

WILLIAM E. MATHEWS, (colored,) was then introduced. He said it was a custom old as antiquity for men to come together to celebrate great events. The Jews celebrated the Passover; England the birthday of her Queen. All the great powers of the earth, including Hayti and Liberia, (applause,) have a day peculiarly their own. The white Americans celebrate the Fourth of July. But it is an unhappy fact that the colored people of the United States had no day to celebrate. Thank God, another and a better day has at last dawned, (applause,) and this evening the colored people meet under circumstances never before known. The names of Wilson and Lovejoy would be handed down to posterity with blessings. (Applause.)

The speaker hoped the 16th day of April would ever be a day of rejoicing in this District. (Applause.) Let the rejoicing swell the tide until all in the United States meet in one grand celebration, (applause,) and when the colored man shall stand on one grand platform of universal right. (Applause.) He liked these anniversaries. They inspired them with a manhood they did not feel on other occasions. (Applause.)

The colored people should celebrate the birthdays of their great men—the birthday of Hannibal, who crossed the Alps, and compelled the Romans to cringe at his feet (applause); of Toussaint L'Ouverture, (applause,) who worked successfully the greater than mathematical problem, that they who would be free must first strike the blow. (Applause.) He (L'Ouverture) had turned Hayti from a hell of slavery to a paradise of freedom (applause); and America had been forced to recognize her nationality, and to-day we have a black man (applause) representing her here. He would like also to see celebrated the birthday of

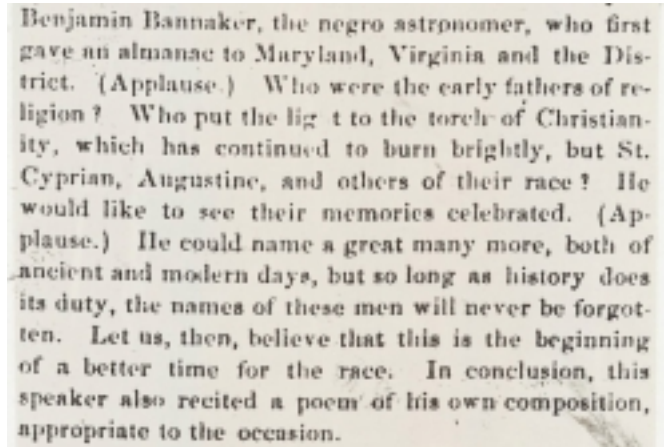
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Benjamin Bannaker, the negro astronomer, who first gave an almanac to Maryland, Virginia and the District. (Applause.) Who were the early fathers of religion? Who put the lig[h]t to the torch of Christianity, which has continued to burn brightly, but St. Cyprian, Augustine, and others of their race? He would like to see their memories celebrated. (Applause.) He could name a great many more, both of ancient and modern days, but so long as history does its duty, the names of these men will never be forgotten. Let us, then, believe that this is the beginning of a better time for the race. In conclusion, this speaker also recited a poem of his own composition, appropriate to the occasion.



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