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Banneker, Benjamin, 1731-1806. Letter.

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Maryland, Baltimore County,
Near Ellicott's Lower Mills,

May the 6th 1790

Sir,

I have, at the request of several gentlemen, calculated an Ephemeris for the year 1791 which I presented unto Mr. Hayes, printer in Baltimore and he desired received it in a very polite manner and told me that he would gladly print the same provided the calculations came any ways near the truth, but to satisfy himself in that he would send it to Philadelphia to be inspected by you and at the reception of an answer he should know how to proceed. And now Sir, I beg that you will not be too severe upon me but as favourable in giving your approbation as the nature of the case will permit - knowing well the difficulty that attends long calculations and especially with young beginners in Astronomy. But this I know that the greater and most useful part of my Ephemeris is so near the truth that it needs but little correction, and as to that part that may be somewhat deficient, I hope that you will be kind enough to view with an eye of pity, as the calculations were made more for the sake of gratifying the curiosity of the public than for any view to profit, as I suppose it to be the first attempt of the kind that ever was made in America by a person of my complexion.

I find by my calculations there will be four Eclipses for the ensuing year but I have not yet settled their appearances, but am waiting for an answer from your Honour to Mr. Hayes in Baltimore. So no more at present but am Sir

Your very humble and most obed^t Serv^t.
B. BANNERER.