



# The Eldon Huston Collection

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We have recently picked up an historic hearing aid collection courtesy of Eldon Huston, a pioneer Montana hearing aid specialist. Eldon Huston started the Montana Hearing Society, a chapter of the International Hearing society, and fit hearing aids in Montana from the early 1960's to about 2007.

Over the years he collected historic hearing aids and started the collection that we will soon display at our office in Great Falls. We have a sound tube from 100 years ago, carbon desktop hearing aids from the 1920's, and eyeglass and vacuum tube body hearing aids from the 1940's.



Here is a sound tube from the early 1900's. Non-electric, of course, you placed the large end to the person speaking and listened with the ear piece. These worked well for one on one conversations. Nonetheless, the sound tube called attention to "your infirmity". (Infirmity was an old fashioned term for a handicap.)

This is the Acousticon desktop model from 1927. It has a case for desktop deployment and a clip you could wear as a body aid. The desktop application was great acoustically because sound resonated in the case increasing fidelity. The desktop application had its drawback because you could only speak to one person or a small group in a quiet place.



Here is an Acousticon from the 1920s.



Notice the clip on ear piece that went just over one ear. Batteries and microphones were hidden on various parts of the body. All body aids from this era had problems with clothing rubbing over the microphone causing a tactile vibration that sounded like static.



This is a Beltone Harmony hearing aid from 1946. This model used three vacuum tubes for amplification. The tubes needed replacement more often than you wanted.



Here is a Sonotone transistor eyeglass hearing aid from the 1950's. These were a revolutionary improvement over vacuum tube aids. Smaller, more convenient and more durable, these were very popular. Still, they had only three to six transistors and basically were amplifiers that amplified too much background noise.