



SILVER LAKE MILL

Since 1822

On Thursdays and Fridays, you are invited to take a self-guided tour of the Mill. On Saturdays, you are able to enjoy our public area on the first floor.

Cogs and gears, wheels and shafts, massive wooden beams and extraordinarily textured limestone—all converge to create a rich setting in which to enjoy Shenandoah Valley history.

Beautifully situated along the banks of Silver Lake, the mill was one of hundreds that once dotted the Valley and served as a community gathering place.

At Silver Lake Mill, you'll enjoy glimpses of the mill's history. If you are lucky, you'll get to see one of our famous cats, who are the stars of our "Silver Lake Tales" series of children's books!



The Civil War: Burning Sadness



Daniel Bowman, owner of the mill and a man of the Brethren faith, may have been pleased when the 116th Ohio Volunteer Infantry camped around the village of Dayton in early October 1864. Opposed to slavery and opposed to war, Daniel was known in the community as a Unionist.

With a paper signed by General Philip Sheridan that ordered Union troops to spare his flour mill, Daniel believed his property would be protected.

Yet, General George Armstrong Custer and his cavalry troops, on their way to the "back road" to begin their assigned burning, set the torch to Daniel Bowman's mill. According to affidavits from witnesses, General Custer said the paper no longer mattered.



The burning of Daniel Bowman's mill, and one of his homes, is just one small part of the Valley's story known as "The Burning."

Colonel Thomas Wildes of the 116th Ohio Volunteer Infantry saved the village of Dayton through his emotional plea to General Sheridan to spare its kind inhabitants.

Nature's Bounty at Silver Lake



Silver Lake, on Virginia's Birding and Wildlife Trail, is fed by a natural spring producing 2.8 million gallons a day. The lake provides the backdrop for a diverse population of year-round and migratory

fowl, along with other creatures ranging from very large snapping turtles and muskrats to crayfish and trout.

Silver Lake was created in 1822, when John Rife received permission to dam the stream in order to build his mill.

