

SHARDS OF WISDOM

“Heard it Through the Grapevine”



Not the most expensive...but the bottle that has special appeal just for you.

Our normal Ralph Finch goes for the quirky.

I don't care about that \$10,000 bottle on your shelf...maybe not even the \$100 bottle, but that quirky item you thought was unusual 10 or 60 years ago that still makes you smile (or raise an eyebrow).

I will tell you about mine—even three of them—and if they make you think of yours, share it with AB&GC readers and include a photo, too.

Here are mine, and if you first glance at the clear, unpontiled, unembossed bottle and say, “That’s not even worth 50 cents,” remember, this isn’t about dollar value but something that pleases you after all these years.

I found this unimpressive bottle decades ago; without the label, I would never have looked at it twice. **[Photo A]**

And the label immediately asked more questions than it answered.

- 1: Where is my magnifying glass? I can't read what's written!
- 2: Can this be real? Could someone a hundred years ago hand-write a label over and over again on however many bottles they hoped to sell?
- 3: It's named “Finch”—but Finch who?

It reminds me of the time 30 years ago—when Jim Hagenbuch called up and alerted me to an item coming up in one of his auctions. He said: “It's you! I mean, it's got your name on it!” In fact, it did: A barber bottle embossed “R. Finch. Tonic.” **[Photo B]**

Now, back to the bottle in question: Here is what the faded label says (as best I can tell): “Finch's ‘Good Samaritan Pain Killer’ Liniment—Directions. For choleric—morbus—1/2 teaspoonful on—(several lines unreadable) until relieved. For rheumatism apply with the hand rubbing in thoroughly / Shake before using. Price 50 cts.” I tried to research the product, but after an hour, this Finch was a pain! I found nothing.

And the bottle with a photo of my mother in her 20s. **[Photo C]** I know nothing about this except it's been around a while. My mother had war-time stories she rarely shared with us. (Hey, in my outdated address file, I still have the phone number of my mother's long-passed WWII boyfriend!)

Editors' note: Got an item that is valuable to you yet likely will never be a star item featured in a glass auction? Share it with readers. Tell Ralph Finch about it, and include a photo, to rfinch@twmi.rr.com.



[Photo A] A hand-written Finch label? How strange. After writing a few dozen bottles, you could have rheumatism of the finger joints and need this product! (I found a Finch Liniment, c. 1930, in Ogden, Utah, but my liniment is too old and primitive.)

[Photo B] A barber bottle embossed “R Finch Tonic,” courtesy of a years-ago Jim Hagenbuch, Glass Works Auctions sale.

[Photo C] My leggy mother Madeline had good days during WWII and has this souvenir photo held by an easel constructed inside a bottle! (What an appropriate item for a bottle collector!)

All Photographs by Janet Finch.



