

M A V E R I C K A I

Build Your Entire Family Tree With Claude

AND FIND RELATIVES YOU DIDN'T KNOW EXISTED

Claude interviews you, traces the history behind your family name, uses your browser to dig through public records for relatives you never had, and lays the whole thing out as a visual tree. Four prompts, plus the tricks that make each one work.

Claude interviews you to map what you already know

Trace the origin and history of your family name

Connect Chrome so Claude can search real records

Find relatives and documents through public sources

Build a visual family tree you can save and share

How to reach out to a relative you find

2026 Edition

How This Works

You are going to build a real family tree with Claude, in one chat. Four prompts, in order. The first two work from what you already know. The third connects Claude to your browser so it can go search real records. The fourth turns it all into a visual tree.

The honest version, because it matters: Claude does not have a secret file on your family. What it is great at is interviewing you into a clean structure, explaining the history behind your name, and using your browser to surface leads from public records you would never dig through yourself. The magic isn't that it knows your family, it's that it turns scattered memories into a real starting point in minutes.

4

prompts, in order

1

chat, kept open

30min

start to finish

KEEP IT ALL IN ONE CHAT

Claude remembers everything as you go, so the interview feeds the name history, and both feed the record search. Stay in the same conversation start to finish.

Prompt 1: The Interview

Don't try to organize your family yourself. Let Claude interview you, it's far better at asking the right questions than you are at volunteering the right answers.

PROMPT 1

I want to build my full family tree. Interview me one question at a time about my full name, where my family is from, and every relative I can actually remember on both sides, with names, approximate years, and birthplaces. Go one branch at a time so I don't get overwhelmed, keep track of what I've told you, and when we're done, lay it all out as a clean starting tree.

What happens next: Claude asks you one thing at a time and quietly assembles the structure. Answer whatever you can, "around 1950" or "before the war" is fine. When you're done, it hands you a clean tree of everything you know.

TIP

Do this with a parent or grandparent nearby if you can. The one-question-at-a-time format is perfect for jogging their memory, and they'll remember names and stories you never knew. This step alone is worth it just for that conversation.

Prompt 2: Trace Your Name

Now that Claude has your surname and where your people came from, have it trace the line itself. This is the part that makes people lean in, most have never heard the story behind their own name.

PROMPT 2

Based on my last name and where my family came from, trace the origin of my family line and tell me how far back you can actually go. Cover the meaning and roots of the surname, the regions it's most common in, any migrations or historical events that moved families with this name, and whether it was likely changed or shortened when my family immigrated. Be clear about what's documented history versus a general pattern for names like mine.

What happens next: Claude walks you through the history of your surname and how far it typically traces. Some of it is genuinely wild. That last line matters, it tells Claude to separate real history from educated guessing, so you know what to trust.

TREAT THIS AS A MAP, NOT A BIRTH CERTIFICATE

Claude knows a lot about the general history of names, migrations, and regions. It does not know your specific ancestors yet. So this is the story of names like yours, a fantastic map of where to look next, not confirmed facts about your bloodline.

Step 3: Connect Chrome

Here's the trick from the video. To go find real relatives, Claude needs to use your browser. This is the step people get stuck on, so go slow.

STEP 1: Add the Chrome connector

On the left in Claude, go to **Connectors**, then **Add connectors**. Search for **Google Chrome** and click **Connect**.

STEP 2: Install and connect the Claude in Chrome extension

This is the part most people miss. The connector needs the **Claude in Chrome extension** installed in your browser. If you don't have it, add it from the Chrome Web Store, then open Chrome and click the Claude icon to connect it to your account.

LOG INTO FREE GENEALOGY SITES FIRST

Before the search, open Chrome and sign into a free site like FamilySearch. Claude uses your browser, so anything you're logged into, it can see and search. That gives it far more to work with.

If Chrome isn't working

Claude didn't open a browser. The extension probably isn't connected. Reopen Chrome, click the Claude extension icon, and connect it, then try the next prompt again.

You can just ask. Say "walk me through connecting Chrome so you can search for me," and Claude will guide you through it right in the chat.

Prompt 3: Find New Relatives

This is the step everyone wants. Claude uses Chrome to comb public records and come back with people and documents you didn't have.

PROMPT 3

Use Chrome to search public records, free genealogy sites, and obituaries for relatives connected to my family that I don't already have. Check FamilySearch, obituaries, cemetery and grave records, and old newspaper archives. For each lead, give me the name, how they might connect to my tree, a link to the source, and how confident you are. Don't invent anyone, if you can't confirm it, mark it as a lead to check, not a fact.

What happens next: Claude opens your browser, digs through the records it can reach, and comes back with names, links, and how they might connect to you. This is where people find relatives they never knew existed.

HEADS UP

Treat every result as a lead, not a confirmed relative, until you see the actual record. A shared last name is not proof, and the most common genealogy mistake is grabbing the wrong person because the name lined up. Claude finds the threads. You confirm them.

If the search comes up short

It hit a paywall. Claude searches the free, open web and any sites you're logged into. If it lands on a paid site like a premium ancestry service, log in yourself in Chrome first, then tell it to keep going, it can't unlock paid data on its own.

It found little. Give it more to work with: a maiden name, a town instead of a country, an approximate year, or an immigration date. Vague inputs get vague results.

TIP

Point it at obituaries specifically. They almost always list the person's relatives by name, spouse, children, siblings, so one obituary can fill in a whole branch.

Prompt 4: Build The Visual Tree

Pull it all together into something you can actually look at, screenshot, and share with family.

PROMPT 4

Now build me a full visual family tree with everyone we have and how we're all connected. Show my confirmed relatives, plus a separate section for the unconfirmed leads. Make it a visual artifact I can view and screenshot. Also give me a GEDCOM file so I can import it into a genealogy app later.

What happens next: Claude generates an interactive artifact, a real visual tree laid out by generation. Ask for the GEDCOM file too, that's the universal family-tree format, so you can import your work into FamilySearch or any genealogy app and never lose it.

TIP

Ask for a clean, printable version as well. It's perfect for framing, for a family reunion, or for a grandparent who wants it on paper.

Bonus Prompts + A Word On Privacy

Pull these out any time, same chat.

Break through a brick wall

BRICK-WALL BREAKER

I'm stuck on [name], born around [year] in [place].
Walk me through exactly what records might exist for this person, which archive or site holds each, and the exact search terms and spelling variations to try.

Crack a name in another language

NAME TRANSLATOR

What would this surname look like in the original language or alphabet, and what are the common English spellings it became after immigration?

Reach out to a relative you found

FIRST-CONTACT MESSAGE

Draft a short, warm message to a possible relative I found. I'm [name], I think we connect through [shared ancestor / surname]. Keep it friendly and low-pressure, and ask one simple question to see if we match.

HEADS UP

You're handling real people's information, some of them living. Don't paste Social Security numbers or sensitive details, and if you reach out to a living relative, send a short, human note, not the whole AI report. People get spooked by a stranger who knows too much.

The One-Page Cheat Sheet

All four prompts, in order. Screenshot this.

1. INTERVIEW ME

Interview me one question at a time to build my family tree: my name, where my family is from, and every relative I remember, with years and places. Then lay it out as a clean tree.

2. TRACE MY NAME

Based on my last name and where my family came from, trace the origin of my family line and how far back it goes. Separate documented history from general patterns.

3. FIND RELATIVES (Chrome connected)

Use Chrome to search public records, free genealogy sites, and obituaries for relatives I don't have. Give a source link and a confidence level for each. Mark anything unconfirmed as a lead, not a fact.

4. BUILD THE TREE

Build a full visual family tree of everyone we found as an artifact I can screenshot, plus a GEDCOM file.

YOUR ACTION PLAN

1. Let Claude interview you (do it with a parent if you can). 2. Trace your name. 3. Connect Chrome + the extension, and log into FamilySearch. 4. Run the record search, treat finds as leads. 5. Build the visual tree and verify the exciting ones before you tell everyone.

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AI finds the threads. You pull them. That's how you find your people.