Finding and Fixing Tree Inconsistencies
by Wayne Shepheard
Legacy Family Tree Webinars – May 2025
Handout

We all know the problems that can arise when assembling family trees, especially those in the public realm. Often, they revolve around the addition of the wrong people which results in errors in whole family lines.

Other mistakes include confusing people with the same or similar name. I have done that. With perseverance and a little luck, I found more accurate information and deleted the people wrongly included originally.

What this talk focuses on are the honest mistakes we might make in recording data, how we can recognize them and what we can do to correct them. These we can put down as Tree Inconsistencies.

Or Bent trees.

My Own Tree

I have what I always thought was a well-constructed family tree. Currently it has almost 9,800 individuals in over 3,000 families. I use **Legacy Family Tree Genealogy Software** – version 10 – as my basic system.

https://legacyfamilytree.com/

I keep it on my hard drive where I have easy access with my desktop PC. Sorry, but I cannot do what I want to do with my family history stuff on my cell phone.

Copies of my tree, or parts of it, have been uploaded to a few websites including *Ancestry* and *MyHeritage*, as a means of connecting with other relatives who may have information on family lines I have not researched. I also use the online versions in conjunction with matching people using DNA analyses.

Putting the tree online was where it got attention about some of the inconsistencies I had not realized existed.

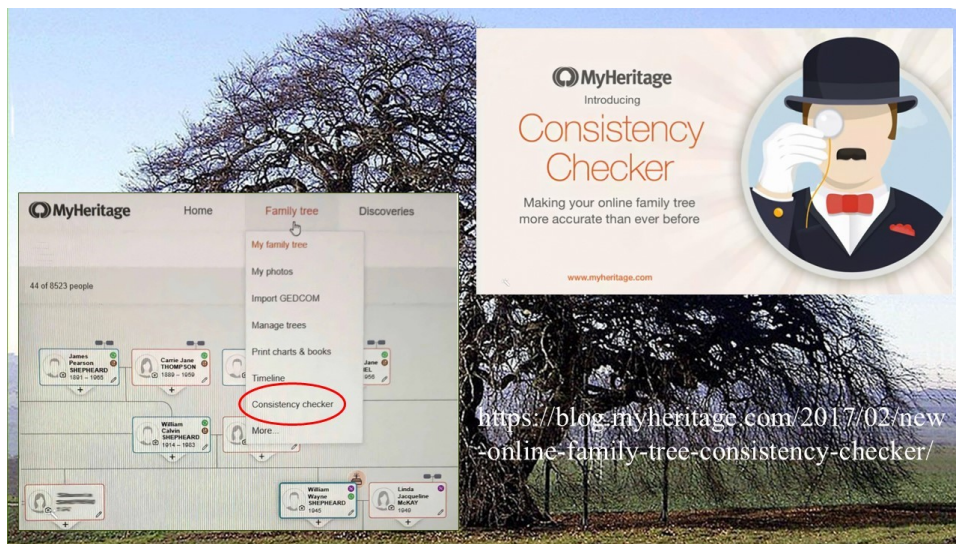*MyHeritage* Consistency Checker

https://www.myheritage.com/

The most important part of constructing a family tree is in ensuring that the information included is accurate. *MyHeritage* has software, called **Consistency Checker**, that will analyze a tree and deliver a report on any problems it might find.

https://blog.myheritage.com/2017/02/new-online-family-tree-consistency-checker/

A similar analysis tool, named Tree Consistency Checker, has actually been available for many years as part of the **Family Tree Builder** genealogy program, another free download piece of software from MyHeritage.

https://www.myheritage.com/family-tree-builder

Access to the analysis section is through the Family Tree tab where you have uploaded and stored your tree data, conveniently called Consistency Checker.
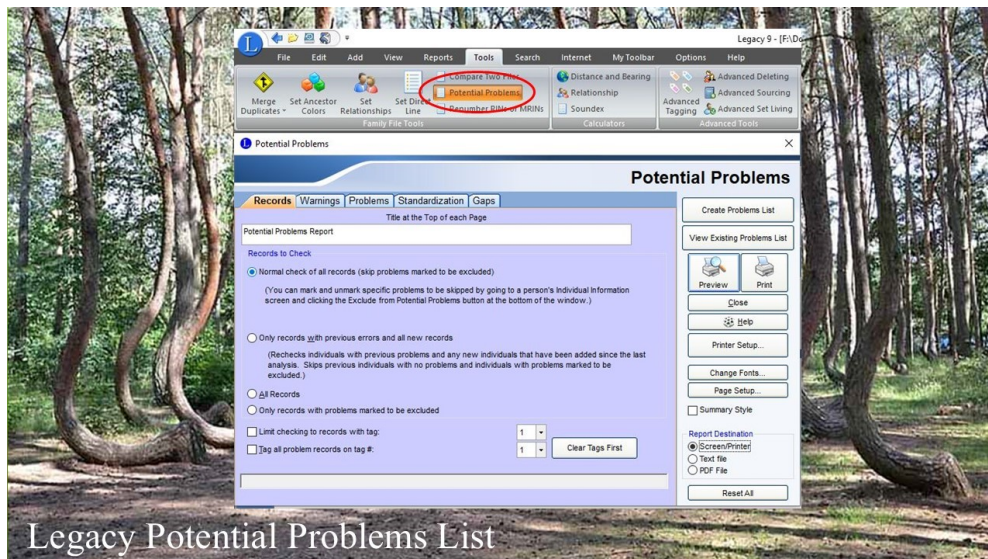
MyHeritage sends emails that state when there are inconsistencies in tree data. That was my introduction to the software – or perhaps a reminder of something that I had ignored.

While I thought my tree was pretty good, and that I had all my ancestors accurately listed, it turns out that, according to the latest assessment, there are 497 inconsistencies!

Legacy Family Tree Genealogy Software

https://legacyfamilytree.com/

Under the Tools tab in Legacy, there is a site where you can review problems with records and even create a record to save or print. I had the program produce a Potential Problems Report, which is what it is called in Legacy.

Legacy Potential Problems List

This one looked even worse for my tree as there were 1,058 records noted as having problems.

Family Tree Analyzer

https://ftanalyzer.com/

There are several programs available that will analyze your tree for inconsistencies or errors.
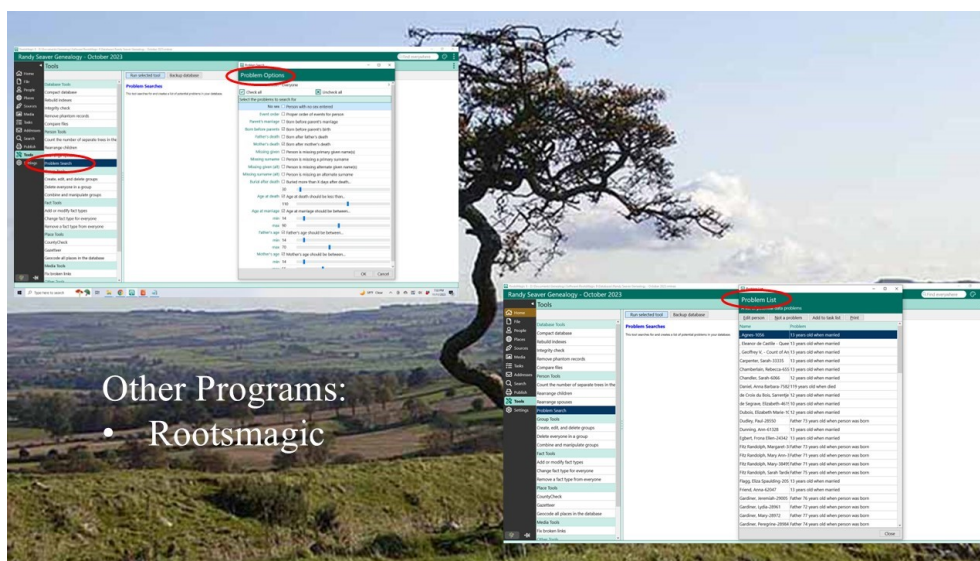
One is Family Tree Analyzer which is downloadable for free. This program has 32 categories for which analyses can be made. You can check all of them or just some. Just upload a GEDCOM of your tree and let it do its work.

RootsMagic

https://rootsmagic.com/

RootsMagic has a Problem Search in their Tools menu. The user can select which problems to investigate. The image on the left shows a list of problems or options available. The image on the right shows the results of the search from the options selected on the left image. The final report can be printed or saved.
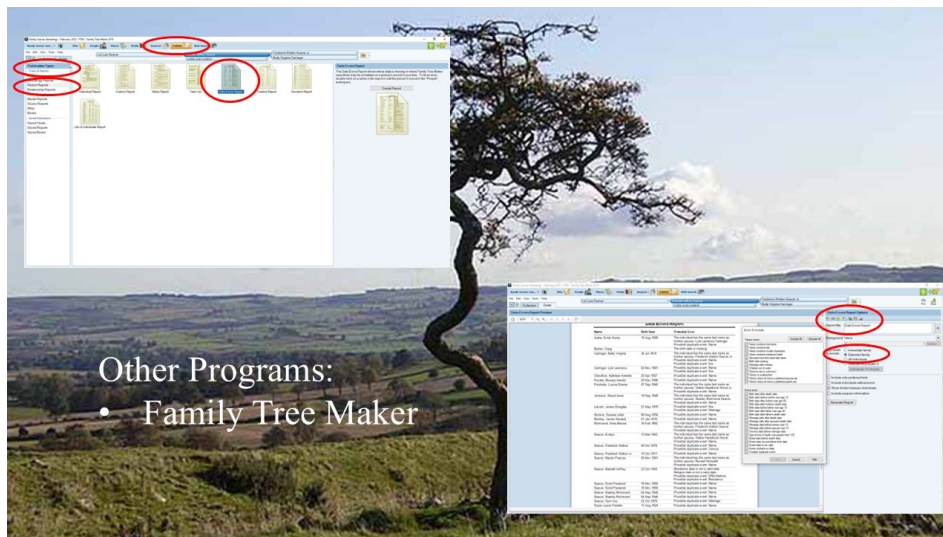
Family Tree Maker

https://treemakerhelp.online/

Family Tree Maker has a Data Errors Report option in their Publish workspace. The user can select which problems to investigate, and which persons in the tree to investigate. The image on the left shows the list of options in the Publish workspace. On the right image of the Data Error Report, the insert window shows the list of data errors to include, in this case all of them.

These can be accessed with the small Family Tree Maker icon in the top right of the screen. The results of the search are shown in the large window. The report can be "published" or saved in the program folder.

Ancestry

https://www.ancestry.com/

Ancestry has a new selection of what they call Ancestry Pro Tools to help with creating charts and reports, searching and sorting people, adding maps and checking trees. https://support.ancestry.com/s/article/Tree-Checker-in-Ancestry-Pro-Tools?language=en_US

Summary

Most genealogical software programs, at least like the good ones illustrated here, will have the capacity to find inconsistencies. If yours does not, then you should be looking at changing programs.

Having accurate data is very important and, of course, using the program to analyze your information is highly recommended. You don't want to end up with a severely bent family tree.

So, what should you do?

- First, and perhaps most importantly, review problems as they may be defined in your genealogy program.
- If you have a tree on MyHeritage, use their Consistency Checker.
- Download Family Tree Analyzer (it's free) and see what it says.
- Or look for other programs that will analyze family tree data.

Or do all the above.

No one program, at least in my experience, catches all the mistakes so it can be very helpful to look at the same data with different investigative tools.

An Internet search for Family Tree Inconsistencies will bring up some options along with some videos to watch.