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Judge frees records of church founder

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — A judge has released from court custody records of reclusive Church of Scientology founder L. Ron Hubbard's World War II military service and medical treatment.

The records could show whether Hubbard, who has written that he was crippled and blinded as a result of war injuries, was actually injured. Attorneys for a woman suing the church contend he never served in combat and never was seriously injured.

Hubbard has written in church materials that he cured himself by using Scientology techniques he developed.

Multnomah County Circuit Judge Donald H. Londer ruled Friday that the records have become relevant to a fraud trial against the church.

His ruling means the records can be turned over to attorneys for the plaintiff, Julie Christofferson Titchbourne. The contents, however, will not be revealed until the defense ends its case in two or three weeks.

Ms. Titchbourne contends she was defrauded by the church and by Hubbard, a defendant in the case, during her involvement with Scientology in 1975 and 1976.

An Oregon court originally awarded her \$2 million in 1979, but the state Court of Appeals reversed the judgment in 1982 and ordered a new trial.

The church has raised freedom of religion as a defense to Ms. Titchbourne's fraud claim.