INTRODUCTION

"Canon". The very word brings up screams of panic and anguish from many *Star Trek* fans, particularly when you're referring to the original *Star Trek* series.

Over the decades, the franchise hasn't all that neat and tidy with dealing with these issues. This issue even shows up heavily when dealing with the starships presented on screen, even those of the *Enterprise*'s sister ships of the *Constitution* class.

The problem begins with the limited budget of the original series. Though other ships are often mentioned, few new ships are shown, and other Federation ships are all shown to be sister ships of the *Enterprise.*

Of those, only one, the *USS Constellation*, is shown clearly with a registry number. And that number, NCC 1017, is fairly problematic. If the ship is the *Constitution* class, and there's only twelve like them, how can there be a nearly 700 ship discrepancy between the *Constellation* and the *Enterprise*?

That's a little annoying, but it gets a lot worse, largely due to fan-speculation and a decided like of interest by the 'powers the be' over the registry issue and the thought of just what the other ships in the Constitution class are supposed to be.
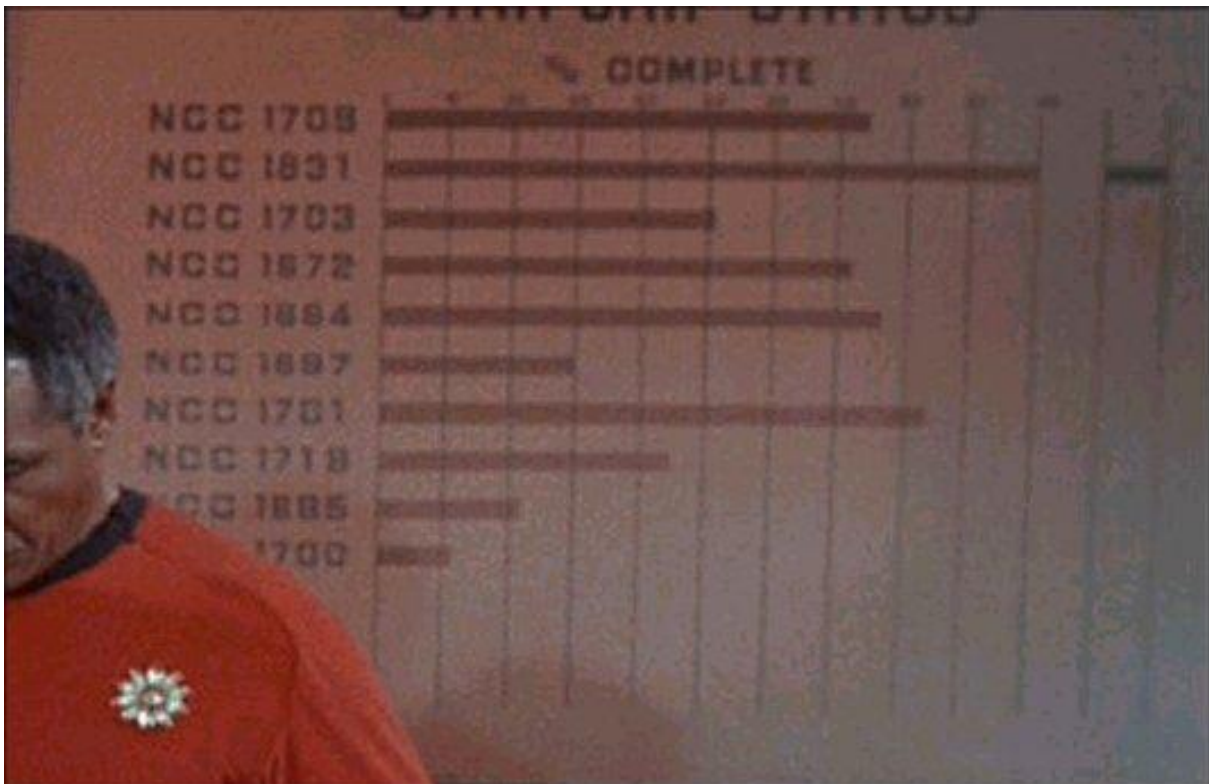
THE ULTIMATE COMPUTER

Through the original series we do see a number of other Constitution-class vessels around ('Connies'.) These include the four ships pitted against the Enterprise under the M-5's control. These are the *Excalibur, Lexington, Hood*, and *Potemkin*. Okay, so these are clearly Connies, though there's no registration given to them.

We see one more Connie on screen during the original series. This is the USS Defiant, another clearly connie-vessel. Sadly, the Defiant is shown flickering and glowing, so it's impossible to make out its registry from the episode.

COURT MARTIAL

We see a lot of registries suddenly come out with the episode 'Court Martial'. There's a repair status board showing numerous registration numbers (such as the Enterprise, which is undergoing repairs as well), though no names

nor ship classes are mentioned.

Originally, a drastic fan-assumption was made that not only were all these ships constitution-class vessels, but they were also all ships named in other episodes. There's absolutely zero evidence for this, of course, and actually gets to be extremely problematic.

Some of these work, but most of them don't. Breaking down the ten registries listed, we get the following list:

NCC 1709
This is the USS Lexington, which is shown as a Constitution class already, and seems to have pretty bad luck since the ship keeps getting knocked around so much, particularly by the M-5 computer.

NCC 1831
This has been 'officially' listed as the USS Intrepid, though there's absolutely no evidence to support this (and more to the contrary). Even if this is the Intrepid, there is absolutely zero reason to suppose that this is a Connie, and is probably a 'TOS-Era' Miranda type instead.

NCC 1703
This is the USS Hood, established as a 'Connie' already as well. Certainly no problems with this one.

NCC 1672
This has been given to the USS Exeter, though there's absolutely zero evidence to support this. Given that this number is *before* the Constitution itself, to actually be a Connie it would need to be rebuilt from another class of ship. More than likely, though, it's just a member of another class.

NCC 1894
There's no actual association with this one (though it's been misread as '1664'). This would almost certainly be a TOS Miranda class.

NCC 1697
This is associated officially with the USS Essex, for no real reason other than the Essex was a possible ship name. Again, the registry seems to indicate that this is *not* a Connie, but another class (same as the so-called 'Exeter'.)

NCC 1701
This is the USS Enterprise, and obviously *is* a Constitution-class ship. It's been known to pop up once or twice on the show.

NCC 1718
This is, more than likely, a Connie but no name has been given for it that's 'canon'.

NCC 1685
Again, this is another class like the 1672, et.. More than likely, this has been consistently mis-read as 1895 an arbitrarily made the 'Endeavour'. Pretty much wrong on all counts there.

This mistake sticks, though, when you get to STVI, and Operation Retrieve's list.

NCC 1700
This is the USS Constitution, the class ship. Obviously, it's a member of its own class. 1700 was never actually shown, but everyone and their mother accepts this as the registry of the ship.

OTHER STARSHIPS

Of course, there are ships that the above list doesn't yet cover. Some of these were 'mis-assigned' ships, going from the 'Court Martial' assumption and based on bad reads of the chart, others just don't really seem to fit.

NCC 1664
Assumed to be the USS Excalibur, this is based on a bad reading of the 'Court Martial Chart' from above, as well as a 'link up the ships we know with numbers we know' mindset. There's absolutely zero evidence that this really even is the Excalibur, and the registry suggests that it's not a Connie.

The Excalibur, however, is shown to be a Connie when she meets up with the M-5 driven Enterprise. It's pretty safe to assume that the 1664 registration is just flat-out wrong.

NCC 1710
This is listed as the USS Kongo in STVI, but primarily in artwork, and as a Connie. Given the registration, and the fact the name had been accepted for decades at this point, pretty safe to call this one as-is.

NCC 1764
This is listed as the 'Defiant', which is shown as a Connie as she disappeared into a dimensional warp of some sort. The registry doesn't appear on screen, however, and the number is from a 'conjecture list'.

The only real problem with the number is that it's pretty high for Kirk's 'only twelve like her' line. This registry would imply that there could be as many as 65 of them.

NCC 1647
This has been assigned to the USS Farragut, but there's absolutely no evidence that the ship name, registry, and class are at all related. NCC 1647, even if she is the Farragut, is likely another class than the Connie.

OPERATION RETRIEVE
Believe it or not, there isn't another solid rundown of official 'Connie' ships until the very end of the Kirk-era saga, within 'The Undiscovered Country'. In the 'Director's Cut' of the movie, released on video and DVD, there's a scene called 'Operation Retrieve' where Colonel West shows the president his plan for rescuing Kirk and McCoy.

There's about a 'bagillion' problems with this scene, though. First, all the ships shown have constitution-class markers, except the Excel-sior. It doesn't really stand to reason that only the excelsior is not a Connie, particularly when two other ships in this 'task force' have Excelsior-age registrations.

NCC 1657
This has been assigned to the USS Potemkin. The number was likely misread from the Court Martial panel. Again, the general 'lining up names and numbers with classes' mentality comes into play. Clearly, though, the registry would not be a Connie.

Unfortunately, the graphics for STVI do show the Potemkin with this registry, which puts it at odds with the Potemkin's very-Connie appearance up against the M-5. It's possible, though, that the Connie Potemkin was scrapped sometime after that encounter and was replaced with a 'refit' style ship of whatever the 1600's class may be.

The Connie-style Potemkin, however, has been given the number 1711 in other sources.

NCC 1717
This is the USS Yorktown, shown explicitly in STIV in space dock. Rodenberry has said this ship is the one that was re-christened to the USS Enterprise NCC-1701-A, but there are problems with that idea—most notably that it refutes an episode of ST:Voy where Tuvok indicates his father served on the Yorktown.

NCC 956
This is listed by name and number as the USS Eagle in the movie "Star Trek VI". It's given a 'Constitution class pin' to describe her, but then all the ships mentioned there are. Given the very low number, she's likely a Connie-era support ship, like a destroyer.

The Technical Manual mentions a Connie USS Eagle as NCC 1719. If you assume both to be true, you have to guess the 1719 was lost before STVI (and there is about twenty years to do so), and replaced with the NCC 956 support ship.

NCC 1371
This is the USS Republic, one of Kirk's previous assignments. There are numerous problems with this being a Connie, notably the number, and age. (The Republic would be very new for Kirk to serve on it, for it to be a Connie). Neither the registration number nor the class of ship is ever shown, however.

More than one source puts this down as a pre-Connie ship, with the official comic going one step farther and making her a member of the 'Baton Rouge' classes (and is also where the NCC 1371 came from).

NCC 1017
The is the USS Constellation, also known as 'lunch for the cornucopia of death'. This is one of those examples where the details on screen should have probably been dismissed as an error, with the model number obviously coming from a rearranged ERTL decal sheet.

This ship was a Connie, though, which begs some speculation. A common 'fan speculation' is that the Constellation was really a much older ship, rebuilt as a feasibility study to see if older ships could be brought up to the new class in a large refit. If you accept this, you could then argue that the 1600's registries may have been refit in the same way.

NCC 2032
This is the USS Challenger, from STVI's 'operation retrieve' list. The pin shown is that of a Connie, but the registry indicates an Excelsior-class vessel. (Though it's a little hard to believe that there are already nearly 50 Excelsiors between the class's launch in STIII and the 'end of the era' STVI'…)

NCC 2048
The USS Ahwahnee, like the Challenger, appears in Operation Retrieve with a connie pin, though the registry indicates another Excelsior vessel.

NCC 1895
This is listed as the USS Endeavor in Operation Retrieve and is given a 'connie' pin. Assuming that any connie-version of the Endeavor (listed elsewhere as NCC 1716) had been lost or retired in the meantime, this would be a new Miranda build or variant by the time of STVI.

NCC 1598
This is listed as the USS Scovil. The Operation:Retrieve pin indicates yet another connie, but the registration (and even the name) don't lend itself to that class. More than likely, it's another Connie-contemporary that survived the refit era.

NCC 1936
Another 'operation retrieve' designation, this belongs to the USS Springfield. The registration could possibly be late-model Connie build or variant, but not likely. It dances around the number used for the Bozeman of the Soyuz class, however (NCC 1941) and may be a member of that class of ship.

NCC 1692
This number appeared as the USS Helin in STVI, but there's no evidence to support that it's a Connie at all. Probably the same class as the proverbial 'Exeter' from before.

CANON REGISTRIES

Come the production of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, some effort was placed in making a single resource for 'canon' information. The most definitive work, the *Star Trek Encyclopedia*, written by Okuda, contains a vast wealth of information most relevant to the Picard-era of Trek.

For *Star Trek* itself, though, the guide starts to seriously fall apart. Many assumptions are made without too much explanation (such as the now infamous 'court martial' listing), largely to fill in some gaps and move on. It's pretty clear that detailing aspects of the original series

is far from Okuda's top priority.

Okuda gives us a 'canon' list of Connies based largely on faulty information outlined above. These include the following list:

USS CONSTITUTION NCC-1700
USS CONSTELLATION NCC-1017
USS DEFIANT NCC-1764
USS EAGLE NCC-956
USS ENDEAVOUR NCC-1895
USS ESSEX NCC-1697
USS EXCALIBUR NCC-1664
USS EXETER NCC-1672
USS FARRAGUT NCC-1647
USS HOOD NCC-1703
USS INTREPID NCC-1831
USS KONGO NCC-1710
USS LEXINGTON NCC-1709
USS POTEMKIN NCC-1657
USS REPUBLIC NCC-1371
USS YORKTOWN NCC-1717

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Again, we're given a lot of ships and registries that just don't make much sense with what's already known. We have to assume that, with the lone exception of the Constellation, that the ships falling outside of the 1700's just aren't conies. That gives us the following 'canon' list that works so far.

USS CONSTELLATION NCC-1017
USS CONSTITUTION NCC-1700
USS ENTERPRISE NCC-1701
USS HOOD NCC-1703
USS LEXINGTON NCC-1709
USS KONGO NCC-1710
USS YORKTOWN NCC-1717
USS DEFIANT NCC-1764

These seem to work fine, but we need to 'bring back' those ships we saw in the original series run and figure out where they really are. The ones remaining include the *Excalibur,* and *Potemkin*. The *Star Trek Technical Manual,* once regarded as official and definitive itself, gives numbers for the two remaining ships that don't conflict with the above list.

The other oddity is the conflict for the USS Defiant having the official number for NCC-1764. This isn't that problematic, but it would dramatically raise the total number of Connies during the original series run. Other sources give the registration as NCC-1717, but this overtly con-

flicts with the *USS Yorktown*. For some reason, the *Defiant* just happened to have a very high registration number for the time-period, perhaps indicating a new variant.

USS EXCALIBUR NCC-1705
USS POTEMKIN NCC-1711

This gives us only nine ships, though, and Kirk mentions a possible total of 12 or 13 (depending on interpretation). We can grab two more ships, the *Exeter,* and *Intrepid,* from the Technical Manual again, which have registries that slide in nicely to what we have already.

USS EXETER NCC-1706
USS INTREPID NCC-1708

This leaves a handful of ships not yet accounted for, which have been assumed to be members of the Constitution class. We still have the *Eagle*, *Endeavour, Farragut*, and *Republic* to deal with.

If we assume that the *USS Eagle* was once a Connie that was lost, and then a new support ship was brought in that had the NCC-956 registry for Operation:Retrieve, we can use the NCC-1719 registry from the Technical Manual yet again to fill in that slot.

The Endeavour too could be another Connie that was lost, with NCC-1716 from the Technical Manual, that was eventually replaced with a Miranda variant NCC-1895.

The *Farragut* and *Republic* vessels probably aren't Connies at all, and are both mentioned as previous assignments for Kirk. Both existing registries tend to support this, so there's little need to make a change here.

USS ENDEAVOUR NCC-1716
USS EAGLE NCC-1719

This now gives us 'Kirk's Fleet' at the time of the original series. The only real problem is that we've skipped a few registries, though we can assume that those ships remained 'under construction' or were delayed for a few years during the 'Five year mission'.

There's also an oddity in "The Motion Picture" where the radio chatter heard in the beginning of the film references the USS Merrimac, NCC-

1715. From the Technical manual, this is yet another connie, presumably built after the first five year mission. Fortunately, that slides into place nicely as well.

To fill out those ships, we can turn once more to the Technical Manual, and fill out the ships through NCC 1720 that don't conflict with what we've already got. This leaves only the conflict slots of 1702, 1704, and 1707.

USS BONHOMME RICHARD NCC-1712
USS MONITOR NCC-1713
USS HORNET NCC-1714
USS MERRIMAC NCC-1715
USS EXCELSIOR NCC-1718
USS LAFAYETTE NCC-1720

NIGGLING QUESTIONS

When it's all done, a couple of questions remain. First, there's a small gap of missing ships early in the registry. There's not a lot of canon or licensed sources that can fill the wholes without conflict. The role-playing games can help a little, however.

The *USS Bismark* is listed by FASA as NCC 1704. This fits in nicely without contradicting anything thus far, and the name is in keeping with the overall theme.

The Last Unicorn Games book lists a *USS Valiant* as a member of the class during the original series run, presumably replacing the older ship mentioned in the series, and can easily fit at 1707, though no registry number is actually given. (The game also mentions that the ship was refit to a science cruiser USS Asimov, but it doesn't really fit the theme of the class.)

Lastly, for 1702, we'll revisit the *Farragut*, as dictated by the Technical Manual. Here we have to assume that this ship was not Kirk's former vessel, but a new one to replace the lost NCC-1647. This works fine enough, if you assume that the 1702, for some reason, wasn't christened until well after other ships of the class were.

This leaves only the Constellation and Defiant out of sync with the other ships. If we assume that the Constellation was a refit attempt that proved too expensive to do again (perhaps a remade *Ranger class* vessel, whose registries

dance around that number), and that the Defiant was part of another build order that came after the first ships, we get a pretty good list.

There's one last 'niggling point' for a potential connie from the TNG episode 'Where Silence Has Lease', which gives the USS Yamato a registry of NCC 1305-E. This would make the original a generation prior to Kirk's time, and likely would mean that the NCC 1305-A was, in fact, a TOS connie. There's not really a problem with this either, it would just mean that the 'honorific' registration scheme went to a ship before the legendary Enterprise.

USS CONSTELLATION NCC-1017
USS YAMATO NCC-1305-A
USS CONSTITUTION NCC-1700
USS ENTERPRISE NCC-1701
USS FARRAGUT NCC-1702
USS HOOD NCC-1703
USS BISMARK NCC-1704
USS EXCALIBUR NCC-1705
USS EXETER NCC-1706
USS VALIANT NCC-1707
USS INTREPID NCC-1708
USS LEXINGTON NCC-1709
USS KONGO NCC-1710
USS POTEMKIN NCC-1711
USS BONHOMME RICHARD NCC-1712
USS MONITOR NCC-1713
USS HORNET NCC-1714
USS MERRIMAC NCC-1715
USS ENDEAVOUR NCC-1716
USS YORKTOWN NCC-1717
USS EXCELSIOR NCC-1718
USS EAGLE NCC-1719
USS LAFAYETTE NCC-1720
USS DEFIANT NCC-1764

Of course, the list's overall 'canon' is more than debatable, but, overall, it makes sense and fits the scheme a lot more nicely than the 'official' references available.

By the time of the motion pictures, a lot of the 1721-1763 gap would likely be filled, and the class's final runs would start pushing it near the 1800 registries of the Miranda-type frigates. It's also possible that new builds of Connies continued through most of the Miranada's lifespan, serving a 'Class II' role for the fleet. (A couple of Connies are shown in battle-wreckage during the TNG series).