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## Data Accuracy

by [Jan McClintock](#)

Updated 2/17/2000 by Leister Productions to reflect the Match/Merge feature added in Reunion 6.

We all know that genealogy isn't an exact science. We collect the data, analyze it, and record it, hoping that it will all come together in the end. But given the nature of the records, whether handwritten ledgers, typed indexes, or Gedcom files, **inaccuracy happens**. We end up with dates that don't match, duplicate entries, and typing errors (ours or otherwise). If is, of course, up to you the researcher to decide what is accurate or most feasible and edit or explain if necessary. Fortunately, Reunion includes a few features to help us root out the shady information.

### Duplicate Records

The **Match/Merge** feature was added to simplify the task of finding, merging, and deleting duplicate records in a family file. Duplication may happen when importing a Gedcom file or family file with similar information or by simply entering people more than once.

In your manual, the Match/Merge feature is explained here: [Help -> Contents -> Using Advanced Features -> Match and Merge](#).

Unless your family file contains a small number of people (under 5,000) you may want to consider Marking [[Help -> Search for Help, "Marking"](#)] a subset of people before running the Match/Merge process. This will help streamline the matching process.

The screenshot shows the 'Find Matches' dialog box. It has three main sections: 'Find matches for...', 'Compare with...', and 'Criteria for a match'. In the 'Find matches for...' section, 'Everybody (182)' is selected. In the 'Compare with...' section, 'Everybody (182)' is also selected. Under 'Criteria for a match', the dropdown menu is set to 'Identical Last Name, Identical First Name'. There are two checkboxes for date criteria, both set to 1 year. At the bottom are 'Cancel' and 'Match...' buttons.

After possible matches have been located and displayed on screen, you can use the pop-up menus at the top of each column to help you recognize ancestors with the same named. (You don't want to merge

great granddad with his namesake.) If you double-click a person's name in the Merge People window, his or her family card will be shown behind the Merge People window. Simply move the Merge People window out of the way to see more fields on the family card.

Once you have determined the selected person has a duplicate, click the **Merge** button to merge in the direction of the **red** arrow. In the example below, the bottom record will merge with the top record. Repeat this process for each duplicate record in the Merge People window.

**Merge People**

Possible matches were found for... 0 Merges

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Last Name	First Name	(Birth-Death)	Spouse	Parents
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	BESSETTE	Carolyn	1966-1999	John Fitzgerald KENNEDY Jr.	William BESSETTE
<input type="checkbox"/>	BOUVIER	Jacqueline Lee	1929-1994	John Fitzgerald KENNEDY	John Vernou BOUVI
<input type="checkbox"/>	KENNEDY	John Fitzgerald	1917-1963	Jacqueline Lee BOUVIER	Joseph Patrick KEN
<input type="checkbox"/>	KENNEDY	Patrick Bouvier	1963-~1963		John Fitzgerald KE

Next Merge Swap Undo

Possible matches for: Carolyn BESSETTE

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Last Name	First Name	(Birth-Death)	Spouse	Parents
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	BESSETTE	Carolyn	1966-1999	John Fitzgerald KENNEDY Jr.	

Mark Double-click names to show family cards. Cancel Save...

Marked People: 0

## Date Feasibility

We've all experienced the "impossible dates" syndrome: Mary was supposedly only 9 years old when she had her first child. Or we have data that shows Baby Smith was born in 1843 and died in 1837. Or we simply slipped while typing in a date... although I'm sure that's never happened in *your* case. Although truth is sometimes stranger than fiction, Reunion 6 provides a way to check these dates and lets you know if something seems fishy.

Choose **Options -> Dates** and click the **Feasibility Checking** tab to open the window. Within the frames are check boxes and age limitations. Choose the options that you want Reunion to check and make sure the **On** button is selected. If you'd like to see a list of possible problems right away, use the **Report** button. Otherwise, click the **Save** button to activate the feasibility checking. Now, when questionable dates are entered or saved, Reunion will send a warning dialog box. You can still enter and save any data you wish, but you'll get a reminder when the dates don't "compute."

**Date Feasibility Warning**

Asa Edward BERRY married before age 12.

Marriage before age 12

☐ Turn Off Date Feasibility Checking

Save, As Is Edit Entries

## Place List

I've always maintained that inconsistency in data entry will come back to haunt you. It's a good idea to keep your data uniform, whether it is in a 'standard' format or not. This is especially true if you plan to submit your family data to a lineage society, the LDS Church collection, or for publication.

[The exception to this edict is the transcription, extraction, or quotation of original records, when you purposefully maintain the original name, spelling or punctuation for reasons of style. However, this would probably be more appropriate in a Notes field, not as a place name entry in Reunion.]

One way to check the uniformity in your family file is to use the **Place List**, a window like the Index that lists each place name you have entered in Reunion. Listed below each place name are the people whose family card contains that place name entry. Choose the menu command **List -> Places**. The first box asks you to select the events to include (birth, marriage, burial, etc.) and whether to include all people or only marked people in this list. By selecting all of the events, you'll create a list of **all** place names in your family file. Click the **List** button to get started.

By looking through the Place List, you can check each place name against the others. For instance, my list included the following place names:

- Evergreen Cemetery, Factoryville, Wyoming Co, PA
- Evergreen Cemetary, Factoryville, PA (who hasn't made *this* error?)
- Evergreen Cem, Wyoming Co, PA

Each of these entries represents the same location, although the first one is most complete. To change the other entries to match the first, I can either go directly to the individual family cards of the people listed under places 2 and 3 by double-clicking them, or I can mark them for future editing. I can also print out a report of the place name list and use it to correct any inconsistencies later. However I decide to operate, I want to end up with just one place name entry for this cemetery.

In the end, the real responsibility for data accuracy rests with the researcher, but the methods described above are ways Reunion can help you keep your data sound.

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This article first appeared in the November/December 1997 issue of Everton's Genealogical Helper magazine.