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# Fred Blum & Diane Cowan

# Confidential Investigative Services Inc.

# Secrets of Finding People



Our President, Fred Blum, is also President of Confidential Investigative Services, Inc. and Diane Cowan is Fred's partner and Vice President. Both have over 20 years experience in the "Private Eye" business. They shared their experience with us through discussion of a few cases where the objective was to find people.

### Case 1 -- Finding a Relative for the Red Cross

For a about two years, Fred has been helping the Philadelphia Red Cross and the International Red Cross Holocaust and War Victims Tracing Center to find people. His first case was in response to free ad in the *Jewish Exponent*. The Tracing Service, at the request of a relative in Israel, was looking for Leah ADELMAN, born about 1890 in Soroca, Romania. Leah had immigrated to the US in 1920, married a SESSLER and settled in Philadelphia.

Fred started with 1920-1940 Philadelphia City Directories and US Census Records at the National Archives. In the census, Fred found eight SESSLER families, but no Leah. Fred also searched the Passenger Arrivals at the National Archives without success. Naturalization records, however, proved to be useful. Fred found the naturalization of Lewis SISSLER, which led him to the 1944 naturalization of Etel Leah SISSLER, born in Soroca, Romania along with a daughter Bessie, born August 23, 1923.

A search of the Social Security Death Index for Lewis SISSLER showed that he died in Ventnor, New Jersey.  A search of Birthday resources through the Steve Morse One-Step Webpages site for Bessie born on August 23, 1923 resulted in 27 hits, but only one in

Ventnor, NJ. Bessie, the first cousin of the originator of the Red Cross search was found. Read more about this case at:

Diane Cowan spends many days finding people. She says that computers are indispensable in today's world. Diane discussed two of her recent cases.

## Case 2 -- Locating a Witness

Diane's case involved locating a witness when the only information available was that the woman's name was Mary and she worked as a hairdresser in Collegeville, PA. Diane could have called every Beauty Salon in Collegeville. Fortunately, there was an alternative. When searching for people in professions, many of these professions require a State license and many of these licensing databases are public and online.

The State Board of Licensing database allows wildcard searches and includes town and/or zip code fields. Diane searched for hairdressers named Mary in Collegeville and was able to narrow the field to three people and found her witness. In other cases, more legwork or phone work is required to identify the subject from amongst more possible people

## Case 3 -- Finding an Old Girlfriend

This case involved finding a male client's High School girlfriend thirty years later. They had the girlfriend's maiden name, her town of residence after graduation (in Northern New Jersey), and the fact that she was Italian. The client wanted to know about her life and to see her on a videotape. He did not want o meet or talk to her.

The key to finding this woman was that she was of Italian heritage and likely to be Catholic. Diane called the Roman Catholic Churches and Schools in the area near the town where this woman grew up. Diane was fortunate to find a clerk at a Church who worked there when this woman was young. She remembered her because her birthday was December 25 -- Christmas day.

A little more work identified that she had moved to Massachusetts. Diane found her using newspapers, verified that she was the target of the search, and surreptitiously videotaped her. The client was thrilled.

Fred mentioned that many of the Internet tools mentioned by Ron Arons in his presentation to JGSGP in November 2006 are used by investigators to find people. Click here to see Ron's list.