



What **Stories: YES** does

- CATALYST sparks activity and change for young people in rural communities.
- IMMEDIATE GAINS in technology and 21st century skills while also focusing on local history.
- RIPPLE EFFECTS impact participants, communities and the Smithsonian's ability to document rural life in the American Experience.



Smithsonian

Evaluation (2016)

5 communities,
4 states,
2 MoMS exhibitions,

203 youth participants

FINDING 1 Catalyst for increasing resources and opportunities for youth in rural communities.

First **technology** project:

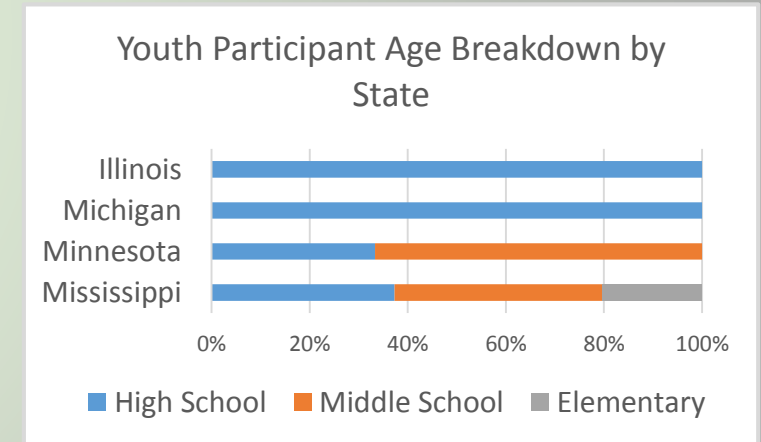
- **70%** youth participants
- **50%** project leaders
- **33%** educators

First **public history** project:

- **65%** youth participants
- **100%** educators
- 25% project leaders



- Increased **community engagement** with local history.
- Over **1000 people** were introduced to local stories at events.

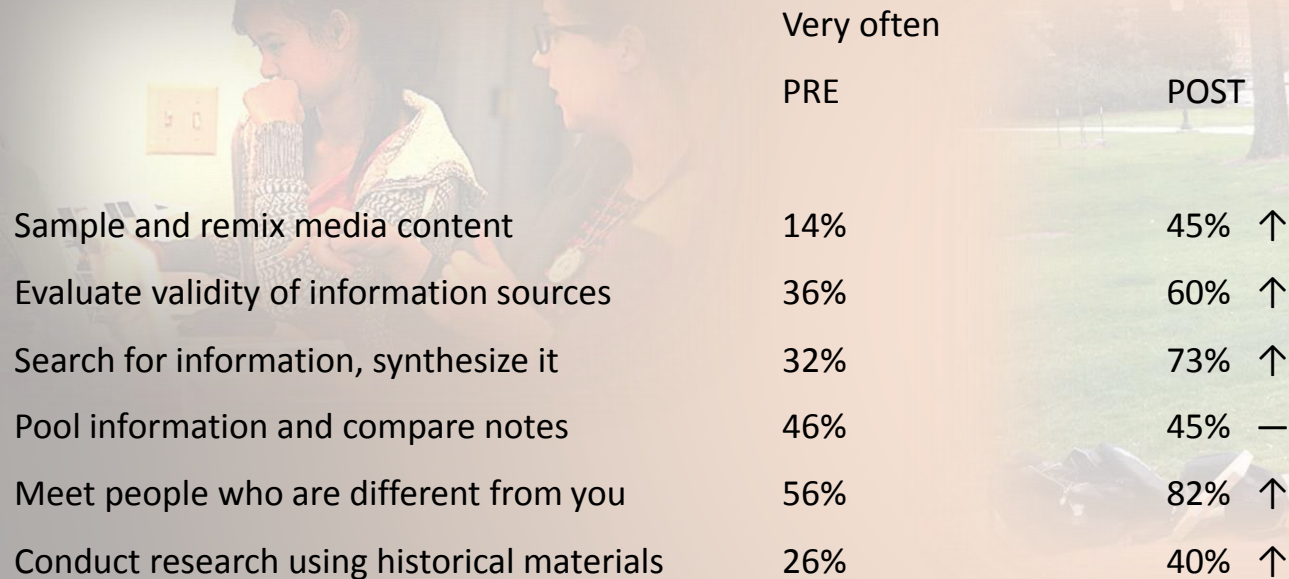


*“We actually had **people calling to ask if they could be interviewed by the students.**”*—Historical Society Director, Lawrenceville, IL

CATALYST

FINDING 2 Youth participants increased technology use and practiced 21st century learning skills.

Q. How often have you had the opportunity to do the following:



	Very often PRE	POST
Sample and remix media content	14%	45% ↑
Evaluate validity of information sources	36%	60% ↑
Search for information, synthesize it	32%	73% ↑
Pool information and compare notes	46%	45% —
Meet people who are different from you	56%	82% ↑
Conduct research using historical materials	26%	40% ↑
Conduct and oral history interview	9%	64% ↑

50% increase in moderate to great deal of HD video recorder use

28% increase in moderate to great deal of digital storage & transport device use

*“Even though kids have phones, the tech has been really helpful because it’s more complex and enables us to **create something really professional**, documentary quality.”*

—Technology Leader, Gulfport, MS

IMMEDIATE GAINS

FINDING 3 Oral history collection increased.

*“Figuring out **questions and how to interview** people was the most challenging and **most rewarding** for [youth].” —Project Leader, Mahomet, IL*

60 new oral history interviews were conducted and explored:

- Political issues
- Recurring floods
- Immigration
- Modern agriculture
- First female NFL referee
- Veterans



*“It’s better that it wasn’t done in school because it was something that **I had to take responsibility** for and complete instead of just trying to get an A.”*

—Student, 8th grade, Lanesboro, MN

IMMEDIATE GAINS

FINDING 4 Young people feel appreciated by adults and adults recognize the talents and contributions of young people.



BEFORE *Stories: YES*

34% agreed that adults listened to young people

AFTER *Stories: YES*

82% agreed
that adults
listen to young
people

“This project and working with these three young women is the highlight of my career.”

—Project and Technology Leader, Lanesboro, MN

RIPPLE EFFECTS

FINDING 5 Adults and youth increase their understanding of how their community contributes to U.S. history.

*“Through this program I learned that there is so much **history I never knew** about such as Whirlpool, shipping companies, and the farming businesses that were once here.”—Student, St. Joseph, MI*

*“This has been a challenge, but I have enjoyed working with folks I don't normally work with. It has caused me to be more **aware of our local history** and to become more active in the historical society.” – Project Leader and Retired Teacher, Lawrenceville, IL*

BEFORE Stories: YES	AFTER Stories: YES	IMPROVEMENT
39% of youth were either neutral or believed that their local community did not make a contribution to U.S. history	8%	31% ↓
30% of youth said it was true or very true that their community made a contribution to U.S. History	50%	20% ↑
22% of youth were neutral about community’s contribution to U.S. history	8%	14% ↓

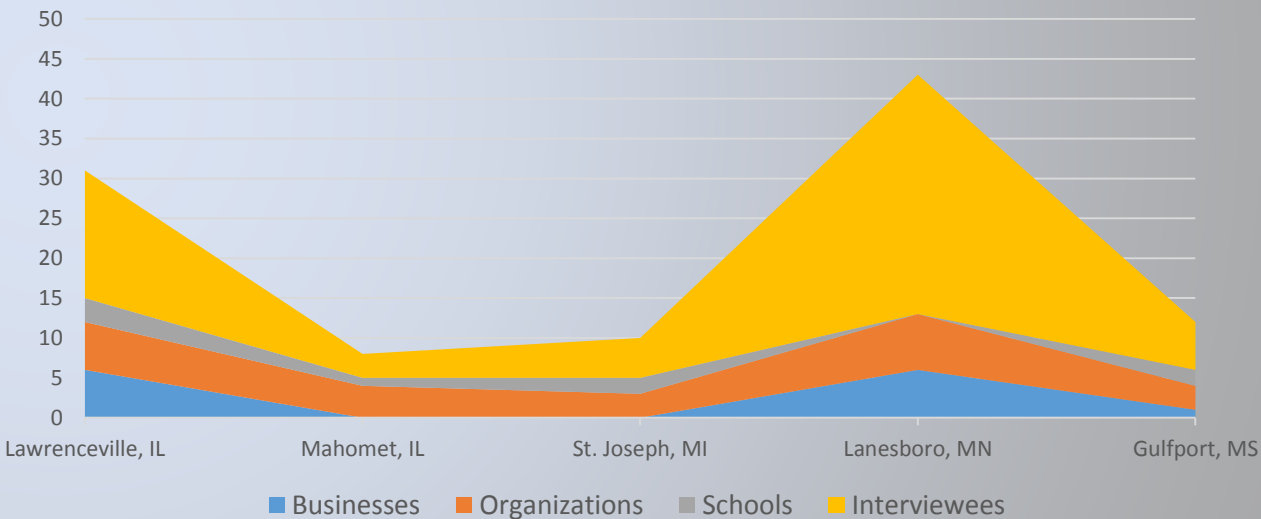
RIPPLE EFFECTS

FINDING 6 *Stories: YES* involved members of communities in local history, some for the first time.



*“The **community** so thoroughly supported us it is hard to know where to begin. The daily newspaper, the weekly newspaper, the radio station, a TV station, our own staff production team, the mayor, the County Board of Commissioners, the merchants, the Rotary, the Chamber of Commerce, the Retired Teachers' Organization, the Churches and so many individuals embraced the project.”*
—Historical Society Director, Lawrenceville, IL

Community Participation



Youth **interviewed** elected officials, veterans, business owners, athletes, and other young people.

RIPPLE EFFECTS

FINDING 7 An archive of rural stories and oral histories is accumulating and has potential use in communities, for researchers, and the Smithsonian.

