

**Tagline**

It's Never The Same River

**Mission**

Rappahannock Rafters is on a mission to provide the best, safest, and most comprehensive river tours anywhere in the eastern United States.

**Vision**

Our vision at Rappahannock Rafters is to spread our love of the history and natural beauty surrounding us in Virginia.

**Join Us**

In the original Algonquian, Rappahannock means "river of quick, rising water" or "where the tide ebbs and flows." The Rappahannock River is one of Virginia's greatest natural treasures, but don't let its beauty or calm appearance fool you. The Rappahannock River is fast, changes rapidly, and can turn dangerous. Luckily, the expert river guides at Rappahannock Rafters bring centuries of family wisdom and experience to the water. Whether you're interested in whitewater adventures, beautiful sightseeing, historical immersion, or a once-in-a-lifetime fishing trip, our guides will ensure you have a memorable—and safe—time on the water.

*Rappahannock River Whitewater Adventures*

Our whitewater tours are intense rafting experiences, designed for semi-experienced to expert rafters. To provide the best experience, we do ask for details about your previous rafting trips. No experience? No problem! Rappahannock Rafters will work with you to design an introductory rafting trip that includes plenty of spray, falls, and adrenaline.

*Rappahannock River Sightseeing Tours*

Visit the calmest, smoothest, and most beautiful parts of the Rappahannock on our special sightseeing tours. Our guides know a hidden part of the river, full of calm bends, that's perfect for sightseeing. Whether you want to take it easy as a new rafter, or you love observing nature as you float along, our sightseeing tours are a beautiful escape from the everyday.

*Rappahannock River History Tours*

Humans have lived and loved on the Rappahannock for centuries, if not millennia. Book one of our historical tours to learn first-hand about the rich history of the Rappahannock River. From the first Native settlements through important American battles, our guides will show you the exact bends of the river where history was made.

*Rappahannock River Fishing Tours*

Book a guided fishing tour and let our experts show you the best-hidden fishing holes in all of Virginia. Perfect for all experience levels, our guides will teach beginners to fish, sit back while experts reel it all in, or meet you anywhere in between.

## **Rappahannock River History**

Winding through eastern Virginia, the Rappahannock River stretches nearly 200 miles. From its source in the historic Blue Ridge Mountains to its final outlet of the Chesapeake Bay, the Rappahannock covers the entire northern region of Virginia.

The Rappahannock River has been a life-giving resource for centuries if not longer. Native people lived along the Rappahannock long before the American colonial period. In fact, the river is named after the Rappahannock tribe who originally lived in the area. Book one of our history tours or scenic tours to learn more about historic Native settlements along the Rappahannock.

European colonists also valued the Rappahannock as a vital means of transportation, trade, and shipping. Colonial settlers built towns alongside the river during the 1700s. Fredericksburg, Virginia is the largest remaining of these cities, but many trading and shipping posts thrived before the American Revolution.

The Rappahannock River played a strategic role in the conflicts of the 1800s. The Battle of Rappahannock was fought on the river during the War of 1812. British marines and American privateers battled on the water, resulting in a defeat for the outnumbered Americans. Our history tours cover the Battle of Rappahannock in more detail: imagine learning about this battle while floating down the same river where it was fought!

During the Civil War, the Rappahannock River served as a dividing line between the north and the south. There were few bridges or ferries across the river in the 1860s, so the quickly moving water served as an effective barricade for either side. The Rappahannock was a strategic asset for each side, and in fact, each side controlled the river at various times during the war. Several decisive battles were fought along the river, including the Battle of Fredericksburg and the Battle of Rappahannock Station. Our history tours cover these battles and many other Civil War events.

The Rappahannock's history has been more peaceful since the Civil War. However, the river is still a major cultural touchstone throughout Virginia. Preservation measures have helped maintain the Rappahannock for the next generation of nature lovers. Book a tour with Rappahannock Rafters today to experience this landmark for yourself.

## **Our Team**

Family-owned for four generations, Rappahannock Rafters is brought to you by the Bolden family of Fredericksburg, Virginia. The Boldens can trace their Virginia ancestry more than 300 years to Wilhelm Boldhein, who found work on the Fredericksburg docks after immigrating from Austria. The family has been closely tied to the water ever since, with various family members working as fishermen, traders, guides, cooks, sailors, and more.

The Rappahannock served as an unofficial boundary during the Civil War, so the Bolden family has an oral history that includes some of the best and worst parts of Virginia's history. (Count on hearing these stories first-hand during our guided river tours.)

Jim Bolden founded Rappahannock Rafters in 1950, after returning home from World War II. After his time overseas, he felt a strong urge to explore the natural beauty and deep history of his own home—and to share these amazing resources with other people. Rappahannock Rafters builds on hundreds of years of Bolden family tradition.

Today, the next generation of Boldens leads Rappahannock Rafters. Skyler Bolden-Garcia is now president of the family company. Like all Boldens, she grew up on the water and was a competitive rower in college. In addition to managing the business side of things, Skyler is the lead scenic and whitewater tour guide at Rappahannock Rafters.

Her brother Andy Bolden assists with management work and also brings his lifetime of fishing experience to Rappahannock Rafters. Andy is a fixture on the semi-pro fishing circuit. As the lead fishing guide at Rappahannock Rafters, he'll show you secret fishing spots used by the Bolden family for centuries.

### **Book your Rappahannock Rafters Trip Today**

The Rappahannock River has shaped the course of Virginian—and American—history. Let it change you as well. Click below to learn more about Rappahannock Rafters tours and book yours today!

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#### **SOURCES USED:**

- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rappahannock\\_River](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rappahannock_River)
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- <https://riverfriends.org/>