

Merging Principles in the Shared Family Tree

MERGING DUPLICATE PEOPLE

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

RESEARCH HELP - POSSIBLE DUPLICATES - REVIEW MERGE

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, you will decide which information from 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 surviving person 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-MTB
- 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 duplicates to be merged, both names are brought up for comparison.

There is a three-step process to complete the merge.

The screenshot displays a comparison screen titled "Step 1 of 3: Are these people a possible match?". It features two columns: "Possible Duplicate" and "Surviving Person".

Possible Duplicate: Dennis Whately
about 1952 - Deceased - BM95-9Z3
Added: 15 July 2020

Surviving Person: Denis Whately
6 April 1952 - 4 March 2000 - BM95-M17
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 - BM95-955)
- Emaline Whately (1945-1995 - BM95-HD6)
- Emaline Whately (1945-1995 - BM95-HDW)
- Emaline Whately (1945-Deceased - BM95-9R1)
- Zoe Whately (1947-Deceased - BM95-9T2)
- Zoe Whately (1947-Deceased - BM95-M81)
- Elsa Whately (1950-Deceased - BM95-MT8)
- Dennis Whately (1952-Deceased - BM95-9Z3)
- Denis Whately (1952-2000 - BM95-M17)

Navigation buttons at the top right include "BACK", "NOT A MATCH", and "YES CONTINUE" (highlighted with a red box).

Navigation buttons at the bottom right include "BACK", "NOT A MATCH", and "YES CONTINUE" (highlighted with a red box).

Step 1. Are these people a possible match? Compare the information for the two people. If they appear to be the same person, click **YES CONTINUE**.

Step 2. Compare, determine, then select the information you want to save about the person. Information can be moved from left to right by clicking on **REPLACE**.

Step 2 of 3: Select the information you want to save. BACK NOT A MATCH **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

Name
Birth Name
Dennis Whately
→ REPLACE

Sex
Male
→ REPLACE

Birth
about 1952
Leyland, Lancashire, England
→ REPLACE

Death
Deceased
→ REPLACE

Other Information

Family: Parents

Parents

- Gilbert Whately 1920-Deceased · BM95-M10
- Laura Balderson 1923-Deceased · BM95-9TD

Marriage
7 December 1942
Euxton, Lancashire, England

Children

- Aurora Whately 1943-2000 · BM95-983
- Emaline Whately 1944-Deceased · BM95-955
- Emaline Whately 1945-1995 · BM95-M06
- Emaline Whately 1945-1995 · BM95-M0W
- Emaline Whately 1945-Deceased · BM95-9R1
- Zoe Whately 1947-Deceased · BM95-9T2
- Zoe Whately 1947-Deceased · BM95-M81
- Ella Whately 1950-Deceased · BM95-MT8
- Dennis Whately 1952-Deceased · BM95-923
- Denis Whately 1952-2000 · BM95-M17

→ REPLACE

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

Name
Birth Name
Denis Whately

Sex
Male

Birth
6 April 1952
Leyland, Lancashire, England

Death
4 March 2000
Euxton, Lancashire, England

Other Information

Alternate Names
Nickname
Den Whately

Family: Parents

Parents

- Gilbert Whately 1920-Deceased · BM95-M10
- Laura Balderson 1923-Deceased · BM95-9TD

Marriage
7 December 1942
Euxton, Lancashire, England

Children

- Aurora Whately 1943-2000 · BM95-983
- Emaline Whately 1944-Deceased · BM95-955
- Emaline Whately 1945-1995 · BM95-M06
- Emaline Whately 1945-1995 · BM95-M0W
- Emaline Whately 1945-Deceased · BM95-9R1
- Zoe Whately 1947-Deceased · BM95-9T2
- Zoe Whately 1947-Deceased · BM95-M81
- Ella Whately 1950-Deceased · BM95-MT8
- Dennis Whately 1952-Deceased · BM95-923
- Denis Whately 1952-2000 · BM95-M17

Step 2 of 3: Select the information you want to save. BACK NOT A MATCH **CONTINUE**

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

Step 3. asks you to confirm your changes, add a reason statement for the merge, and then finish the merge by clicking [FINISH MERGE](#).

The screenshot shows the 'Step 3 of 3: Confirm your changes by finishing the merge.' interface. At the top right, there are buttons for 'BACK', 'NOT A MATCH', and 'FINISH MERGE' (highlighted with a red box). The main content is divided into two columns. The left column, titled 'Reason For Merge', contains a text box for explaining the merge, a link for 'Suggested Reason Statements', and four boxes with pre-written reasons and 'ADD' buttons. The right column, titled 'Confirm Changes', shows a profile for 'Denis Whately' with vital statistics and family information.

Step 3 of 3: Confirm your changes by finishing the merge. [BACK](#) [NOT A MATCH](#) [FINISH MERGE](#)

Reason For Merge

Explain why you think this merge is correct.

Suggested Reason Statements [Learn More](#)
You may select one of these statements to add to your reason statement.

- All vital information and relationships match. ID numbers: BM95-9Z3 and BM95-M17. [ADD](#)
- Most vital information and relationships match. Some details contain minor conflicts. ID numbers: BM95-9Z3 and BM95-M17. [ADD](#)
- Most vital information and relationships match. No details conflict. ID numbers: BM95-9Z3 and BM95-M17. [ADD](#)
- This record contains little information: BM95-9Z3. There is enough evidence to believe it is the same person as BM95-M17. [ADD](#)

Confirm Changes

Green boxes are indicators of newly added or changed conclusions.

Denis Whately
6 April 1952 – 4 March 2000 · BM95-M17

Vitals

Name
Birth Name
Denis Whately

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

When a merge is completed, the system asks you to complete a [Reason Statement](#) explaining why you performed the merge.

Note that FamilySearch is now providing some sample reason statements that may apply. You can just click and [ADD](#) the statement. To better understand what are appropriate Reason Statements, click [Learn More](#).

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

UNMERGE OR RESTORE A PERSON

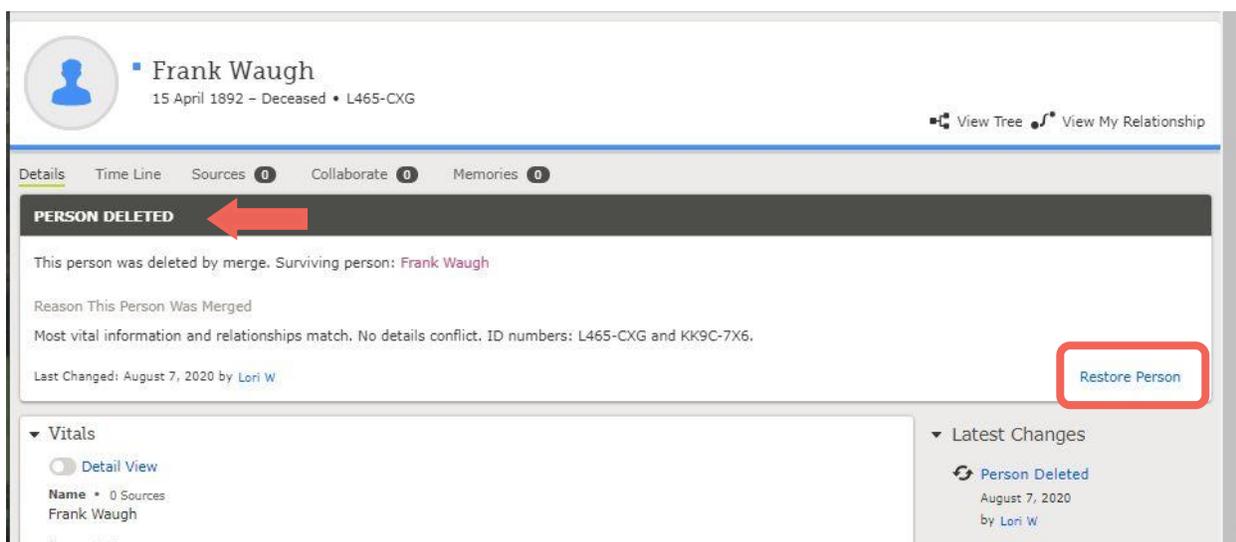
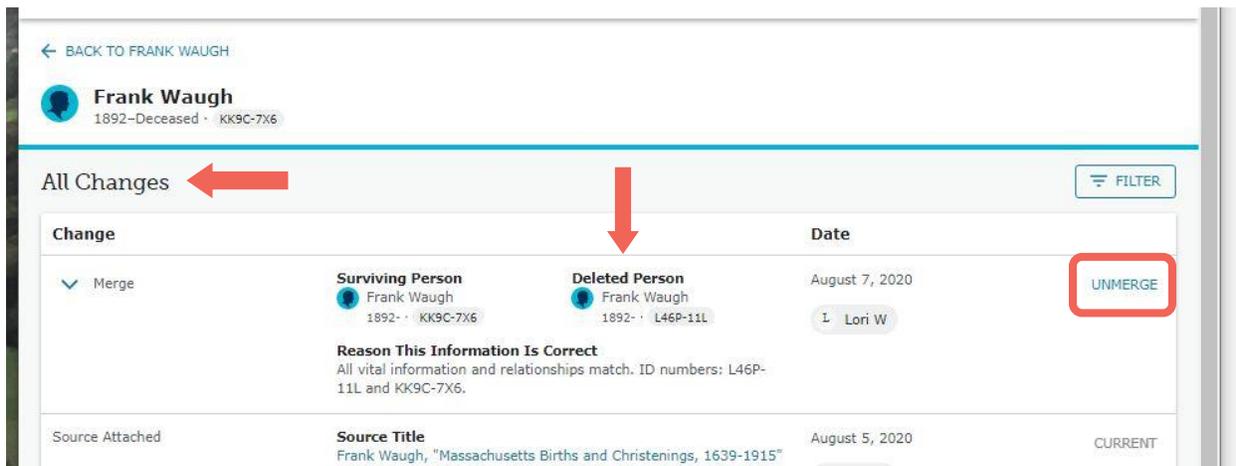
If two individuals were merged incorrectly, it is possible to undo the merge.

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. Click on the Deleted Person and open their person page, where you will find the option to [Restore Person](#).

Merging history will be added to the [Latest Changes](#)



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.