisfying dinner at the moderate price of 25 cents”.

There, now don’t you feel better?