

# The Federalists in Charge

## One American's Story

Benjamin Banneker was born a free man at a time when most African Americans were enslaved. Largely self-educated, he became a surveyor, astronomer, and mathematician, and he published a yearly almanac. In 1790 Washington appointed him to the commission planning the new nation's capital.

Banneker was an exceptional example of what African Americans could achieve if released from the bondage of slavery and racism. In a letter to Jefferson, Banneker reminded him that "all men are created equal."

### PRIMARY SOURCE

“ [God] hath not only made us all of one flesh, but that he hath also, without partiality, afforded us all the same sensations and endowed 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. ”

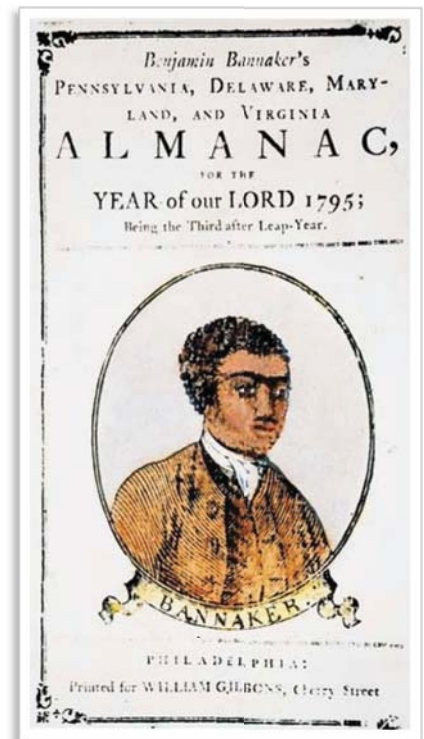
—Benjamin Banneker, *Letter to Thomas Jefferson 1791*

Despite his efforts, Banneker was unable to change attitudes to slavery. However, Banneker will always be remembered as one of the outstanding Americans who helped launch the new republic.

## Washington Retires

**KEY QUESTION** What dangers did President Washington warn against?

In 1796, President George Washington decided that two terms in office was enough. He wanted to return to Mount Vernon, his estate in Virginia. Throughout his eight years in office (1789–1797), he had tried to serve as a symbol of national unity. In large part, he succeeded.



(above) Benjamin Banneker helped to survey the new capital of Washington, D.C.