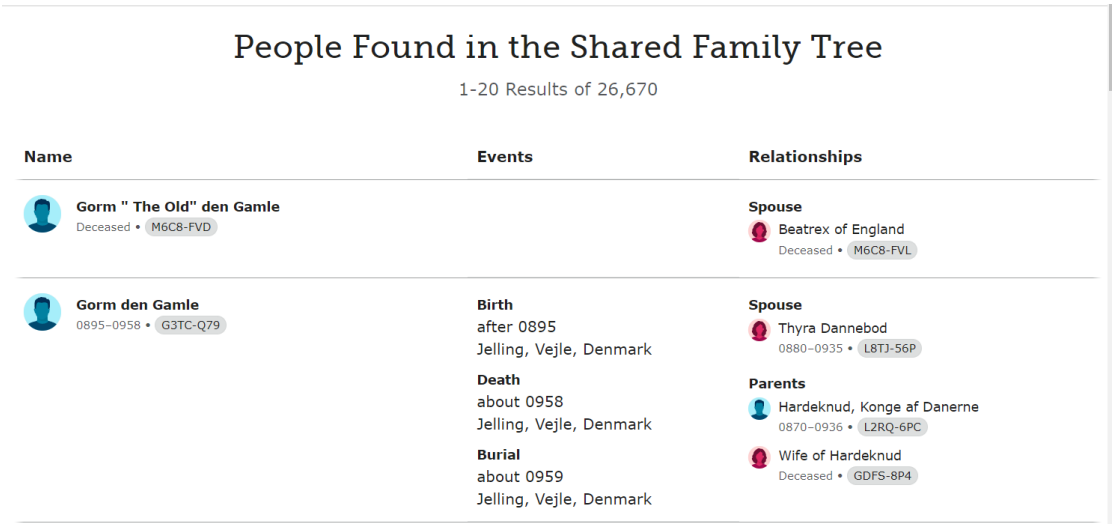
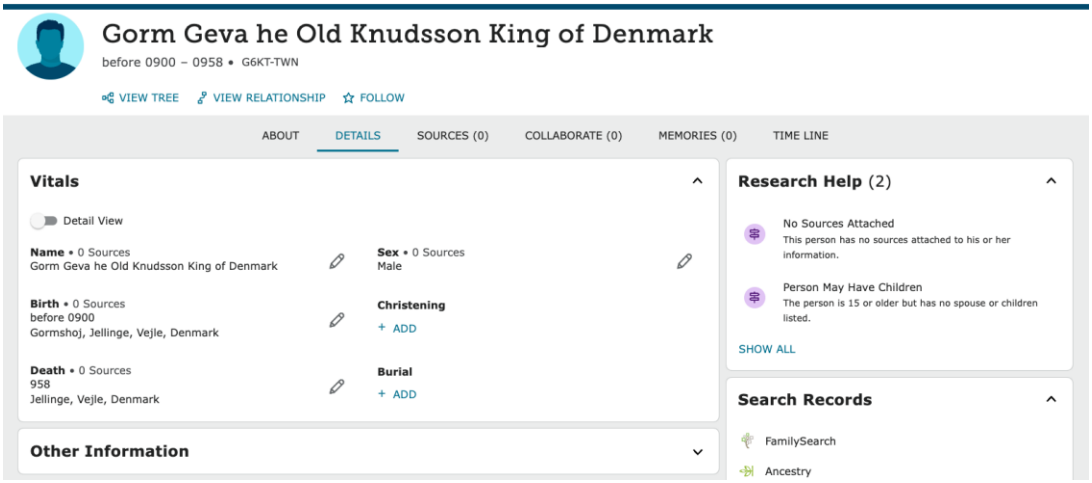
# Merging Duplicate Individuals

The goal of FamilySearch is to create one giant tree for all of mankind in which every person who ever lived is recorded exactly once.

## Why do duplicates occur?

- When a living person dies
- Batch indexing
- New.familysearch.org the precursor to FamilySearch Family Tree did not have a merge option
- Information was dumped into FamilySearch from several sources including the IGI, Temple Index, etc. This accounted for many of the duplicates that FamilySearch was notorious for in the beginning
- Two people may be working on the same line but from different directions. For example, you may be in the US working on your ancestors in Sweden while someone in Sweden has your ancestor in their tree already and doesn't know where they went to in America
- A person adds their information into the tree, and it is different enough from what is already in the tree, that the algorithm doesn't recognize it. This is especially true for the royal families when they are put in in different languages. For example, one person might add "Gorm den Gamle," while another person puts in "Gorm the Old," another person puts in "Konge Gorm," another puts in "King of Denmar-k Gorm," etc.



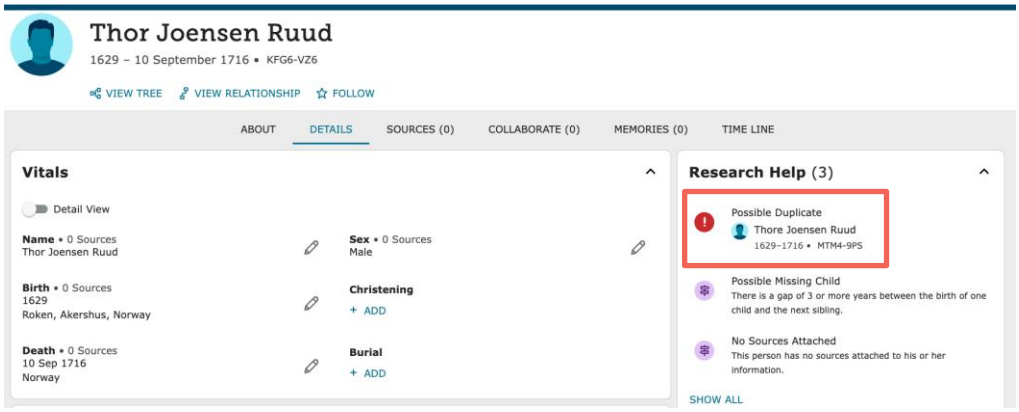


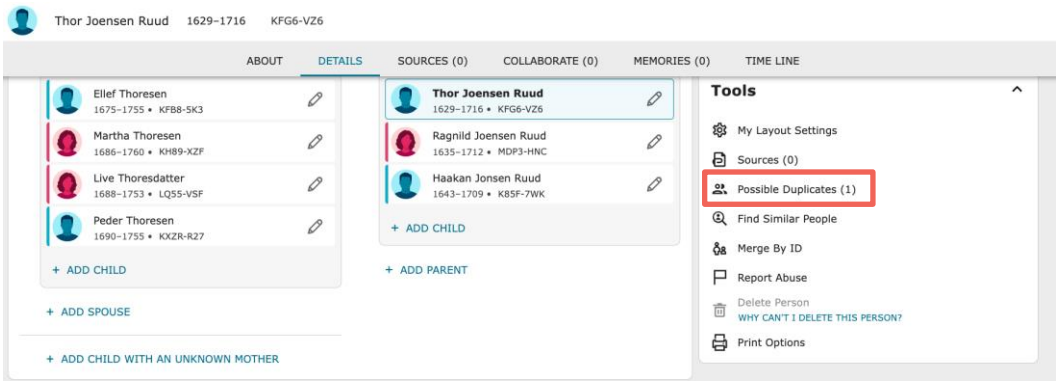

## Key Things to Know

- An Individual can be merged up to 250 times. Sometimes a person has already hit this limit.
- Don't be afraid to merge but also don't be careless. A merge can be undone if necessary but it's best to get it right the first time.
- FamilySearch will search for merges for you. Sometimes it finds a duplicate that is not valid. Do not assume it is a real duplicate just because the website thinks it is. Increasing the amount of detail on a person decreases the odds of this happening. If your ancestor is simply Peder Nielsen born 1730 in Denmark the website will identify many Peder Nielsen's living all over the country that could be yours, providing a more exact county or parish (even if it is just an educated guess) of birth will help the website to better help you.
- You will be unable to request the person's ordinances until all duplicates are accepted or rejected.

## Finding Duplicates

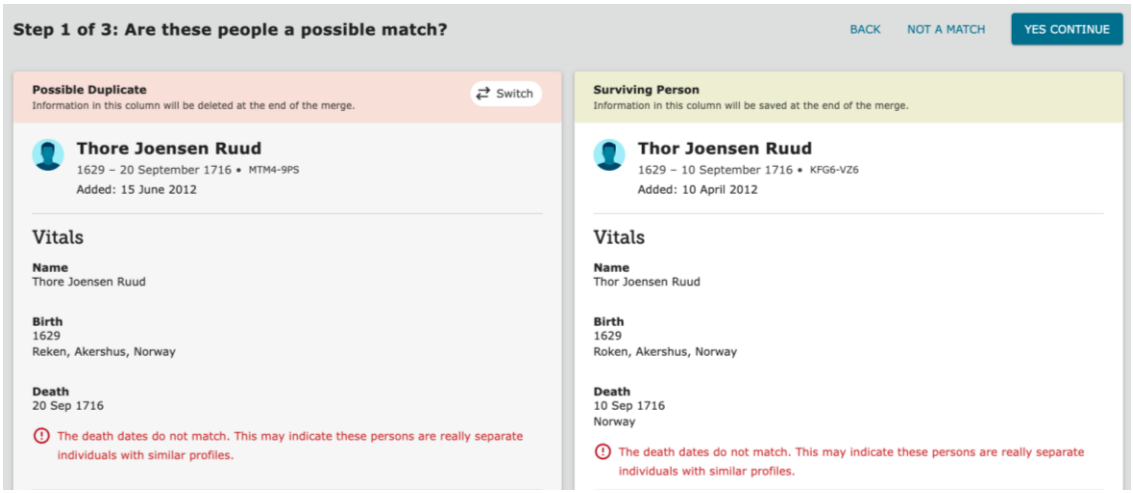
- You can find duplicates by in the "Research Help" or "Tools" section and then clicking "Possible Duplicates".



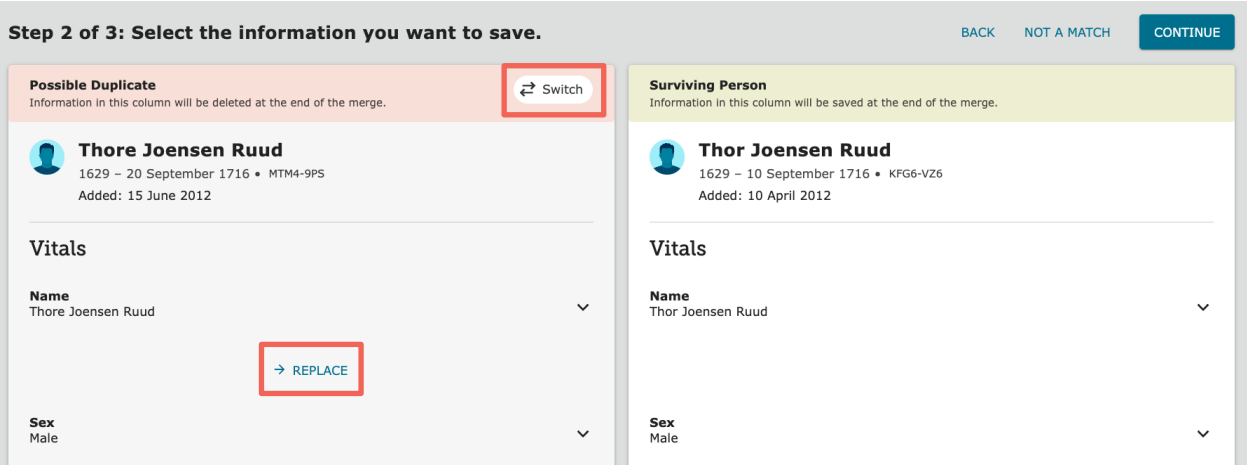



## Merging Duplicates

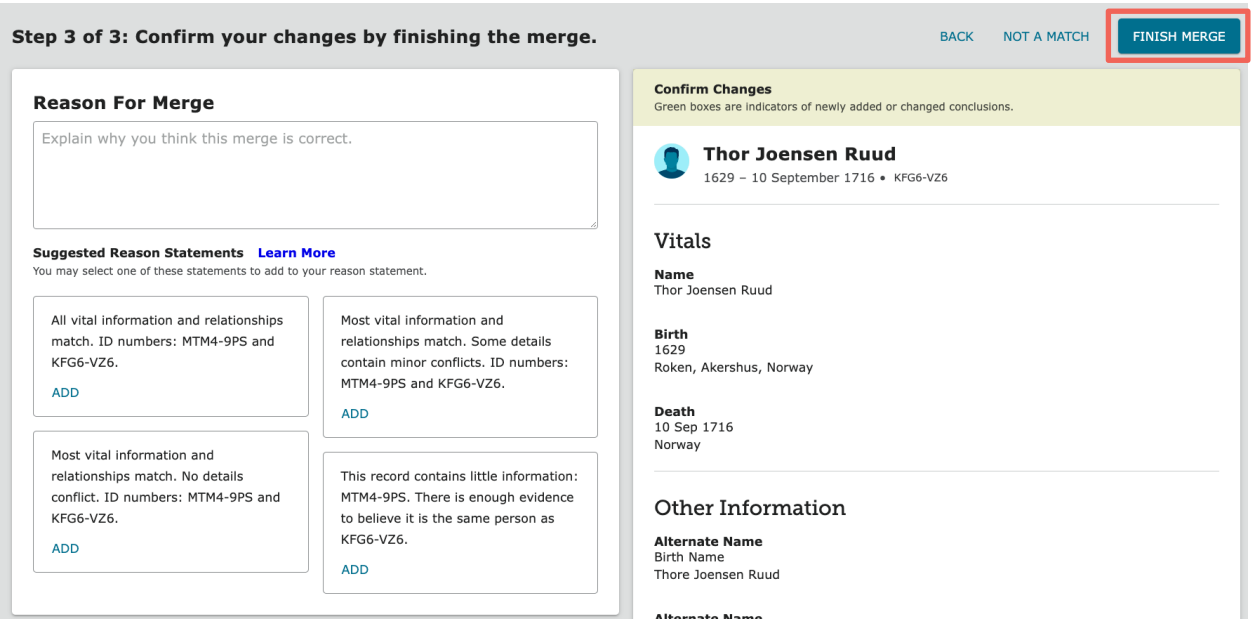
- In tree view, click on the red box and then click the blue “Review Merge” button.
- You will be lead through a series of three pages. On the first page you will review the two individuals, to determine if they are the same person. On the second you will choose which information is best, and on the third you will provide a reason for the merge you are doing.
- On the first page the person who will be deleted is shown on the left and the surviving person will be on the right, simply decide if they are a match. If they are scroll down to the bottom and click “Yes Continue” if not click “Not a Match” and provide a reason.




- If you clicked yes, on the second page you will now choose which information you like best. Anytime the information on the left is better than the information on the right click the button that says “Replace” otherwise the information on the left will be deleted. Sometimes you may want to preserve the person on the left instead of the right, if so, click the “switch” button at the top.

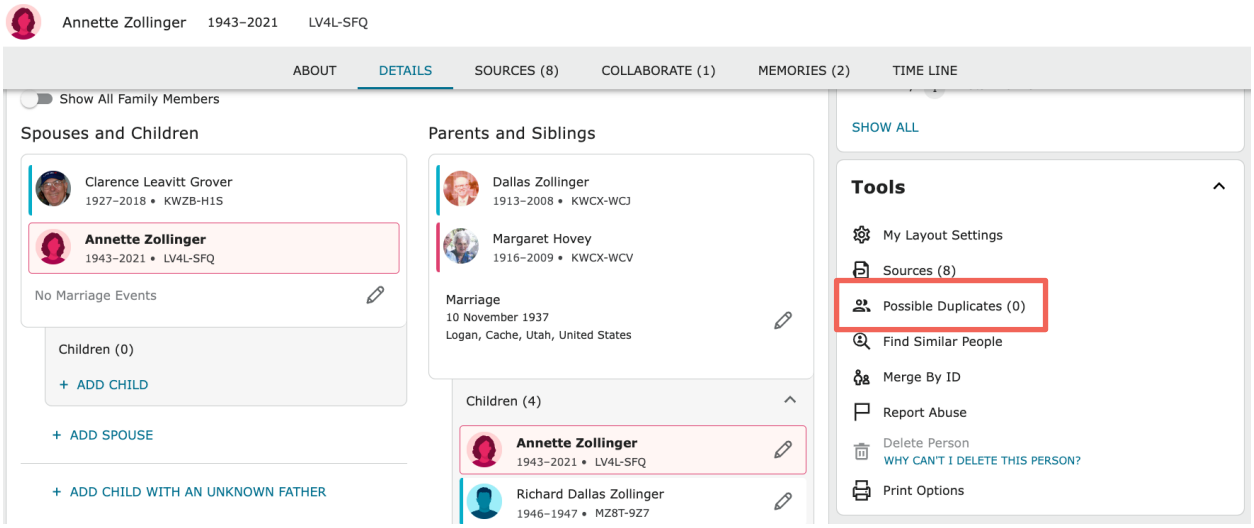



- After clicking continue you will be led to the final page where you provide a reason for your merge. You can type anything you want in this box, or you may choose one of the pre-filled boxes by clicking the word “Add” on the desired box. Whatever you choose will be visible to others. Choosing a good reason helps ensure someone will not alter it later. Click “Finish Merge” to complete the process.



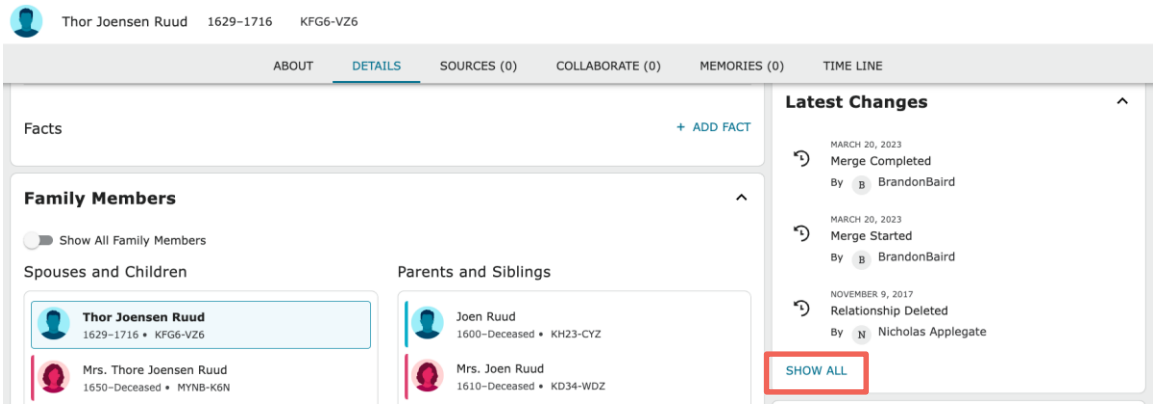

## Manual Merging

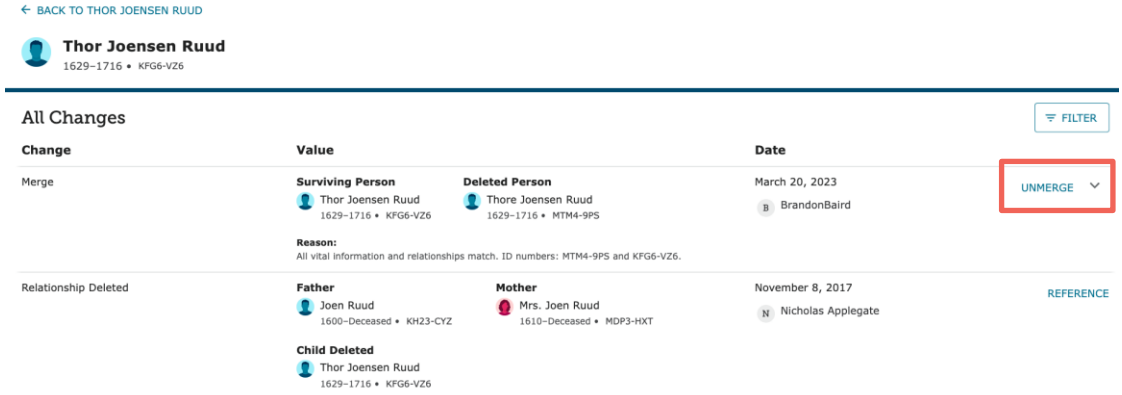
- Sometimes you know two people are duplicates even though the website has not realized it. In this case scroll down to the “Tools” section on a person’s page and click, “Merge by ID” then paste in the FamilySearch ID number of the known duplicate.




## Unmerging

- If two people have been merged incorrectly and it needs to be undone, go to the person page of the surviving individual, scroll down to where it says, “Latest Changes” and click “Show All.” Any merges made will appear in the list. Click on “unmerge,” provide a reason, and then click “unmerge” again.



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