



The History of Silver Lake as Told Through Its Deeds

Discussion Prompts for Educators and Students

Welcome to our guide for teachers using "The History of Silver Lake as Told Through Its Deeds." Below, you'll find 43 discussion questions covering different parts of Silver Lake's past like family, faith, wartime service, education, and even sanitation. Each question can help start a discussion or assess understanding. A companion document is available upon request with Authors' suggested answers. These questions are grouped into seven topics. Use them to get your students talking and thinking critically in class.

Group 1: The Story of Torchia Hill, Log Haven: The Henkelmann Family Retreat, Linger Longer: A Miller Tradition

Group 2: Settlement and the Kaufman, Cline and Stonesifer Years

Group 3: The Silver Lake Improvement Company, The Silver Lake Community Association, Public Health Concerns, and Looking Forward

Group 4: Natural Resources and Silver Lake

Group 5: The Spillway: Function, Modification, and Stormwater Management

Group 6: South Point School and Training Young People

Group 7: Other Characters

Group 1: The Story of Torchia Hill, Log Haven: The Henkelmann Family Retreat, Linger Longer: A Miller Tradition

1. How do the Torchia, Henkelmann and Miller families prioritize family unity and connection, especially in the face of challenges such as war, financial hardships, and changes in their lives?
2. Discuss the role of tradition and heritage in shaping the values and priorities of the Torchia , Henkelmann and Miller families. How do they pass down these traditions from one generation to the next?
3. Reflect on the intergenerational relationships within the Torchia, Henkelmann and Miller families. How do grandparents, parents, and grandchildren contribute to the richness of family life?
4. Reflect on your own family experiences and traditions. How do they compare to those of the Torchia, Henkelmann and Miller families? What lessons can you learn from their stories about the importance of family in your own life?



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5. How does faith influence the actions and decisions of characters like Meade Torchia and Reinhold Henkelmann in the narrative?
6. Discuss the role of prayer and divine intervention in shaping Andy Torchia's experiences and outcomes.
7. Why do people name their children after victorious generals in war, as was likely the case with Winfield Scott Hammond after General Winfield Scott and William Grant Stonesifer after Ulysses S. Grant?
8. Discuss the experiences of two soldiers who were present at Normandy during World War II – Harry Peck in his disabled landing craft and Dr. Eugene Hetrick in battlefield hospitals.

Group 2: Settlement and the Kaufman, Cline and Stonesifer Years

1. What roles did Silver Lake, and others like it, play in Central Pennsylvania's development?
2. How did the Quakers' guiding principles of non-violence, belief in the sanctity of life, and stewardship influence their interactions with the indigenous Susquehannock people?
3. Reflecting on the challenges faced by the English Quakers during their journey, such as the innovative crossing of the Susquehanna River using canoes, what do you think drove their determination to settle in the Redland Valley?
4. What were the implications of John Hart Kaufman's purchase of the mill and water rights between the Bennett Run diversion dam and the mill?
5. How did the paving of the "Road to New Cumberland" and the broader Progressive Era in the United States influence perceptions of Silver Lake and its potential for recreational development?
6. How did lakes and rivers contribute to amusement parks? And why did being close to beautiful water make these parks more attractive to visitors?
7. Discuss the role of William G. Stonesifer in the transformation of Silver Lake into a resort, including his engagement with a surveyor to plot out lots for small summer cottages.



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8. Analyze the challenges faced in selling hillside lots at Silver Lake and the strategies employed to attract buyers. What implications did these challenges have for the overall development of the area?
9. Evaluate the impact of Guy Stonesifer's sudden death on the development plans for Silver Lake.
10. What factors contributed to William G. Stonesifer's decision to transfer all unsold parcels and lake maintenance obligations to SLIC after the death of his son Guy?

Group 3: The Silver Lake Improvement Company, The Silver Lake Community Association, Public Health Concerns, and Looking Forward

1. How did the formation of the Silver Lake Improvement Company (SLIC) mark a turning point in the development and preservation of Silver Lake?
2. What role did the Silver Lake Community Association (SLCA) play in the transfer of ownership of the lake, dams, and streams from SLIC, and how did it contribute to the long-term preservation of Silver Lake?
3. Discuss the impact of the introduction of sanitary sewers on the Silver Lake community, particularly in terms of changing demographics and lifestyle patterns.

Group 4: Natural Resources and Silver Lake

1. Why were stone walls built along West Street at Silver Lake, and how do they serve functions beyond just looking nice? What makes their design and materials useful?
2. How did stone masons leave their mark on the architectural heritage of Silver Lake and its surroundings? Why was stone masonry such an important skill in the area's development?
3. Discuss the significance of the Atlantic Flyway and its role in the migration of birds. How does Silver Lake fit into this broader migratory pattern?
4. In what ways does Ken Boyer's transition from hunting to photography reflect a deeper appreciation for nature and its inhabitants?



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5. How did early settlers like millers use clay, specifically Bentonite, to maintain water levels in mill ponds like Silver Lake? What role did this clay play in preventing water drainage?

Group 5: The Spillway: Function, Modification, and Stormwater Management

1. How has the landscape around Silver Lake changed over its 250-year history, and what impact has this had on the management of stormwater and the risk of dam breaches?
2. Describe the primary functions of the spillway at Silver Lake and the modifications it has undergone over time. How do these modifications contribute to the management of water flow and the prevention of dam breaches?
3. Reflect on Andy Torchia's harrowing experience at the spillway as an eight-year-old boy. What lessons can be learned from his story, and how does it underscore the importance of safety?

Group 6: South Point School and Training Young People

1. Reflecting on the students' response to Donald Snelbaker's challenge to explore their own area's history, what can we learn about the importance of local history education in fostering a sense of community pride and preserving cultural heritage?
2. Donald Snelbaker's dedication to "training young people" and preserving local history underscores the role of educators in nurturing a sense of curiosity and appreciation for the past. How can teachers and school administrators empower students to become active participants in preserving their community's heritage?
3. The preservation of the 6th-grade students' booklet as a historical artifact reflects a commitment to passing on knowledge and memories to future generations. What responsibility do individuals and institutions have in safeguarding and sharing local history, and how does this contribute to the collective identity of a community?
4. Discuss the role of oral history and firsthand accounts in preserving cultural traditions and memories passed down through generations. How can these narratives complement written records and archival materials in reconstructing the past?



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5. Reflecting on Andy Torchia's memories of Mrs. Effie Snyder's teaching methods, what insights can we gain about effective teaching strategies and their impact on students' educational experience?
6. What factors may have influenced Barbara Gross Forgas's disengagement with formal education, and how do her experiences emphasize the importance of recognizing and accommodating diverse learning styles and preferences?
7. How did the physical environment of the South Point Schoolhouse, including its rural setting and class size, shape students' experiences and interactions with learning? Discuss the significance of the school's communal atmosphere and its role in fostering a sense of belonging and community among students?
8. Compare and contrast Andy Torchia's and Barbara Gross Forgas's experiences at the South Point Schoolhouse with contemporary educational practices. How have attitudes towards education and teaching methods evolved over time, and what lessons can be drawn from historical approaches to schooling?
9. Barbara Gross Forgas's journey from a reluctant student to a successful entrepreneur illustrates the importance of adaptability and resilience in overcoming challenges and pursuing one's passions. Reflect on Barbara's transformation and discuss the lessons that can be gleaned from her perseverance and determination in the face of adversity.

Group 7: Other Characters

1. Reflecting on Ruth Stonesifer's advocacy for Gold Star Families and legislative measures following the loss of her son Kris, what insights can we gain about the impact of personal tragedy on broader social activism, and how does advocacy honor the sacrifices of military families?
2. How does the multi-generational legacy of the Hetrick family in providing rural medical care demonstrate the importance of family traditions and community service, and what lessons can be drawn from their commitment to serving others?



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3. How do Harry F. Peck's experiences during World War II and his retreat to Silver Lake highlight the role of natural landscapes in promoting resilience and emotional well-being during times of adversity?
4. How does Bobbie Stonesifer's journey from a fatherless boy at the Milton Hershey School to a skilled carpenter and family man reflect themes of resilience and adaptation in personal narratives, and what insights can be gleaned from his experiences?
5. How does the blind date arranged by their mothers that led to the marriage of Bobbie Stonesifer and Janice Good illustrate the influence of interpersonal connections on life trajectories and family narratives, and what role do the shared experiences of love and companionship play in shaping personal and family stories?