

Banneker-Douglass Museum Mural Project Description

William Arthur Smith, *Andrew Ellicott & Benjamin Banneker Surveying the Boundaries of Washington, DC*, 1968 (Oil on linen, 93" H X 66" W)

Project Mission

To conserve, mount, frame, and display the *Andrew Ellicott & Benjamin Banneker Surveying the Boundaries of the District of Columbia* mural at the Banneker-Douglass Museum in Annapolis, Maryland, as well as to provide financial support to the museum.



Background

In 1966, the State Roads Commission, predecessor to the Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA), the agency that operates and maintains the State's toll facilities, contracted with Gladieux Corporation to make decorative improvements to the Maryland House Travel Plaza on I-95 in Aberdeen, Maryland. A Pennsylvania artist – William A. Smith – was commissioned to create several murals for the travel plaza. Each depicted significant individuals and events important to both Maryland and U.S. history, and were installed in the lobby of the Maryland House on April 2, 1968.

On September 16, 2012, the Maryland House Service Plaza was closed to the public to be demolished and rebuilt. Olin Conservation, Inc. was contracted by Clark Construction to remove the murals from the second floor. The murals were delivered to Page Conservation in Washington, D.C., on October 18, 2012, where they were cleaned and prepared for long-term storage. This process was completed and delivered to Bonsai Storage in Hanover, Maryland July 2013.

With the William A. Smith family's consent, the MDTA decided to separate the murals into individual scenes to make it easier to find suitable homes for the smaller sections.

Future Plans

The Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture, which operates the Banneker Douglass Museum, advocated for the museum to be chosen as the mural's new home. This transition was approved in 2016 by the Board of Public Works. We aim to install the survey scene for permanent display in the museum's foyer for public viewing.



Mural Project Description continued

The Andrew Ellicott-Benjamin Banneker mural is part of a rare collection of murals commissioned by the State, just two years after the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Be a part of history when you contribute to its unveiling at the Banneker-Douglass Museum during Black History Month, February 2022.

The *Andrew Ellicott & Benjamin Banneker Surveying the Boundaries of the District of Columbia* mural honors two extraordinary historical figures. The mural is dedicated to long-time Washington, D.C. surveyor, Chas Langelan, who respected and admired both Banneker and Ellicott. Langelan emulated them in his own passion for the surveying profession and executed its demands for integrity and accuracy to a high degree.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Be a part of history. Donate to the Andrew Ellicott & Benjamin Banneker Mural Project today. The mural unveiling will occur during Black History Month, February 2022. Contributor names will be displayed near the artwork.

For online contributions, visit the Museum's donation page at <https://bdmuseum.maryland.gov/donate/>. Click Donate Today, and select Andrew Ellicott & Benjamin Banneker Mural Project.

Please make checks payable to Banneker-Douglass Museum and add "Ellicott-Banneker Mural" in the memo.

Mail to:

Banneker-Douglass Museum
P.O. Box 1442, Annapolis, MD 21404

About Benjamin Banneker

Benjamin Banneker was a man of extraordinary accomplishments who lived during the eighteenth century. He was largely self-taught in the fields of astronomy, mathematics, surveying, and natural history. He produced a series of commercially successful almanacs and constructed what is possibly the first striking clock made in the United States, built entirely of wood. He assisted Andrew Ellicott in the land survey that became our nation's capital, Washington D.C. Banneker was a free landowning African-American who farmed and lived in Oella near Ellicott City, Maryland.

About Andrew Ellicott

Andrew Ellicott was the premier land surveyor in the United States from 1784 to 1820. He was called upon to perform many significant surveys such as the completion of the Mason/Dixon Line and the original survey of the area designated to become our nation's capital. He surveyed the borders of no less than eleven of our states and surveyed both the northern and southern boundaries of the United States. Ellicott was well-known by George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin. He became the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Land Office and served as a mentor for Meriwether Lewis. In later years he became a professor of mathematics at West Point Military Academy.

About the Banneker-Douglass Museum

As the State of Maryland's official museum of African American heritage, the Banneker-Douglass Museum serves to document, to interpret, and to promote African American history and culture (particularly in Maryland) through exhibitions, programs, and projects in order to improve the understanding and appreciation of America's rich cultural diversity for all. The Banneker-Douglass Museum is operated by the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture.

Thank you for your kind consideration in support of this essential and historical project.