THE FAMILY HISTORY FOUNDATION

Verify Ancestry Hints: The 1 "Red Flag" Checklist Every Gallant Genealogist Needs
(https://familyhistoryfoundation.com/blog/verify-ancestry-hints/)

—THE RED FLAG CHECKLIST—

□ **RED FLAG #1: The "Impossible Chronology" Trap**

The Vibe Check: Does the math actually work?

- Is a mother giving birth before age 13 or after age 50?

- Is a father siring a child *after* his death date?

- Is a child getting married before age 14 without parental consent noted?

- **Action:** Do the math. If the dates don't align with biological reality, reject the hint.

□ **RED FLAG #2: The "Location Leap"**

The Vibe Check: Did they teleport across the country?

- Your ancestor was a poor farmer in Ohio in 1850. This hint is a death record for 1852 in London, England.

- Do you have proof of this migration (a ship manifest, a land deed in the new location)?

- **Action:** People moved in the 1800s, but rarely without reason or a paper trail. If you can't explain the journey, don't accept the destination.

□ **RED FLAG #3: The "Same Name" Syndrome**

The Vibe Check: Is this just someone else with a common name?

- The hint matches "John Smith" born in 1840.

- Does the spouse's name match? Do the children's names match?

- **Action:** A name match is not a person match. You need at least two, preferably three, data points to confirm identity (e.g., Name + Birth Year + County OR Name + Spouse Name + Occupation).

□ RED FLAG #4: Record Type Discrepancy

The Vibe Check: Does the timeline make historical sense?

- Are you seeing a Marriage License dated *after* a Census record shows them already married and living together?

- Are you seeing a military draft registration for someone who should be 70 years old?

- **Action:** Look at the *type* of record and the date it was created. Ensure it fits the life stage of your ancestor.

□ RED FLAG #5: The "Duplicate Spouse" Logic Fail

The Vibe Check: Is your tree marrying people who shouldn't be married?

- Does the hint suggest a spouse when your ancestor is already married to someone else in your tree during that same year?

- Does it show a man married to two sisters simultaneously?

- **Action:** Ancestry trees often accidentally merge two different families. Check existing marriage dates before accepting a new spouse.

□ RED FLAG #6: The Vanishing Ancestor

The Vibe Check: Where did they go for 20 years?

- You have them in the 1860 Census and the 1900 Census, but they are missing from 1870 and 1880.

- The hint just fills one gap without explaining the others.

- **Action:** Massive gaps usually mean you are looking at two different people, or they moved/changed names. Be highly skeptical of hints that pop up after decades of silence.

□ **THE #7 "GOLDEN NUGGET": The Neighbor Check**

The Vibe Check: Who are they living next to? (Algorithms *never* check this).

- Don't just look at the typed index. **Open the actual image of the Census record.**

- Look 5 houses up and 5 houses down from your ancestor.

- Do you recognize the surnames of neighbors, in-laws, or cousins from their previous hometown?

- **Action:** Families migrated in clusters. If your ancestor is alone in a new town surrounded by total strangers, it's likely the wrong person. If they are surrounded by familiar names, you've found gold.

THE SOURCE HOUND'S OATH: "I will not accept an algorithmic guess as historical fact. I will dig for primary sources, I will do the math, and I will honor my ancestors with the truth."