Merging Principles in Family Tree

MERGING DUPLICATE PEOPLE 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.
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.
The two names are displayed side by side. During the merging process, the name on the right will merge into the name on the left and the name on the right side will be archived.

As you compare the two names, you want the best data to be on the left side. You simply click Replace to move data from the right to the left. (Note that you can Switch Positions of the people at the top of the screen.) Simply ignoring the right 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 Continue Merge, mark Not A Match, or Cancel.
If the duplicate person (on the right) has spouses, children, or parents that are the same as the person on the left, BUT THEY HAVE DIFFERENT ID NUMBERS, then they are also likely duplicates and will need to be merged also. Move their names and information to the person on the left or they will be unconnected in the system.

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 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.

**RESTORE AN ARCHIVED PERSON BY ID NUMBER**

- While signed in to FamilySearch.org, hover your cursor over Family Tree, and click Find.
- Click Find by ID.
- Enter the ID of the deleted person and click Find.
- Click the name of the person.
- On the summary card, click Person.
- In the Person Deleted box, review the reason for the deletion, and then click Restore Person.
RESTORE THE DELETED PERSON

- Open Show All under Latest Changes.
- Look for the green box titled Merge.
- Click on the name under the Deleted Person. The summary card opens.
- Click on the person’s name again. The option to Restore Person appears. Review the reason for the deletion.
- Click Restore Person and include a Reason Statement, explaining why you are restoring this individual.

Note: Restoring is not the same as unmerging. When you restore an archived person, the surviving person does not revert back to what it was before the merge, but retains the added relationships, data, sources, memories, etc.
INDIVIDUALS THAT CANNOT BE MERGED

- The gender of one person is male and the gender of the other person is female.
- The data indicates the 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 left is the primary person. This person (and ID number) will remain. The person on the right will be archived (or deleted) after a merge.
- If you’re 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 that are 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.