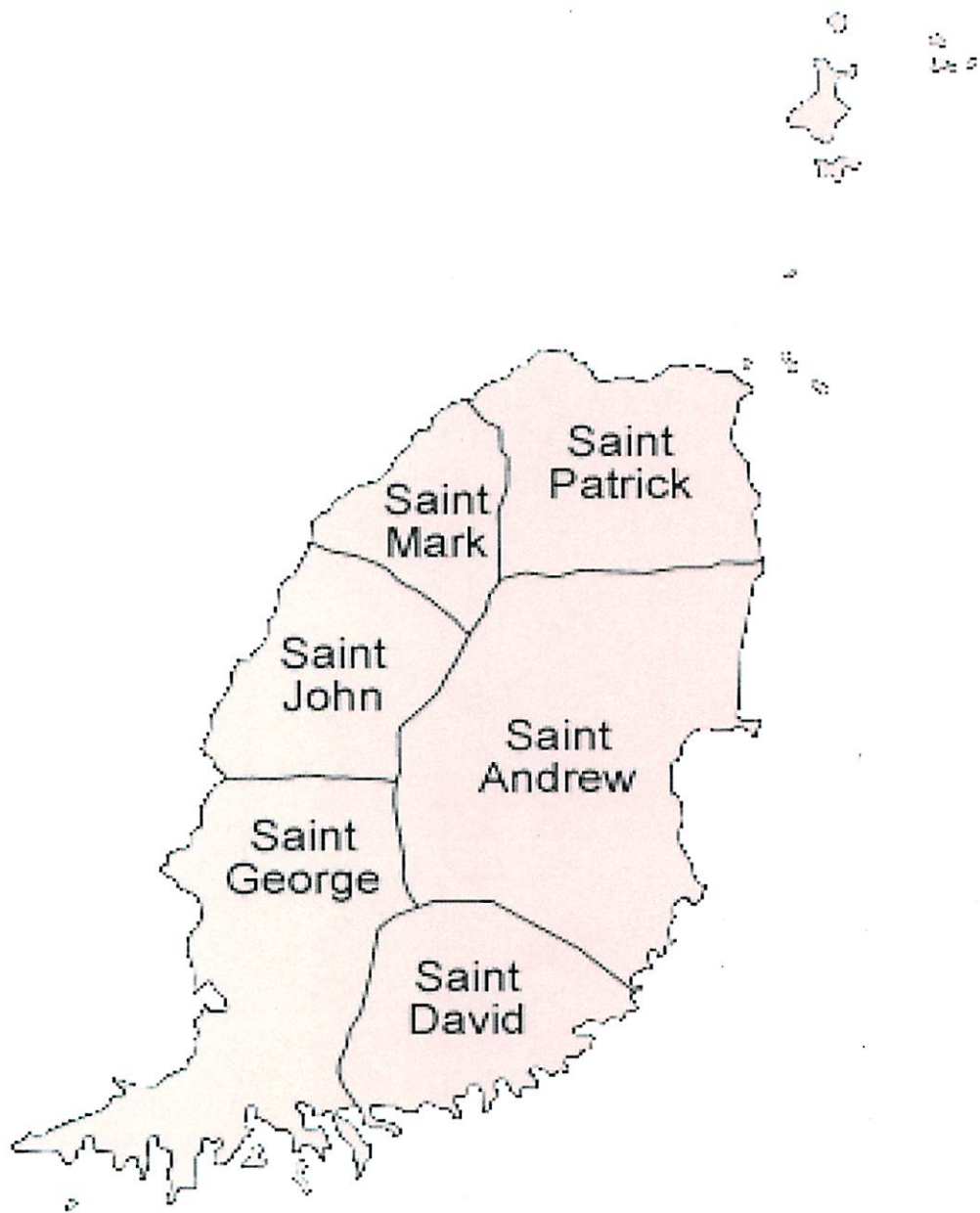


**PRESENTATION**

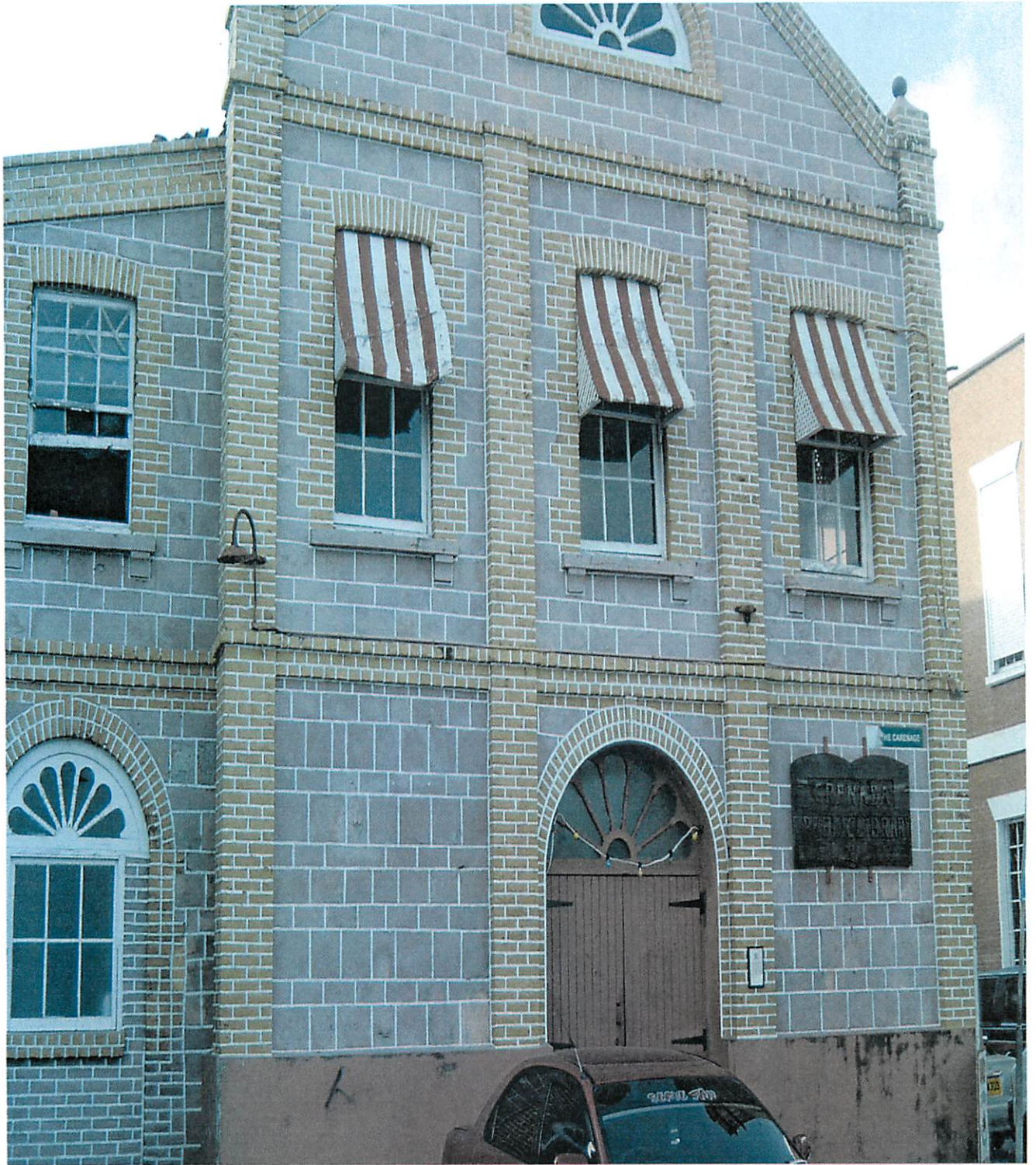
**WORLD DIGITAL LIBRARY  
MEETING**

**June 22-23, 2010**

**Presented by  
Samaria Lillian Sylvester (Miss)  
Director of Libraries  
Grenada**



**Map of Grenada**



**GRENADA PUBLIC LIBRARY  
CARENAGE  
ST. GEORGE'S**

## **GEOGRAPHY**

**Grenada**, a tropical tri-island state that includes the dependencies of *Carriacou* and *Petite Martinique* has a total land area of 334 square kilometers being 12 miles long and 21 miles wide. It is the smallest and southernmost of the Windward Islands chain and one of the many islands forming a graceful curve between the continents of North America. It has a generally mountainous topography with the Caribbean Sea lapping the shores of the western side of the island while the dramatic Atlantic swells break on the eastern coasts.

Grenada is an English speaking country with an estimated population of 102,638 (2002). A member of the Caribbean Community (*CARICOM*), Grenada was dominated by both British and French governments in its early history, became a British Colony and finally obtained political independence from Britain on February 7, 1974.

Grenada is one of the world's chief suppliers of the 'twin crop' of nutmeg and mace, and numerous other spices are grown in lesser quantities. It has come to be known internationally as the '*Isle of Spice*' and uses the Eastern Caribbean Currency (\$EC).

## **LIBRARY/ARCHIVAL SERVICES**

Library and Information Services in Grenada began as early as 1846, with the passing of a bill by the Legislative Council, for the establishment of a library and museum. In 1853, a subscription library was thus declared open and moved from a subscription library to a free public library in 1949.

**The Grenada Public Library** (Sheila Buckmire Memorial) now functions as the National Library and Archives/Repository as well as the administrative headquarters for the Department of Library Services, Ministry of Education.

Unlike the institution of library services, no legislation initiated the establishment of Archives. In fact, it was not until the then Chief Librarian took the initiative to build up the historical records section of the Public Library during her tenure (1959-1985) that any semblance of an Archive was recognized.

The collection consisted of local newspapers; government documents i.e. gazettes, estimates, departmental reports, electoral lists, blue books, letter registers and letter books, legislative council papers, colonial documents and school publications both local and Caribbean dating as far back as 1764. Since then other pockets of archival material which are similar in nature have been identified in other places including the Supreme Court Registry and Office of the Governor General. Efforts to harness these resources, organise and house same under one entity is ongoing.

It is interesting to note that up till now primitive methods of preservation and conservation are employed and it was not until the realization of the Grenada Endangered Archives Project (an initiative of the British Library and University of Manchester) in January 2010 that digitisation was even heard of in some circles. This project focused on digitizing 132 volumes of deed records and local government correspondence which provide a crucial source for understanding the major political, social and economic transformation of the southern Caribbean.

The project is expected to run for eighteen (18) months thereafter it may be possible to boast the acquisition of digitized materials then. Until such time Grenada does not have any records which may be offered as part of this exercise.

Some constraints which are however, familiar to us all include the lack of human and technical resources and the apathy exhibited by our respective governments. One way in which the latter situation could be addressed is by mandating them (from the highest level possible) to give topmost priority to libraries and to aid their efforts to acquire, organise and disseminate information to all.