

Rapping

Benjamin Banneker

Benjamin Banneker was a self-taught mathematical genius, a free black born in Maryland, who contributed to the fields of science, mathematics, and political affairs.

Benjamin's mother was the daughter of Molly Welsh, an English servant, and a slave whom she had bought. Bannaky, the slave, was said to have been the son of an African king. Molly had been accused of a crime and had been exiled to America, being forced to work as a servant for seven years to pay for her passage.

After she worked out her freedom, she was able to buy a small farm, and to help her work it, she bought two slaves. Later on, she freed them both, and married the one named Bannaky. Their name was anglicized to Banneker.

Four children were born to the marriage, and the eldest, Mary, was the mother of Benjamin.

Benjamin was a precocious child. At the age of 4, he was learning to read the Bible. In 1737, his father, Robert, bought a 120-acre farm. In 1759, he died, leaving 72 acres to his wife and son, and the balance to his three daughters.

By this time, Benjamin was an excellent farmer, as well as a self-taught mathematician, having educated himself by borrowing books from a neighbor.

At the age of 60, and for a period of over 10 years, he published an almanac that provided information about the sun, moon, and tides. Thomas Jefferson was so impressed with the almanac that he sent copies to French scientists, and wrote to Banneker telling him of his high regard for his work.

Banneker constructed a clock, which was all of his own invention. He hand-carved out of wood each moving part, using a small watch as a model.

A man who lived alone, cooking his own food, and washing his own clothing. Banneker never married. Chosen by George Washington as one of the designers of the nation's Capital, he had been described as a man of dignified dress and appearance. He died Oct. 25, 1806, one month short of his 75th birthday.

--Norman N. Barbee

Hugh Crowd Expected At A & T Homecoming

Nostalgia, merry making and large crowds are expected to highlight the annual

Homecoming observance at A&T State University October 28 through Nov. 2.

More than 20,000 visitors, alumni and friends of the university, are expected to participate in the gala festivities on and off the campus.

The theme for this year's event is "Once in a Lifetime: The Good Times." For the students, the emphasis will be on the look of the 1940's, including the annual coronation of the student queen on Thursday night.

A&T's alumni will generate a lot of the activity, beginning with the chartering of planes, busses and trains from such areas as Detroit, New York City, Washington, D.C.,

Atlanta, Newark, N.J. and Baltimore.

"There is no doubt that this year's observance will exceed all of the others," said James E. Garfield, general chairman of the celebration.

The alumni activities will include a "Miss Alumni" and a "Miss Gate City" contest, the chancellor's breakfast, the annual Homecoming ball and the Homecoming worship service on Nov. 3.

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