

Proposal: Ridgewood Historical Society Programming & Contributions

For the History & Cultural Center of Bergen County

Submitted by:

*Ridgewood Historical Society
Schoolhouse Museum, Ridgewood, NJ*

Introduction

The Ridgewood Historical Society is honored and excited to partner with the newly established **History & Cultural Center of Bergen County**. As one of the county's oldest and most respected historical organizations, we are deeply committed to preserving and sharing the stories that shape our region. Together, we believe we can create engaging, accessible, and meaningful programming that brings Bergen County's rich history to life.

We propose a collaborative slate of programming and contributions that highlight the people, places, and pivotal moments that define our shared heritage, while creating lasting educational and cultural value for visitors of all ages.

Proposed Programming & Contributions

1. The Schedler Book Club

A monthly book group hosted on-site, focusing on the history of Bergen County and the broader region. Selected works will span nonfiction, memoir, historical fiction, and primary sources. Discussions will be led by local historians, educators, and guest authors, with a goal of deepening community knowledge and sparking lively conversation.

2. Story Slam Evenings

Inspired by oral history traditions, these storytelling nights will invite residents to share personal or family stories rooted in the region. Whether funny, moving, or surprising, these true tales will foster connection, empathy, and community pride. Stories will be recorded (with permission) and may contribute to a permanent oral history archive.

3. Children's Programming

We propose developing a robust curriculum tailored to school groups, scouting organizations, and youth ministries. Programming will include:

- Hands-on activities aligned with state social studies standards
- Interactive tours and scavenger hunts
- Period reenactments and storytelling sessions
- Artifact exploration and craft projects related to daily life in early Bergen County

Our goal is to spark curiosity and build a sense of place in young learners.

4. Artifact Sharing & Rotating Exhibits

The Ridgewood Historical Society is proud to care for a significant collection of artifacts that represent the region's agricultural, military, domestic, and civic history. We propose:

- Rotating curated exhibits hosted at the Zabriskie House
- Temporary loans of relevant pieces for thematic exhibitions
- Collaborative curation with staff from the History & Cultural Center

These exhibits will help interpret the space and offer new reasons for repeat visits.

5. Guided Walking Tours & Living History Reenactments

We propose offering seasonal walking tours and immersive reenactments that explore the Zabriskie property and surrounding areas. With participation from:

- Ridgewood High School students
- Local historians and actors
- Revolutionary War reenactment groups

These programs will bring historical moments to life and offer unforgettable educational experiences.

6. Inclusion in Historic House Tour

As part of our historic house tour, we would be proud to formally include the Zabriskie House as a key destination, offering special tours, interpretive signage, and docents in period attire.

7. 250th Anniversary of the United States (2026)

We look forward to collaborating with the Center and other local organizations in celebration of America's 250th anniversary. Our proposed contributions include:

- Co-sponsoring lecture series and educational events
 - Providing speakers and facilitators from our network of historians and scholars
 - Offering event or exhibit space at the Schoolhouse Museum as needed
 - Developing special programs focused on Revolutionary War history and Bergen County's role in America's founding
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Our mission has always been to preserve the past and inspire the future—and we see the History & Cultural Center of Bergen County as a natural partner in that mission. Together, we can offer residents and visitors vibrant programming that honors our shared heritage and builds stronger community ties.

We look forward to the opportunity to collaborate and welcome further discussion to shape these ideas into action.