

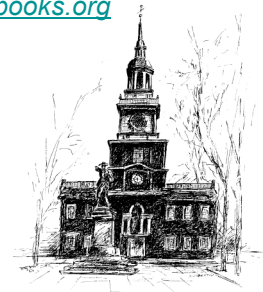


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# America's Founding Patriots



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## REMEMBERING OUR PAST

### Special Interest Articles:

- REMEMBERING OUR PAST, an introduction by J. S. Smithies.
- **BENJAMIN BANNEKER** by John W. Cromwell, The Negro in American History, Washington, 1914.
- Memoirs of Benjamin Banneker – By John B. Latrobe, Esq. as Presented to the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, 1845.
- The Vocabulary of Moral Character, **NOAH WEBSTER'S 1828 DICTIONARY.**

With the American social structure coming under fire from many areas of the modern world, we need to pause and remember our past. Not only the noble deeds done, but the people who helped to form our nation.

In this series we will be reprinting the stories of our founding patriots regardless of nationality or gender. If you have a favorite one, please let us know so that we may be sure to include the individual.

The lives of these individuals should inspire us today and allow us to realize that each of us are unique and have the capacity to change the world around us. We each have the power to change our lives internally with our thoughts and externally with our actions and deeds.

We have the power to change our families through the choices we make.

We have the power to change our schools and business by living the principles that our Founding Patriots teach us.

We have the power to change our communities, states, and nation by accepting the great responsibilities that come with living in the greatest nation known. To those that much has been given, much is expected.

We hope you enjoy learning about our Founding Patriots.

## Benjamin Banneker

In this newsletter, we will be presenting a reprint of Chapter 19 -- Benjamin Banneker by John W. Cromwell, The Negro in American History, The American Negro Academy, Washington D.C., 1914.

The second section will be a reprint of Memoirs of Benjamin Banneker – By John B. Latrobe, Esq. as Presented to the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, 1845.



## BENJAMIN BANNEKER

BY JOHN W. CROMWELL, THE NEGRO IN AMERICAN HISTORY, WASHINGTON D.C., 1914.

A Little more than one hundred years ago a black prince arrived on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay. He came by compulsion, not by choice; he was brought here a slave. That he was no ordinary black is attested by the fact that he clung to his heathen gods and refused to work for those who had him in control; yet, he was of noble mien, dignified and possessed rare intelligence, even retaining to the last the name which he brought with him from Africa~Banneker.

In the same year in which William Penn established his colony on the banks of the Delaware, an English peasant woman having accidentally spilled a can of mil--so the story goes--was charged with and found guilty of stealing. As her punishment she was transported to Maryland where she was bound to service for seven years, a mild sentence for the offense, because she could read. A thrifty woman she was and bought a small farm on which she subsequently placed Banneker, the exiled black African prince.

Though he would not work, Banneker touched the heart of Molly Welsh who liberated and married him. Four children was the result of this union, one of whom, Mary Banneker, was married about the year 1730 to Robert, a native African who on being baptized in the Episcopal faith, was formally given his freedom. Robert, like many a one of his race of whom there is unfortunately no record, did not take the name of the white people who had claimed him a slave, but called himself Banneker, after his wife, the daughter of the African prince.

Their oldest offspring, Benjamin Banneker, was born November 9, 1731, just about three months before George Washington. In the year 1737 Robert Banneker, his father, purchased for the sum of seventeen thousand pounds of tobacco a farm of one hundred acres. It was in a primeval wilderness, though only ten miles from Baltimore, then a village of less than thirty houses. Roads were few, houses were miles and miles apart, schools and churches were exceedingly scarce, the steam whistle had not yet echoed through the valleys nor across the plains of that primitive country, yet there were a few private schools, and to one of these the lad Benjamin was sent.

Here he was a most apt student and had received instruction as far as "double position," as it was then called, proficiency in which even a century later, was regarded as a test of arithmetical skill, and to-day, as compound proportion, by which name it is now known, it is a source of great perplexity to pupils in our advanced grammar schools. This was the limit of the educational advantages which Banneker received, but it must have been most thorough, for as the sequel proved, it was the foundation upon which he built so well as to take rank with the greatest scientific men of his times, to achieve a world-wide distinction for skill as mathematician and astronomer that one hundred years have not obliterated.

Apart from his studies, his life was not eventful, yet it is deserving of all emulation. The oldest and only son among four children, he assiduously gave his service on his farm even after he had attained his majority. Upon the death of the father, in 1757 (which fact is learned from an entry in Benjamin's Bible), the full responsibility of the management of the farm fell upon him, the household duties being performed by Benjamin's mother whose vigor of body remained until she was quite advanced in years. It is said of her agility that even when over seventy years of age it was a common thing for her to run down the barn yard fowls which were desired for the table or for market.

*"...he was a most apt student and had received instruction as far as 'double position'..."*



## Benjamin Banneker by John W. Cromwell, continues:

In those days the country stores were the centers of information and social contact. Here the planters brought their corn, their wheat, their tobacco, for sale or for exchange; here the latest intelligence from London, Boston or Philadelphia was obtained. The country store also contained the post-office at which letters were received or dispatched at the weekly or monthly mail. Here the weekly newspaper, of which there were only two at that time in the colony, was read by the most intelligent and the affairs of the day discussed. Banneker, himself a landed proprietor, was frequently at the store during these gatherings at which his intelligent conversation, his quiet and dignified manner, and his accurate information on current affairs made him a unique but welcome visitor. He did not resort there to the neglect of his farm, for it was thoroughly well-kept, his orchards abounded in fruit, his cattle were sleek and fat, his storehouse was well filled with grain and tobacco.

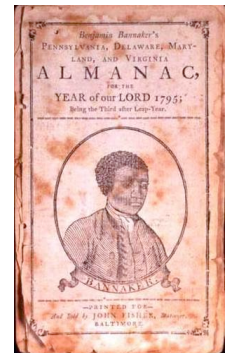
It was in his early manhood about 1753 that Banneker having only seen a watch, with it for a model constructed a wooden clock all the parts of which—the wheels, the springs, the balances—were the result of his own ingenuity, skill, patience and perseverance. This is said to be the first clock ever constructed in America all the parts of which were made in this country. For more than twenty years it kept good time, an example of the cunning workmanship of the sable artificer.

An event of very great significance in the quiet neighborhood of Banneker's home was the erection in 1772 of the flour mills at what is now Ellicott City. The machinery, so crude and antiquated by present standards, was more than a nine days' wonder in these far-off days. Among others, Banneker, delighted even after the novelty had worn off, lingered to study it, to understand its philosophy and to enlarge the sphere of his knowledge of mechanics. The establishment of these mills was not only an event deigned to advance the material interests of this neighborhood. It was a means to him of great intellectual development.

The proprietors, the Ellicotts, became warmly attached to him, especially because of the strong personal friendship that grew up between him and George Ellicott. Mr. Ellicott saw in Banneker an intellect that not only was ever grasping after the truth, but one capable of an almost infinite development. Though Banneker was black he was to Ellicott, to use a favorite expression of Frederick Douglass, “a kinsman, a clansman, a brother beloved.”

One day in 1787 Mr. George Ellicott loaned Banneker Mayor's Tables, Ferguson's Astronomy, Leadbeater's Lunar Tables and some astronomical instruments, which only those far advanced in mathematics could comprehend—telling Banneker at the time that at the earliest opportunity he (Ellicott) would explain them to him. Banneker took them and retired to the seclusion of his cottage where without any aid save that which God had given, he made himself so familiar with the contents of the volumes as to detect errors in their calculations. You can imagine Mr. Ellicott's surprise to find on next meeting the philosopher that his services as instructor were not needed. Banneker possessing “the cunning-warded keys” that open every door in one's pursuit of knowledge, at the mature age of fifty-six entered zealously upon the study of astronomy, closely observing all the natural phenomena of his neighborhood, as well as the movement of the heavenly bodies, making records, still in existence, that spread his fame far and wide.

The time required for his study and investigations so entrenched upon that required for the work of the farm that the necessity of utilizing his scientific knowledge led him in part to consider the feasibility of compiling an ephemeris or almanac for the States of Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia. For this work he had advanced far towards the construction of tables of logarithms for the necessary calculations when Mr. Ellicott presented him with a set.



*“..having seen a watch, with it for a model constructed a wooden clock all parts of which—the wheels, the springs, the balances—were the result of his own ingenuity, skill, patience and perseverance...”*




## Benjamin Banneker by John W. Cromwell, continues:

Many observers who saw Banneker asleep during the day in his cottage which on a knoll commanded a fine view of the surrounding country, declared him to be a worthless, good-for-nothing fellow, a victim to an old propensity for intoxicating liquors; but it was untrue, for when, "Nature let her curtain down, And pinned it with a star," they might have seen Banneker enveloped in the ample folds of his cloak reclining on the ground, his eyes watching the heavenly bodies and determining their laws. In these days of observation this would be unnecessary; but Banneker was his own observatory and telescope-he built the roadbed on which he trod to success.

*"His patience and  
determination  
won."*

His patience and determination won. He solved the problems confronting him, if not to his own satisfaction, at least to that of mankind. When his almanac was nearly ready for publication he was prevented from carrying out his purpose by a most fortunate combination of circumstances. The United States Government had begun with Washington's inauguration in 1789, but there was yet no permanent official home. In keeping with a provision of the Constitutional Convention, Maryland and Virginia had ceded to the central government certain territory, known as the Federal Territory, to be used as the Nation's Capital, but its exact boundaries had not been fixed.



Mr. Andrew Ellicott was commissioned to survey the boundaries and Benjamin Banneker was invited as a man of scientific attainments and professional skill to assist in the work. He accepted the invitation and shared in fixing the boundaries of the District, in the selection of the site of the Capitol Building, in locating an eligible spot for the Executive Mansion, the Treasury and other buildings. So satisfactory was his work and so agreeable a companion was he that despite prevailing customs the Commissioners invited him again and again to a seat during their meals at the same table with themselves, but he was content to occupy a seat at a side table in the same dining room.

Banneker having completed his engagement at the Federal Territory with which he was very well pleased as he recounted to his friends, addressed himself to the publication of his almanac. That I may not be accused of exaggeration or giving an undue praise, I quote from Mr. J. H. B. Latrobe's Memoir before the Maryland Historical Society:

*"The first almanac which Banneker prepared fit for publication was for the year 1792. By this time his acquirements had become generally known, and among others who took an interest in him was James McHenry, Esquire. Mr. McHenry wrote a letter to Goddard and Angell, then the almanac publishers in Baltimore:*

*"In their editorial notice Messrs. Goddard and Angell say, 'they feel gratified in the opportunity of presenting to the public, through their press, what must be considered as an extraordinary effort of genius; a complete and accurate Ephemeris for the year 1792 calculated by a sable descendant of Africa.' And they further say, that 'they flatter themselves that a philanthropic public in this enlightened era, will be induced to give their patronage and support to this work, not only on account of its intrinsic merits (it having met the approbation of several of the most distinguished astronomers of America, particularly the celebrated Mr. Rittenhouse), but from similar notices to these which induce the editors to give this calculation the preference' [mark the words-the preference] 'the ardent desire for drawing modest merit from obscurity and controverting the long-established, ill-bred prejudice against the blacks.'"*

## Benjamin Banneker by John W. Cromwell, continues:



This Mr. McHenry referred to was a division surgeon of the Revolutionary War, a trusted friend of General Washington, a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 and a Cabinet officer under both Washington and John Adams. David Rittenhouse was the celebrated astronomer and statesman who wrote the constitution of Pennsylvania, and a professor of the University of Pennsylvania. Like Banneker he had at an early age constructed a clock and for several years was the most noted clock maker in America.

The endorsement of two such men standing in the very first professional and political rank is sufficient to establish the standing and claim of this great, this monumental work of Banneker. For ten years this almanac was the main dependence of the farmers of Maryland, Delaware and the adjacent States, which demonstrated its utility, in fact it was discontinued only with the inability of Mr. Banneker, on account of old age to undergo the intellectual labor incidental to its further publication.

In the publication of his almanac, Banneker was not unmindful of the service rendered to the race of which he was a part. It was an opportunity that he did not shrink from seizing and improving. Before the first copy was received from the printers, he prepared a complete autograph copy and sent it accompanied by a letter to Thomas Jefferson, then U. S. Secretary of State--most remarkable letter, a most manly appeal through Jefferson to the American people on behalf of a class of people who had rendered most valuable service to the country. The entire letter deserves to be read again and again for its courteous manner, its nobility of thought, its dignified utterances as well as for its eloquence. We have space only for a few extracts:

*"Sir, I hope I may safely admit in consequence of the report which hath reached me... that you are measurably friendly and well-disposed toward us and that you are willing to lend your aid and assistance to our relief from those many distresses and numerous calamities to which we are reduced... I apprehend you will readily embrace every opportunity to eradicate that train of absurd and false ideas and opinions which so generally prevail with respect to us; and that your sentiments are concurrent with mine, which are, that one Universal Father hath given being to us all; that He hath not only made us all of one flesh, but he hath also, without partiality, afforded to us all the same faculties, and that however variable we may be in society and religion, however diversified in situation or color, we are all of the same family and stand in the same relation to Him."*

He next makes an argument that it is the duty of all who profess the obligations of Christianity to extend their power and influence for the relief of every part of the human race. Notwithstanding the privileges freely accorded to him personally, Banneker keenly felt the force of the prejudice against the race as a class. He says:

*"I freely and cheerfully acknowledge that I am of the African race, and in that color which is natural to them, of the deepest dye, and it is under a sense of the most profound gratitude to the Supreme Ruler of the universe, I now confess I am not under that state of tyrannical and inhuman captivity to which many of my brethren are doomed, but that I have abundantly tasted of the fruition of those blessings which proceed from that free and unequalled liberty with which you are favored, and which I hope you will willingly allow, you have received from the immediate hands of that Being from whom proceedeth every good and perfect gift."*

And so he makes argument after argument, and then apologizing for the length of the letter he concludes as follows:



## Benjamin Banneker by John W. Cromwell, continues:

*"I ardently hope that your candor and generosity will plead with you in my behalf when I make known to you that it was not originally my design; but that having taken up my pen in order to direct to you as a present a copy of an almanac which I have calculated for the succeeding year, I was unexpectedly and unavoidably led thereto. This calculation, sir, is the product of my arduous study in this my advanced stage of life; for having long had unbounded desire to become acquainted with the secrets of nature, I have had to gratify my curiosity herein through my own assiduous application to astronomical study, in which I need not recount to you the many difficulties and disadvantages which I have had to encounter. And although I had almost declined to make my calculations for the ensuing year, in consequence of that time which I had allotted therefore being taken up at the Federal Territory, by the request of Mr. Andrew Ellicott, yet finding myself under engagements to printers of this State, to whom I had communicated my design on my return to my place of residence, I industriously applied myself thereto which I hope I have accomplished with correctness and accuracy, a copy of which I have taken the liberty to direct to you and which I humbly request you will favorably receive; and although you may have the opportunity of perusing it after its publication, yet, I chose to send it to you in manuscript previous thereto, that thereby you might not only have an earlier inspection, but that you might also view it in my own handwriting.*

Jefferson's reply is brief, but characteristic:

*"Philadelphia,  
"August 31, 1791.*

*"Sir: I thank you sincerely for your letter of the 19th instant and for the almanac it contained. Nobody wishes more than I do to see such proofs as you exhibit that nature has given to our black brethren talents equal to those of the other colors of men and that the appearance of a want of them is owing only to the degraded condition of their existence both in Africa and America. I can add with truth, that no one wishes more ardently to see a good system commenced for raising the conditions, both of their body and mind to what it ought to be, as fast as the imbecility of their present existence, and other circumstances which cannot be neglected, will admit.*

*I have taken the liberty of sending your almanac to Monsieur de Condorcet, Secretary of the Academy of Science at Paris, and member of the Philanthropic Society, because I considered it a document to which your color had a right, for their justification against the doubts which have been entertained of them.*

*"I am, with great esteem, sir,*

*"Your most obedient servant,  
"THOMAS JEFFERSON.*

What of Banneker as a social being? He never married. So thoroughly devoted was he to science that the tender passion, love, never gained the mastery. He lived by himself, prepared his own food and washed his own clothes and in other domestic necessities his wants were supplied by his sisters who lived near by.

A few anecdotes will shed a light on other traits in his character.

When he was no longer actively engaged in agriculture, he divided his holdings into smaller tenancies, but since tenants were not regular in their payments and they considered it a personal affront when he called on them for his rent; nevertheless, he was determined to provide for his maintenance, so he sold his land for an annuity based on the market value of his land and his expectancy of life, reserving a residence for himself for life. He lived eight years longer than his calculations, and therefore got not only the value of his land but a handsome advance on it.

Reference has been made to his abundant orchards. His pear trees were especially noted, and the smaller boys of those days, the great-grandfathers of those who live in our midst to-day, would steal them while the old gentleman was intent on his astronomical calculations. Once when some boys were more persistent or bolder than usual he arose, left his table and coming to the door said, *"Boys, you are perfectly welcome to one-half of the fruit if you will leave me the other."* With that he returned to his room and resumed his studies. "When he had occasion to come once more to the door he found that the boys had left him-the leaves.

## Benjamin Banneker by John W. Cromwell, continues:

He was a musician. Like that other great son of Maryland of three generations later, Frederick Douglass, he was quite a violinist. Nothing was more common than to find him under his favorite tree at evening tide playing his violin.

He was not a member of any church but the spirit of reverence for the Father of all pervades much of his writings. He frequently attended the meetings of the Society of Friends during which he leaned on his staff in the spirit of humility and devotion.

There was nothing to indicate the slightest trace of white blood in his appearance. *"In size and personal appearance,"* says one who remembered him as he appeared in the later years of his life, *"the statue of Franklin at the library in Philadelphia as seen from the street is a perfect likeness of him. This likeness is heightened because he wore a superfine drab broadcloth suit made in the old style, plain coat with a straight collar, and long waist-coat and a broad-brimmed hat."*

The excessive mental application kept up with intensity for a score of years told on his vigorous constitution and he became a victim to a complication of disorders, but his indomitable will added years to his life. He could not forego the pleasure of communing with nature under the open sky. It was during one of his walks one bright autumnal Sunday afternoon of 1804 that he complained of not feeling well—he returned to his cabin, became speechless and in a few hours passed from contemplation of the terrestrial to an enjoyment of prospects celestial.

His surviving relatives promptly carried out the injunction he had given, of taking over to Mr. Ellicott all his books, mathematical instruments and papers including the oval table on which he made his calculation—almost as soon as the breath had left his body.

Two days later the last funeral rites were held. While these were in progress a fire consumed his house and everything that remained in it, including the wooden clock that first evidenced his mechanical skill and inventive genius.

Today his name is not more than a tradition; no headboard or other monument marks his final resting place, if even it be known.

In the Chautauqua for September, 1899, Gabriella M. Jacobs in winding up an article on *"The Black Astronomer,"* (J. H. B. Latrobe's *Memoir*) says:

*"Neither the site of his birthplace nor his grave was ever marked by a memorial. He was buried on a hillside near to his own property, but by the strange irony of fate, the exact location of his grave is now unknown."*

She says in concluding: *"A public school building for colored pupils in Washington, D C., known as the Banneker school is believed to be the only monument to the genius of the Negro who at the dawn of the nineteenth century foreshadowed the advancement of his race which marks the century's close."*

Finis.

## MEMOIRS OF BENJAMIN BANNEKER

– BY JOHN B. LATROBE, ESQ. AS PRESENTED TO THE MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY, BALTIMORE, 1845.

A FEW words may be necessary to explain why a memoir of a free man of color, formerly a resident of Maryland, is deemed of sufficient interest to be presented to the Historical Society. There are no questions relating to our country of more interest than those connected with her colored population; an interest which has been increasing, year after year, until it has acquired its present absorbing character. Time and space prohibit an inquiry into the causes of this. It is sufficient to state the fact. The presence of this population in the States where slavery exists modifies their institutions in important particulars, and affects in a greater or less degree the character of the dominant race. For this reason alone, the memoir of a colored man, who has distinguished himself in an abstruse science, by birth a Marylander, claims consideration from those who have associated to collect and preserve facts and records relating to the men and deeds of the past.

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania has, no doubt, carefully gathered all that could be obtained to illustrate the life and scientific character of Rittenhouse. In presenting to the Historical Society of Maryland a memoir of Banneker, the little that is known of one who followed, under every disadvantage, in the footsteps of the philosopher of our sister State, is collected and preserved.

There is another reason why this memoir is appropriate. Maryland is the only State in the Union that has clearly indicated her policy in regard to her colored population. She looks to their gradual and voluntary removal as the only means of solving the difficult problem which their presence involves. To aid in this removal, she appropriated, in 1831, the large sum of \$200,000; not in the expectation that this sum would transport them all from this country to Africa; but that, by means of it, a community of freemen capable of self-support and self-government might be established there, that would be so attractive ultimately to the colored people here, as to produce an emigration, at the proper cost of the emigrants themselves, based on the same motives, and as great in amount as the emigration from Europe to America. This policy and its results must enter largely into the history of Maryland. Its success must mainly depend upon the ability and skill of the emigrants to found such a nation as will accomplish the end in view: and this in its turn depends on the oft-mooted question as

to the comparative intellect of the two races, the white and the colored. To decide this, facts are important; and not one more conclusive exists than the abilities and character of Benjamin Banneker. Whether, therefore, as a matter of mere curiosity only, or as a fact from which important inferences for present action are to be drawn, a memoir of the individual in question should possess interest for our association.

Benjamin Banneker was born in Baltimore County, near the village of Ellicotts Mills, in the year 1732. His father was a native African, and his mother the child of natives of Africa; so that to no admixture of the blood of the white man was he indebted for his peculiar and extraordinary abilities. His father was a slave when he married; but his wife, who was a free woman and possessed of great energy and industry, very soon afterwards purchased his freedom. Banneker's mother was named Morton before her marriage, and belonged to a family remarkable for its intelligence. When upwards of 70, she was still very active; and it is remembered of her, that at this advanced age she made nothing of catching her chickens when wanted by running them down. A nephew of hers, Greenbury Morton, was a person of some note, notwithstanding his complexion. Prior to 1809, free people of color, possessed of a certain property qualification, voted in Maryland. In this year a law was passed restricting the right of voting to free white males. Morton was ignorant of the law till he offered to vote at the polls in Baltimore County; and it is said that when his vote was refused, he addressed the crowd in a strain of true and passionate eloquence, which kept the audience, that the election had assembled for him, in breathless attention while he spoke.

The joint labor of the elder Banneker and his wife enabled them to purchase a small farm, which continued after their death in the possession of their son. The farm was a tract of one hundred acres, the half of a larger tract called "*Stout*," and was conveyed by Richard Gist to Robert Bannaky, as the name was then spelt, and Benjamin Bannaky his son, (who was then but five years old) on the 10th March, 1737, for the consideration of 7,000 lbs. of tobacco. At the date of Banneker's birth, his parents, although within ten miles of Baltimore, lived almost in a wilderness. In 1727, five years before, the site of Baltimore was the farm of John Flemming, on which, in that year, the legislature authorized a town to be laid out. The view of this town, in 1704, with which we are all familiar, does not exhibit more than twenty houses, straggling over the eminences on the right bank of Jones' Falls. In 1740, Baltimore had been surrounded with a board fence to protect it against the Indians. All this is proper to be remembered, in order that the difficulties against which Banneker had to struggle may be fairly



understood. In 1732, Elkridge landing was of more consequence than Baltimore.

When Benjamin was old enough he was employed to assist his parents in their labor. This was at an early age, when his destiny seemed nothing better than that of a child of poor and ignorant free negroes, occupying a few acres of land in a remote and thinly peopled neighborhood,—a destiny which certainly, at this day, is not of very brilliant promise, and which, at the time in question, must have been gloomy enough. In the intervals of toil, and when he was approaching, or had attained, manhood, he was sent to an obscure and distant country school, which he attended until he had acquired a knowledge of reading and writing, and had advanced in arithmetic as far as “Double Position.” In all matters beyond these rudiments of learning he was his own instructor.

On leaving school he was obliged to labor for years, almost uninterruptedly, for his support. But his memory being retentive, he lost nothing of the little education he had acquired. On the contrary, although utterly destitute of books, he amplified and improved his stock of arithmetical knowledge by the operation of his mind alone. He was an acute observer of every thing that he saw, or which took place around him in the natural world, and he sought with avidity information from all sources of what was going forward in society; so that he became gradually possessed of a fund of general knowledge, which it was difficult to find among those even who were far more favored by opportunity and circumstances than he was.

At first his information was a subject of remark and wonder among his illiterate neighbors only; but by degrees the reputation of it spread through a wider circle; and Benjamin Banneker, still a young man, came to be thought of as one, who could not only perform all the operations of mental arithmetic with extraordinary facility, but exercise a sound and discriminating judgment upon men and things.

It was at this time, when he was about thirty years of age, that he contrived and made a clock, which proved an excellent timepiece. He had seen a watch, but not a clock, such an article not yet having found its way into the quiet and secluded valley in which he lived. The watch was therefore his model. It took him a good while to accomplish this feat; his great difficulty, as he often used to say, being to make the hour, minute and second hands correspond in their motions. But the clock was finished at last, and raised still higher the credit of Banneker in his neighborhood as an ingenious man, as well as a good arithmetician.

The making of the clock was an important matter, for it was probably owing to the fame of it, that the Ellicott family, who had just commenced a settlement where Ellicott's Mills now stands, were induced to seek him out. Well educated, and having great aptness for the useful mechanics, they were the men of all others, able to understand and appreciate the character and abilities of Banneker, and they continued during his life his firm and zealous friends.

As already stated, the basis of Banneker's arithmetical knowledge was obtained from the school book into which he had advanced as far as Double Position: but in 1787, Mr. George Ellicott lent him Mayer's Tables, Fergusson's Astronomy and Leadbeater's Lunar Tables. Along with these books were some astronomical instruments. Mr. Ellicott was accidentally prevented from giving Banneker any information as to the use of either books or instruments at the time he lent them: but before he again met him, and the interval was a brief one, Banneker was independent of any instruction, and was already absorbed in the contemplation of the new world which was thus opened to his view.

From this time, the study of astronomy became the great object of his life, and for a season he almost disappeared from the sight of his neighbors. He was unmarried, and was the sole occupant of a cabin on the lot of ground already mentioned. His parents had died at a date which is not remembered; before the period, however, to which we now particularly refer. He was still obliged to labor for his bread; but by contracting his wants he made little serve him, and he thus obtained leisure to devote to his books. His favorite time for study was night, when he could look out upon the planets whose story he was reading, and whose laws he was gradually but surely mastering.

During the hours of darkness Banneker was at his labors, and shutting himself up in his house, when not obliged to toil out of doors with his hands, he slept during the day. In this way he lost the reputation for industry which he had acquired in early life; and those who saw but little of him in his field, and who found him sleeping when they visited his house, set him down as a lazy fellow, who would come to no good, and whose old age would disappoint the promise of his youth. There was a season, when this estimate of him by the ignorant among his neighbors, led to attempts to impose on him, and at times gave him serious inconvenience. But as people came to understand him, his character was restored most honorably. A memorandum in his hand-writing, dated December 1ath, 1790, states “...informed me that...stole my horse and great coat, and that the said...intended to murder me when opportunity presented...gave me a caution to

*let no one come into my house after dark*" The names of the parties were originally written in full; but they were afterwards carefully cancelled, as though Banneker had reflected, that it was wrong to leave an unauthenticated assertion on record against an individual, which might prejudice him, if incorrect, by the mere fact that it had been made.

Very soon after the possession of the books already mentioned had drawn Banneker's attention to astronomy, he determined to compile an almanac, that being the most familiar use that occurred to him of the information he had acquired. Of the labor of the work, few of those can form an estimate who would at this day commence such a task, with all the assistance afforded by accurate tables and well digested rules. Banneker had no such aid: and it is narrated as a well-known fact, that he commenced and had advanced far in the preparation of the logarithms necessary for his purpose, when he was furnished with a set of tables by Mr. George Ellicott.

About this time he began the record of his calculations, which is still in existence, and is left with the Society for examination. A memorandum contained in it thus corrects an error in Fergusson's Astronomy.

*"It appears to me that the wisest of men may at times be in error: for instance, Dr. Fergusson informs us that when the sun is within 12 of either node at the time of full, that the moon will be eclipsed: but I find, according to his method of projecting a lunar eclipse, there will be none by the above elements, and yet the sun is within 11° 46' 11" of the moon's ascending node. But the moon being in her apogee prevents the appearance of this eclipse."*

Another memorandum makes the following corrections.

*"Errors that ought to be corrected in my Astronomical Tables are these; 2 vol. Leadbeater, p. 204, when  $h$ ; anomaly is  $4^s 30'$  the equation  $3^o 38' 41''$  ought to have been  $3^o 28' 41''$ . In  $\♂$  equation, page 155, the logarithm of his distance from  $\odot$  ought to have been 6 in the second place from the index, instead of 7, that is from the time that his anomaly is  $3^s 24^o$  until it is  $4^s 0^o$ ."*

Both Fergusson and Leadbeater would probably have looked incredulous, had they been informed, that their labored works had been reviewed and corrected by a free Negro in the then almost unheard of valley of the

Patapsco. The first Almanac which Banneker prepared, fit for publication, was for the year 1792. By this time his acquirements had become generally known, and among others who took an interest in him was James McHenry, Esq. Mr. McHenry wrote a letter to Goddard and Angell, then the Almanac publishers in Baltimore, which was probably the means of procuring the publication of the first Almanac. It contains a short account of Banneker, and is inserted as the most appropriate preface that could have been furnished for the work. Mr. McHenry's letter does equal honor to his heart and understanding. A copy of the Almanac is presented herewith to the Society, in the name of Mrs. Ellicott, the widow of George Ellicott, Banneker's steadfast friend.

In their editorial notice, Messrs. Goddard and Angell say, *"they feel gratified in the opportunity of presenting to the public, through their press, what must be considered as an extraordinary effort of genius—a complete and accurate Ephemeris for the year 1792, calculated by a sable descendant of Africa,"* &c. And they further say, that *"they flatter themselves that a philanthropic public, in this enlightened era, will be induced to give their patronage and support to this work, not only on account of its intrinsic merits, (it having met the approbation of several of the most distinguished astronomers of America, particularly the celebrated Mr. Rittenhouse,) but from similar motives to those which induced the editors to give this calculation the preference, the ardent desire of drawing modest merit from obscurity and controverting the long established illiberal prejudice against the blacks."*

The motive alluded to by Goddard and Angell in the extract just quoted, of doing justice to the intellect of the colored race, was a prominent object with Banneker himself; and the only occasions when he overstepped a modesty which was his peculiar characteristic, were when he could, by so doing, *"controvert the long established illiberal prejudice against the blacks."*

We find him, therefore, sending a copy of his first Almanac to Mr. Jefferson, then Secretary of State under General Washington, saying in the letter that accompanied it, *"although you may have the opportunity of perusing it after its publication, yet I chose to send it to you in manuscript previous thereto, that you might not only have an earlier inspection, but that you might also view it in my own hand-writing."*

To the letter from which the above is an extract, and which will be found at length, appended to this memoir, Mr. Jefferson made the following reply:

PHILADELPHIA,  
Aug. 30, 1791.

SIR,

*I thank you sincerely for your letter of the 19th instant, and for the Almanac it contained. Nobody wishes more than I do to see such proofs as you exhibit, that nature has given to our black brethren talents equal to those of the other colors of men, and that the appearance of a want of them is owing only to the degraded condition of their existence both in Africa and America. I can add with truth that no one wishes more ardently to see a good system commenced for raising the condition both of their body and mind to what it ought to be, as fast as the imbecility of their present existence, and other circumstances which cannot be neglected, will admit. I have taken the liberty of sending your Almanac to Monsieur de Condorcet, Secretary of the Academy of Sciences at Paris, and member of the Philanthropic Society; because I considered it a document to which your whole color had a right for their justification against the doubts which have been entertained of them.*

*I am, with great esteem, sir, your most obedient servant,*

THO. JEFFERSON.

MR. BENJAMIN BANNEKER, near Ellicotts' Lower Mill, Baltimore County.

When he published his first Almanac, Banneker was fifty-nine years old, and had high respect paid to him by all the scientific men of the country, as one whose color did not prevent his belonging to the same class, so far as intellect went, with themselves. After the adoption of the constitution in 1769, commissioners were appointed to run the lines of the District of Columbia, the ten miles square now occupied by the seat of government, and then called the "*Federal territory*." The commissioners invited Banneker to be present at the runnings, and treated him with much consideration. On his return, he used to say of them, "*that they were a very civil set of gentlemen, who had overlooked his complexion on account of his attainments, and had so far honored him as to invite him to be seated at their table; an honor,*" he added, "*which he had thought fit to decline, and requested that a side table might be provided for him.*"

Banneker continued to calculate and publish his Almanacs until 1802, and the folio already referred to

and now before the Society, contains the calculations clearly copied, and the figures used by him in his work. The hand-writing, it will be seen, is very good and remarkably distinct, having a practiced look, although evidently that of an old man, who makes his letters and figures slowly and carefully. His letter to Mr. Jefferson, in the Appendix, gives a very good idea of his style of composition and his ability as a writer. The title of the Almanac is here transcribed at length, as a matter of curious interest at this later day. If it claims little of the art and elegance and wit of the Almanacs of Punch or of Hood, it is nevertheless, considering its history, a far more surprising production.

*"Benjamin Banneker's Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia and Maryland Almanac and Ephemeris for the year of our Lord 1792, being Bissextile or leap year, and the sixteenth year of American Independence, which commenced July 4, 1776. Containing the motions of the sun and moon, the true places and aspects of the planets, the rising and setting of the sun, and the rising, setting and southing, place and age, of the moon, &c. The Lunations, Conjunctions, Eclipses, Judgment of the Weather, Festivals, and remarkable days."*

Thus much is Banneker's: then follow Goddard and Angell; "*also several useful tables and valuable receipts-various selections from the common place-book of the Kentucky Philosopher, an American sage; with interesting and entertaining essays in prose and verse-the whole comprising a greater, more pleasing and useful variety than any book of the kind and price in North America.*"

Besides his aptitude for mechanics, and his ability as a mathematician, Banneker was an acute observer, whose active mind was constantly receiving impulses from what was taking place around him. Many instances of this are to be found in the record of his calculations, which he seems to have used occasionally as a common-place book. For instance, under date of the 27th August, 1797, he writes:

*"Standing at my door I heard the discharge of a gun, and in four or five seconds of time, after the discharge, the small shot came rattling about me, one or two of which struck the house; which plainly demonstrates that the velocity of sound is greater than that of a cannon bullet."*

It must have been a philosophic mind, which observing the fact as here stated, drew from it the correct conclusion, and then recorded it in appropriate terms as a simple and beautiful illustration of the law of nature, with which, in all probability, he first became acquainted through its means. Again on the 23d December, 1790, he writes:

*“About 3 o'clock, a. m. I heard the sound and felt the shock like unto heavy thunder. I went out but could not observe any cloud above the horizon. I therefore conclude it must be a great earthquake in some part of the globe.”*

A similar conclusion from the same facts was drawn by a greater man than Banneker near eighteen hundred years before, <sup>(Pliny)</sup> and recorded to be commented on in after ages.

Nor was Banneker's observation confined to matters of a philosophical character. There is evidence in the memoranda of his record book that natural history was equally interesting to him. The following, independent of its connection with the subject of our memoir, possesses general interest as an authentic statement by an eye-witness of a curious fact in entomology. In April, 1800, he writes:

*“The first great locust year that I can remember was 1749. I was then about seventeen years of age, when thousands of them came and were creeping up the trees and bushes. I then imagined they came to eat and destroy the fruit of the earth, and would occasion a famine in the land. I therefore began to kill and destroy them, but soon saw that my labor was in vain, and therefore gave over my pretension. Again in the year 1766, which is seventeen years after their first appearance, they made a second, and appeared to me to be full as numerous as the first. I then, being about thirty-four years of age, had more sense than to endeavor to destroy them, knowing they were not so pernicious to the fruit of the earth as I imagined they would be. Again in the year 1783, which was seventeen years since their second appearance to me, they made their third; and they may be expected again in the year 1800, which is seventeen years since their third appearance to me. So that if I may venture to express it, their periodical return is seventeen years: but they, like the comets, make but a short stay with*

*us. The female has a sting in her tail as sharp and hard as a thorn, with which she perforates the branches of the trees, and in the holes lays eggs. The branch soon dies and falls. Then the egg, by some occult cause immerses a great depth into the earth, and there continues for the space of seventeen years as aforesaid.*

*“I like to forgot to inform, that if their lives are short they are merry. They begin to sing or make a noise from first they come out of the earth till they die. The hindermost part rots off, and it does not appear to be any pain to them, for they still continue on singing till they die.”*

Again, there is the following record of a fact in natural history:

*“In the month of January, 1797, on a pleasant day for the season, I observed my honey bees to be out of their hives, and they seemed very busy, all but one hive. Upon examination I found all the bees had evacuated this hive, and left not a drop of honey behind them. On the 9th February ensuing, I killed the neighboring hives of bees, on a special occasion, and found a great quantity of honey, considering the season-which I imagine the stronger had violently taken from the weaker, and the weaker had pursued them to their home, resolved to be benefited by their labor or die in the contest.”*

The last extract we shall make from the record book is one which indicates a relish for the beautiful in nature, as well by his undertaking to record a description of what he saw, as by the language which he uses. The extract is from the last pages of the book, when he was in his seventy-first year. His writing is still distinct, but the letters have lost their firmness, and show that his hand trembled as it held the pen.

*“1803, Feb. 2d. In the morning part of the day, there arose a very dark cloud, followed by snow and hail, a flash of lightning and loud thunder crack ; and then the storm abated until afternoon, when another cloud arose at the same point, viz: the northwest, with a beautiful shower of snow. But what beautified the snow was the brightness of the sun, which was near setting at the time. I looked for the rainbow, or rather*



*snowbow, but I think the snow was of too dense a nature to exhibit the representation of the bow in the cloud.*

*"N. B. The above was followed by very cold weather for a few days."*

Soon after he obtained the books already mentioned as having been lent him by Mr. George Ellicott, and became engrossed in his new studies, he found that it was necessary to have more time at his disposal than he had previously enjoyed, and also to be released from some cares that had occasionally annoyed him. The land on which he lived was divided into several small tenements, the rent of which contributed to Banneker's support. The collection of this rent was a source of constant trouble and vexation. His tenants quarreled with him; they refused to pay him: if he insisted on payment, they annoyed him in a dozen different ways, until at last, saying that *"it was better to die of hunger than of anger,"* he determined to sell his land for an annuity. He therefore made a careful calculation of the chances of his life upon such data as he could obtain, and the Ellicott family bought the land upon the terms proposed by him. In the same volume that contains his Almanacs in manuscript is an account current, by which it would seem that the annuity was £12 Maryland currency. This arrangement gave him the time he wanted, and the annuity, with the proceeds of his Almanac, mainly supported him until he died. It is stated, that the only imperfect calculation which Banneker ever made, was the calculation for this annuity. He lived eight years longer than the time prescribed. Other persons in later days have done the same, where the insurance office has undertaken the calculation, so that Banneker's case is not a remarkable one in this respect.

\*Notwithstanding the sale of the land he still resided on it and, as it would seem from a memorandum in his record book, he continued to labor on it a portion of his time. On the 24th April, 1802, he speaks of being in the field, holing for corn-and among the last entries made by him are charges for pasturage. In 1804, Banneker died, in the 72d year of his age, and his remains are deposited, without a stone to mark the spot, near the dwelling which he occupied during his life-time. His land, of course, went at once into the possession of the Messrs. Ellicotts, and his personal property was disposed of by him to his friends before he died. There is no evidence that he made a will, or that there was administration on his estate, to be found in the records of the Orphan's Court, which have been examined with a view of adding to the few materials still existing for his biography. There are several persons now living who recollect Banneker well, and from these Mr. Benjamin H. Ellicott, of Baltimore, has

collected the memoranda from which, with the materials furnished by his record book, this sketch has been prepared. The following is an extract from Mr. Ellicott's letter in regard to Banneker.

*"During the whole of his long life he lived respectably and much esteemed by all who became acquainted with him, but more especially by those who could fully appreciate his genius and the extent of his acquirements. Although his mode of life was regular and extremely retired, living alone, having never married,-cooking his own victuals and washing his own clothes, and scarcely ever being absent from home, yet there was nothing misanthropic in his character, for a gentleman who knew him, thus speaks of him. 'I recollect him well. He was a brave looking pleasant man, with something very noble in his appearance. His mind was evidently much engrossed in his calculations; but he was glad always to receive the visits which we often paid to him.' Another of Mr. Ellicott's correspondents writes as follows : ' When I was a boy, I became very much interested in him, (Banneker) as his manners were those of a perfect gentleman; kind, generous, hospitable, humane, dignified and pleasing, abounding in information on all the various subjects and incidents of the day; very modest and unassuming, and delighting in society at his own house. I have seen him frequently. His head was covered with a thick suit of white hair, which gave him a very venerable and dignified appearance. His dress was uniformly of superfine drab broad cloth, made in the old style of a plain coat, with straight collar and long waistcoat, and a broad brimmed hat. His color was not jet black, but decidedly Negro. In size and personal appearance, the statue of Franklin at the Library in Philadelphia, as seen from the street, is a perfect likeness of him. Whenever I have seen it, it has always reminded me of Banneker. Go to his house when you would, either by day or night, there was constantly standing in the middle of the floor a large table covered with books and papers. As he was an eminent mathematician, he was constantly in correspondence with other mathematicians in this country, with*



*whom there was an interchange of questions of difficult solution.”*

\* The deed from Banneker to the Ellicotts, Jonathan, Elias, George and John, is dated on the 10th March, 1799, and purports to convey 72 acres of a tract of land called “*Stout*” for the sum of £180 Maryland currency--which seems inconsistent with the idea of the annuity mentioned in the text. But the positive information of living witnesses, and the entries in the record book, kept by Banneker, seem to establish the fact that the annuity was paid, prior to the date of the deed, the execution of which was perhaps postponed or neglected for many years after the agreement was made. A deed for 28 acres of the tract, the balance of the 100 acres, had been previously executed to Greenbury Morton, a cousin of Banneker's on the mother's side.

In the foregoing brief notice all is collected that can now be obtained in regard to Benjamin Banneker.

The extent of his knowledge is not so remarkable, as that he acquired what he did under the circumstances we have described. It might be said by those disposed to sneer at his simple history, if there be any such, that after all he was but an almanac-maker, a very humble personage in the ranks of astronomical science. But that the almanac-maker of Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia, from 1791 to 1802, should have been a free black man, is, to use the language of Mr. Jefferson, a fact to which his whole color has a right for their justification against the doubts that have been entertained of them.

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LETTER REFERRED TO IN THE FOREGOING MEMOIR.

MARYLAND, BALTIMORE COUNTY,  
Near Ellicotts' Lower Mill,  
August 19th, 1791.

THOMAS JEFFERSON, Secretary of State.

Sir :

*I am fully sensible of the greatness of that freedom, which I take with you on the present occasion, a liberty which seemed to me scarcely allowable, when I reflected on that distinguished and dignified station in which you stand, and the almost general prejudice and prepossession which is so prevalent in the world against those of my complexion.*

*I suppose it is a truth too well attested to you, to need a proof here, that we are a race of beings who have long labored under the abuse and censure of the world, that we have long been considered rather as brutish than human, and scarcely capable of mental endowments.*

*Sir, I hope I may safely admit, in consequence of that report which hath reached me, that you are a man far less inflexible in sentiments of this nature than many others, that you are measurably friendly and well disposed towards us, and that you are ready and willing to lend your aid and assistance to our relief, from those many distressed and numerous calamities, to which we are reduced.*

*Now, sir, if this is founded in truth, I apprehend you will readily embrace every opportunity to eradicate that train of absurd and false ideas and opinions, which so generally prevails with respect to us, and that your sentiments are concurrent with mine, which are that one universal father hath given being to us all and that he hath not only made us all of one flesh, but that he hath also without partiality afforded us all the same sensations, and endued us all with the same faculties, and that however variable we may be in society or religion, however diversified in situation or color, we are all of the same family, and stand in the same relation to him.*

*Sir, if these are sentiments of which you are fully persuaded, I hope you cannot but acknowledge, that it is the indispensable duty of those who maintain for themselves the rights of human nature, and who profess the obligations of Christianity, to extend their power and influence to the relief of every part of the human race, from whatever burthen or oppression they may unjustly labor under, and this I apprehend a full conviction of the truth and obligation of these principles should lead all to.*

*Sir, I have long been convinced, that if your love for yourselves and for those inestimable laws, which preserve to you the rights of human nature, was founded on sincerity, you could not but be solicitous that every individual of whatever rank or distinction, might with you equally enjoy the blessings thereof,*

*neither could you rest satisfied, short of the most active diffusion of your exertions, in order, to their promotion from any state of degradation, to which the unjustifiable cruelty and barbarism of men may have reduced them.*

*“Sir, I freely and cheerfully acknowledge that I am of the African race, and in that color which is natural to them of the deepest dye, and it is under a sense of the most profound gratitude to the supreme ruler of the Universe, that I now confess to you, that I am not under that state of tyrannical thralldom, and inhuman captivity, to which too many of my brethren are doomed, but that I have abundantly tasted of the fruition of those blessings, which proceed from that free and unequalled liberty, with which you are favored, and which, I hope you will willingly allow, you have received from the immediate hand of that being, from whom proceedeth every good and perfect gift.*

*“Sir, suffer me to recall to your mind that time in which the arms and tyranny of the British crown were exerted with every powerful effort in order to reduce you to a state of servitude; look back, I entreat you, on the variety of dangers to which you were exposed; reflect on that time in which every human aid appeared unavailable, and in which even hope and fortitude wore the aspect of inability to the conflict, and you cannot but be led to a serious and grateful sense of your miraculous and providential preservation; you cannot but acknowledge, that the present freedom and tranquility which you enjoy, you have mercifully received, and that it is the peculiar blessing of heaven.*

*“This, sir, was a time in which you clearly saw into the injustice of a state of slavery, and in which you had just apprehension of the horrors of its condition, it was now, sir, that your abhorrence thereof was so excited, that you publicly held forth this true and invaluable doctrine, which is worthy to be recorded and remembered in all succeeding ages. ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.’*

*Here, sir, was a time in which your tender feelings for yourselves had engaged you thus to declare, you were then impressed with proper ideas of the great valuation of liberty, and the free expression of those blessings to which you were entitled by nature; but, sir, how pitiable is it to reflect that although you were so fully convinced of the benevolence of the Father of mankind, and of his equal and impartial distribution of those rights and privileges which he has conferred upon them, that you should at the same time counteract his mercies, in detaining by fraud and violence so numerous a part of my brethren, under groaning captivity and cruel oppression, that you should at the same time be found guilty of that most criminal act, which you professedly detested in others with respect to yourselves.*

*“Sir, I suppose that your knowledge of the situation of my brethren, is too extensive to need a recital here; neither shall I presume to prescribe methods by which they may be relieved, otherwise than by recommending to you and all others, to wean yourselves from those narrow prejudices which you have imbibed with respect to them, and as Job proposed to his friends, ‘put your souls in their souls stead,’ thus shall your hearts be enlarged with kindness and benevolence towards them, and thus shall you need neither the direction of myself nor others, in what manner to proceed herein.*

*“And now, sir, although my sympathy and affection for my brethren hath caused my enlargement thus far, I ardently hope that your candor and generosity, will plead with you in my behalf, when I make known to you, that it was not originally my design; but that having taken up my pen, in order to direct to you as a present, a copy of an almanac, which I have calculated for the succeeding year, I was unexpectedly and unavoidably led there to.*

*“This calculation, sir, is the production of my arduous study in this my advanced stage of life; for having long had unbounded desires to become acquainted with the secrets of nature, I have had to gratify my curiosity herein through my own assiduous application to*

*astronomical study, in which I need not to recount to you the many difficulties and disadvantages which I have had to encounter. And although I had almost declined to make my calculation for the ensuing year, in consequence of that time which I had allotted therefore, being taken up at the Federal Territory, by the request of Mr. Andrew Ellicott, yet finding myself under several engagements to printers of this State, to whom I had communicated my design, on my return to my place of residence, I industriously applied myself thereto, which I hope I have accomplished with correctness and accuracy, a copy of which I have taken the liberty to direct to you, and which I humbly request you will favorably receive, and although you may have the opportunity of perusing it after its publication, yet I chose to send it to you in manuscript previous thereto, that thereby you might not only have an earlier inspection, but that you might also view it in m own hand-writing.*

*“And now, sir, I shall conclude and subscribe myself, with the most profound respect, your most obedient humble servant,*

*“B. BANNEKER.*

*“THOMAS JEFFERSON, Secretary of State. Philadelphia.*

*“N. B. Any communication to me, may be had by a direction to Mr. Elias Ellicott, merchant, in Baltimore Town.”*

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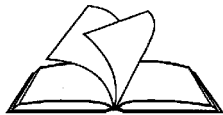
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The definitions of moral character are from Noah Webster's **1828 DICTIONARY**:

**character** — a mark made by cutting or engraving, as on stone, metal or other hard material...a mark or figure made by stamping or impression...the peculiar qualities, impressed by nature or habit on a person, which distinguish him from others.

**charity** — love, benevolence, good will.

**chastity** — purity of the body,...freedom from obscenity, as in language or conversation.

**civility** — the state of being civilized; refinement of manners; good breeding; politeness; complaisance; courtesy,...civilities denote acts of politeness.

**complaisance** — a pleasing deportment; courtesy; that manner of address and behavior in social intercourse which gives pleasure; civility.

**complaisant** — pleasing in manners; courteous; obliging.

**courtesy** — elegance or politeness of manners; especially, politeness connected with kindness; civility...to treat with civility.

**ethics** — the doctrines of morality or social manners...a system of moral principles.

**evil** — having bad qualities of a moral kind; wicked; corrupt; perverse; wrong...moral evil is any deviation of a moral agent from the rules of conduct prescribed to him by God, or by legitimate human authority.

**felicity** — happiness; blessedness.

**fidelity** — faithfulness; careful and exact observance of duty,...honesty; veracity.

**humble** — lowly, modest; meek.

**humility** — in ethics, freedom from pride and arrogance; humbleness of mind.

**industry** — habitual diligence in any employment, either bodily or mental.

**justice** — the virtue which consists in giving everyone what is his due...honesty and integrity in commerce or mutual intercourse.

**manner** — form; method; way of performing or executing; custom; habitual practice.

**mannerly** — with civility; respectfully; without rudeness.

**manners** — deportment; carriage; behavior; conduct; course of life; in a moral sense.

**modesty** — that lowly temper which accompanies a moderate estimate of one's own worth and importance.

**moral** — relating to the practice, manners or conduct of men as social beings in relation to each other, and with reference to right and wrong. The word moral is applicable to actions that are good or evil, virtuous, or vicious, and has reference to the law of God as the standard by which their character is to be determined.

**morality** — the doctrine or system of moral duties, or duties of men in their social character; ethics.

**polite** — literally, smooth, glossy, and used in this sense till within a century. Being polished or elegant in manners; refined in behavior; well bred; courteous; complaisant; obliging.

**precept** — in a general sense, any commandment or order intended as an authoritative rule of action; but applied particularly to commands respecting moral conduct. The Ten Commandments are so many precepts for the regulation of our moral conduct.

**principle** — in a general sense, the cause, source or origin of anything; that from which a thing proceeds; as the principle of motion; the principles of actions;...ground; foundation; that which supports an assertion, an action, or a series of actions or of reasoning....a general truth; a law comprehending many subordinate truths; as the principles of morality, of law, of government, etc.

**quality** — property; that which belongs to a body or substance, or can be predicated of it...virtue or particular power of producing certain effects...disposition; temper...virtue or vice as good qualities, or bad qualities...character.

**refinement** — the act of purifying by separating from a substance all extraneous matter;...polish of language; elegance; purity,...purity of heart; the state of the heart purified from sensual and evil affections.

**rule** — government,...control; supreme command or authority;...that which is established as a principle, standard or directory; that by which anything is to be adjusted or regulated, or to which it is to be conformed...established mode or course of proceeding prescribed in private life. Every man should have some fixed rules for managing his own affairs.

**strength** — firmness; solidity or toughness...power of resisting attacks; fastness.

**temperance** — moderation; particularly, habitual, moderation in regard to the indulgence of the natural appetites and passions.

**truth** — conformity to fact or reality; true state of facts.

**valor** — strength of mind in regard to danger; that quality which enables a man to encounter danger with firmness; person bravery.

**veracity** — habitual observance of truth.

**vice** — properly, a spot or defect; a fault; a blemish...in ethics, any voluntary action or course of conduct which deviates from the rules of moral rectitude, or from the plain rules of propriety...corruption of manners.

**virtue** — strength, the practice of moral duties and abstaining from vice...the practice of moral duties from sincere love to God and His laws, is virtue and religion.