

Degrees of Truth: Engineering L. Ron Hubbard

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ABSTRACT: Religious scholars Hugh B. Urban, Kjersti Hellesøy, Dorte Refslund Christensen and Stephen A. Kent have forwarded the popular narrative that L. Ron Hubbard's official biography is a hagiography. This consensus resulted partly from contrasting Hubbard's incomplete, poor academic records against his purported claims about graduating from George Washington University with a civil engineering degree and good grades. By not closely inspecting all source materials, however, these scholars have missed the discrepancy causes: transcription errors that evolved, ultimately resulting in misattribution of authorship. Only religious scholar J. Gordon Melton has correctly noted in his book *The Church of Scientology* that Hubbard made no such claims, although Melton provided no detailed explanation for the basis of his argument. Indeed, Hubbard directly addressed flunking and his poor grades in several places. This article not only expands on Melton's observation, but posits that the prevailing view in which Hubbard claimed to have a civil engineering degree and good grades has actually resulted from incomplete and biased research.

KEYWORDS: Dianetics, George Washington University, L. Ron Hubbard, Scientology, L. Ron Hubbard's Academic Degrees.

Introduction

The current mainstream narrative about L. Ron Hubbard (1911-1986) is that he lied about having good grades and a civil engineering degree from George Washington University. Critics Jon Atack (Atack 1990, 59), George Malko (Malko 1970, 31), Russell Miller (Miller 1987, 57), Gerald "Gerry" Armstrong (Armstrong 2009a, 2009b), Lawrence Wright (Wright 2013, 352), Paulette Cooper and L. Ron Hubbard, Jr. (Cooper 1971, 160-63 and Bibliography) have contrasted Hubbard's incomplete and poor college transcript against various Scientology biographies in order to portray him as fraudulent. To their credit,

these critics have addressed discrepancies in the Church of Scientology's early promotional information about Hubbard. Where their criticism became dishonest, however, was in evaluating prior to having all of the data, rather than trying to seek and understand the discrepancy causes.

Meanwhile, the Church of Scientology's Public Relations Office attacked its critics' reputations through its *Freedom* magazine and various websites (Church of Scientology International 2011 and STAND League 2018) yet removed all references to Hubbard's graduation, good grades and a B.S. (Bachelor of Science) in Civil Engineering in its later biographies. Having provided no explanation for revising their founder's biography, however, the church seemingly agreed with its critics. In short, as they revised their founder's biography, the church largely employed similar tactics to its critics rather than having explained the discrepancies. As a result, religious scholars including Hugh B. Urban (Urban 2011, 32 and Urban 2015, 137–38), Kjersti Hellesøy (Hellesøy 2014, 257–58), Dorte Refslund Christensen (Christensen 2005, 227) and Stephen A. Kent (Kent 2001, 95 and Kent and Lane 2008, 117) have accepted the critics' argument that Hubbard and the Church of Scientology intentionally lied about his grades, graduation and civil engineering degree. Only scholar J. Gordon Melton noted that the church erred—not Hubbard—albeit without providing any explanations for his claim (Melton 2000, 58 and 75). Indeed, much evidence shows that Hubbard openly discussed his poor grades and nonexistent college degree. In light of the number and variations of discrepancies regarding Hubbard's alleged civil engineering degree claims, it became evident that a thorough, exhaustive, and comprehensive review was needed to evaluate not only how these discrepancies originated, but who if anybody was doing the deceiving.

Acknowledgements

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the assistance of the History and Genealogy Department at the Los Angeles Public Library, the librarians at the George Washington University Special Collections Department, and the archivists at the National Archives and Records Administration. Margaret Lake of *ScientologyMyths.com*, Michael Snoeck at the website *WiseOldGoat.com*, Max Hauri of the *True Source Scientology Foundation* and Andreas Gross of the blog *Scientology: Original 1972* aided by providing hard-to-find original Scientology resources. Patricia Krenik, Lousie and Karen Williams, and Antony Phillips also assisted with providing the years of births and deaths for many lesser known figures. Personal thanks go to Randy Smith, Kay Christenson, Mary Blackford, Tristan Camacho and most of all Olga Fragoso for their tireless support and patience in reading, editing, listening, researching, suggesting and revising the numerous drafts of this paper. Finally, special thanks go to Professors J. Gordon Melton and Massimo Introvigne for having agreed to read and ultimately publish this paper at the highest professional level, and of course the peer reviewers for their useful comments.

The Current Narrative

Although such discrepancies at first might seem relatively insignificant to most historians, because Hubbard founded Dianetics and Scientology and had a large impact on millions of people, his critics have not only scrutinized his life and all purported claims, but also have used any discrepancies as evidence to discredit all of these subjects as being rife with deception. Malko justified why the civil engineering discrepancy remained central to the critics' arguments after having alleged Hubbard made these claims:

Hubbard's career at George Washington University is important because many of his researches and published conclusions have been supported by his claims to be not only a graduate engineer, but "a member of the first United States course in formal education in what is called today nuclear physics." The facts are that Hubbard never received a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering. He flunked freshman physics, was placed on probation in September of 1931, and failed to return to the university after the 1931–32 academic year. In later years, in addition to the "C.E." which he allowed to appear after his name, he added a "Ph.D." (Malko 1970, 31).

As with many other critics, Malko drew his conclusion largely from the December 1959 Church of Scientology publication *A Brief Biography of L. Ron Hubbard*, which stated that Hubbard earned a "B.S. in Civil Engineering" from

George Washington University in 1934 (Eddy 1959, 4). Yet Hubbard dropped out in 1932, never having completed his civil engineering degree. Furthermore, as critics emphasize, most of his grades were below average (NARA 1932).

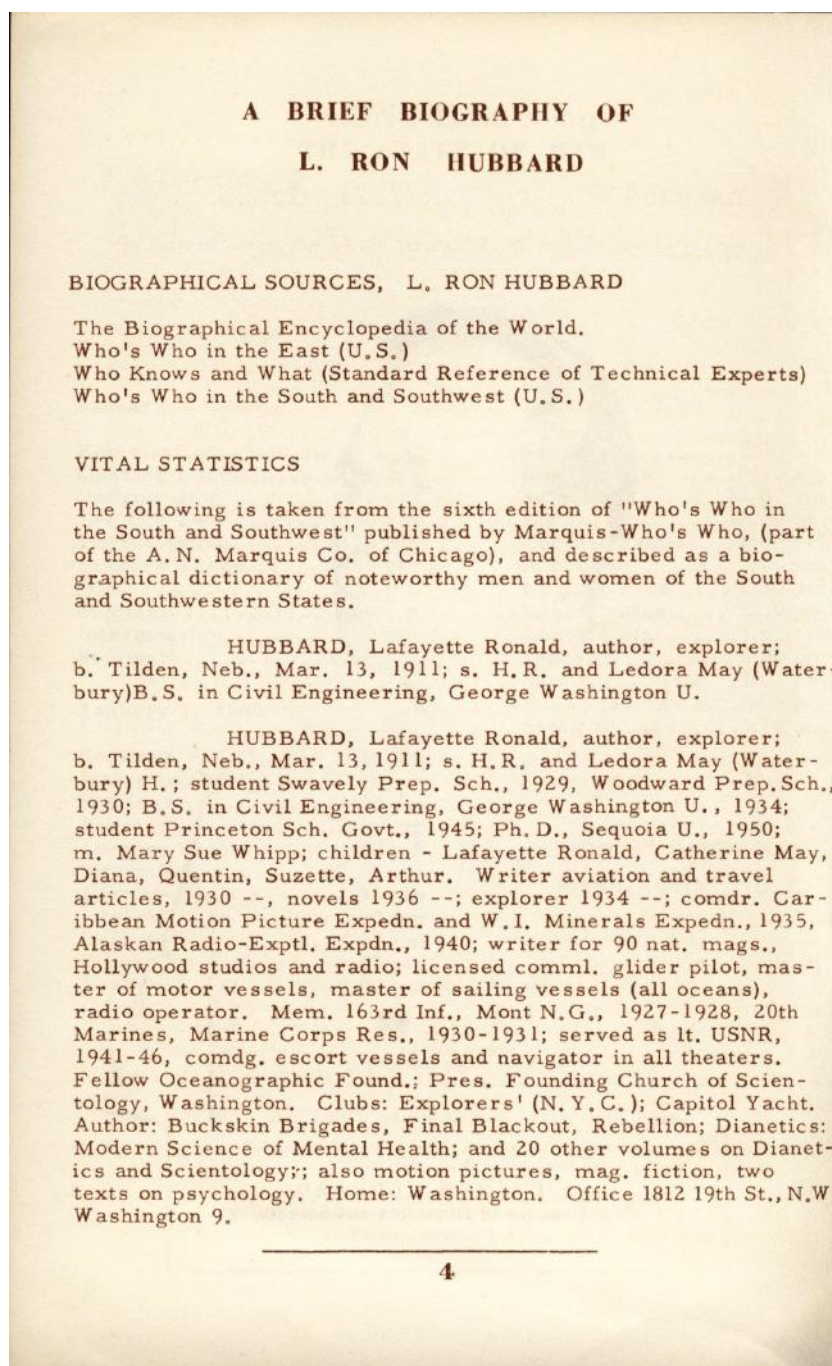


Figure 1. *A Brief Biography of L. Ron Hubbard* as published by the Church of Scientology in 1959.

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
Office of the Registrar
Washington, D. C.

Official Transcript of the Record of Lafayette Ronald Hubbard

Address 3038 P Street, N.W., Washington, D. C.

Date of Admission September, 1930. Dates of Attendance 30-31, 32 31, 31-32.

Graduated XXXX With degree of XXXX

Present status is entitled to a statement of honorable dismissal.

Entrance credits: Sources Woodward Preparatory School, Washington, D. C.

Subject	Units	Source	Subject	Units	Source	Basis of Admission
English	4		Commercial Geography	1		As a candidate for the Degree of Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering. Conditioned in Chemistry 1 unit. Condition re- moved by work in College.
Spanish	2		Solid Geometry	1		
Algebra	2		Plane Trigonometry	1		
Plane Geometry	1					
History	3					
Economics	1					
Physics	1					
Physical Geography	2					
			Total	15 1/2		

College credits in The School of Engineering.

Year	Catalogue Number	Descriptive Title	Semester Hours	GRADES		
				First Semester	Second Semester	Summer Session
30-31	English 1/2	Rhetoric	6	C	B	
	Chemistry 3/4	General Chemistry (Course carries 10 semhrs., 2 sem- hrs. used to satisfy entrance condition)	6	D	D	
	Mech. Eng. 3/4	Mechanical Drawing; Descriptive Geometry	6	B	C	
	Math. 12	Plane Analytic Geometry	(3)	P	-	
	Physical Education		2	C	A	
31-32	German 1/2	First Year German	(6)	F	F	
	Math. 19	Differential Calculus	(3)	-	F	
	Civil Eng. 25/26	Materials of Construction	4	-	-	B
	Physics 13	Dynamics, Sound, and Light	(5)	E	-	
	Math. 19	Differential Calculus	3	D	-	
	Math. 20	Integral Calculus	3	-	D	
	Math. 12	Plane Analytic Geometry	3	D	-	
	English 115/116	The Short Story	6	B	B	
	Physics 12	Electricity and Magnetism	3	-	D	
	Physics 14	Modern Physical Phenomena; Molecular and Atomic Physics	(2)	-	F	
		Total.....	64			

Faculty action: Placed on probation for deficiency in scholarship September, 1931.

Not valid without
Seal

Transcript issued to Lucius C. Dunn, Commander, U.S. Navy (Ret.) (Date May 27, 1941.)
Intelligence Officer, U.S. Navy Yard.

REGISTRAR

This transcript is under no conditions to be released to the student.

26A-2M141

Figure 2. Courtesy of Elisabeth Kaplan, George Washington University Special Collections Department.

Ex-Scientologist Attack allowed the church to explain:

Scientology official [at the time] Vaughn Young says the idea that ‘C.E.’ stands for ‘Civil Engineer’ is mistaken. Apparently the initials represents [sic] a certificate awarded in the early days of Scientology (Attack 1990, 59).

Yet no Scientology documents supported Young's statement; while there were B. Scns. (Bachelors of Scientology) and D. Scns. (Doctors of Scientology), no C.E. appeared outside of the C.E.C.S.—the Committee of Examination, Certification and Services (Hubbard Communications Office 1955, 4 and Steves 1954, 1 & 8). Even if one considered that C.E. could have indicated other Scientology titles like “Course Examiner” or “Chief Executive,” no other Scientologist had a “C.E.” after their name in any church publications around this time except for Hubbard. The C.E. most definitely referred to Hubbard as a Civil Engineer. Thus, it would appear that both L. Ron Hubbard and the Church of Scientology lied about both his grades and college degree.

Not only have popular journalists and Scientology critics ended their investigations here, but most religious and historical scholars have based their conclusions on this same data. Urban grounded his hagiography theory around Hubbard's purported claims of having a degree:

Hubbard claimed that he had mastered the sciences, studying engineering [and] atomic physics at George Washington University [... but] had merely enrolled in one introductory course on molecular and nuclear physics at George Washington University, receiving a grade of F [...] Thus Hubbard's autobiography is perhaps best understood not as an accurate historical chronicle but rather as a kind of “hagiographic mythology”—that is, an idealized narrative composed self-consciously of mythic themes (Urban 2015, 137–38).

In an earlier analysis Urban even emphasized that “in mathematics [Hubbard] earned nothing higher than a D” after having interpreted his data through a critical lens:

[W]e accept the Hubbard story not as an accurate historical document but as an intentionally constructed ‘hagiographic mythology’ [...] Perhaps the one truly unique feature of Hubbard's biography is that *he was himself a prolific author of science fiction and fantasy tales and thus had an unusually creative hand in the elaboration of his own narrative* (Urban 2011, 32).

Urban's views directly influenced Hellesøy, who repeated his narrative:

Hugh Urban characterizes the official biography of Hubbard, as presented by the CoS, as a kind of hagiography, an idealized narrative built around mythic themes [...] Hubbard went to George Washington University for two years. According to the hagiographic account, Hubbard was an engineer [...] Critical investigation has demonstrated that he never even finished any of his degrees (Hellesøy 2014, 257–58).

Christensen then used these conclusions as both the title and subject of her essay: “Inventing L. Ron Hubbard: On the Construction and Maintenance of the

Hagiographic Mythology of Scientology's Founder" (Christensen 2005, 227). Meanwhile, Kent used Miller's claims regarding these discrepancies as the basis for diagnosing Hubbard with a narcissistic personality disorder (Kent and Lane 2008, 117). Despite popular and academic agreement that Hubbard claimed to have earned an undergraduate degree with good grades, virtually no evidence corroborated these conclusions.

The Scandal of Bibliographies

The index page to *A Brief Biography* revealed Elanore Eddy (1921–1994) as this issue's *Ability* editor—not Hubbard (Eddy 1959, 2). Nevertheless, Cooper stated that “his son [L. Ron Hubbard, Jr.] claims his father really wrote it [*A Brief Biography of L. Ron Hubbard*]” (Cooper 1971, 160). If L. Ron Hubbard Jr.'s claims were true, then it stands to reason that his father either wrote under the pseudonym Elanore Eddy or wrote it and placed the blame on her. If not, then Eddy either wrote it or copied the biography from outside sources. Regarding the pseudonym argument, a photo from the 20th Scientology A.C.C. (Advanced Clinical Congress) in Washington, D.C showed that Elanore Eddy existed (*Ability* 1958, 10).

20th A.C.C. Students



Standing, 1 to r: Miriam St. Georges, Tony Dunleavy, Mark Roberts, Ted Dunn, Andy Parlogean, Jack Horner, Oswald Swallow, Margaret Watson, Phyllis Fletcher. Seated, 1 to r: Elda Ilger, Connie Godfrey, Elanore Eddy, John Roberts, Helen Sandfuchs, Melody Horner, Kay Miner, Max Clay.

Figure 3. Photo with Elanore Eddy as published by the Church of Scientology in 1958.

With the pseudonym possibility eliminated, what follows hereafter will examine the sources and therefore the basis of authorship claims regarding *A Brief Biography of L. Ron Hubbard*. The 1959 Church of Scientology biography of Hubbard cited four sources:

The Biographical Encyclopedia of the World,

Who's Who In The East (U.S.)

Who Knows and What (Standard Reference of Technical Experts)

Who's Who In the South and Southwest (U.S.).

Although this issue of *Ability* magazine provided no dates nor specifics regarding which editions of these books were used, it also stated: “[t]he following is taken from the sixth edition of ‘Who's Who In the South and Southwest’” (Eddy 1959, 4). This would explain why the entry for L. Ron Hubbard in *Who's Who in the South and Southwest* appeared virtually identical to *A Brief Biography of L. Ron Hubbard*. The Scientology biography virtually replicated the *Who's Who* entry, with the exception of some cases where it used unabridged terms, for example “Engring.” turned into “Engineering,” presumably for improved readability (*Marquis Who's Who* 1959, 395). The fault therefore did not lie entirely with Eddy, for she accurately transcribed Hubbard's biography from *Who's Who in the South and Southwest*. Rather, her error was in not fact-checking against the other three sources. Nevertheless, Cooper claimed that Hubbard directly lied about this information:

In his *Brief Biography*, he said he had graduated from Columbian University and in *Who's Who in the Southwest* (they claim he supplied the data) (Cooper 1971, 162).

Cooper could not have used either source as the basis for this claim, primarily because neither *A Brief Biography* nor *Who's Who in the South and Southwest* even mentioned Columbian University. In fact, no printed Scientology materials even referenced Columbian University, except for *A Report to Members of Parliament on Scientology*, which mentioned Columbian College:

L. R. Hubbard attended Swavely Prep. School, Manassas, Virginia, and Woodward Prep. School, Washington DC, USA and Columbia [sic] College, George Washington University, Washington DC in 1932. Attended Princeton University post-graduate (Public Relations Bureau 1969).

The World-Wide Public Relations Bureau published this document, however, not Hubbard. For that matter, it remains unclear from *when* she sourced her

information, as Columbian University was the name for George Washington University before 1904, while Columbian College actually resides within George Washington University, itself once called Columbian College (GW Libraries 2017). These facts have revealed Cooper's statement to be entirely unfounded. Interestingly, although Cooper's aside "they claim he supplied the data" further attempted to assign the entry's authorship to Hubbard and away from the publishers of *Marquis Who's Who*, when coupled with the fact that Eddy transcribed *Who's Who in the South and Southwest* almost verbatim, the question of authorship shifted from one of Hubbard or Eddy to that of Hubbard or the *Marquis Who's Who* editors.

In any case, *A Brief Biography of L. Ron Hubbard* must have cited *Who's Who* volumes before 1960 because the *Ability* issue in which it appeared had a 1959 copyright with an upcoming congress listed on 1 January 1960. As the sixth edition of *Who's Who in the South and Southwest* published in 1959, this would have also made it the last *Who's Who* published before *A Brief Biography*. As L. Ron Hubbard did not appear in earlier editions of *Who's Who in the South and Southwest*, and because The A. N. Marquis Company also held the rights to both *Who Knows—and What* and *Who's Who in the East*, the information in the earlier editions of one of these series almost certainly influenced the later editions of the other series, especially if used as a means of data verification.

The next earliest entries for L. Ron Hubbard appeared in both the 1949 and 1954 editions of *Who Knows—and What Among Authorities, Experts, and the Specially Informed*, which *Ability* magazine mistitled as "Who's Who and What (Standard Reference of Technical Experts)." Both books incorrectly showed Hubbard with a "BS '34 (George Washington U)" (Marquis 1949, 306 and Marquis 1954, 327–28). These two books also noted that his last academic achievement was "Student '45 (Sch Mil Govt, Princeton)" (Marquis 1949, 306 and Marquis 1954, 327–28). Although Cooper cited neither of these books, she further claimed that Hubbard also lied about his time at Princeton:

As for the Princeton School of Government that he says he attended, it was the Princeton School of *Military* Government, and he went there only three months in what was possibly a war service course (Cooper 1971, 163).

If Hubbard submitted the data as Cooper claimed, then he did not lie about this statement. Hubbard definitely completed additional Naval training from 1944–45 at the School of Military Government in Princeton University (Dyson 1979).

Furthermore, both the 1949 and 1954 editions of *Who Knows—and What Among Authorities, Experts, and the Specially Informed* by Marquis Who's Who clearly listed him as a "Student '45 (Sch Mil Govt, Princeton)."

What rendered Cooper's claim all the more unfounded was that Hubbard explicitly explained that he studied military government at Princeton in a 29 October 1955 lecture:

During the latter part of the war, I got the notion that nobody knew what they were fighting about so I took the opportunity of taking some training in military government [...] And I went back to Princeton University and took a course in military government (Hubbard 1955c, 5).

Hubbard explained in another lecture on 7 July 1957 that he did not attend Columbian College:

I used to sit over in the engineering school and some of my pals in the Columbian College would come over and they'd say, "Oh, my God, I can't pass this examination or write this paper." And I'd take their textbook on psychology and write the paper for them. They'd do my mathematics! (Hubbard 1957c, 4).

While true that in an earlier 19 July 1954 lecture Hubbard mentioned Princeton University, he did not mention its school of military government: "I am talking to you now from material given to me by the professor of ethnology at Princeton University where I studied" (Hubbard 1954a, 6). Also, in a 15 September 1964 lecture he omitted the word military:

Now, you maybe think it isn't a new technology, but I was taught at Princeton in their school of government and taught very well on a lot of these points (Hubbard 1964b, 16).

Neither of these two latter statements supported Cooper's claim or contradicted Hubbard's previous two statements, however, as all of their contexts involved what Hubbard had learned about military governance.

Cooper's Bibliography of Sources Consulted page further revealed that she ignored the other books cited in *A Brief Biography*—let alone their prior editions—and several primary Scientology sources (Cooper 1971, Bibliography). Had Cooper reviewed the other cited book series, then she would have noticed discrepancies in the 1946 *The Biographical Encyclopedia of the World*, the only entry in any of the four series with a photo of Hubbard. This entry also contained significant departures from later entries, as it did not list his time at the Princeton School of Military Government in 1945, which occurred one year before publication. Although the entry still incorrectly showed Hubbard with

a degree in Civil Engineering from George Washington University, it better resembled his college transcript as it stated that he graduated in 1932, the year he left (Institute for Research in Biography 1946a, 946). This discrepancy in graduation years suggested that there were alterations that occurred in earlier series.

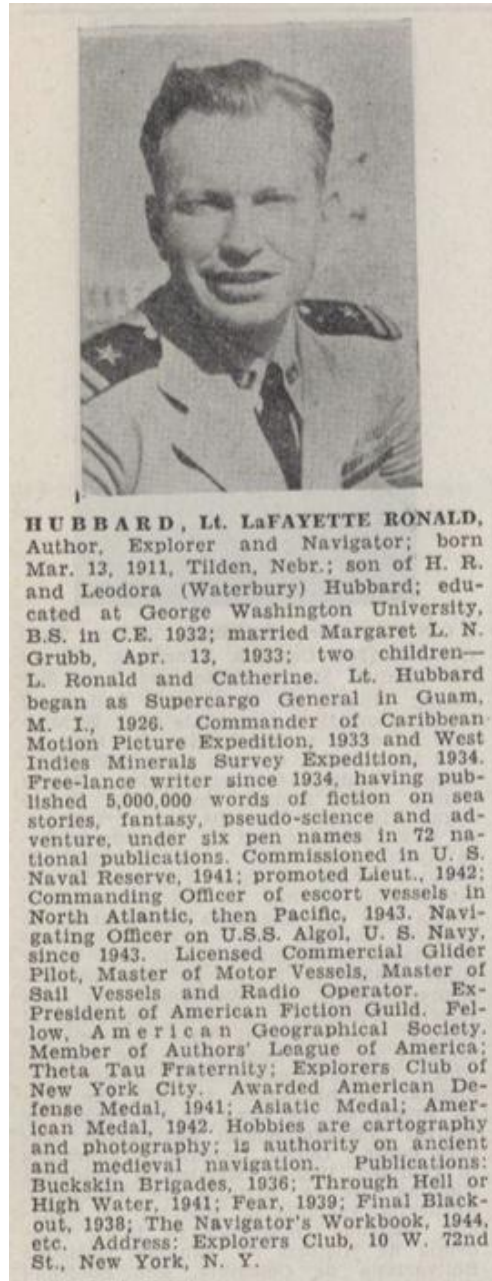


Figure 4. 1946 *The Biographical Encyclopedia of the World* entry for L. Ron Hubbard.

The *Who's Who in the East* series fully explained the errors. While the third edition only showed Hubbard's name, the reference page indicated a full entry in prior "Marquis biographical reference works" as per the asterisk by Hubbard's name (Marquis 1951b, 1223 and Marquis 1951c, 1203). Under the copyright page, however, the only prior "Marquis biographical reference" was volume two from 1948 (Marquis 1951a, Copyright Notice). That volume once again did not show Hubbard at the Princeton School of Military Government (Marquis 1948, 854). This omission would undermine some claims that Hubbard inflated his college achievements if "he supplied the data" to the Marquis publishers. The 1948 volume showed Hubbard with a B.S. in Civil Engineering from George Washington University in 1934, which would suggest that an error originated between the somewhat incorrect 1946 *Biographical Encyclopedia of the World* and the entirely incorrect 1948 *Who's Who in the East*. The 1944 first edition of *Who's Who in the East*, however, not only had the earliest published public biography of L. Ron Hubbard, but it was also the only version to show him having attended George Washington University from 1930–32 without having graduated (Biographical Press 1944a, 1150). If Hubbard did submit information to the publishers as his son and Cooper have claimed, then Hubbard did so correctly and honestly at the very outset, which directly disproved both of their contingent statements that he lied.



Figure 5. 1944 *Who's Who In the East* entry for L. Ron Hubbard.
Courtesy of Fred Marks at *Marquis Who's Who*.

Reconciling Differences

The discovery of the change in publishers after volume one has strongly supported the argument that the publishers caused the errors. Yet despite several *Marquis Who's Who* prefaces having stated that the editors sought out potential entrants and verified data by all means available, Cooper asserted that “they [Marquis Who's Who] claim he supplied the data.” To help resolve these conflicting statements, former Marquis Who's Who Managing Editor Alison Perruso clarified that the “information was all found publicly” and that “L. Ron Hubbard [...] did not voluntarily submit information to us” (Alison Perruso, e-mail message to author, 1 September 2015). Nevertheless, *Who's Who* publications sometimes sought out and requested information from potential subjects, such as with Hubbard's military supervisor Herbert Keeney Fenn (1890–1951) (Booker 1942). To clarify whether Hubbard sent his biography upon request, Perruso further explained, “there is usually no submission from the individual themselves...as is the case here [with Hubbard]” (Alison Perruso, e-mail message to author, 19 August 2015). Therefore, Hubbard not only never submitted information to *Marquis Who's Who* but this revelation entirely disproved both Cooper's and L. Ron Hubbard Jr.'s claims. In other words, the 1948 Marquis *Who's Who in the East* used outside information, including both the 1944 *Who's Who in the East* by Biographical Press, which correctly showed that Hubbard attended George Washington University from 1930–32 without a degree, and the 1946 *Biographical Encyclopedia of the World*, which incorrectly showed him having graduated with a civil engineering degree in 1932.

Although this new information and explanation covered all of A. N. Marquis' publications—*Who's Who in the East*, *Who's Who in the South and Southwest*, and *Who Knows—and What Among Authorities, Experts, and the Specially Informed*—the “1932 B.S. in C.E.” in the 1946 *Biographical Encyclopedia of the World* by Institute for Research in Biography, Inc. required further explanation. Its preface stated, “the aid of leading authorities in many fields was obtained as well as the cooperation of responsible heads of government bureaus and departments” as well as “Intensive efforts were made to obtain the material directly from the subjects themselves” (Institute for Research in Biography

1946b, I & III). These statements indicated that the errors came from the government, other publishers or from Hubbard.

The correct data in the 1944 *Who's Who in the East*, however, cleared Hubbard. It stated that “every reasonable effort has been made to procure the requisite data from persons deemed eligible for inclusion” and that “[i]n every possible instance the facts were procured at first hand” (Biographical Press 1944b, VI–VII). If the correct information came directly from Hubbard in 1944, then the errors in 1946 resulted due to internal errors or outside sources. If not, the possibility of Hubbard or Scientologists having sent them incorrect information in 1945–46 would appear unlikely. After all, the Church of Scientology incorporated in December 1953 (State of New Jersey 1953). Dianeticists, who later became Scientologists, existed only after Hubbard published *Dianetics* in May 1950 (Kent 2001, 95). These events occurred several years after the 1946 *The Biographical Encyclopedia of the World* mistakes. Even if one made the case that *Dianetics* first appeared in 1948 as *The Original Thesis*, it had a relatively small circulation and did not receive a formal print until after the success of *Dianetics* in 1950, and the error occurred at least two years earlier (Hubbard 1951a, “Other Books By” Page).

Clearing the Err

Hubbard also addressed these biographical errors in an interview featured in *LOOK*, the second most popular magazine in 1950:

In his youth Hubbard traipsed around the world with his father, a lieutenant commander in the Navy, and ultimately wound up at George Washington University Engineering School. His biography in ‘Who’s Who in the East’ [1948 edition] says that he got his bachelor’s degree in civil engineering in 1934. His publishers, Hermitage House, Inc., identify him as a mathematician and theoretical philosopher. Hubbard himself finds this somewhat embarrassing, because, as he is quick to tell interviewers, ‘I never took my degree.’ He also deprecates the inaccuracy of his ‘Who’s Who’ biography, which lists him as an ‘explorer since 1934’ (Maisel 1950, 82).

Hubbard also knew about at least one if not both of the entries in the *Who Knows—and What Among Authorities, Experts, and the Specially Informed* series since 1955, which he directly mentioned in the first *Ability* issue: “‘Who Knows and What,’ the companion book to ‘Who’s Who in America,’ which gives

the professional experts of the country, and which you can find in any good library, lists me as an expert in psychology” (Hubbard 1955a, 10). Both the 1949 and 1954 editions of *Who Knows—and What Among Authorities, Experts, and the Specially Informed* described Hubbard as one with expertise on “Expedition organization and psychology” and “studies on prevention [of] psychic breakdown and handling of men under stress of expedition conditions. Author: Expedition Personnel; Fear; The Anatomy of Madness; Man Under Stress, and others; also articles in field [of psychology]” (Marquis 1949, 306 and Marquis Who’s Who 1954, 327–28). Except for the fiction novel *Fear*, the other entries were indeed non-fiction articles about psychology. The 1954 edition of *Who Knows—and What* also omitted his 1953 honorary Sequoia University PhD, which, when coupled with his interview five years earlier, further undermined criticisms that he inflated his degrees. Furthermore, in one of his earliest lectures on 23 September 1950, Hubbard explained his lack of formal education and failure to graduate:

I had neglected to go to high school. The last formal school I had attended was Grant School in Oakland and my father said I had to go to university, so he sent me to a prep school in Virginia [Swavely] where I studied for about four months and took the New York Board of Regents and got into George Washington University. [...] They regretted it from there on because I never seemed to stay with the curriculum. When it came to studying to be an engineer [...] At last they said, “Well, after all, you’re not going to practice engineering. We might as well pass you in a few of these courses.” This was a great relief to me, since my father was bound and determined that the only measure of excellence was ‘A.’ My only measure of excellence was whether or not I learned anything about what I wanted to know (Hubbard 1950, 6).

In that same lecture, Hubbard even described flunking: “Now, old Professor [Thomas] Brown [1892–1962] was teaching, for the first time in the United States, atomic and molecular phenomena [...] And I took the course and of course flunked it” (Hubbard 1950, 7). Similarly, Hubbard casually explained in a 13 April 1957 lecture that he flunked in math: “I always flunk mathematics” (Hubbard 1957a, 77). As critics and scholars have been apt to show, his college transcript grades confirmed both of these statements.

Moreover, Hubbard never described attending college beyond 1932, as per a 30 December 1954 lecture: “There’s a terrific world. What’s [man] going to do with it? In 1932 my classmates had decided what he was going to do with it. He was going to blow it up, that’s what he was going to do with it” (Hubbard 1954b,

19–20). He also explained in another lecture that he got bad grades and then referenced 1932 as an end point:

I was a member of the first class in nuclear physics (we called it atomic and molecular phenomena then of which nuclear physics, by the way, is only one small part). And I was a member of the first class that taught this subject at George Washington University—got the worst grades there. [...] But nearly all nuclear physicists, atomic and molecular phenomena boys—Buck Rogers boys, we were known as [...] For all the years between '32, let us say, and 1943, nobody had any use for a Buck Rogers boy (Hubbard 1957a, 74–75).

Hubbard's articles never mentioned George Washington University beyond 1932 either, as seen in a 1957 *Ability*:

The other thing I did was to take a Geiger counter and make a test of Washington. A little earlier this Geiger counter had been giving false evidence because the stick used with the counter, as will happen, evidently had some uranium stuck to it. But with the counter in good operating order and clean, it was discovered that the background count of Washington, D.C., is the same as it was in 1932 when I was going to George Washington University and studying radiation (Hubbard 1957b, 2–3).

Nearly a decade later, Hubbard again repeated in a 7 July 1964 lecture that he did not have a college degree and mocked this repeated question from journalists:

I stayed in Washington one hot summer to finish off an awful lot of engineering courses, and so forth, that I needed for credit, you know? People stand around and they say I haven't got any degrees, I haven't got any of this and so forth—they ought to been there that summer, man. I'd much rather been out flying airplanes, because I was having a ball flying airplanes. Instead of that I had to sit in this horrible—they didn't have any air conditioning in Washington and Washington is cool at 95, in most summers, you know? Sitting down there at GW, sweating over this stuff. And one of the courses was materials of construction. I could have cheerfully have choked the guy who ever wrote that textbook. He had the organization facility of an army officer. And my God, brick and concrete, brick and concrete and pebbles and aggregate and the streak characteristic of marble and the tension of steel—were all in the same paragraph. You just couldn't sort it out. Nothing—nothing was ever over here grouped. [...] And with the thermometer bouncing around a hundred, you know, sitting in a roaring hot classroom, you see, trying to walk my way through this—that's why I almost kill reporters who say, 'What degrees do you have?' It's just that one [audience laughs] (Hubbard 1964a).

Wordplay on “degrees” aside, Hubbard's description of the Materials of Construction matched the summer course catalogue and his transcript confirmed his enrollment (George Washington University 1931, 260 and NARA 1932).

Hubbard did state in a 21 January 1961 lecture that he studied nuclear physics in college and later mentioned the year 1934. This sentiment echoed the apparent uselessness of “Buck Rogers boys” from the 13 April 1957 lecture in which he said the lack of general interest in nuclear physicists was true from 1932–1943. Yet, he did not claim to have graduated nor have any serious interest in the subject:

A long, long time ago, I was in a university called George Washington University over in the United States, Washington, DC. I was studying nuclear physics. And I said, “Well, the best thing to do is just to go on and study nuclear physics because my father wants me to. That’s a good reason. And when I finally get through studying nuclear physics, why, I’ll write for a living.” And that’s the way it worked out because nobody wanted a nuclear physicist in 1934. Nobody had anything to do with a nuclear physicist in 1934. We were the Buck Rogers boys (Hubbard 1961a, 3–4).

Hubbard also mentioned that he got a degree in a 13 April 1957 lecture. Although not directly stated, what he referred to was his 1953 honorary PhD degree from Sequoia University awarded for *Dianetics*, not for civil engineering or nuclear physics, as evident from the context:

It’s amusing that I know anything about the subject [nuclear physics] because the basic reason for working in the field of the mind and Scientology and Dianetics, was based upon the use to which this information was being put in the early thirties. [...] But as far as nuclear physics is concerned, the only use I ever made of any of the material, directly and intimately, was to try to define the tiniest particle or wavelength of energy in this universe. I went out on this subject as a special subject on which I wished to base a thesis, and suddenly realized that I probably would find that small particle in the human mind. [...] But this search for the smallest particle led me over to the psychology department of the George Washington University [...] There wasn’t anybody in the psychology department that could do more than add up a column of figures in arithmetic. They were not mathematicians. They did not know how to develop a theory mathematically and extrapolate it in such a way as to get a prediction of what the condition was. [...] I said, ‘This could be a serious thing. We are given to believe that the field of the mind is very definitely covered, that a great deal is known about it. And I have just been studying a subject which threatens to disturb the mental equilibrium of the world in future years, nuclear physics. Someday, someday, somebody will want to know something about the mind.’ And so I went on about my work; I studied, I eventually got a degree in the subject, whatever good that was (Hubbard 1957a, 74–79).

The work and subject that Hubbard “got a degree in” was for his researches into the mind as presented in *Dianetics* awarded by Sequoia University in 1953, although even here Hubbard downplayed that degree. Regardless, Hubbard never

claimed to have graduated from George Washington University with a degree in civil engineering or anything else.

Only Melton noticed that Hubbard never claimed to have good grades or a civil engineering degree. Melton correctly noted, “Hubbard never claimed the kind of formal academic credentials which the average scientist or physician possesses” (Melton 2000, 58). Melton did not elaborate, although he acknowledged the historical discrepancies in a related endnote:

It is the case that some of the biographical sketches of Hubbard published by the Church of Scientology contained mistakes and implied credentials for Hubbard which he did not possess (and had never claimed). In its most recent publication, it has moved to correct those errors (Melton 2000, 75).

The Birth of a Notion

Without reviewing all of the evidence, however, Melton’s claim and endnote may seem unfounded. Thus Kent, who cited Miller as his source, argued that Hubbard deceived his followers:

For at least two books that he wrote [*The Problems of Work* and *Scientology: The Fundamentals of Thought*], Hubbard more-than-exaggerated his credentials when he identified himself as ‘L. Ron Hubbard, C. E. [Civil Engineer], PhD.’, even though he had dropped out of college and never finished his Bachelor’s degree or received a degree in any form of engineering (Miller, 1987: 57). Despite these and many other deceptions about his credentials, he was completely self-referential when instructing his followers about how to do their job assignments or posts (Kent and Lane 2008, 127).

Kent drew this conclusion partly due to early Scientology book editions which showed “C.E.” after Hubbard’s name, specifically *Creative Learning: A Scientological Experiment in Schools* (Silcox and Maynard 1955), *All About Radiation* (HASI 1957, 39), *Scientology: 8–80* (Hubbard 1952a), *Scientology: The Fundamentals of Thought* (Hubbard 1956b), *Scientology 8–8008* (Hubbard 1953 and Hubbard 1956a), *The Problems of Work* (Hubbard 1956c) and *Self-Analysis in Dianetics* (Hubbard 1952b). Kent, however, made the same error as Cooper and Armstrong, because Hubbard not only openly admitted that he held no degrees in his lectures, he also never claimed to in any books. In fact, Victor H. Silcox (1917–2002) and Len J. Maynard (1912–1984) wrote *Creative Learning: A Scientological Experiment in Schools*, not Hubbard, although they

expanded on his work and thanked him for the inspiration (Silcox and Maynard 1955, III). The editors of the Hubbard Association of Scientologists International (HASI) in London and Phoenix also referred to Hubbard as a C.E. in the first editions of *All About Radiation*, *Scientology: 8–80*, *Scientology: The Fundamentals of Thought* and the first three editions of *Scientology: 8–8008*, not Hubbard. They continued to use this title in later editions from HASI and other affiliate printers—not unlike what happened with the *Who’s Who* entries. Only the Hubbard Dianetic Research Foundation omitted the C.E. in both the original 1951 manuscript for *Science of Survival* (with Hubbard’s handwritten notes) and a signed copy of the original manuscript for *Dianetics 1955!* (Hubbard 1951b and Hubbard 1954c, Copyright Notice).

Unique to *Science of Survival*, *The Problems of Work* and *Self-Analysis in Dianetics*, these books defined Hubbard as an engineer in their introductions upon citing *Funk & Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary of the English Language* as the source—again without years or editions. Presumably the October 1951 *Science of Survival* used the 1951 Funk & Wagnalls dictionary entry (Hubbard 1951c, i) because no entry for Dianetics appeared in the 1950 Funk & Wagnalls dictionary, whereas the entry first appeared verbatim in the 1951 *Funk & Wagnalls New Practical Standard Dictionary* (Funk 1951, 1565). An identical definition by Funk & Wagnalls repeated in *The Problems of Work* from 1956 (Funk 1956, 1563 and Hubbard 1956c, v). Because no entries for “Scientology” appeared in Funk & Wagnalls, it would appear that *The Problems of Work* editors copied that definition verbatim from an earlier *Ability* (Hubbard Communications Office 1955, Back Cover).

Only London-based Derricke Ridgway Publishing attributed a definition of Dianetics with Hubbard as a C.E. to Funk & Wagnalls in the introduction to the 1952 edition of *Self-Analysis in Dianetics* (Hubbard 1952b, Frontispiece). No records supported this citation, however, because the Funk & Wagnalls dictionary entries for Dianetics remained consistent from 1951 to 1960, with all having referred to Hubbard as an “American engineer” (Funk 1952, 1565). Notably, Hubbard directly criticized Derricke Ridgway in a 30 December 1956 lecture:

Now, up to that time, two books were in distribution in Great Britain: *Dianetics: Modern Science of Mental Health* (British edition, watered down. They like the American edition much better) and *Self-Analysis in Dianetics*. And those two books, hardcover books, were

being published by Derricke Ridgway in London. And Derricke Ridgway was making so much money that he couldn't find anything to do, so he had to make that scarce. And not because of those two books, but because of several other factors—these two books remaining the two solvent items in his inventory—he went bankrupt (Hubbard 1956f, 8).

Hubbard had hinted earlier about the bankruptcy claims, having explained that Derricke Ridgway “squirreled” (altered) Scientology writings: “The biggest squirrel in Great Britain, Derricke Ridgway, was recently to be found in bankruptcy court. I wonder how he got there? We wouldn't know anything about that, of course!” (Hubbard 1955b, 2–3). Indeed, a 1959 notification of dividends mentioned the 1954 bankruptcy case, which indicated that it went bankrupt the prior year—or recently, as Hubbard wrote (*The London Gazette* 1959, 4131). The only variation in any Funk & Wagnalls definitions from this period appeared in the 1959–1960 *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of the English Language International Edition and Britannica World Language Dictionary* which referred to Hubbard as a “U.S. engineer” (Preble 1960, 354). Even so, it did not resemble Derricke Ridgway's “C.E.” definition. Whether Hubbard directly bankrupted Derricke Ridgway or not would likely require additional research, however, that he attacked the one publisher that clearly misattributed citations only countered the arguments that Hubbard claimed to have been a C.E.

From Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary:

di.a.net'.ics *noun* A system for the analysis, control and development of human thought evolved from a set of co-ordinated axioms which also provide techniques for the treatment of a wide range of mental disorders and organic diseases: term and doctrines introduced by L. Ron Hubbard, C.E., D.Sen., American engineer, (Gr. *dianoetikos*—*dia*, through, plus *noos*, mind) **di.a.net'.ic** *adj.*

Figure 6. Funk & Wagnalls dictionary entry from the 1952 edition of *Self-Analysis in Dianetics*, published by Derricke Ridgway.

DI·A·NET'·ICS *noun* A system for the analysis, control, and development of human thought evolved from a set of coordinated axioms which also provide techniques for the treatment of a wide range of mental disorders and organic diseases: term and doctrines introduced by L. Ron Hubbard, American engineer. [<Gr. *dianoetikos* < *dia*, through, + *noos*, mind] — **DI·A·NET'·IC** *adj.*

Figure 7. Funk & Wagnalls dictionary entry from the 1951 edition of *Funk & Wagnalls New Practical Standard Dictionary of the English Language*, published by Funk & Wagnalls.

Even after the Church of Scientology corrected the errors in its biographies, outside publications continued to make these mistakes for decades. Later editions of *Who's Who in the South and Southwest* kept the incorrect information while adding a “postgrad” to “Princeton Sch. Govt.” in the 1973–74 edition (*Marquis Who's Who* 1973, 353). This apparently influenced *Who's Who in America*, which also added a “postgrad” through 1976–77, retracted it in 1978–79, but then added “student George Washington U., 1934” (*Marquis Who's Who* 1976, 1520–21 and *Marquis Who's Who* 1978a, 1574). Then *Who's Who in the South and Southwest* corrected the “postgrad” error in the 1978–79 edition, but also added “student George Washington U., 1934” (*Marquis Who's Who* 1978b, 349). Meanwhile, *Who's Who in the East* kept the graduation error through 1986 (*Marquis Who's Who* 1984, 362). *Who's Who in America* fully corrected Hubbard's record in the 1980–81 edition, but only thirty years after Hubbard publicly acknowledged the errors (*Marquis Who's Who* 1980, 1631). Critics hostile to Hubbard naturally ignored this data, including ex-Scientology archivist Armstrong who claimed to intimately know and have Hubbard's biographical materials and yet never mentioned these discrepancies between the *Who's Who* books and Scientology books in any of his court transcripts (Armstrong 2009a and 2009b). Scientology's final use of the C.E. title occurred in November 1963 (James 1963, 12), while a 1977 Sea Org Information Letter officially removed the C.E. title and canceled all previous biographies (Sea Organization 1977, 2). As the Church of Scientology corrected the errors in Hubbard's biography well before even *Marquis Who's Who* did, this undercuts a central claim in the hagiography narrative. Rather, this overlooked evidence has instead indicated that several others, both his supporters and critics, failed to check the sources of the discrepancies.

Although the cause of the initial error in the 1948 *Who's Who in the East* remains unknown, the recent discoveries have all pointed to a *Marquis Who's Who* clerical error in 1945. The first and only publication with the correct information was the 1944 *Who's Who in the East* by Biographical Press, then the first error appeared in the 1946 *Biographical Encyclopedia of the World* by Institute for Research in Biography, Inc., until a completely wrong entry appeared in the 1948 *Who's Who in the East*, published by The A. N. Marquis Company. Notably, the preparatory schools Swavely and Woodward disappeared for a decade from the *Who's Who* biographies, until the 1959 *Who's Who in the South and Southwest*, and so their omission also likely affected the other later book series.

False Attributions

In addition to the aforementioned books and magazines, several other documents have shown that others falsely attributed titles to Hubbard that he himself did not. Wright noticed that the C.E. appeared in the Church of Scientology's Naval Notice of Separation:

There is a Notice of Separation in the official records, but it is not the one [the Church of Scientology] sent me. The differences in the two documents are telling. [...] The church document indicates, falsely, that Hubbard completed four years of college, obtaining a degree in civil engineering. The official document correctly notes two years of college and no degree (Wright 2013, 352).

Indeed, the church version showed incorrect data about Hubbard's college education on what appeared to be a copy of an official government form (Lake 2013). Likewise, the Navy version had the correct data in regards to this issue (NARA 1946). Wright concluded that the church version was a forgery—a conclusion beyond the scope of this analysis—but assuming that Wright was correct, it begs the question as to who forged it, when and for what reason. When considering that Hubbard explained the situation numerous times in lectures and writings, mentioned the error in a 1950 interview, provided the original correct entry to the 1944 *Who's Who in the East*, and that the Church of Scientology stopped using the C.E. title by 1963, whereas *Marquis Who's Who* continued using it until 1986, it would appear unlikely that Hubbard created the Church of Scientology's Notice of Separation.

Curiously, the *Translator's Edition of Scientology*, which spanned six weeks from 1 May to 12 June 1956 in Professional Auditors Bulletins (PABs) 82–88, showed a “PhD, C.E.” in Hubbard’s letterhead. Hubbard likely wrote these bulletins as per his earlier note “I have written here a Translator’s Edition.” It also included a short autobiography:

WHO INVENTED SCIENTOLOGY: Scientology was discovered (found) not invented (created). It was organized by L. Ron Hubbard, an American, who has many degrees and is very skilled by reason of study [...] Hubbard was trained in nuclear physics at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. before he started his studies about the mind. This explains the mathematical precision of Scientology. Doctor Hubbard has been given many honours for his work in the field of the mind.

The alluded “many degrees” here were his Sequoia honorary PhD, the Doctor of Divinity, the Bachelor of Scientology and Doctor of Scientology. Although Hubbard did not describe these degrees, he explained where most of them originated:

Scientology has two main organizations. One of these is the HUBBARD ASSOCIATION OF SCIENTOLOGISTS [...] The other is THE HUBBARD ASSOCIATION OF SCIENTOLOGISTS INTERNATIONAL [...] Scientology practitioners are validated (certified, given diplomas) by these two organizations. Diplomas are given only after very exact training. A person who is skilled in Scientology has a diploma from one of the above two organizations or from THE FOUNDING CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY in Washington, D.C., USA (Hubbard 1956d, 1–3).

What made these PABs unique were that the “PhD, C.E.” title only appeared on them from 82–88. In PAB 89, Hubbard (without titles) wrote: “Now, for me, begins the job of rewriting the Translator’s Edition for book form, since I believe you have noticed, as I did, many typographical errors” (Hubbard 1956e, 1). Although he did not state what these errors were, notably the “PhD, C.E.” vanished from PAB 89 onwards. As he also signed his name without any titles throughout the *Translator's Edition*, the editors appear to have added the “PhD, C.E.”—similar to the book covers of the same 1952–56 period.

Journalist and Scientology critic Tony Ortega mentioned a 2 January 1958 letter from Washington D.C. to Dr. Edward Condon (1902–1974) purportedly from Hubbard with what appeared to be his signature followed by “C.E., PhD” (Hubbard 1958). Aside from the uncharacteristic writing style, however, a handwritten “/per md” followed his signature. The “/per md” of course indicated that someone with the initials MD wrote it and signed Hubbard’s

signature, as both appeared in the same handwriting style and did not match Hubbard's.

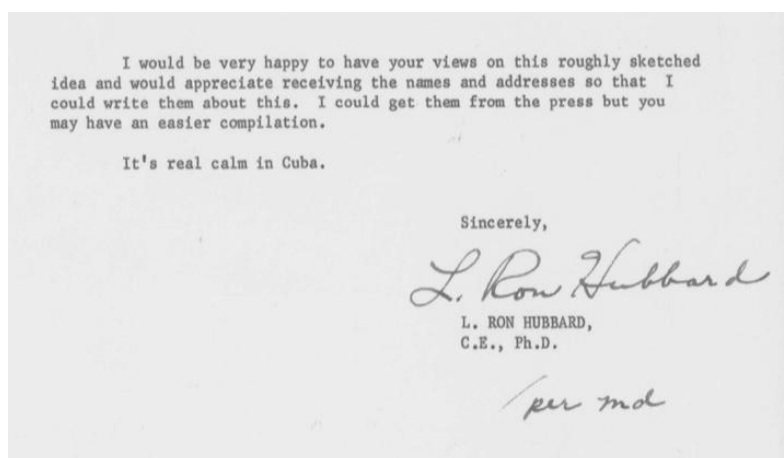


Figure 8. From Ortega's site.

Figure 9. From *Science of Survival* manuscript edition.

Similarly, a PE (Personal Efficiency) Handout from April 1961 apparently showed that Hubbard referred to himself as “C.E., PhD” (Hubbard 1974f, 196–99). Nevertheless, Hubbard having authored the *PE Handout* would appear virtually impossible. Firstly, the parenthetical note before Hubbard's name at the bottom stated:

The article ‘What Is Scientology?’ has been entirely re-written by Ron, and this one should be used in preference to the original one which was written in Johannesburg and issued there.

This article attributed changes to Hubbard without indicating any initial assistant or compiler and instead used only the typists' initials “jl.rd.” Yet, the original “What Is Scientology?” article first appeared in the April 1961 *Ability*

issued from Washington D.C., not Johannesburg, as “Scientology”—again written by Eleanore Turner (née Eddy), without a “C.E.” title (Turner 1961a, 6).

Secondly, despite a bracketed note after Hubbard’s name which stated “Originally issued on 12 April 1961. The 14 April 1961 correction added paragraph 9,” no cancellation, revision, or Issue II appeared at the top—atypical for Hubbard Communications Office (HCO) documents. In fact, no 12 April 1961 HCO Information Letter had ever existed. In addition to the lack of proper authorship, revisions and nonexistent references, a “Not HCO Correct” appeared as a small note at the top of this letter, which further indicated an incorrect, unofficial and misattributed status.

Thirdly, Hubbard could not have written or issued the *PE Handout* from Johannesburg as he was in England during this time. Hubbard issued “S.O.P. Goals” from England in HCO Bulletins and Policy Letters between 18 February to 11 April. Additionally, the April 1961 *Ability* stated:

HCO Special Events Course, previously announced to begin on April 17th, HAS BEEN POSTPONED [...] The reason for the postponement of this course is—instructors Dick and Jan Halpern are going to St. Hill [England] for a very thorough briefing from Ron on S.O.P. Goals (Turner 1961b, 10).

In fact, Hubbard abolished the PE Course on 23 January 1961 when the 3rd South African A.C.C. began (Hubbard 1974a, 191). He then appointed Peter Greene (1929–1991) as the Johannesburg HASI Association Secretary on 30 January 1961 (Hubbard 1974b, 146). Then on 15 February 1961, Greene wrote the HCO Policy Letter *Evaluation Script*, which stated, “Script written by Peter Greene on Experience with PE Foundation, Johannesburg, based on recent PE Policy Letters,” but never specified which letters they were based on, and instead attributed the authorship to Hubbard. Greene appeared neither as the originator (i.e. “For L. Ron Hubbard”), the compiler, the assistant (i.e. “PG”), nor even as the typist (i.e. “pg”) at the bottom (Hubbard 1974c, 169–71), which proved misleading. Then, exactly one day after the last 3rd South African A.C.C. lecture of 17 February 1961, without any explanation HCO Information Letters—a type of HCO previously unseen—began to appear on 18 February once Hubbard returned to England (Hubbard 1974d, 193). Additionally, this first issue titled *Magazines, Testing, PE* stated “Not HCO Original,” which indicated authorship by someone other than Hubbard.

The 2 March 1961 HCO Policy Letter *Automatic Evaluation Packet* stated, “all sheets and plan of the Auto Evaluation itself now exist in Johannesburg,” which further indicated Greene’s authorship. The *Automatic Evaluation Packet* unveiled a plan to release eight items, which not only mentioned item number “3. What is Scientology?” but also stated that item “No. 7 State of Release has already appeared in this form. (HCO Info Letter of February 22nd, 1961).” The 22 February 1961 HCO Info Letter not only did not exist, but created a major anachronism as it conflicted with the claims that these items would be written as per the *Automatic Evaluation Packet*: “As soon as I write these handouts mentioned in 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 they will appear as HCO Information Letters for your getting them letter-pressed [emphasis added]” (Hubbard 1974e, 172). Furthermore, the March 1961 *Ability* had first published “The State of Release” (Hubbard 1961b, 1), while an identical “State of Release” later appeared in the aforementioned 14 April 1961 *PE Handout*, thus contradicting the latter’s origination date, type and location claims of “No. 7 (The State of Release) has already come to you as part of a recent Info Ltr [the nonexistent one from 22 February 1961] and is repeated here.” Finally, item number “2. Form Letter giving IQ and Future” had already appeared in Greene’s 15 February 1961 *Evaluation Script*, although unnamed as such. Per all of the available data, all evidence would indicate that Peter Greene wrote the HCO Information letters and thus misattributed authorship and thus the C.E. title to Hubbard.

Conclusion

By all admissions and indicators, Hubbard wanted nothing to do with civil engineering from the outset and publicly repeated this statement. Had he claimed a B.S. C.E. then this would certainly have been fraud, but the allegation that he made such a claim appears to have no support upon closer examination. Although the C.E. might be interpreted as indicating a degree when paired with the honorary PhD, the comma between them clearly signified that these were two separate things: the PhD meant either an honorary or earned PhD, and the C.E. meant Civil Engineer, though not necessarily with a degree, but rather through experience and training. Yet in Hubbard’s lectures and writings, he recognized the misattributions of others, addressed these errors, admitted having bad grades

and poor attendance, having dropped out, and the various mistakes in his biographies.

Without any knowledge of his prior lectures, writings or source materials, it certainly could appear that he misled others on this issue, which likely prompted *A Brief Biography of L. Ron Hubbard* as a means of correction in the first place. Of course, its errors resulted from the unchecked prior errors, however, and only created more confusion and thus more misguided claims that Hubbard faked having graduated. Nevertheless, close inspection of all currently available evidence indicated that Hubbard never lied about his grades nor about having graduated with a civil engineering degree. The fact that no scholar, critic, supporter nor the Church of Scientology itself has thoroughly examined or explained these discrepancies merits reevaluations of several other various claims and criticisms regarding Hubbard, Dianetics, and Scientology. With this new information, one can better view the evolution of errors over the various series instead of attributing them to dishonesty, which only underscores his close friend Robert Heinlein's (1907–1988) famous razor: "Never attribute to malice that which is adequately explained by incompetence."

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