

Long Distance Research: Genlighten

ONE OF THE challenges when doing genealogy research is that often we don't live, and won't be traveling, where original documents are held. When this happens, how do we find someone who might be able to help us?

One answer is Genlighten, <http://www.genlighten.com>. Genlighten connects genealogists to local researchers who can retrieve information from source documents. They also allow experienced genealogists a quick and simple way to offer lookup services online and earn extra income.

All too often, you need a vital record, obituary or other basic document, but you need the assistance of someone who lives locally. Though many documents have been digitized and are available on the web, via free or paid subscriptions, much more is only available at a local courthouse, archives, vital records office, local repository, etc.

I learned of Genlighten because, previously, when I needed specific documents from Cook County,

I used the services of Cynthia of Chicago genealogy (one of the co-founders of Genlighten, along with her husband Dean Richardson). I

did several projects involving individuals living in Chicago and the greater Cook County area and, time and again, I used her affordable, fast and specific services to obtain documents.

These are no-frills basic documents, such as an index entry, vital record, directory entry, voter registration or headstone photos,

versus general research. This service is geared toward the genealogist who knows exactly what they are seeking, and yet can't do it themselves.

The service is very easy to use. The providers all set their own rates. To find a lookup provider, click on "Lookups" in the menu, choose country, state and, if needed, choose county and record type. This will bring up a list of the available lookup

your shopping cart. Once you have put all that you need in your cart, you are then guided through the payment process. Eventually, the document or result will be uploaded to you.

To learn a bit more about the service, check out the great slide show on Cynthia's site, <http://chicagogenealogy.blogspot.com/2009/11/introducing-genlightencom.html>.

When you need locale-specific human-powered research,



Above: Genlighten homepage.
Left: How Genlighten works.

services and associated providers. When you find an entry of interest, you can click on the provider's name to learn more about them, or click on "get details" to learn more about what exactly is encompassed by the service. This will also give you the option to create your particular request and then add it to

which relies on the skills and experience of local researchers who know

their community's records firsthand, check out Genlighten. If all the providers are as professional as Cynthia, you'll be happy you obtained your next offline documents using this service.