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## Nancy Daniels: *The Long Life and Legacy of a Former Slave*

By Idenze Ezeme

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FEATURE  
IMAGE

### Nancy Daniels

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**NANCY DANIELS**

# Nancy Daniels: The Long Life and Legacy of a Former Slave

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**N**ancy Daniels was an African-born Barbadian ex-slave of probable Igbo descent who was taken from her home and forced into slavery in Barbados. She was born before 1760 and was brought to Barbados around 1780 when she was in her twenties. Her life was full of hardship, but she showed great strength. Her story is an example of how Igbo people survived and kept their culture alive, even after being taken far from home.

01

## Life as a Slave

Nancy was owned by a man named M. D'Azevedo. Like many enslaved Africans, she lost her freedom and had to work hard in difficult conditions. After M. D'Azevedo died, she was given to the Daniels family. At that time, enslaved people often had to take the last names of their owners, so she became known as Nancy Daniels.

Records in Barbados confirm that she was born in Africa, but we do not know exactly where. However, many believe she was from the Igbo people of West Africa. The Igbo were often taken during the transatlantic slave trade. They were known for being strong, proud, and holding on to their traditions, even in slavery.

02

## Life After Freedom

When slavery ended, Nancy Daniels was freed. However, life was still difficult for former slaves. Many had no land or money, so they had to keep working for the families who had owned them. Nancy stayed with the Daniels family and worked as their housekeeper until she died.

People who knew her said she was a wise and respected woman. Even though she was far from her homeland, she may have continued some Igbo traditions, such as storytelling, using herbs for medicine, and honouring her ancestors.

03

## A Long Life

One of the most amazing things about Nancy Daniels was how long she lived. According to family stories, she lived to be 120 years old. Her death record says she was 116 years old when she died on September 24, 1871. She was buried the same day at Saint Leonard's Anglican Church in Bridgetown, Barbados.

Her long life is a symbol of survival and strength. She lived through slavery, saw freedom come, and remained strong through it all.

# The Igbo Influence in the Caribbean

The Igbo people left a big mark on Caribbean culture. Many enslaved Igbo people kept parts of their language, religion, and traditions. Some Igbo words are still used in Caribbean languages today. The way people live, work together, and respect their ancestors in the Caribbean also comes from Igbo culture.

Nancy Daniels's story is not just one person's. She represents many Igbo people who were taken from their homes but never lost their spirit.

Nancy Daniels' story is about strength, survival, and holding on to culture. She was born in Africa, survived the journey to Barbados, lived through slavery, and saw freedom. She lived for over 100 years, proving that the human spirit is strong.

Many enslaved people's names and stories have been forgotten, but Nancy Daniels' memory lives on. She reminds us of the strength of the Igbo people and all African descendants who built new lives despite great hardship.

- Barbados National Trust. (2015, May 20). Nancy Daniels, photographed in the 1850s.
- Ukpuru. (2016, June 21). Nancy Daniels, photographed in the 1850s.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

## Idenze Ezeme

Nze is an Igbo history and culture enthusiast with an in-depth passion for exploring the rich cultural heritage, traditions, and historical narratives of the Igbo people. His works is mostly focused on pre-colonial Igbo societies, traditional belief systems, leadership systems, and the impact of European colonialism.



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*History worth reading.*

African history · culture · indigenous knowledge

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