

Benjamin Banneker

Benjamin Banneker was born November 9, 1731. He was born free unlike most other black people and was born in Maryland along the Patapsco River. Benjamin's mother Mary, grew up a free woman. His father Robert, a former slave, was freed before 1731.

Benjamin grew to be a farmer because his parents needed him to be one. His parents owned land and gave it to him. He grew tobacco on his farm. He had to work hard to do it. His parents left him a hundred acres, which he called Stout. He also sold his tobacco in town.

Benjamin tried to teach himself astronomy, like many other white people. He calculated the movements of the stars and people were very surprised. Benjamin wanted to prove other people wrong. He created a new almanac that was very unlike others. He calculated when the 17-year cicadas came out of their holes. They were very noisy in Maryland in 2021. He also surveyed land for Washington, D. C. with Andrew Ellicott in 1791, who created Ellicott City in 1772 with his cousin, George Ellicott.

He also created a clock by taking apart a watch around 1751. It lasted for more than 50 years until he died. It was special because it was made out of wood.

He wrote his first letter to Thomas Jefferson on August 19, 1791. Thomas Jefferson was the Secretary of State at that time. He wrote about a lot of other people with his skin color, and how they were treated. Thomas Jefferson wrote back saying how he agreed with him and how he wanted things to change.

Benjamin Banneker was great because he wanted things to change and that he made a clock that lasted more than 50 years. I feel surprised that someone that smart lived in Ellicott City where we are now.