

Bricks, Bissels and Ironing Boards

by Lynne Belluscio

Just in case you haven't completed your Christmas shopping, the Jell-O Gallery Shop has a variety of things from the practical to the sublime. Christmas ornaments, pot holders, cookbooks, the LeRoy book, T-shirts (in Christmas colors of course) and sweatshirts. We have a limited number of LeRoy afghans. And for the person who has everything, don't overlook a brick in the Jell-O Brick Road. You will receive a certificate suitable for framing and next summer the brick will be placed in the sidewalk in time for the Oatka Festival. The shop is open 10 to 4, Monday through Saturday and this Sunday 1-4. (Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24, we will be closing at noon.)

I have always been amused at the list of Christmas gifts in the *LeRoy Gazette*. Last year I found a great 1910 ad for a new bathroom complete with an image of Santa standing in front of a claw-foot bath tub. This year, in the 1911 *Gazette*, I found Santa pushing a Bissell carpet sweeper. "Bissell always pleases mother, wife, sister or friend." Bathtubs and carpet sweepers fall into that category of "useful" Christmas gifts. Sometimes they aren't fully appreciated. My daughter will tell you that the Christmas gift that disappointed her the most, came in a huge long box. It was wrapped in bright paper and tied with a bow, and stood next to

the tree for several days before Christmas. I don't know what she thought was in the box, but on Christmas morning, much to her disappointment, she received a bright shiny ironing board. I guess it goes along with the garbage disposals and vacuum cleaners that women have received instead of silver bracelets and elegant sweaters. Somehow, men enjoy receiving power tools and battery chargers, but kids and women want something more.

The LeRoy stores offered practical gifts as well as the "sublime." Olsen's advertised that they were "A Store of A Thousand Presents." Burrett's Store ran a large banner in the *Gazette* mentioning that they had a Toyland in the basement. Medical Hall advertised that Santa had moved into their store. Ellis and Sederas wanted everyone to know that at their store there would be Christmas music throughout Christmas week. (Perhaps it was music played on a Victrola?)

M.H Gorton advertised solid gold brooches for \$1.50; \$2.50 and \$3.50. Amethyst and other stones were 75 cents. The latest "belt pins" in new and artistic designs "looked more than their price" of 50 cents to \$5. If you wanted to take the train into Rochester you could buy the latest style of children's clothes --- "Aviation Sets" that included a knitted cap, stole and muff in



Bissell Carpet Sweeper

The name Bissell on a carpet sweeper means that it is the best to be had. Our showing is priced from \$2.75 to \$5.00.

a wide variety of colors. (I have not been able to discover much about aviation sets. I suspect that the hat style was similar to the early aviator's leather caps, with the ear flaps.) Indian sweet grass baskets were available at Saile's Drug Store.

For the practical minded, Ryan Brothers advertised safety razors and carving sets. If you couldn't afford a Gillette razor, they had some that were less expensive. They had plenty of aluminum ware - chafing dishes, percolators, tea and coffee pots and cake dishes. Or you could

buy a Singer Sewing Machine at FD. Morton's.

I read with interest that the weather in 1911 was similar to this year. The *Gazette* noted that the temperature in December had risen to 60 degrees and there had been little snow. The year before, in 1910, the December weather had been brutally cold and everyone was having trouble getting their sleighs through the deep snow probably making it difficult for Christmas shopping.



SHOW OFF
your corporate, club, or organization logo with any of these **COOL** promotional products...
with many more to choose from!

LP GRAPHICS

1 Church Street, Le Roy NY
585-768-2201
lpgraphics.net



We take this time to say
THANK YOU
for your patronage.
Have a Safe and Happy
Holiday Season!

Bob Shepard Heating
24 Hour Emergency Service
Call 768-6042