

# Basic Detail Report

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## Medical Instrument

### Date

1850-1910

### Primary Maker

F C Rein

### Medium

Metal, plastic

### Description

Two ear hearing aid. It consists of an adjustable metal headband with tortoiseshell Bakelite curved earpieces. A tube fits into the ear and spirals round into a flattened trumpet shape. Maker's mark: F. C. Rein Patentees. These acoustic headbands, known as Aurolase Phones were designed to be concealed beneath a wig or hat. They are the earliest known camouflaged hearing aid, and were made in various shapes, some even resembling open flowers. They acted as sound collectors, with the trumpet amplifying sound for the listener. They were also known as auricles, in this particular shape according to the Rein catalogue. The material may be Bakelite but needs confirmation. A query has arisen about the dating. 1850 to 1900 is too early for Bakelite. Rein operated throughout the 19th century so the dating could be correct and the material incorrect as Bakelite was patented in 1907. These could be celluloid. The end of manufacture date is needed to confirm when FC Rein ceased operating or moved on to other technology.