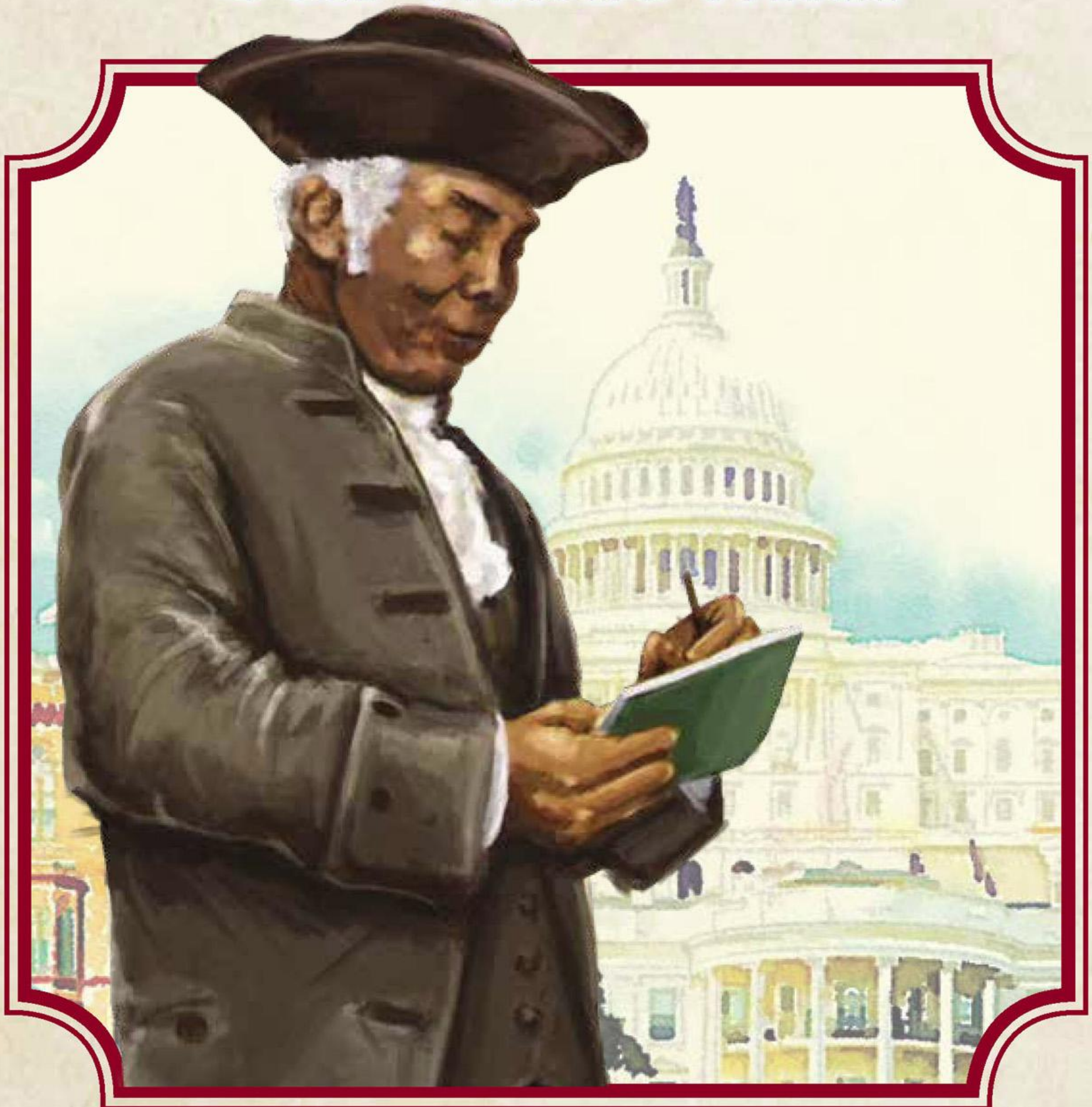


Benjamin Banneker

Self-Made Man



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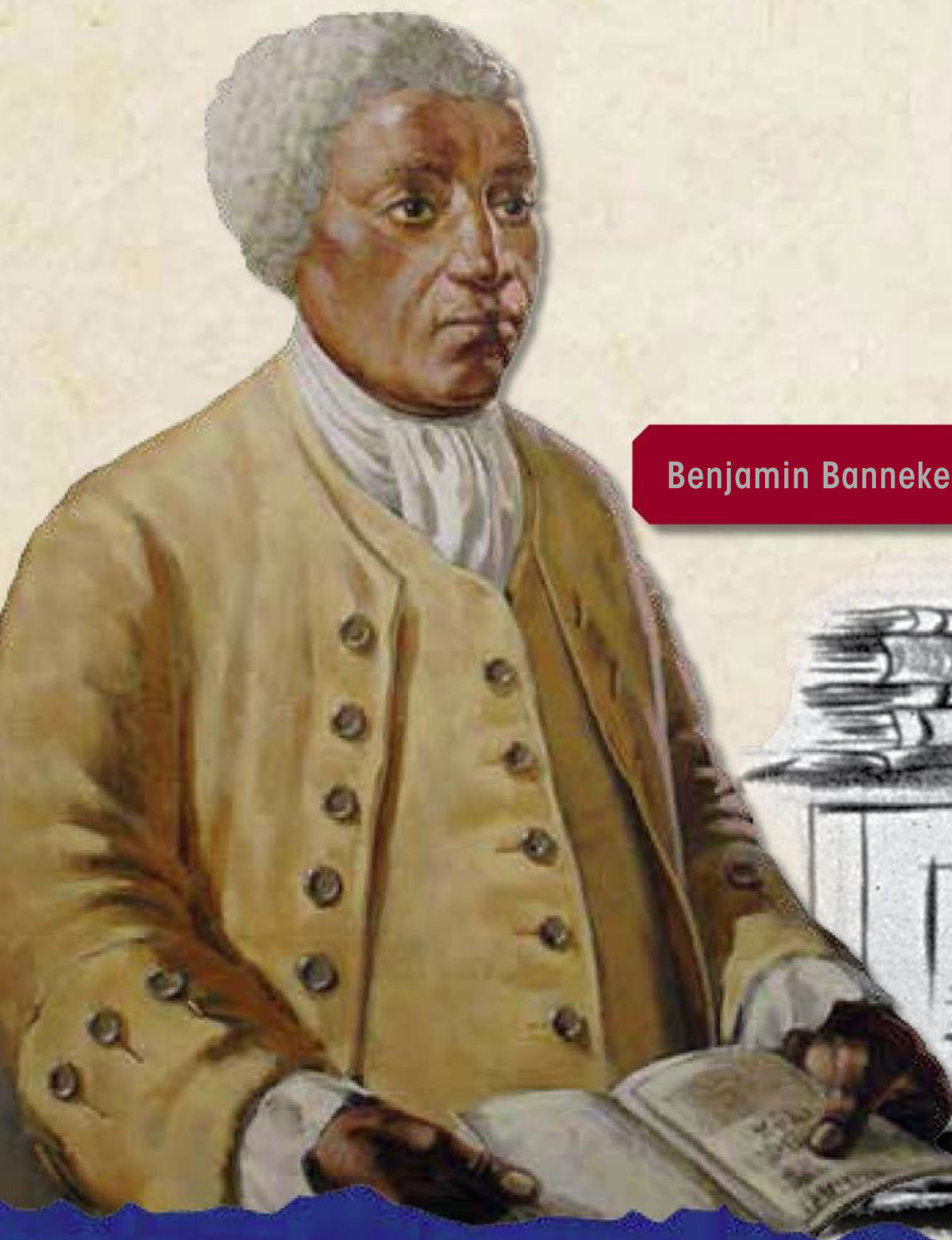
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Self-Made Man

Benjamin Banneker was a free black man. This was rare for the time in which he lived. Back then, most African Americans were enslaved. Banneker was born free. He was also born curious. As a child, he loved to learn. He spent hours teaching himself how things worked. He studied why things happened. This inquisitiveness and thirst for knowledge continued throughout his adult life.

Banneker taught himself math and science. In his later years, he made up complex math puzzles for himself and others to solve. Banneker loved looking at the stars and planets. He liked to figure out their paths. His accuracy in calculating their distances later earned him an important job in Washington, DC.



Benjamin Banneker

Banneker was an author, too. He researched and wrote books. He also wrote important letters in which he spoke about the evils of slavery and **racism**.

Banneker wanted to show that African Americans were as smart as white people. That was something many people at the time did not believe. Banneker's achievements are impressive, even more so when one realizes that he achieved them with few resources and very little schooling. Banneker was a self-made man.

A slave trader sells a girl at an auction in 1780.

Slavery

In the 1700s, many African Americans were slaves. They were the property of others. Slave owners forced slaves to work long hours without pay. And they often treated slaves harshly.

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