



## Hands on with FamilySearch Family Tree

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FamilySearch Family Tree is a great tool for finding and sharing research about your ancestors. However, information in Family Tree is not always complete or accurate. Some individuals are listed multiple times while others have duplicate relationships. These errors can be cleaned up and the information improved. In this class, we will discuss and then practice using some of the tools and features on Family Tree that can help improve the quality and accuracy of Family Tree.

### Duplicate Individuals

Record entries in Family Tree are sometimes duplicated, making it appear as if an individual has two record entries instead of one. These duplicate entries can be merged. However, merging is a complex process. When you review possible duplicates:

- Carefully consider whether the two records belong to the same person. How likely is it that there were two people with similar names, birth information, spouse, and so forth?
- Consider the impact the merge will have on other records in the tree. Is the duplicate record connected to parents, children, siblings, or spouses?
- Review both records. Are there recent contributors? Are sources attached? Pay attention to reason statements and discussions. Has someone else already identified a reason these two records should not be merged?
- When you merge, review the Vital Information carefully. Keep the best and most accurate information. Consider the completeness of dates and places and review any reason statements.
- When you merge, keep all relatives, even if they are also duplicates. Cutting relatives may leave other descendants disconnected from their own trees. Cutting relatives can also lead to more free radicals (unattached individuals) floating around the tree. Keeping all relatives will remind you to merge those duplicate individuals.

Learn more about resolving duplicates. Read the following articles in the help center:

- [Overview and Important Guidelines for Merging](#)
- [Finding and merging possible duplicate records in Family Tree](#)
- [Finding and merging duplicates not found using the Possible Duplicates link](#)

### Duplicate Relationships

If an individual is listed with an incomplete set of parents (such as a father and no mother) as well as a complete set of parents (the same father with the correct mother), a duplicate

relationship exists. This duplicate relationship can be deleted. (If the existing parent is a duplicate, merge the duplicates before deleting the relationship.)

Learn more about deleting duplicate relationships. Read the article titled [Deleting duplicate relationships](#) in the help center.

## Replacing Incorrect Parents or Spouses

Individuals in Family Tree may be listed with the incorrect father, mother, or spouse. If the correct spouse or parent already exists in Family Tree, you can easily replace the incorrect spouse or parent with the correct one.

Learn more about replacing incorrect parents or spouses. Read the article titled [Correcting parent-child relationships](#) in the help center.

## Adding and Attaching Sources

Sources are the key to creating an accurate and well researched Family Tree. Currently, you can easily connect historical records to Family Tree using the **Attach to Family Tree** button. However, not all sources are found on FamilySearch. Not all sources are even found online. When the source for information on Family Tree isn't found on FamilySearch, you will need to add a source and then attach it to the individual it relates to. When adding a new source, include enough information that another user can retrace your steps and access the source at a later date.

Learn more about adding and attaching sources. Read the following articles found in the help center:

- [Adding sources for the information I contribute to Family Tree](#)
- [Finding your Source Box and attaching a source to a person in Family Tree](#)
- [Your Source Box](#)
- [Reducing improper changes to records on Family Tree](#)

## Reason Statements

A reason statement is a note you leave for other users explaining the changes you made to Family Tree. Why did you make a change? Where did the information for your change come from? Why do you believe your information is more accurate than information previously contributed? When writing reason statements, consider the following:

- When making changes to names and vital information, explain why you believe your information is accurate, as in this example. "The date and place are listed on Harriett's death certificate. The date is listed on Harriett's headstone. Harriett is buried in the same place she died."
- When merging individuals, explain why you believe the individuals match. Be specific. "The death record of Harriett (Sneed) Landon lists her parents, Obadiah Sneed and Eleanor Cooper, and her husband, Jonathon Landon. This merge will combine Harriett, the daughter of Obadiah and Eleanor, and Harriett, the wife of Jonathon."
- When attaching a source, explain why you believe the source belongs to the person you are attaching it to. Identify any unusual or conflicting details. "This is Jonathon and Harriett Sneed [indexed as Sroud] in 1910 as evidenced by matching birthplaces,

residence, and family members.”

- When deleting information, explain why the information is incorrect and needs to be removed. “This is the death date and place for Harriett (Green) Landon, not Harriett (Sneed) Landon.”
- If you edit information that already includes a reason statement, update the reason statement to include your reasons for making the change.

Learn more about reason statements. Read the following articles found in the help center.

- [Reason statements for adding, editing, and deleting information](#)
- [Adding reason statements to people and relationships](#)