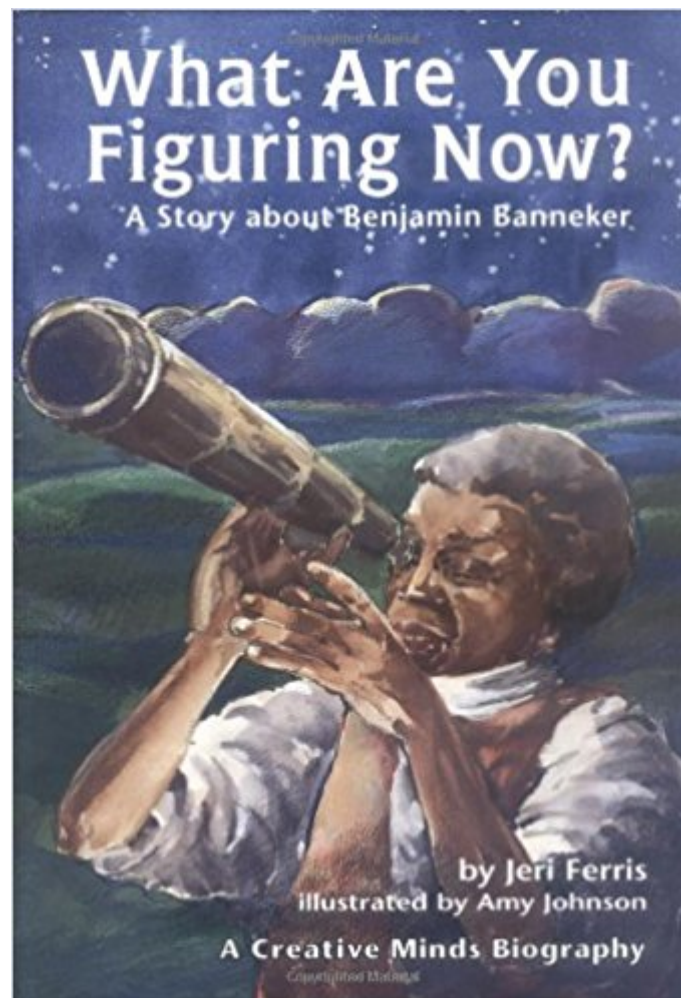




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# What Are You Figuring Now?: A Story About Benjamin Banneker (Creative Minds Biography)



## Synopsis

A biography of the Afro-American farmer and self-taught mathematician, astronomer, and surveyor for the new capital city of the United States in 1791, who also calculated a successful almanac notable for its preciseness.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Grade 2-4 Banneker, born of free black parents near Baltimore in 1731, is remembered for his skill as an astronomer, mathematician, and surveyor. He worked with Andrew Ellicott, the surveyor appointed by George Washington, to lay out the boundaries of Washington, D.C. A great deal of information and a long period of time have been compressed and simplified in an attempt to make Banneker's life and contributions accessible to young readers. Dialogue has been added, most likely for the same reason, although it is sometimes jarring. For example, when Benjamin begins the Quaker school, his grandmother's musing portends the boy's future: " 'Benjie,' she said, 'I wonder what great things you're going to do some day. And I wonder how you can do them on a tobacco farm.' " Little information is given on the restrictive laws of 18th-Century America which would help place Banneker in an appropriate context. No sources are cited with the exception of an acknowledgement to Silvio Bedini, the author of a definitive adult biography entitled *The Life of Benjamin Banneker* (Landmark, 1984). Bedini and others are noted for further reading in Lillie Patterson's biography for children, *Benjamin Banneker: Genius of Early America* (Abingdon, 1978; o.p.). Maria B. Salvadore, District of Columbia Public Library Copyright 1989 Reed Business

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Arrived in time and it's excellent for a 5th grade reader! Not too much, too too little. Perfect!

I personally I joy reading this book at my age 54. It's a very good read for the young ones. They could even act it out as a skit.

Benjamin Banneker was raised on a farm in Maryland. Growing up, he counted everything. He learned to read and constantly wanted to know more. He worked hard growing tobacco and fishing, but he wanted more than that out of his life. When a Quaker moved in nearby and started a school, Benjamin was permitted to attend. He lasted there about four years, until he learned all the Quaker had to teach him. One day in town, he encountered a man he knew. The man had a watch that he let Benjamin borrow. Benjamin spent many hours taking the watch apart and documenting how all the pieces worked and fit together. It took Benjamin two years, but he recreated the watch and built his own working clock. People talked, and soon many wanted to come and see the man that built the clock. Life went on like this for Benjamin. He discovered something new and then had to master it. It was his mastery of astronomy and surveying that eventually landed him in the midst of President Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Benjamin was now part of the team that would design the layout of the new capital in Washington. Benjamin had only a basic education by today's standards, but Ms. Ferris goes on to document the amazing accomplishments one man made on his own. She shows what hard work and perseverance can accomplish. Reviewed by: Jaglvr

I love this book, because Mr Bannakey was a smart guy and he became poor to rich using his skills and participating the building of the capital city of USA, and meeting with the first president of United States.

The story of Benjamin Banneker has been a great addition to my class. I teach 7th,8th grade resource special education students in an economically disadvantaged part of rural east Texas. We read the story and study it with the use of vocabulary and questions which I have developed. The story is well written and easy enough for my slow readers to enjoy. I am very pleased to be able to teach history in this manner. My class is a reading class but we are able to use this simple book as a jumping off place to teach invention, hard work, overcoming obstacles and a myriad of other character building concepts. Highly recommended...

My mother bought me these books when I was in the 3rd grade. They got me through many book reports and biography assignments in elementary school. I had never heard of Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth or Benjamin Banneker before. Even now that I am in college I remember things I learned from these books! I can't listen to a lecture on Washington D.C., slavery or African-Americans and not think about this book! These books are simple enough for any child to understand, and it might just spark they're interest in history too.

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