

Messages from the Corrections **Box**

Insights from an NSDAR Corrections Genealogist

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Distillation of the Presentation presented at News You Can Use,
Continental Congress
27 June 2023

Key Topics:

- *What is the Corrections Team, and what purpose do they serve within the Office of the Registrar General?*
- *Who messages the Corrections Team?*
- *What types of questions are received by the Corrections Team, and what are the standard responses?*

Who (or what) is the Corrections Team?

The Corrections Team (commonly referred to as “the Red Team”) consists of four to five senior Staff Genealogists. These individuals have a particular affinity for the more challenging aspects of genealogical research and analysis, particularly the types of issues handled by NSDAR Staff Genealogists. The current Corrections Team consists of four Staff Genealogists.

On a day-to-day basis, we act as advisors for our fellow Staff Genealogists, weighing in on complex service and lineage issues. We also proofread, approve, and check applications and supplementals which involve DATA CFs. “DATA CF” stands for “DATA in Corrections File.” A DATA CF is an open, digital compilation of records pertaining to issues identified with a Patriot Ancestor’s service. They often include research and writeups created by NSDAR Staff Genealogists. Some of the most common DATA CF codes you may see on a patriot’s profile are FAMPCS (for *Future Applicants Must Prove Correct Service*), FAMP/C (for *Future Applicants Must Prove lineage of Child*), FAMPC/L (for *Future Applicants Must Prove Correct Lineage*), or EL (for *Error in Lineage*). Each of these codes help to explain the issue identified on a particular Patriot Ancestor’s profile or on a particular application or supplemental. Coding papers and patriots can help Registrars and Prospective Members when they are preparing papers, as well as help Staff Genealogists during the verification process.

Corrections Genealogists also help to maintain our database of 150,576 NSDAR patriots and 1,043,569 members records—and counting! As you can imagine, typographical errors are common in a database this extensive, so Corrections Genealogists help to maintain the accuracy of some of the public- and member-facing information associated with our members and Patriot Ancestors.

However, we don’t just work with our fellow NSDAR Staff Genealogists—we also frequently work with our Membership and individuals outside of our organization. If an individual or NSDAR Chapter wishes to mark the grave of an NSDAR patriot with an NSDAR-approved marker and wishes to update the previously verified biographical or service-related information associated with the Patriot Ancestor, it is the responsibility of the Corrections Team to help ensure that the marker best reflects the information known about the said patriot.

Corrections Team members also receive, process, and maintain all corrections correspondence related to an existing Patriot Ancestor, previously verified applications, etc. If an interested party (which could be a DAR member, SAR member, Staff Genealogist, or member of the public) notices an error with a Patriot Ancestor’s GRS

profile or an existing member application or supplemental, they are welcome to mail the Corrections Team a coversheet explaining the issue, along with supporting documentation proving the correct information. Upon receipt, the coversheet and corresponding documentation are processed digitally, then held until a paper involving the Patriot Ancestor and/or lineage in question is received. At that time, the submitted records are examined, and all necessary changes are made.

One of the Corrections Teams' most important responsibilities is fielding phone calls and emails from members and parties outside the organizations who are interested in our database and our Correction Files. The Corrections Team has their own email address: rgcorrections@dar.org. The most common questions, concerns, and general messages we receive at this email address will make up the remainder of this presentation.

Who contacts the Corrections Team?

Typically, we receive the highest number of emails and phone calls from individuals associated with NSDAR—this includes Members, Prospective Members, Registrars and Regents, Staff Genealogists, etc. However, we also maintain a congenial relationship with SAR membership and SAR Staff Genealogists, who often reach out with questions about our database and DATACFs. We are also contacted by individuals who are not associated with either NSDAR or SAR—these could be hobbyist genealogists, historians, or laypeople who are interested in a particular Patriot Ancestor.

What are some of the most frequently asked questions?

In preparing this presentation, four and a half years of archived emails received at the rgcorrections@dar.org email address were reviewed in hopes of identifying some of the most common types of questions, concerns, and requests fielded by the Corrections Team. Therefore, all the messages included in this document are based on real emails—however, they have been carefully anonymized, with any potentially identifying information altered to preserve the integrity of the email's author.

The purpose of this presentation is not to mock any email's author, or poke fun at the sort of question asked; instead, the Corrections Team hopes that by providing answers to the most common questions we receive, we can help provide a guideline or template for future question-askers to follow.

Email #1:

Need to see DATA CF

I see that AARON SMITH A104533 is coded FAMP/C for lineage issues.
I would like to read the genealogist's summary of this issue.

-Robert Brown

Email #2:

Hello,

I'm trying to verify my lineage and hit a dead end with documentation. I saw on a previous paper (NN 987654) that an analysis was used to link generations 5-6.

Can I see this analysis? It may be able to help me verify my own lineage.

Thank you!
Jenny Ralph Miller

Response to Emails #1 and #2:

It is understandable that a Registrar or Prospective Member would want to see our Corrections Files, or to have a copy of an analysis which pertains to a particular lineage. After all, these documents could contain important information which could help in the creation of a New Member Application or Supplemental.

However, DATA CFs and analyses are not shared outside of the NSDAR genealogy department. The reasons for this policy are manifold: firstly, these records are propriety documents, meaning they belong to the Staff Genealogists, Office of the Registrar General, and NSDAR.

Also, these records are considered to be works in progress. For instance, a patriot may be coded FAMPCS if we are unable to identify qualifying service belonging to a particular man. However, in the following years, a Prospective Member, Member, or Registrar may be able to locate and submit proof of service which would allow the previously closed patriot to be reopened to applicants again. Therefore, DATA CFs are considered open,

ever-changing files which can be updated according to new information, documentation, NSDAR policy, etc.

Finally, DATACFs and analyses can sometimes involve discussions of sensitive information. The Staff Genealogists and employees of the Office of the Registrar General take the privacy of the NSDAR membership very seriously and prioritize the confidentiality of any potentially sensitive information regarding a member's lineage.

However, Corrections Staff is more than willing to summarize the contents of a non-confidential DATACF, as well as give the sources the genealogist used reach his or her research conclusion(s).

Email #3:

What does it mean when a patriot is coded DATACF?

Good morning, Corrections Staff!

I am preparing a supplemental through Peter Quick A093080. He is coded DATACF. Do I need to be worried about his service or his lineage?

**Thank you for your help,
Jane Smith**

Response to Email #3:

Using Peter Quick A093080 as an example, let's investigate his profile and see what his DATACF code could mean.

When there is any confusion surrounding a Patriot Ancestor's code, the first place to look is the comment listed on the GRS profile. This is the comment on the profile of Peter Quick A093080:

COMMENTS

1) SEE DATACF FOR DISCUSSION OF MILITARY AND PATRIOTIC SERVICE. 6/2019.

As you can see, the comment does not give any specific actions a potential applicant through this line “must” do—for instance, a patriot coded FAMPCS (a service code) may have a comment that says “FUTURE APPLICANTS **MUST** PROVE RESIDENCE AND SERVICE.” Similarly, a patriot coded FAMP/C (a lineage code) may have the comment, “FAMPCL – FUTURE APPLICANTS **MUST** PROVE THE MOTHER OF THE PATRIOT’S CHILDREN.” Because the comment on the profile of Peter Quick A093080 does not include these types of commands relating to the acceptability of his service or lineage, it’s a pretty good sign that there are no known issues with this patriot that would prevent a successful application.

When you are confused about the meaning of the code, another good thing to try is clicking the blue hyperlink “WHY?” next to the code:

QUICK, PETER

Ancestor #: A093080

Notice: **DATA IN THE CORRECTION FILE** (WHY?) (DATACF)

Clicking the “WHY” button next to a patriot coded DATACF brings up the following explanation:

Data in the correction file

This indicates that the Genealogy Office has a corrections file on this patriot. The line is currently open to membership. The DATACFs are the working files of the corrections team and are NOT available to the public due to the *sometimes* sensitive nature of the contents. There are a variety of reasons why a file may have been created.

- The line may have been closed at one point but then reopened.
- In some cases the DATACF could have been retained in order to have a paper trail explaining why the line was closed then reopened.
- A DATACF may also include information on several men of the same name or on an extended family with several patriots.

As you can see, the DATACF code is benign, and does not mean that the patriot is closed to new applications.

Email #4:

EL code explanation

I was looking at one of my patriots and saw that a very recent paper was coded EL. The comment on his record was very vague. **Why was this single paper coded EL?** Is there something wrong with my lineage?

Thank you,
Karen Carmichael

Response to Email #4:

While we usually try to be as descriptive as possible with the comments on the profiles of coded ancestors, sometimes discretion is necessary. This is particularly important when a sensitive error in lineage is reported by an NSDAR member.

In the wake of the commercially available autosomal DNA tests, the previously unquestioned biological paternity of many people (NSDAR members included) can be proven to be inaccurate. If a member discovers that the parent, grandparent, etc. listed on their application and/or supplemental(s) is not their biological relative, they can inform the Corrections Team so their papers can be flagged accordingly. As mentioned in our previous discussion regarding our privacy policy toward DATACFs and analyses, we care deeply for the confidentiality of our members' records; therefore, we will include details on the public-facing GRS page of a patriot when there is a highly specific error in lineage contained to a single member's papers.

In summary: if you notice that only one member's application and/or supplementals are coded, and if the comment regarding the lineage error appears to be intentionally vague, then it is probably a lineage issue specific to that one member's recent family line.

It is also important to note that we will never penalize a woman for an application or supplemental submitted in good faith, even if she later learns that there was a previously unknown error in the lineage on these papers. A woman's status as a member in good standing will not be impacted if a genetic test reveals that she has a biological parent or grandparent other than those listed on her previously submitted paper(s).

Email #5:

Will this reopen my patriot?



Patriots, Soldiers, Spies.pdf
2 MB



Military service in VA.pdf
859 KB



My patriot was recently coded FAMPCS because you are questioning his service... I've attached some service records I found online. Do these records resolve this issue?

Best,
Frances Hamilton

Response to Email #5:

Unfortunately, due to the risk of malware, we have been advised by our in-house IT staff that we cannot download or open any attachments sent via email, nor can we follow links to outside websites imbedded in emails.

However, if you have records which you believe could resolve a patriot's existing corrections code, we encourage you to send the information to us via Corrections Mail, as I discussed earlier in the presentation. The printed copies of the sources you would like to have reviewed, along with an explanatory coversheet, can be mailed to the following address:

Attn: Corrections Genealogist
Office of the Registrar General
National Society Daughters of the American Revolution
1776 D St. NW
Washington, DC 20006-5303

Due to the very large backlog of work processing and verifying our collection of pending new member applications and supplementals, we are unable to immediately review new corrections materials. We also cannot pre-verify the acceptability of any sources, since all sources relating to a patriot's residence and service must be examined in the greater context of the patriot's biographical information (their age at the time of the proposed service, their date and place of both birth and death, their spouse, children, and other

family relationships, etc.). For these reasons, we will hold all submitted corrections mail until the next time a paper is received through the patriot and/or lineage and question.

Email #6:

WRONG ancestor name!

Corrections team,

All of my ancestors records only ever list him as "GEORGE SMYTHE" - however, you put him in your database as "GEORGE SMITH." **This surname is incorrect!** Please change it back!

Norma Smythe Douglas

Response to Email #6:

Since the Ancestor Database in the Genealogical Research System is the working database of the Registrar General's Office, there are certain conventions that we use in our Database to organize our work. One of these conventions is the practice of organizing patriots with similar surname spellings under one "standard" spelling.

Using Ms. Norma Smythe Douglas's fictional email as an example, let's look at the way we have the alternate spellings of "Smith" organized in our database:

Smith

SCHMIDT,

SMYTH,

SMYTHE

Three variant surname spellings (Schmidt, Smyth, and Smythe) all redirect to the one, standard spelling of “Smith.” Using Standardized surname spellings has several benefits—for example, we can more easily sort, find, and organize our patriot database if only one variation of a surname is used. It also helps to prevent the establishment of multiple GRS profiles for “different” men that claim identical service.

As family historians, we can feel understandably possessive of our forefathers and foremothers. We only want the best and most “correct” information to be used and presented to the world. This can be particularly true for DAR members and the ways their Patriot Ancestors are presented in our Ancestor Database. This includes the ways in which we choose to spell their given and surnames. We do not intend for our use of standard spellings to be a commentary on the “correct” way a name should be spelled, or the “true” representation of the way a patriot self-identified; it is merely a tool that our staff members use to locate and organize patriots. For this reason, the established spellings may not be changed in the database.

However, our members are encouraged to use whatever surname spellings they desire on their insignia, in their chapter publications, etc.

Email #7:

Hello,

I included my city of birth on my application based on my birth certificate. The staff genie checked the location off.

However, when you search for my paper in the descendants database this information doesn't show up.

Will you fix my paper in the descendants search?

Thanks,
Lori Jones

Response to Email #7:

While the Corrections Team manages the Ancestor Database and will correct any errors brought to our attention by Staff Genealogists and Members, we do not manage the Descendants Database. Any typographical errors noticed in the Descendants Database can be forwarded to:

darprojects@nsdar.org

Any changes made to the Descendants listing can take anywhere from several days to a week to become visible on the public site.

It is also important to note that our Descendants Database is transcribed entirely by volunteers. They are told to transcribe the information exactly as it appears on the paper; however, due to human error, mistakes do happen. The transcription process is also a slow one, so it could take a year or more for a recently verified paper to become visible in the Descendants Database.

Email #8:

Dear Corrections Genealogist,

I included a typo in the name of one of our recent members on page 1 of the application—her last name is actually “Thompson,” but I spelled it “Tompson.” I am hoping I can have her membership record updated to include the correct spelling.

Sincerely,
Jamie Gordon
Chapter Regent

Response to Email #8:

Staff Genealogists are not permitted to make any changes to page one of a New Member Application or Supplemental. We also do not make changes to membership records—including address and name changes—which took place after the application for membership was approved.

These types of requests should be addressed to the Office of the Organizing Secretary General. Their department has multiple email addresses, which are listed on the following page:



MemberServices@dar.org – name changes, address changes, transfers, death notices, passwords, Membership inquiries, Member for Member program, Resignations, Tenure Certificates.



InsigniaApproval@dar.org – ordering of insignia and pins.



Dues@dar.org - Dues, Reinstatements, Life Membership



NBMRequests@dar.org – National Board of Management Request, National/State Officer Updates



CongressRedCred@dar.org – Congress registration, credentials.



ChapterServices@dar.org – EIN letters, Charters, Chapters Organizing, Disbandments, Merges, Chapter Officer Changes

One of the most important responsibilities of a Corrections Genealogists is to answer corrections-related questions for our members. We want our members to be well-informed, but even more importantly, we want them to feel comfortable enough with us to reach out to us at rgcorrections@dar.org with any questions or concerns with the corrections made to the profiles of their Patriot Ancestors.

Thank You!