



The University of  
the West Indies  
Centre for Gender and  
Development Studies



Issue 2 – 2008

# Living Ancestors

by  
*Gabrielle Le Roux*



Aya

Anastasia Thomas, known as Aya lived in Soufriere, Dominica. She was born on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 1901. She was 100 years old when Gabrielle Le Roux met, interviewed and drew her in 2001.

Aya was known for her outstanding skill as a bele dancer, she wore her traditional dance clothes for her portrait.



## Ma Pampo

Elizabeth Israel, better known as Ma Pampo lived in Glanvillia, Portsmouth, Dominica. She was born 27 January 1875 and died on October 17<sup>th</sup> 2003 at the age of 128. She was 126 years old when she sat for this portrait in 2001.

Ma Pampo attributed her good longevity to hard work, the natural food she ate, God and her philosophy of living in peace with the people around her.



### Didi

Virginia Barry, known as Didi lived in Glanvillia, Portsmouth, Dominica. She was 101 years old but her exact birthdate was not available when I visited.

Didi was Ma Pampo's first cousin and although she was over a hundred she was twenty five years younger years younger than her.



### Ma Morol

Josine Nicely Bernadette Valmond was known as Ma Morol. She lived in Sineku where the survivors of the Caribs, some of Dominica's earliest inhabitants live. She was born on 22 November 1901 and was 100 years old when we met. She was skilled at the kind of basket and mat weaving practiced in that area.



Ma John

Marian Younger Virgile, known as Ma John lived in Marigot, Dominica. She was born 10 July 1901 and was 100 years old in 2001.

Ma John had worked for many years on Mellville Hall Estate shelling copra and lost an eye chopping wood.



Aunty Rose

Rose Peters, known in her community as Aunty Rose or Ma Rose lived in Glanvillia, Portsmouth, Dominica. She was born the 21st February 1883. She was 118 years old when she sat for this portrait in 2001 and she died just a couple of months later on September 28<sup>th</sup> the same year.

When she saw the portrait Aunty Rose said she found it looked like her: "But I find you made me look a little bit old!"



## Memen

Felicite Hogan was known both as Memen and Ma William. She lived in Goodwill, Roseau, Dominica. She was born 8 March 1901 and was 100 years old in 2001.

Memen had sixteen children but only four of them grew to adulthood. She had worked all her life as a farmer.





### Ma Bradley

Elize Phillips was called Leela, Moda and Ma Bradley in her community. She lived in Wesley, the area of Dominica where Creole is not spoken. She was 113 years old when she agreed to be drawn for this project.

Ma Bradley was deeply moved to know that her portrait was going to be seen in Africa, she said it was the only way she would return there.



Ma Cuffy

Nellie Cuffy, known as Ma Cuffy lived in Goodwill, a suburb of Roseau, the capital of Dominica. She was born on 26 September 1900 and was 101 years old in 2001.

Ma Cuffy said that she would like to be remembered as: “A beautiful woman, a good woman and a woman with good friends”.



## Ama

Evelina Nation was known as Ama and lived in Castle Bruce, Dominica. She was born 18 February 1898 and was 104 years old when I drew her.

Ama had eleven children, a hundred and ten grandchildren, about a hundred and fifty great grandchildren and ten great-great grandchildren.