

TAYLORS FALLS SCENIC BOAT TOURS

A FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED BUSINESS SINCE 1906.

A Legacy on the St. Croix River

The History of the Muller Boat Company by Kayla Donahue



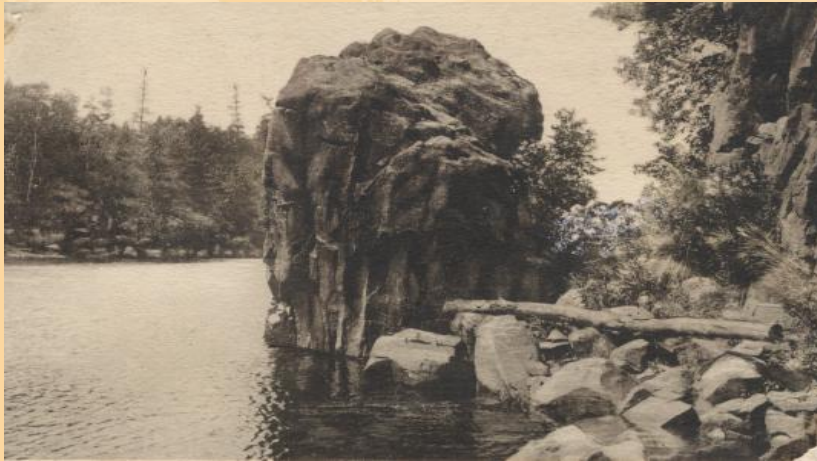
The Muller Boat Fleet, post 1965

Back before the Muller Boat Company began in Taylors Falls, Minn. in 1906 there were several who gave tours along the Upper Dalles of the St. Croix River. The rock formations we've come to know and love were shown along the river's edge by boat. Two brothers had rowed tourists along the current and back upstream pointing them out. The story goes that these brothers had joined the Church. While the Lord's Day was a valuable tour day, they were unable to sustain a profitable business model. The park commissioner then sent word to the Muller Family in Stillwater, Minn. to ask if one of their boys would come to Taylors Falls and give tours

through the Upper Dalles. Seventeen year old Carl Muller and his eight passenger power boat, *The Pinafore*, were up to the task. Thus, the beginning of Muller Boat Company, and what we know today as the Taylors Falls Scenic Boat Tours.

Canoeing on the St. Croix River, Interstate State Park

In 1910, Carl Muller added canoe and rowboat rentals, which we now know as the Taylors Falls Canoe & Kayak Rental. Muller had full days of tours, driving the tour boat down river, loading the canoes and rowboats, then bringing them all back up the river late into the night. This allowed passengers to get up close and personal to some of the rock formations along the river, such as Shadow Rock or Lion's Head.

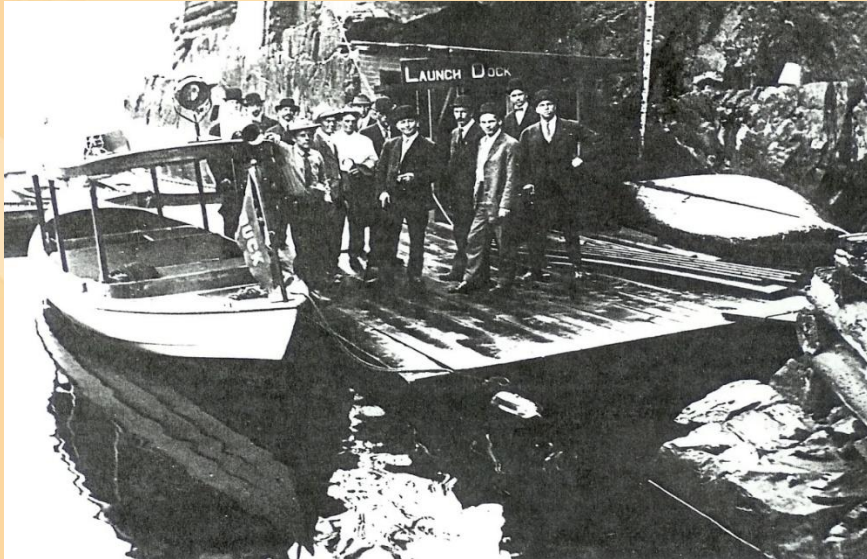


Shadow Rock, Vintage Post Card



Lion's Head, Vintage Post Card

After several successful summer seasons, Carl added a new, larger boat to the fleet.



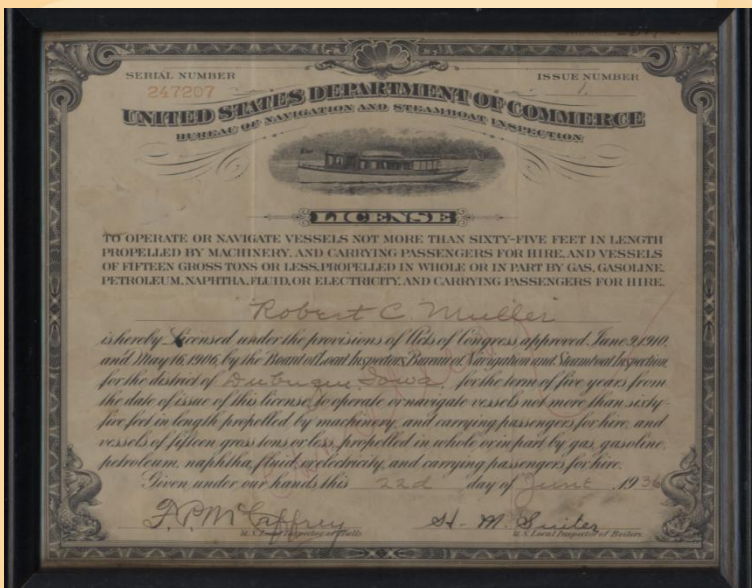
George Muller, his father still in Stillwater, built *The Duck*, aptly named after Carl's sweetheart, Katy Campbell's nickname. *The Duck* being a larger boat than *The Pinafore*, carried thirty two passengers for many years.

Original launch dock at Shadow Rock, with The Duck

September 28, 1911 was the day Carl Muller and Katy 'Duck' Campbell got married. They welcomed the next of the Muller Generation on August 10, 1918 when Robert 'Bob' Muller was born. Only a few years later, another man would begin offering tours along the Upper Dalles. This boat was *The Dalles*, a forty-foot boat that was reported to hold forty-eight to eighty passengers. After a short time, Carl purchased *The Dalles* to include in the Muller Boat Fleet.

In 1925, Carl's father, George, built yet another boat for his growing collection. With Bob being only seven years old at the time, they decided on the name *Robert C* for the vessel. He spent every available moment on the St. Croix River with his father. At the age of only fifteen, Bob piloted his very first tour with passengers in 1933. A few years prior to this milestone, *The Dalles Showboat* was built and introduced to the St. Croix River. This newest addition was forty-seven feet and carried up to passengers.

Father and son worked side-by-side for many years, rebuilding and maintaining each vessel as needed to allow for the scenic trips along the river to continue. As Bob grew into his role on the river, obtaining a pilot's license through the United States Coast Guard required only two letters of recommendation from reputable citizens of moral character and a licensing fee.



Robert C Muller's pilot's license from the United States Coast Guard, 1936

The Muller family continued to grow just like the business did. On March 9, 1940, Bob and Ann were married and welcomed Cynthia Ann Muller (Cam) into their family, and their life on the St. Croix River on February 12, 1941.

Cam's first boat ride was in 1941 aboard the *Robert C* with her grandparents and great-grandparents, an early glimpse into her role in the family business and life in the river valley.



Cam's first boat ride, 1941

When Cam was two years old, Bob stepped away from the family business to serve his country in the United States Navy. Two years later, he picked up right where he left off, alongside his father on the Upper Dalles of the St. Croix River. After a few more years, Cam became a big sister to Kathy in March of 1950. The Muller Boat Company continued for many years with Carl and Bob at the helm of the boats on the river as well as the family business.

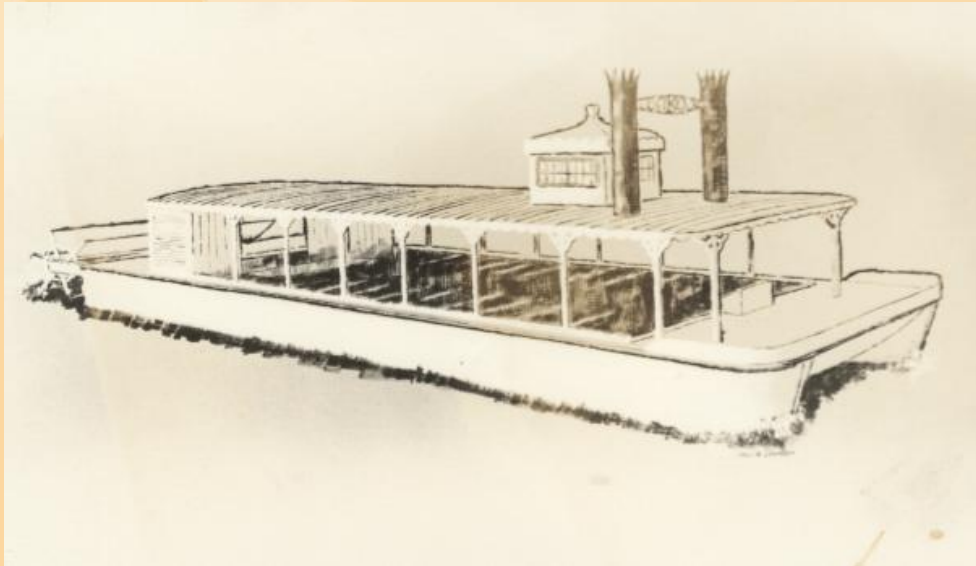
In a transition that had been years in the making, Bob acquired the Muller Boat Company from Carl in 1959. A year later, he also acquired a son-in-law. Dennis Raedeke



married Cam on August 29, 1960. It didn't take long for Dennis to not only join the family, but the family business, as well.

Bob Muller and Dennis Raedeke, aboard the unfinished Kathy M, 1963

The Muller/Raedeke family had much to celebrate in the years to follow. Cam and Dennis brought two boys into the world: Ron Raedeke, born June 10, 1961, and Dan Raedeke, born February 21, 1963. Bob had another boat built in 1965 as the other three wooden boats were in need of replacing after many years of carrying passengers and canoes up and down the river. Named after his second daughter, the *Kathy M*, was a forty-eight foot steel-hulled



powerboat with a non-driving paddle wheel in the back for appearances. Another addition to the family came in 1969 when Amy Raedeke (Frishmon) was born on September 18.

Sketch of the Kathy M

Cam and Dennis purchased Val Croix Ski Area from the Rivard brothers in 1972. They renamed it Wild Mountain, and in 1976 they took over management of the Muller Boat Company, allowing for staff to be employed in recreational activities in opposing seasons. Staff were on the boats in the summer and on the slopes in the winter.



Left to right: Earl Rivard, Kenneth Rivard, Dennis Raedeke, Leland Rivard, and Lloyd Rivard. Not pictured: Myles Rivard

Captain Bob still loved to drive the boats and continued to captain the *Kathy M* and even the newly built *Taylor's Falls Queen*. Dennis had the *Queen* built in 1980 out of La Crosse, Wis.



At eighty feet long with a 150-passenger capacity, the *Taylor's Falls Queen* has facilities to host dinner cruises, wedding receptions, and private charters of all types. She has a functional paddlewheel in the back, allowing the boat to make seven-mile round trips on the river.

Dennis Raedeke aboard The Taylor's Falls Queen

Over the next few years, *Kathy M* and the *Taylor's Falls Queen* would carry the business forward. During this time, *The Dalles* had been sawed up, *Robert C* was sold for excursion trips on Lake Okoboji, Iowa, and *The Dalles Showboat* was donated to the boy scouts in Stillwater, Minn.

The Robert C loaded to go to its new home



The Dalles, being sawed apart



Eventually, the demand grew for yet another, even larger vessel. Dennis built the *Taylor's Falls Princess* in 1985, in LaCrosse with ultralight aluminum construction and an even shallower draft. The eighty foot authentic paddle-wheeler would become the primary passenger boat to carry up to 250 passengers along the unpredictable water levels of the Upper Dalles. On August 17, 1985, Dan and Sanna celebrated their wedding reception aboard the *Taylor's Falls Princess*. The *Taylor's Falls Queen* and the *Taylor's Falls Princess* are the first paddle boats this far North of the St. Croix River since 1924.

Ryan Ramaley joined the company in 1988 and has worked closely with the family for 38 years, and counting. In 1989, the next of the Muller/Raedeke generation would take hold with the birth of Dominick Raedeke on February 2. That same year, Cam and Dennis retired from active management of the recreation companies to circumnavigate the world in their sailing catamaran, *Wild Wind III*. Their children, Ron, Dan, and Amy would resume managing the Muller Boat Company with the boat tours and canoe and kayak rental, and Wild Mountain Ski Area. A few years later, in 1995, the siblings purchased Wildwood RV Park & Campground in Shafer, Minn, just outside of Taylors Falls, and Amy married Scott Frishmon on June 10, 1995.



Dennis Raedeke, launching the Taylors Falls Princess, 1985

Ron, the eldest of the three siblings, decided to pursue a career in engineering and stepped away from the family business in 1999. Captain Bob Muller continued to operate boat tours until he was eighty-seven years old. Captain Mike Kelly worked with Captain Bob, Dennis, and family for 44 years.



Bob and Ann Muller's 40th Wedding Anniversary, 1980. Pictured from left to right: Cam Raedeke, Dennis Raedeke, Ann Muller, Captain Bob Muller, Kathy Carlson, Bob Carlson

In 2006, Taylors Falls Scenic Boat Tours celebrated 100 years of being a successful business and a staple in Taylors Falls. In 2018, Dominick joined the family business, receiving his pilot's license in 2022, working alongside Ramaley as Operations Managers for Taylors Falls Scenic Boat Tours, Taylors Falls Canoe and Kayak Rental, and Wildwood RV Park & Campground. Now, in 2026, another Frischmon is joining the ranks. Mike Frishmon, Scott and Amy's youngest, will be working for the family business starting this Spring.

The Muller/Raedeke/Frischmon family celebrating 100 years of the family business. From left to right, back row: Dan Raedeke, Dominick Raedeke, Olivia Raedeke, Ron Raedeke, Cam Raedeke, Dennis Raedeke, Scott Frischmon, Amy Frischmon, Heidi Carlson. Susie Carlson. Front row: Sanna Raedeke, Simone Raedeke (Pala), Will Raedeke, Maggie Raedeke, Kathy Carlson, Capt. Bob Muller, John Frishmon, Ellie Frischmon, Mike Frishmon



The same family is gearing up to celebrate 120 years of owning and operating Muller Boat Company. From so few requirements to receive a pilot's license from the US Coast Guard, to now requiring several hours of paperwork, a four part exam with a 70-90% passing score, background checks through Homeland Security, and having a notarized Maritime Oath, the same family over five generations has taken the helm to not only show you the Upper Dalles of the St. Croix River, but to experience it.

We're excited to share 120 years with everyone this year! We have big plans for special Anniversary Cruises. Happening each month, you'll have the opportunity to meet members of the Muller/Raedeke/Frischmon family, see historical photos and memorabilia, as well as receive an exclusive Taylors Falls Scenic Boat Tours commemorative t-shirt! Dates for the Anniversary Cruises are: May 16, June 14, July 19, August 23, and September 13. Get your tickets at taylorsfallsboat.com!

While we're gearing up for the 120th season in Taylors Falls, we're asking for your memories! Scan this QR code or enter this URL <https://forms.gle/qwjvhJJCroGg8avp6> into your browser to upload your photos and tell us your stories for a chance to be highlighted on one of these cruises or our social media!



120 YEARS