

# FUN & LEARNING

## Benjamin Banneker

Benjamin Banneker (November 9, 1731 – October 9, 1806) was a free African American scientist, surveyor, almanac author and farmer. Born in Baltimore County, Maryland, to a free African American woman and a former slave, Banneker had little formal education and was largely self-taught. He is known for being part of a group led by Major Andrew Ellicott



that surveyed the borders of the original District of Columbia, the federal capital district of the United States.

Banneker's knowledge of astronomy helped him author a commercially successful series of almanacs. He corresponded with Thomas Jefferson, drafter of the United States Declaration of Independence, on the topics of slavery and racial equality. Abolitionists and advocates of racial equality promoted and praised his works.

Although a fire on the day of Banneker's funeral destroyed many of his papers and belongings, one of his journals and several of his remaining artifacts are presently available for public viewing.

Parks, schools, streets and other tributes have commemorated Banneker throughout the years since he lived. However, many accounts of his life exaggerate or falsely attribute his works.

Benjamin Banneker was born on November 9, 1731, in Baltimore County, Maryland to his mother Mary, a free black, and his father Robert, a freed slave from Guinea. [1] There are two conflicting accounts of Banneker's family history. Banneker himself and his earliest biographers described him as having only African ancestry.[2][3][4] None of Banneker's surviving papers describe a white ancestor or identify the name of his grandmother.[3] However, later biographers have contended that Banneker's mother was the child of Molly Welsh, a white indentured servant, and an African slave named Banneka.[3] The first published description of Molly Welsh was based on interviews with her descendants that took place after 1836, long after the deaths of both Molly and Benjamin.[3][5]

In 1753 at the age of 22, Banneker completed a wooden clock that struck on the hour. He appears to have modeled his clock from a borrowed pocket watch by carving each piece to scale. The clock continued to work until Banneker's death.[13][14][1]

Banneker expressed his views on slavery and racial equality in a letter to Thomas Jefferson and in other documents that he placed within his 1793 almanac.

Banneker never married.[9] Because of declining sales, his last almanac was published in 1797. After selling much of his farm to the Ellicotts and others, he died in his log cabin nine years later on October 9, 1806, exactly one month before his 75th birthday.

## Word Search

G H H L A T I P A C S Z O W D W K  
M B W Z D A C C Y L K D V U B N C  
H I S D P L E O A B Y L I Z X O L  
G O T H A F F N L G P N S F B I D  
E G N K S L R S F F C K M Z R T F  
H R E E B U A T B O C O U P Y A A  
C A M C O N S I D E R W S W F R V  
A P U J Y M Q T J L V Q T M W A A  
N H C N B S H U G S H L R R N L I  
A Y O Y V X I T X B E T E B C C L  
M S D M L H L I W E O V E Z G E A  
L A S T R O N O M Y Q O T E H D B  
A N J Z W S M N F P N B S L P W L  
F V Z A N C E S T R Y C S N A U E  
N G L M A R Y L A N D F E C C E K  
M W J G E A Y T I L A U Q E T X J  
W D U T J Q T N E M N R E V O G S

Astronomy  
Journals  
Maryland  
Declaration

Capital  
Streets  
Biography  
Documents

Government  
Constitution  
Equality  
Available

Consider  
Almanac  
Ancestry

NOOTMYSRA \_\_\_\_\_  
AODACETRLNI \_\_\_\_\_  
ILCRNEPIP \_\_\_\_\_  
MTINNADO \_\_\_\_\_  
IIDTNEFY \_\_\_\_\_  
MGFNROI \_\_\_\_\_  
NGITPY \_\_\_\_\_  
SEINGLL \_\_\_\_\_  
VBMNEOER \_\_\_\_\_  
SKTCUR \_\_\_\_\_

### Answers To Last Week's Scramble Words

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|------------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. WRITING       | 5. GYM CLASS   | 9. PRINCIPAL  |
| 2. NOTE BOOK     | 6. MATHEMATICS | 10. HOME ROOM |
| 3. COLORED PAPER | 7. LITERATURE  |               |
| 4. DESK TOP      | 8. THE WEEKEND |               |