

Tune Up Your Family Tree with the MyHeritage Consistency Checker By James L. Tanner



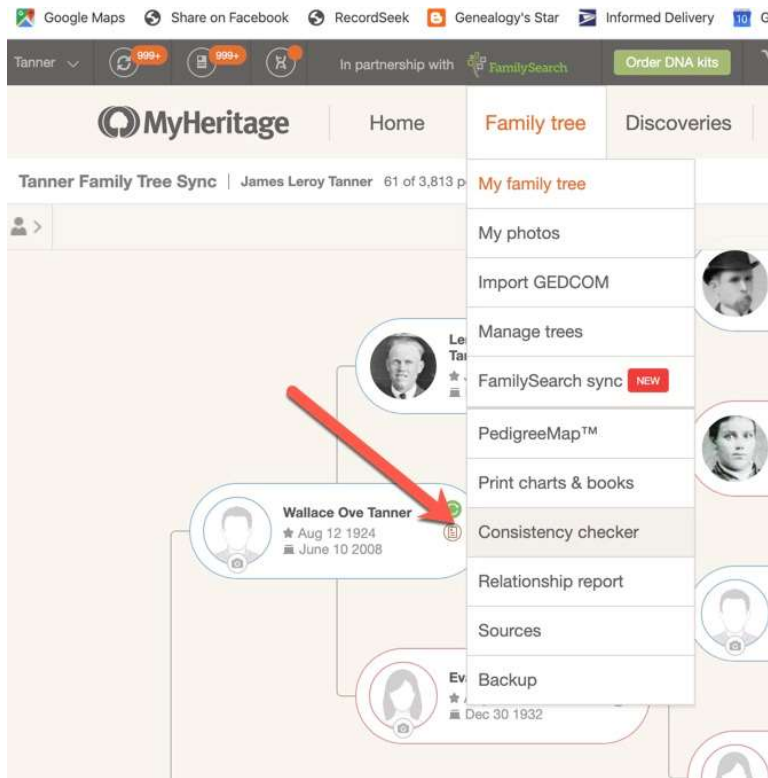
One of the major challenges of all genealogists is to maintain a high level of documentation and consistency in their ancestral lines. Fortunately, we now have a powerful "tune-up" tool to accomplish this task. It called the [MyHeritage.com](https://www.myheritage.com) Consistency Checker.

With my family tree on [MyHeritage.com](https://www.myheritage.com), all of the thousands of my ancestors are being searched for consistency Here is a short description of the Consistency Checker from a MyHeritage blog post entitled, "[Keep Your Family Tree Accurate With the Tree Consistency Checker.](#)"

The Consistency Checker employs 37 different checks on the family tree data, ranging from the obvious (e.g., a person was born before their parent, or when the parent was too young to be a parent) to the subtle and hard to find (e.g., a person was tagged in a photo and the photo is dated before the person's birth; or two full siblings were born 5 months apart, which is impossible).

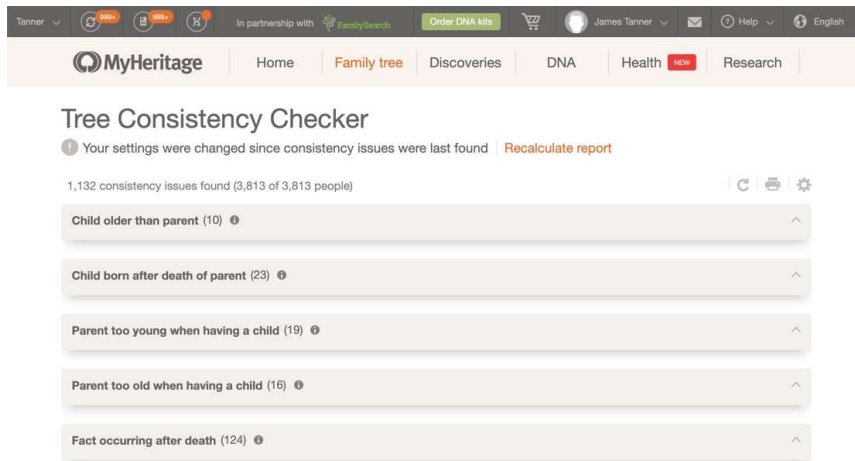
Some of the issues it finds are factual mistakes (e.g. wrong birth date entered), some are bad practices (e.g. birth year entered as 22 instead of 1922, or prefix entered as part of the first name instead of in the prefix field), some are warnings about possible data entry errors (e.g. a woman's married surname was apparently entered as her maiden surname, or a place was entered that looks suspiciously like a date) and some are inconsistencies you may want to fix, such as references to the same place name with two different spellings. Any issue you feel is fine and should intentionally not be addressed can easily be marked to be ignored and will not be reported again.

The Consistency Checker is located in the expanded Family Tree menu. Your first click will reveal this dropdown menu. A follow-up click on the "More" link will extend the menu and let you click on the Consistency checker selection.

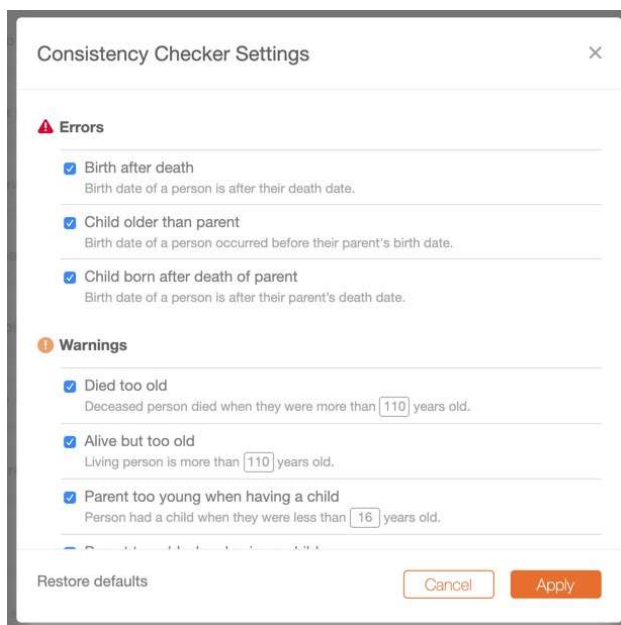


The Consistency Checker was introduced back in February of 2017 and had an immediate impact on my own family tree. Much of the original information that is the basis of my own family tree has been inherited from a number of my ancestral family historians. Many of the entries were made without recording the original sources and consequently, there are numerous errors. The number of errors is currently over 1100 with about 3,813 people and this number came from only 25 of the 37 total categories of inconsistencies. In my case, this can seem overwhelming but if your tree is relatively small and you have carefully only added information substantiated and supported by historical or reliable family records, then the Consistency Checker may not have as much of an impact on your family tree as it does on mine and you may not have nearly as many issues to resolve.

For ease in seeing the categories, there is an arrow button on the right-hand side of each category title that will let you expand or collapse each category of inconsistency. In this screenshot, I have closed all of the categories for convenience.



The Gear icon in the top right corner allows you to access the Consistency Checker Settings (shown below) and include or exclude any of the categories in a check list. The issues are separated or grouped into three different categories: Errors, Warnings, and Notices.



You should carefully examine the categories of the inconsistencies before getting too discouraged with the numbers. Of course, every time you work on correcting any of the inconsistencies, the number of consistency issues changes. For this reason, it is also a good idea to recalculate the report from time to time, especially if you are working on your family tree and correcting the entries. It will take longer to recalculate the report than to load the last report that was produced. The total number of inconsistencies will also depend on how many of the categories you select.

Depending on the number of people in your family tree and the speed of your internet connection, you may have to wait a while to see the total. However, you can stop the scan any time by clicking on the “X” icon in the top right corner.

My seemingly large number of inconsistencies is centered in four categories:

- Fact occurring after death
- Tagged in photo after death
- Siblings with the same first name
- Inconsistent last name spelling

A few other categories also have relatively high numbers:

- Fact occurring before birth
- Disconnected from tree
- Inconsistent place name spelling

If you find that the marked inconsistency does not apply because of some specific circumstance, such as last names in a family or line that really do have inconsistent spelling, then you can mark the items by clicking a “X” and they will no longer be considered inconsistent.

In many cases with specific inconsistencies, you can correct the situation right from the Consistency checker without opening your family tree and looking at the individual. For example, if the inconsistency is “Alive but too old,” you can mark the person deceased quickly and directly in the Consistency checker.

While you are reviewing the issues, you will note that Errors are issues that are obviously incorrect. These issues are marked with a red warning icon. Warnings, on the other hand, are situations where the data is merely unusual or not expected. Warnings are marked with an orange exclamation mark. Notices, marked by a gray square icon, may be a problem but are not as likely to a mistake.

Each of the issues in the Consistency Checker are interactive and you can move your cursor over the different parts to see the links directly to the individuals involved or to the part of your family tree that will allow you to review and correct the issue if appropriate.

Some of the issues raised may only be resolved after extensive research. If there are any pending Record Matches or Smart Matches™, it is a good idea to incorporate any newly discovered information at the time the issue is observed. The information provided by the Record Matches or Smart Matches™ may provide the information needed to correct the error or rectify the inconsistency.

If you use the Consistency Checker from time to time and focus in on the types of errors, warnings, and notices that appear, if any, you will soon become accustomed to correcting your own errors before they appear in the report. But in my family tree, the issues found act as a reminder that there are serious historical issues with my inherited information that my take years of research to finally resolve.