

President's Letter - 2025 Year in Review

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Mr. Local History Project

184 W. Oak Street, Suite 101
Basking Ridge, New Jersey 07920

mrlocalhistory.org

IRS 501c3 non-profit charitable organization
info@mrlocalhistory.org

Our Mr. Local History Project Mission:

To preserve and promote New Jersey's local history with a social twist, as we are always looking to find new, fun ways to share stories about the great history of New Jersey.

2025 Annual Report

2025 Year in Review

2025 was a big year for the Mr. Local History Project. It marked our 5th year in operation and a milestone we're incredibly proud of reaching our one millionth visitor. What started as a simple passion for telling New Jersey's stories has grown into a well respected, statewide history project with readers showing up every day to learn, remember, and share. That continued curiosity and support confirms what we've believed all along people genuinely care about local history when it's told in a way that's fun, relatable, and rooted in real places and people.

Throughout the year, our researchers published and updated 307 stories and welcomed more than 147,000 active users, most of whom were discovering Mr. Local History for the first time. The stories that resonated most



followed a clear pattern readers loved learning where familiar sayings came from, revisiting iconic New Jersey landmarks and diners, and diving into human centered stories about families, local figures, and moments where New Jersey connects to the national story. Traffic came in waves driven by standout stories rather than background noise, showing that strong storytelling continues to be our biggest driver of growth as interest builds toward America's 250th anniversary.

Beyond the website, 2025 was about taking history into the community. From launching our New Jersey and America 250 collections and expanding the Wear Lost Local History program, to delivering more than 500 Bernards Township flags to local 5th graders through our Project Local History Ambassador Program, our focus stayed on making history visible, shareable, and accessible. Combined with four magazine issues, community events, partnerships, and educational outreach, 2025 was a year of creativity, momentum, and meaningful connection one that sets the stage for an exciting and impactful 2026.

This annual report has been approved by the Board of Trustees and will be filed with the State of New Jersey and GuideStar for Non-Profit organizations. 2025 represented the 5th year of operation for the Mr. Local History Project (referred to throughout as MLHP). The organization is a well-respected state-wide historic organization with a mission to preserve and promote local history with a social twist.

Administrative:

The Mr. Local History 2025 Tax Return will be filed to the IRS via the IRS online portal. Form 990-N postcard will be submitted to the IRS sometime in March 2026 after the Board has reviewed the report. There is a NJ State requirement for filing: a \$50 fee for non-profits as MLH is a registered and approved 501c3 Non-Profit Charitable organization. The Mr. Local History project received Candid's highest rating in 2025 with a Platinum Transparency designation. <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/84-3350277>



2025 Platinum Status Candid Non Profit

MLH Committee Updates

Digital Committee

Our Mr Local History logo creations in 2025 are a direct reflection of the creativity passion and pride of our designers who continue to find new ways to tell New Jersey's story visually. From seasonal and celebratory designs to bold patriotic interpretations each logo captured the spirit of place history and community while keeping the Mr Local History identity instantly recognizable. We extend a sincere thank you to our designers for their imagination flexibility and attention to detail whose work helped elevate our brand strengthened engagement and made our storytelling instantly shareable throughout the year.



Mr Local History Logo Creations 2025

Key 2025 Online Metrics/ www.mrlocalhistory.org:

Reaching our one millionth visitor in 2025 marked a major milestone for the Mr Local History Project and a powerful affirmation of the community's appetite for local storytelling. What began as a passion for preserving and sharing New Jersey history has grown into a widely discovered resource averaging hundreds of visitors each day drawn to stories that connect people places and memory. This achievement reflects years of consistent research writing and creative presentation and most importantly the continued support of readers who return share and contribute to keeping New Jersey's history alive as we head toward America's 250th anniversary.



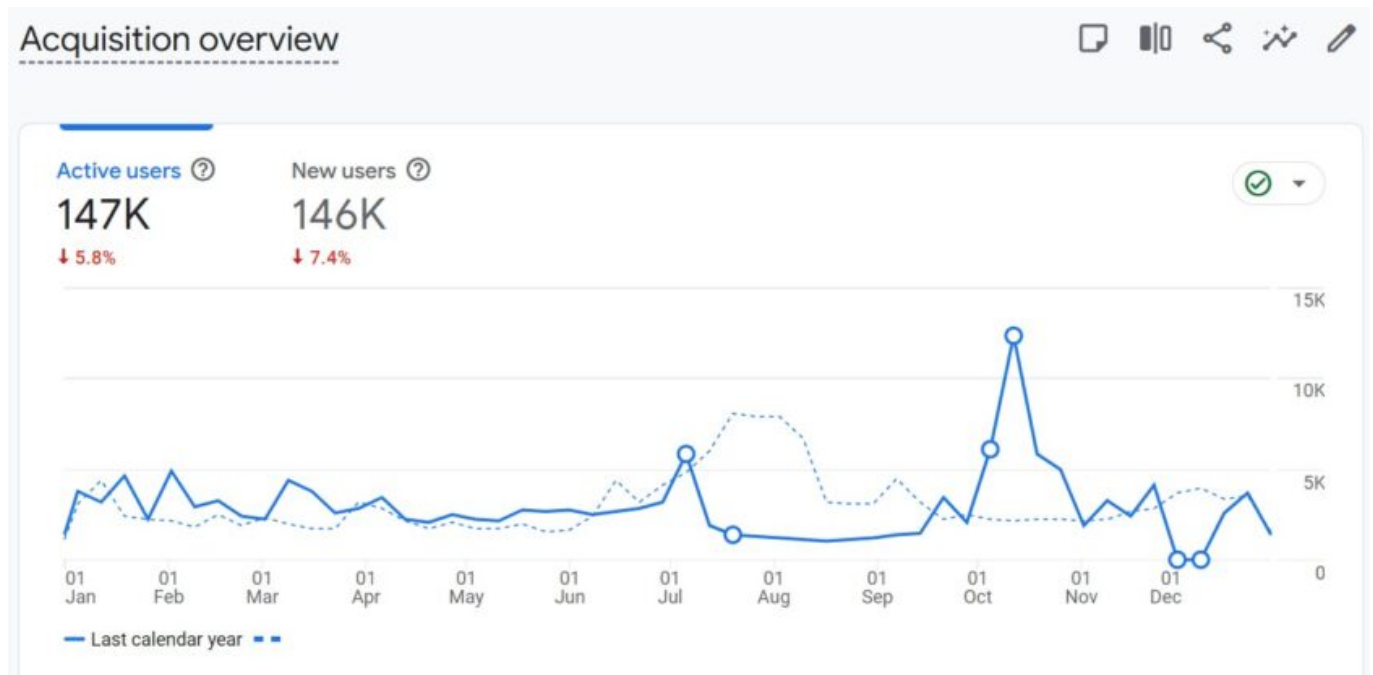
Mr Local History One Millionth Visitor Dec 26 2025



The 2025 acquisition data shows strong overall reach with **147K active users** and **146K new users**, confirming that Mr Local History continues to attract a predominantly new audience discovering the site for the first time. While both metrics declined modestly year over year, down **5.8% in active users** and **7.4% in new users**, traffic patterns reveal several important strengths. Engagement remained steady through much of the year, with noticeable surges in mid summer and a significant peak in October, indicating that specific stories, seasonal content, or external sharing events drove meaningful spikes well above baseline levels. Compared to 2023, 2025 demonstrates fewer but sharper traffic peaks, suggesting that individual high performing stories are



increasingly responsible for audience growth rather than uniform background traffic. Overall, the data indicates a healthy discovery driven site with strong episodic performance, positioning Mr Local History well to capitalize on major storytelling moments and increased national interest leading into America's 250th anniversary.



Mr Local History Google Analytics Users 2025

The top searches in 2025 reveal a strong public appetite for stories that blend New Jersey history, colorful language, food culture, and notable people. Many of the most searched terms center on the origins of familiar sayings, reflecting curiosity about where everyday expressions come from, while others highlight sustained interest in local landmarks, diners, estates, and community figures. Searches tied to well known personalities and historic places underscore the value of approachable, story driven history that connects national moments to local settings. Overall, the data shows that readers are drawn to content that is informative, entertaining, and distinctly New Jersey, reinforcing Mr. Local History's mission to make the past engaging and relevant.



Top Search Terms 2025

#	Search Term	Theme
1	colder than a witches tit origin	Sayings & Phrase Origins
2	kienast quintuplets	Local People & Community Stories
3	cold as a witches teat	Sayings & Phrase Origins
4	bendix diner	New Jersey Food & Dining
5	john paulson big short	New Jersey Food & Dining
6	steve eisman	American History & Figures
7	colder than a witches in a brass bra origin	Sayings & Phrase Origins
8	colder than a witches	Sayings & Phrase Origins
9	colder than a witches tit	Sayings & Phrase Origins
10	cold as a witches tit	Sayings & Phrase Origins
11	john paulson the big short	New Jersey Food & Dining
12	kienast quintuplets today	American History & Figures
13	witches tit	Sayings & Phrase Origins
14	henry ruschmann	Local People & Community Stories
15	henry knox	NJ History & Landmarks
16	bill kienast	American History & Figures
17	trump bedminster home	NJ History & Landmarks
18	cold as a witch's teat	Sayings & Phrase Origins
19	mr local history	Brand & Project Awareness
20	sky farm nj	NJ History & Landmarks
21	kienast quints today	Local People & Community Stories
22	waterloo village concerts	NJ History & Landmarks
23	john paulson	American History & Figures
24	blairsdon mansion	NJ History & Landmarks
25	george motz burger list	New Jersey Food & Dining



Top Searches Mr. Local History 2025

In 2025, the Mr. Local History Project researchers posted and revised 307 posts to the Mr. Local History website. In 2025 the most successful Mr Local History stories shared a clear pattern of what resonates most with our audience. Readers were drawn first to stories that explain the origins of familiar sayings and phrases followed closely by deeply local New Jersey history tied to recognizable places people food and community mysteries. Human centered stories about families local figures and cultural moments consistently performed well alongside nationally significant figures whose stories intersect with New Jersey. Together the top stories show that engaging accessible storytelling rooted in place curiosity and shared memory drives strong readership and reinforces Mr Local History's role as a trusted and widely discovered source for New Jersey history as we move toward America's 250th anniversary.



Top 25 Stories of 2025 – Mr Local History

#	Story Name	Theme
1	Origins of Cold as Balls and Cold as a Witch's Teet	Sayings and Phrase Origins
2	Home – Mr Local History Project	Brand and Project Awareness
3	President Trump's Historic Summer White House in Bedminster,	NJ History and Landmarks
4	The World's Oldest Glitter Factory Started in Bernardsville, New Jersey	NJ History and Industry
5	Where Are the Kienast Quintuplets from Liberty Corner – 50+ Years Later	Local People and Community Stories
6	A Jersey Ship That Never Sailed – The Flagship in Union	NJ History and Landmarks
7	The Tiny Green Gate House on Hillcrest Road in Warien Township	NJ History and Local Mysteries
8	Characters of "The Big Short" by Michael Lewis	American History and Figures
9	Jackie Kennedy Onassis' Time in Bernardsville and	American History and Figures
10	Jackie Kennedy Onassis' Time in Bernardsville and Peapack	American History and Figures
11	Jackie Kennedy Onassis' Time in Bernardsville and Peapack	American History and Figures
12	Retrospective: Jackis Kennedy Onassis in Bernardsville and Peapack	Local People and Community Stories
11	The Hall-Mills Murder: America's First Sensationalized Trial	Crime and American History
12	America's Oldest Nudist Colony Is in Liberty Corner, New Jersey	NJ History and Social History
13	Jersey's Historic Bendix Diner –	New Jersey Food and Dining
14	Building AT&T Headquarters in Basking Ridge	NJ Corporate and Development History
15	Legendary Jimmy Buffs Italian Hot Dog	New Jersey Food and Dining
16	Jersey's Bendix Diner Story – Forced to Sell	New Jersey Food and Dining
17	Jersey Pizzerias and the Mafia's-Pizza Connection Trial	NJ Development and Community History
18	America's Oldsteadnants - History of Bedminster and Bernards Township	Crime and NJ Food History
25	AT&T's Colden Boy Has Had a Tough Life	NJ Corporte and Human Interest History



Top Posts Mr. Local History 2025

Education

In 2025, our Project Local History Ambassador Program in Bernards Township, New Jersey was a great success. MLHP held assemblies at each of the Bernards Township Elementary schools and St. James, presenting an official Bernards Township flag and information card to every 5th grader. The program will continue in 2026 and is 90% funded. Over 500 Bernards Township flags were presented at no charge, along with an all 5th grade assembly highlighting the history of the Bernards Township flag and its meaning.



Programs

This year Mr Local History launched the *New Jersey and America 250* Redbubble collection, a creative effort to celebrate New Jersey's unique places, people, and stories as America approaches its 250th anniversary. The collection features original artwork and designs inspired by iconic New Jersey landmarks, historic sites, and local traditions, offering apparel, accessories, and gifts that resonate with both residents and history lovers. By connecting tangible heritage with everyday culture, the collection helps support Mr Local History's mission to make local history engaging, accessible, and meaningful, while inviting a wider audience to wear and share their pride in the Garden State's role in the broader American story.



Wear Lost Local History Program: The program contains over 290 recreated digital logos from lost businesses across New Jersey. The images were loaded to a new Redbubble online storefront that “Prints-On-Demand” any digital creations on over 65 products. MLHP has no upfront costs for producing the products. That means there are over 18,850 combinations for our followers to choose from our Redbubble Wear Lost Local History program

MLH again supported and promoted the New Jersey Historic Wooden Village Keepsake collection in cooperation with T3 Consortium acting as the underwriter and sponsor to the series. The collection has grown now to 40 designs. Over the past year, Mr. Local History explored and shared stories from across New Jersey, highlighting places that define local character and collective memory, from the music legacy of Stone Pony in Asbury Park to the deep historic roots of Basking Ridge, including the Astor Estate, Basking Ridge Christmas Eve, Basking Ridge Church and Oak, Basking Ridge Oak Tree, Brick Academy, Boudinot House, KMS Farmstead, Lyons VA Historic District, Washington House, and Widow Whites Tavern.



New Jersey Historic Village Collection at year end 2025.

Stories continued through Bedminster with Lamington House, Bernardsville with the Bernardsville Cinema, Jerolamans General Store, Olcott School, and Vealtown Tavern, and Cranford with the Cranford Canoe Club, Cranford High School, Cranford Hotel, Cranford Theater, and Riverside Inn. Coverage extended to signature moments like the Far Hills Race Meeting, iconic eateries such as White Manna, New Jersey Diner, Krugs Tavern, and Jimmy Buffs, and beloved landmarks including Lucy the Elephant, Ford Mansion, Blairsden Estate, Natirar Estate, Sandy Hook Lighthouse, Union Flagship, EggOmat, and community anchors throughout Westfield, including the Jolly Trolley and Westfield Fire Dept, Mindowaskin Park, Mindowaskin Winter, Rialto Theater, and Westfield Presbyterian Church, culminating at the enduring symbol of summer and tradition along the Wildwood Boardwalk.

Events/Highlights

The four Mr Local History Magazine issues released in 2025 showcased the breadth and energy of New Jersey storytelling across the seasons. The Spring issue focused on local pride and rediscovery highlighting iconic places community traditions and the best of Jersey culture as the year began. The Summer issue leaned into celebration and Americana with strong patriotic themes roadside history and classic destinations that define warm weather in New Jersey. The Fall issue explored deeper historical narratives from farms and estates to mysteries and legends grounding readers in the layered past of the state. The Holiday issue wrapped up the year with festive charm spotlighting shopping guides seasonal traditions downtowns and ways to support local history and businesses making the magazine both reflective and forward looking as the year closed.



Mr Local History Magazine Covers 2025

- Project Local History Ambassador Sponsor – 5th-grade Bernards Township flag program (April/May 2025)
- Bernards Township Charter Day – May 24, 2025
- Halloween Story Telling Fundraiser – Warren – October 24, 2025
- Small Business Saturday Participant – November 29, 2025
- Giving Tuesday Participant – December 2, 2025

Finances

All monies received by the Mr. Local History Project went towards preserving and promoting New Jersey's local history. Donations, store sales, and event fundraising accounted for 100% as no 2024 grants were submitted or received. Details will be released as we prepare our IRS returns for the year in March 2026.

Looking Ahead to 2026



The Mr. Local History Project looks ahead to 2026 with an expanded vision designed to reach broader audiences



throughout Somerset County and across New Jersey. The organization will continue successful programs such as Elder Voices and the Project Local History Ambassador initiative in Bernards Township while maintaining a strong presence at community events including Bernards Township Charter Day and the Bernards Township Day of Community Service and Pride as additional coordinators are needed. New initiatives will also launch including Painting Local History which will engage local elders from across the Somerset Hills.

In addition Mr Local History speakers will deliver multiple America 250 public programs activities and event representations in 2026 celebrating the nation's 250th semiquincentennial. These efforts will include featured speaking engagements on the Sacking of General Lee in Basking Ridge and its impact on the campaign the American flag story of Francis Hopkinson versus Betsy Ross and other engaging history driven presentations offered to the public.



Board of Trustees:

Our 2025 Board of Trustees remained simple with a straightforward structure and was approved at our first meeting of the year. The organization met as needed to discuss programs, volunteers, supporters, researchers, and finances.

- Brooks Betz – President (Chair/Secretary)
- Jill Betz – Vice President (Vice Chair/Treasurer)
- Advisors/ Researchers: Paula Axt, Meg Wastie

Respectfully submitted:
Brooks H. Betz



Chair / President
Mr. Local History Project, LLC
Registered and accredited IRS 501c3 non-profit charity

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