

# A Tale of Two Sisters



*“We never missed a day not thinking about what happened, even though we did not talk about the Holocaust. But eventually we started to speak out with hope that something so terrible would never happen again.”*

Cela Tishgarten Miller, June 22, 1998



Bluma and Cela.



Sketch of Pinczov, Poland

**1920’s Pinczow, Poland**—6 children are born to Haskell and Rachel Tishgarten. The family lives above their store where Haskell is a leather merchant.

**May 3, 1924**—Cela Tishgarten is born, the third of 6 children.

**June 10, 1926** –Bluma Tishgarten is born, the fourth of 6 children.

**1939-1942**—Political unrest increases in Eastern Europe and Pinczow is partially burned. The Tishgarten family is forced to move to a cousin’s home that has been spared.

**August, 1942**—As the German round ups begin in Pinczow, the family is compelled to make some difficult and urgent decisions. Haskell and son Kalma join the “partisans” (Jewish resistance). Oldest daughter Genya, with infant child, as well as youngest daughters Salah and Yentela must stay. Rachel shoves the family savings into 18 year old Cela and 16 year old Bluma’s pockets, and forces them to flee and hide in the nearby woods.



**September, 1942**—The sisters have a chance meeting with their Uncle David Tishgarten and 2 cousins. As they all continue to take refuge in the woods, they build a shed and survive by buying bread from the nearby farmers. In constant fear of betrayal by these Polish farmers, the group walks for 2 nights to Chmelnick, to hide in another uncle’s wood mill. The Nazis unsuccessfully search for the sisters on several occasions, forcing them to hide amongst the woodpiles. Fear of discovery forces the sisters to make another difficult decision.

**September, 1942-January, 1944**—The sisters hear an announcement from a loud megaphone that the Nazis are offering a “plan”—*spare your life and work in a “work camp” or risk being captured with unknown consequences.* Because rumors of Hitler’s “Final Solution” were circulating throughout Europe, Cela and Bluma choose to present themselves and take their chances in a work camp. The sisters are taken to a Hassag slave labor camp in Kielce where they manufacture ammunition for the Germans.

Hassag work camp.

**February-1944-December, 1944**—The sisters are taken to Chostochau, another work camp, where they toil daily, working on airplanes.

**January, 1945-March, 1945**—With the advancement of the Russian Army, Cela and Bluma are sent to Bergen-Belsen Concentration Camp. In March, the sisters are again shuffled to a different work camp, Burgau, to continue as slave laborers, by painting airplanes.

**April, 1945- June, 1945**—Bluma contracts typhoid fever and is cared for by her sister Cela. Just as Bluma recovers, Cela falls victim to the fever.

