

Barry Wayne Miles
(1940-2018)

Barry was born on Virginia's Eastern Shore on Saxis Island, in Accomack Co, VA, Oct 31, 1940 (Halloween) and died in Washington, NC, April 11, 2018. He moved with his family to Newport News, VA, when he was about 1 year old. His family moved back to Saxis on two different occasions, when he was in the 4th grade and 7th grade. He attended Saxis Elementary School, where grades 1, 2 and 3 were taught in one room by one teacher and grades 4, 5 & 6 were taught in another room by another teacher. He attended the 7th grade at Atlantic High School in Oak Hall, VA, now the location of Arcadia High School.

During his time at Saxis Island, he listened to his grandmother, Rachal O'rella Linton Byrd, talk about the family and conditions of the past. He tried to work some of those stories into his family genealogy. He started his genealogy work after his grandmother died in 1967. In 1970, he took a genealogy class at Thomas Nelson Community College, Hampton, VA, and has pursued this hobby with great passion ever since. He began with an extensive card file system, in his efforts to trace his families. Originally, he was only going to trace his 4 grandparents' lines. He began computer genealogy in 1979 when he purchased an Apple II computer and the program Genealogist's Right Hand. He worked with this and other Apple compatible programs until he and his cousin, M.K. Miles, also of Saxis Island, teamed up to work on their Saxis families using Roots III software about 1978. That was the start of a partnership that lasted 40 years.

He was amazed that he was able to find 25 (out of a possible 32) of his great-great-grand parents, which included one line from Annapolis, MD, that he was not able to trace further back. He was equally amazed by the amount of historical and genealogical information he was able to compile about Saxis and its people. For instance, he found an article in the Peninsula Enterprise, 23 July 1887, written by a drummer boy about Pocomoke Neck and Sykes (Saxis) Island. He was pleasantly surprised when he found that he (and many of today's residents of Saxis Island) could trace his ancestors to a Revolutionary War soldier, some of the first settlers of Virginia's Eastern Shore, English Royalty and the Roman Emperor Charlemagne.

Barry was always a sticker for references and insisted on a source for every piece of information they entered into their MilesFiles database, which is on the Eastern Shore of Virginia Public Library Web Page (<http://espl-genealogy.org/MilesFiles/site/index.htm>). That's why their database of almost 100,000 names has over 2,500 sources, cited almost 400,000 times.

His hope was that when they were unable to continue their pursuit that someone younger would pick up the quest and continue to expand on their efforts. His cousin, M.K. Miles, who continues to expand the MilesFiles, shares that sentiment.

Barry & M.K. Miles published 8 books:

- Tombstones of Upper Accomack County (15,000 inscriptions) (with Mary F. Carey)
- Marriages of Accomack County (1854-1896)
- Wills of Accomack County (1800-1860)
- Civil War Soldiers of the Eastern Shore of Virginia (both black & white)
- 4 Volumes of Colonial Families of the Eastern Shore of Virginia

Barry also published 2 books of his own:

- Cemeteries of the City of Hampton, VA (formerly Elizabeth City County)
- Cemeteries of the City of Newport News, VA (formerly Warwick County)

They also helped Kirk Mariner publish his 9th Eastern Shore of Virginia history book:

- Almost An Island, The History of Saxis, Virginia