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Founder's son says Hubbard did not invent the E-meter

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Although Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard is credited with patenting the sect's E-meter, it is arguable whether the renowned author and adventurer actually invented the electronic device.

Over the past 34 years, Scientology literature has referred to the E-meter as the "Hubbard Professional Electrometer," and many people have assumed the 72-year-old science-fiction writer actually invented it.

However, Hubbard's estranged son—his father's disciple until a family falling out in 1953—recalls that a man named Volney G. Mathison actually invented the elaborate galvanometer and presented it to the elder Hubbard in late 1950.

"(Mathison) approached my father at a lecture and demonstrated it for him," recalled Hubbard's son, who changed his name

to Ronald DeWolf after forsaking his father and the sect in 1953.

"At first dear old dad wouldn't have anything to do with it," DeWolf said during a telephone interview from his Carson City, Nev., home. "But then he saw the profit potential in it and started using it."

DeWolf said some of Mathison's earlier E-meter models were "Rube Goldberg contraptions with huge dials and a dozen different switches. The first E-meters were large machines with (vacuum) tubes and were fairly expensive for the time."

On an Arcon Manufacturing Co. advertisement DeWolf has kept, a 1953 model E-meter listed at \$88.65 and plugged into an electrical socket. The ad also praised the "Minimeter," which was battery-operated and cost \$35.

And there was the old Model A, which was able to project a 10-foot image on a screen, according

to a newsletter called the "Journal of Scientology."

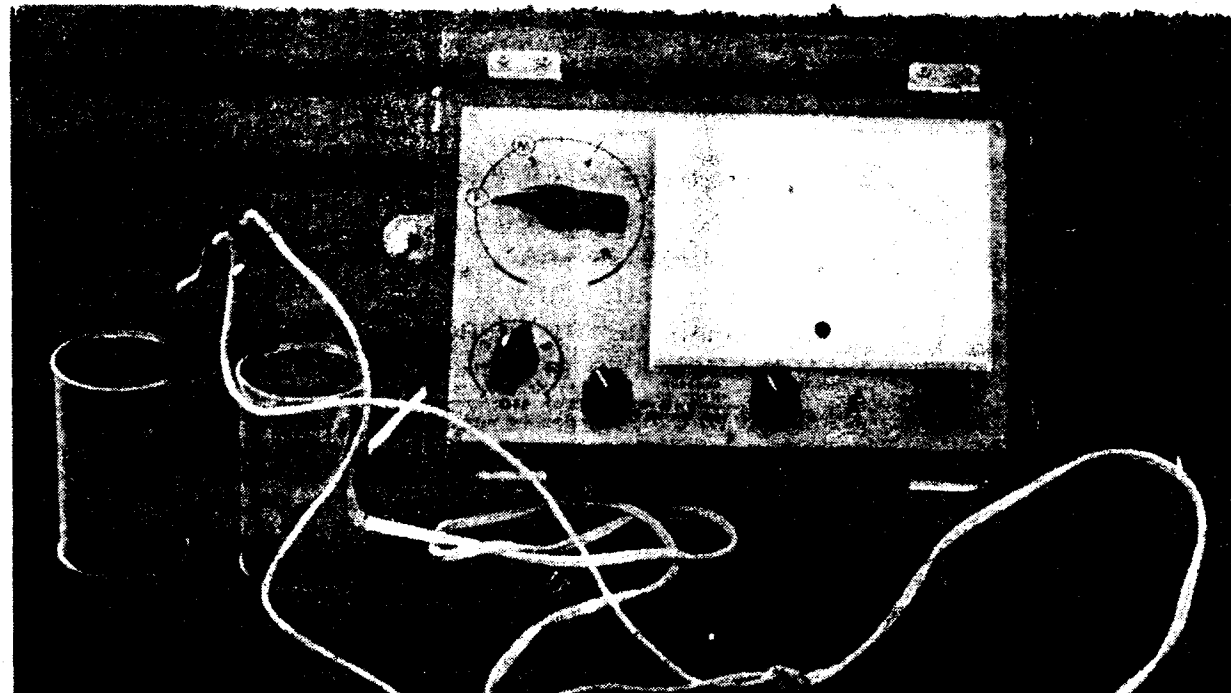
"They were quite fancy in those days," DeWolf recalled. "And I tried out almost all of the new ones."

"The only problem was Volney wouldn't give up his rights to the E-meter. And you must keep in mind that, from the very beginning, my father had to own and control everything associated with Dianetics."

DeWolf said Hubbard began buying the E-meters from Mathison and selling them to sect members, but in time became frustrated that the California inventor refused to relinquish the rights to the device.

"So all of a sudden, I think it was in 1953, (Hubbard) decided we didn't need the E-meter anymore and for about a year it was against the rules to use an E-meter."

But come 1954, Hubbard ran



An 1970s-era E-meter model. The meters have gone through numerous redesigns.

into a couple of "electronic experts" in Washington, D.C., where he had established The Founding Church of Scientology. The pair had invented a new solid-state E-meter to which Hubbard soon

gained patent rights.

DeWolf said the first Scientology E-meters were constructed in the basement of the sect's building. They cost about \$12.50 to manufacture and were sold for

\$66 to \$99.

In the years since, the E-meter has undergone numerous cosmetic and operational changes, and at least four different models are available today.