



THE TUMA FAMILY

PREPARED FOR
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RESEARCH REPORT
APRIL 2020

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Introduction

The goal for this research was to verify the European origins of the Tuma and Sprael ancestors of John W. Tuma (1848-1943), a native of Bohemia, the son of John Tuma and Anna Sprael. After that, we will trace the paternal Tuma family back as far as possible in the time allotted. According to family information, John W. Tuma was born on 23 September 1848 in Bohemia (Böhmen, Province of Austria). He immigrated about 1871 and settled in Nebraska. DNA evidence suggests he was related to other Tuma immigrants who originated in Ústaleč, Klatovy District, Plzeň (Pilsen) region, Böhmen.

Research on the Tuma and Sprael (Sperl) families was successful in identifying the origins of the Tuma (spelled Tůma in Czech) and Sperl families, and in extending some of these families back 3-4 generations in Catholic church records. The results are summarized below.

Anton Tůma & Anna Jehlík Family Research

The family of John W. Tuma's brother Anton Tuma (born June 1839), was found first. DNA evidence had shown connections to two of the children of Anton Tuma – a daughter Anna, and a son Frank (born 8 October 1864). Although Anton was thought to have been from Ústaleč in Zavlekov parish, it was discovered that he was actually from the town of Úsilov (Ausilau, Ousilov) in Slavíkovice (Slawikowitz, Slavíkov) parish.

Although the records of Zavlekov parish did not include baptisms that matched this family, we found the Antonín Tůma (Anton is German) family listed in Slavíkovice parish. Anna was born on 5 May 1875 (Document 2), and “Frank” (German *Frank*, Czech *František*) was born on 10 October 1862 (Document 3), both being born in house number 22 in Úsilov. Although our interest was in the family of John W. Tuma, we knew this family was related, so we researched them as an indirect way of finding the family of John W. Tuma.

Czech baptism records from this time period provide not only the names of the parents of the child, but also the names of the grandparents, and where they were living. Anton Tůma, as he was listed in most of these records, was the son of Johan Tůma, a cottager in Lautschim, and Anna Sperl (originally) of Lipkau. In addition to Anna and Franz, Anton and his wife had eight other children. Copies of their birth records were made to better study them to figure out the names of the places listed, and to look for additional clues (Documents 1-10).

Anton Tuma and Anna Jehlík were married on 17 February 1862 in Vítov in Slavíkovice parish, the town she was from. Anton Tuma was listed as a 22-year-old cottager in Úsilov, son of Johan Tuma, a cottager in Loučeschim house no. 28, and Anna Spedl of Lichkau [*sic*].

Johann (Ján) Tůma & Anna Sperl (Spedl) Family Research

With the clues from documents on the family of Anton Tůma & Anna Jehlík, it was possible to locate a baptism record for the direct line ancestor Wenzl Thůma [sɪ], who was known as John W. Thuma in the United States. The name Wenzl would have sounded like a foreign name in Nebraska, and he instead decided to use a common name that would sound more American, “John,” and let his Czech given name be used as a middle name. He was born 1 December 1848 in Úsilov, in Slavíkovice parish, the son of Johan Thůma, cottager (parents: Wenzl Thůma, cottager in Lautschin 28, and Katharina Engelman of Lauschin 7) and Anna Spödl (parents: Wenzl Spödl of Tilhbau 22, and Anna Schwegda of Lichtau 22) (Document 12).

Because town names have different spellings over time, and depending on whether the language of the records was German, Czech, or Latin, it was helpful to get copies of all the baptism records of the siblings of “John” Wenzl Thuma, to compare the way the place and surnames were spelled in each document. Johan (German) or Ján (Czech) Tůma and Anna Sperl/Spedl were the parents of 10 children born from 1838 to 1855, three of whom died young (Documents 12-19). Among those children was a set of twins born in 1851.

The 1869 Bohemian census for the address Úsilov in Kdyně (Neugedein) District, showed that there were three generations of the Thuma family living there at that time (Document 22). The head of the household was listed as the son, Antonín Thuma, whose family was discussed in the previous section. He was married with three children at that time. Also in the household was his father, a widower, and three other brothers, including the immigrant ancestor, who was recorded here as a journeyman cabinet maker, with the Czech version of his name, Václav Tuma [sɪ]. The family owned one cow and five calves up to three years old.

As immigrants often would not leave Europe until their parents died, or someone else was able to care for them in their later years, it is interesting to see when they died. Anna, the wife of Johann Tuma, the cottager of Úsilov house number 22, died of typhus fever at the age of 42 on 12 February 1857 (Document 20). Her husband lived for another 14 years, dying as a pensioner on 30 March 1871 at the age of 73, of old age (Document 21). Since John W. Thuma arrived in Baltimore, Maryland, on 31 July 1871, it looks like he left within a few months of his father's death.

Efforts so far to find the marriage record of Johann Tůma and Anna Sperl have not been successful. This could be searched for further in the future if desired. Also, there are Bohemian census records for the years 1880, 1890, 1900, 1910, and 1921, as well, which could be searched to see if descendants of this family continued to own Úsilov number 22, and to look for descendants of this family who remained in Bohemia. For now, research turned to the next, earlier generation of this family.

Wenzl (Wenceslaus) Tůma (Thum) & Katharina Engelmann

Johann (Jan), son of Waclaw Tůma [sic] and Kateřyna Engelman of house 28 in Lautschim (now Loučim), was born and baptized on the 18 June 1798 (Document 23). Waclaw is an old Czech spelling for the modern spelling Václav. In German records, he would have been referred to as Wenzl, and in earlier Latin records, as Wenceslaus. He was the grandfather of the immigrant “John” Wenzl Thuma, for whom the grandson was apparently named.

Waclaw Tůma [sic], son of Jan Tuma - a cottager in Loučim, and Kateřina, daughter of Šebastián Engelman - a farm laborer in Loučim, were married on 28 November 1797 in Loučim (Document 24). Their ages at that time were 31 and 21, respectively, both being single. Another child of Jan Tuma of Loučim 28, was married in 1796.

Since the emphasis for this research was to extend the paternal line back as far as possible, not to focus on obtaining copies and translations of the records of all of the children born to ancestral couples, copies of the baptisms of other children born to this family were not made at this time. As before, it was helpful with so many different variations of surnames and place names to compare information from the various records, so notes were made of other children born to Waclav Tůma and Kateřyna Engelman, identifying five more children born from 1800 to 1809 (see the accompanying research journal and our online tree).

Katharina, the wife of Wenzl Tůma, died 4 June 1835 at house 28 in Loučim, at the age of 64 years, of dropsy (Document 25). Her daughter, Maria, had died almost two months earlier of dropsy at the age of 30 and was listed on the same page in the burial records, just before her mother. The entry immediately following Katharina's was the death of her granddaughter, Margaretha, the illegitimate daughter of the deceased Maria, who died at the age of 1 ¼ of an unknown illness. Wenzl Tůma survived his wife by almost two years, dying of old age on 27 February 1837, at the age of 76 years (Document 26).

Jan (Johannes) Tůma (Thum) & Magdalena Nowotna

Research on the Tůma family became more difficult as it continued back another generation. The records before 1770 were not indexed, which required searching each page of the old registers. As the parish boundaries included more villages, there were more pages to examine each year. The handwriting style from these earlier records was also more challenging to decipher. A marriage record for Jan Tuma (Thum) and Magdalena Nowotna has not yet been found.

Wenceslaus (Wenzl), son of Joannes Thum and Magdalena, was baptized in Loučim parish on 10 February 1766 (Document 31). As mentioned already, Wenceslaus was the Latin form of the German name Wenzl (*Václav* in the Czech language). Because of the difficulty in finding his parents' marriage and in discovering the earliest records on this family, it was important to find whatever

documentation could be found and to compare different records for clues. Because of this, copies and translations were made for other children of Joannes Thum and Magdalena, including five children born from 1762 to 1773 (Documents 29-34). Although these records were all recorded in Latin, it is interesting that the surname was spelled Thum in the baptism records from 1762 to 1766, as Thun in the baptism record from 1768, and as Tuma in the baptism records for 1771 and 1773.

Joannes Tuma, a cottager, died on 21 May 1781 at house number 28 in Loučim at the age of 54 years (Document 27). His widow, Magdala, died almost 22 years later, on 1 February 1803 at the age of 72 (Document 28).

One other clue was found, which mentions Catharina, sister of Joannes Tuma, cottager at house 28 in Loučim, who died 12 April 1772 at the age of 34 years (Document 35). Joannes was the Latin form of the name John (Ján in Czech, Johann or Johannes in German). Based on their ages at death, Jan Tuma (Thum) would have been born about 1727 and his sister, Catharina, in about 1738. The baptism records for Loučim have a gap from 1719-1730, but there should have been a record of the sister Catharina's birth. Since that record was not found, it seems likely that the Tuma (Thum) family was from a neighboring parish before moving here. Jan Tuma appears to be the first one with that surname in the records of Loučim.

Conclusion

Good progress was made in researching the Thuma family back three generations prior to the immigrant John W. Thuma of Nebraska, to Jan Tuma and Magdalena Nowotny, born in the 1720s. They appear to have come to Loučim before 1762. The next step in researching this family would be to search neighboring parishes during the period 1727-1738. Many of the parishes in this region have records going back to the 1600s, so with some investment in another research project, there is a good chance the earlier origins of this family could be discovered, and the family line might be extended back a few more generations.

There also remains much more that could be done in researching some of the female ancestors' lineages back earlier in time if this is something desired at some point in the future. This would include the Spertl (Spedl), Engelman, and Nowotna families. Also, efforts could be made to discover more about the siblings of John W. Thuma, to identify their descendants, and to determine if there might be descendants of this family who still live in the same area of the Czech Republic today.

Your Research Package

Our research for this session comprises several elements, each of which is critical to the results of our efforts on your behalf. This report must be seen in conjunction with these other parts as the full scope of the research you requested.

Research Report. This document walks you through our research, highlights the important information we uncovered and discusses the challenges we faced.

Research Journal. The accompanying Research Journal is the list of our searches, both successful and not successful. The Research Journal documents the true scope of the research performed during this session. It is an essential tool for future research because it also details sources that did not provide new information.

Document Images. These copies of the documents we uncovered during our research contain the key information we found about your family, along with full citations for those records.

Private Family Tree. We created a private family tree at *Ancestry* for the family lines we researched, to which you have already been invited. This tree not only reflects the documented information you provided, but it also presents the information we discovered.



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