



Merging Duplicate People in Family Tree

Merging Principles in Family Tree

The FamilySearch Family Tree contains many duplicate individuals. Some data may pertain to the same person and should be merged. Other data may pertain to a person with a similar name but represents an entirely different person. These should NOT be merged and need to be marked as **Not a Match**.

Before merging records, consider the following:

- Review family relationships, reason statements, sources, and discussions on the person's page.
- Know what pieces of information are already well documented and explained.
- Keep notes as you work through the merging process.
- If possible, refer to a well-documented genealogical database, book, or other resource.

POSSIBLE DUPLICATES

The system will display the number of **Possible Duplicates** under the **Tools** menu on the right side of the person page. This is also displayed under **Research Help**.

If the system does not find a duplicate, but you know there is one, copy the ID number of the person you wish to merge and use the **Merge By ID** feature.

Clicking either of these will bring up the merging duplicates screen.



MERGE BY ID

Enter or paste the ID number of the possible duplicate person into the box.

The system will then compare the two names side by side in the same way it does if it did find a duplicate.

Merge By ID ×

⚠ Merging is a complex process in which you decide if two people are the same person. If they are, you choose which information should be kept. Please take the time necessary to carefully review each possible duplicate.

Current Person ID
Frank Waugh
1905-Deceased • BMM8-GD2

Possible Duplicate ID

Enter a Person ID

Continue

REVIEW MERGE

The screenshot shows a genealogy software interface. On the left, a profile for 'Frank Waugh' (1905-Deceased • BMM8-GD2) is shown with a red box around it. Below it is a list of children, including another 'Frank Waugh' (1905-Deceased • BMM8-GD2) which is also highlighted with a red box. On the right, a 'Tools' sidebar is visible, with a red arrow pointing to the 'Possible Duplicates' tool, which has a notification badge '1'.

The screenshot shows a profile for 'Frank Waugh' (1906-Deceased • BMMB-L5K). The profile includes birth and death information, and a list of parents: Jonnie Waugh and Clara Rolley. A red box highlights the 'Review Merge' button, which is labeled 'Not a Match'.

If you are certain that the possible duplicate found by the system is NOT the same person, click on **Not a Match**. Otherwise, click on **Review Merge** to see the two names compared side by side. During the merging process, the name on the **left** will merge into the name on the **right** and the name on the left side will be archived.

As you compare the two names, the best data should be on the right side. You simply click **Replace** to move data from the left to the right. (Note that you can **Switch Positions** of the people at the top of the screen.) Simply ignoring the left side item is the same as clicking **Reject**. If you move information by mistake, you can click **Undo**.

At the bottom of the screen you can click **BACK**, **NOT A MATCH** or **YES CONTINUE**.

■ Gilbert Whately 1920-Deceased • BM95-M1Q

Details Time Line Sources 0 Collaborate 0 Memories 0

▼ Family Members

Spouses and Children

Hide All + Add Spouse

 **Gilbert Whately**
1920-Deceased • BM95-M1Q
Marriage: 7 December 1942
! Euxton, Lancashire, England

 **Laura Balderson**
1923-Deceased • BM95-9TD

Preferred

^ Children (10)

-  **Aurora Whately**
1943-2000 • BM95-983
-  **Emaline Whately**
1944-Deceased • BM95-955
-  **Emaline Whately**
1945-1995 • BM95-MD6
-  **Emaline Whately**
1945-1995 • BM95-MDW
-  **Emaline Whately**
1945-Deceased • BM95-9R1
-  **Zoe Whately**
1947-Deceased • BM95-9TZ
-  **Zoe Whately**
1947-Deceased • BM95-MBJ
-  **Elsa Whately**
1950-Deceased • BM95-MT8
-  **Dennis Whately**
1952-Deceased • BM95-9Z3
-  **Denis Whately**
1952-2000 • BM95-M17

+ Add Child

Parents and Siblings

Hide All + Add Parent

 **Nathaniel Whately**
1895-Deceased • BM95-MYT
Marriage: 7 June 1918
! Leyland, Lancashire, England

 **Beatrix Topin**
1898-Deceased • BM95-9YH

^ Children (10)

-  **Gilbert Whately**
1920-2000 • BM95-MT7
-  **Gilbert Whately**
1920-Deceased • BM95-M1Q
-  **Julia**
1922-Deceased • BM95-MDG
-  **Julia Whately**
1922-Deceased • BM95-9ZQ
-  **Clara Whately**
1924-Deceased • BM95-MTN
-  **Lilian Whately**
1926-Deceased • BM95-M86
-  **Edgar Whately**
1928-Deceased • BM95-9Z2
-  **Edgar Whately**
1928-Deceased • BM95-9Y7
-  **Nicholas Whately**
1930-Deceased • BM95-MYK
-  **Nic Whately**
1930-2000 • BM95-MD4

+ Add Child

 **Gilbert Whately**
1920-Deceased • BM95-M1Q

 + Add Spouse

Preferred

^ Children (2)

-  **Emaline Whately**
1945-1995 • BM95-MDW
-  **Zoe Whately**
1947-Deceased • BM95-MBJ

In this example we can see multiple duplicates in this family. You must work through them one at a time. It often works best to start with the parents and then merge the children one at a time.

For this example we will use the last child in the first family, Dennis Whately. The system has found a possible duplicate. When we click on the possible duplicate, both names are brought up for comparison. There is now a three step process to complete the merge.

Step 1 of 3: Are these people a possible match?
BACK NOT A MATCH **YES CONTINUE**

Possible Duplicate
Information in this column will be deleted at the end of the merge. ↔ Switch

Dennis Whately
about 1952 - Deceased - BM95-923
Added: 15 July 2020

Vitals

Birth
about 1952
Leyland, Lancashire, England

Death
Deceased

Other Information

Family

Parents

- Gilbert Whately
1920 - Deceased - BM95-M1Q
- Laura Balderson
1923 - Deceased - BM95-9TD

Children

- Aurora Whately
1943 - 2000 - BM95-983
- Emaline Whately
1944 - Deceased - BM95-985
- Emaline Whately
1945 - 1995 - BM95-MD6
- Emaline Whately
1945 - 1995 - BM95-MDW
- Emaline Whately
1945 - Deceased - BM95-9R1
- Zoe Whately
1947 - Deceased - BM95-9T2
- Zoe Whately
1947 - Deceased - BM95-M8J
- Elsa Whately
1950 - Deceased - BM95-MT8
- Dennis Whately
1952 - Deceased - BM95-923
- Denis Whately
1952 - 2000 - BM95-M17

Surviving Person
Information in this column will be saved at the end of the merge.

Denis Whately
6 April 1952 - 4 March 2000 - BM95-M17
Added: 15 July 2020

Vitals

Birth
6 April 1952
Leyland, Lancashire, England

Death
4 March 2000
Euxton, Lancashire, England

Other Information

Alternate Name
Nickname
Den Whately

Family

Parents

- Gilbert Whately
1920 - Deceased - BM95-M1Q
- Laura Balderson
1923 - Deceased - BM95-9TD

Children

- Aurora Whately
1943 - 2000 - BM95-983
- Emaline Whately
1944 - Deceased - BM95-985
- Emaline Whately
1945 - 1995 - BM95-MD6
- Emaline Whately
1945 - 1995 - BM95-MDW
- Emaline Whately
1945 - Deceased - BM95-9R1
- Zoe Whately
1947 - Deceased - BM95-9T2
- Zoe Whately
1947 - Deceased - BM95-M8J
- Elsa Whately
1950 - Deceased - BM95-MT8
- Dennis Whately
1952 - Deceased - BM95-923
- Denis Whately
1952 - 2000 - BM95-M17

Step 1 of 3: Are these people a possible match?
BACK NOT A MATCH **YES CONTINUE**

Compare the information for the two people. If they appear to be the same person, click **Yes Continue** . In step 2 compare information and determine what you want to save about the person. Information can be moved from left to right by clicking on **REPLACE**.

The screenshot displays a comparison interface for two profiles of Dennis Whately. The left profile is identified as 'Dennis Whately' (BM95-923) and the right as 'Denis Whately' (BM95-M17). Both profiles show vital information such as Name, Sex, Birth, and Death, along with family details like Parents, Marriage, and Children. A 'REPLACE' button is visible at the bottom of the left profile. At the bottom of the entire interface, a 'CONTINUE' button is highlighted with a red rectangular box.

When you are satisfied with the information on the right person, click **CONTINUE**.

Step 3 asks you to confirm your changes, add a reason statement for the merge, and then **FINISH MERGE**.

Note that FamilySearch is now providing some sample reason statements that may apply. You can just click and add the statement.

The merge is now complete. You can now confirm the accuracy of the details of other family members and merge as needed.

If the duplicate person (on the left) has spouses, children, or parents that are the same as the person on the right, **BUT THEY HAVE DIFFERENT ID NUMBERS**, then they are likely duplicates and will also need to be merged. Move their names and information to the person on the right or they will be unconnected in the system after the merge.

Following the merge, you will then need to compare and merge those people as needed.

When a merge is completed, the system asks you to complete a **Reason Statement** explaining why you performed the merge.

There is more information about what to include in Reason Statements in the **Help Center**.

Merging history will be added to the **Latest Changes**



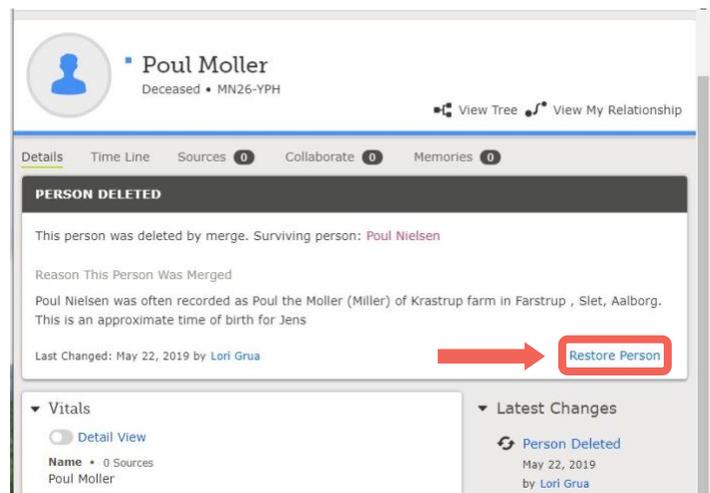
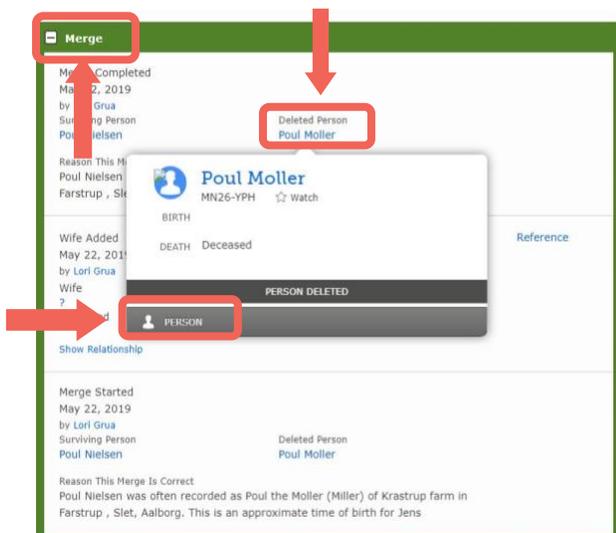
UNDOING A MERGE

If two individuals were merged incorrectly, It is possible to undo the merge.

Go to **Latest Changes** on the right side of the person page. Click on **Show All**.

After opening the **Show All**, if no changes have been made since the merge occurred, the merge can be undone by clicking **Unmerge**.

If changes have been made to the person's information, you must **restore the archived person**. The Unmerge option is not available.



INDIVIDUALS THAT CANNOT BE MERGED

- The gender of one person is male and the gender of the other person is female.
- The data indicates one person is alive and the other is deceased.
- Both people in the database were created from membership records of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
- One of the people has restrictions that would prevent it from being changed.
- If FamilySearch identifies possible duplicates that cannot be merged, a message appears beneath the possible duplicates indicating these persons cannot be merged.

POSSIBLE DUPLICATE AND MERGING TIPS

- Before starting a merge, know what information is correct. If possible, have documents to support the data.
- The person on the right is the primary person. This person (and ID number) will remain. The person on the left will be archived (or deleted) after a merge.
- If you are not sure of dates or relationships, CANCEL THE MERGE and DO RESEARCH! Do not assume. When in doubt, do not merge.
- Be sure to check attached sources.
- View the relationships connected with the individuals you are considering for merging. (You may also want to compare with relationships in other trees such as Ancestry.com).
- Be careful when merging and only merge individuals that you know are duplicates. If there are no dates or places to identify the person, he or she is probably not a duplicate and should not be merged.
- Within a family, resolve duplicate parents before resolving duplicate spouses and children.
- The **Possible Duplicates** tool may not find any duplicates. You may then need to use the **Merge by ID** feature.
- To make sure there are no duplicates, click on the **Find** button at the top of the page and do a manual search. If a duplicate appears, copy the ID number, go back to the Possible Duplicates tool, and choose **Merge by ID**. Type in the ID number and click **Continue**. That duplicate record will appear, ready to be merged.