

Swetes Village Uncovered

Swetes Village Uncovered is a community-based group dedicated to showcasing the heritage, culture, and natural assets of the village of Swetes in the parish of St. Paul, Antigua and Barbuda, through offering a unique and memorable tour within their village.



Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SwetesVillageUncovered>

Phone: (268) 460-2376

A promotional poster for "Unlock the Museum #2 Swetes Village Uncovered". The top left features the "UNLOCK the Museum" logo with a keyhole icon and the text "MUSEUM OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA". The top right has "#2". The main image is a photograph of a traditional wooden house with a corrugated metal roof. Overlaid on the image is the text "UNLOCK Swetes Village" in large, stylized letters. Below the image, it says "IN COLLABORATION WITH SWETES VILLAGE UNCOVERED". The text continues: "The Unlock the Museum series continues in the village of Swetes, a vibrant community that has maintained Antiguan and Barbudan lifeways, including a traditional 'Blouse & Skirt' house." and "Inside we share facts about the village of Swetes and the Blouse & Skirt House." At the bottom, it says "YOU HAVE THE KEYS. NOW UNLOCK!". There are three circular callouts: one with "MORE INFO" and contact details (268 462 1469, museum@andw.ag, The Museum of Antigua and Barbuda), and two with social media links (Facebook: SWETES VILLAGE UNCOVERED, Email: SWETESVILLAGEUNCOVERED@LIVE.COM).

UNLOCK
the Museum

#2

UNLOCK
Swetes Village

IN COLLABORATION WITH
SWETES VILLAGE UNCOVERED

The Unlock the Museum series continues in the village of Swetes, a vibrant community that has maintained Antiguan and Barbudan lifeways, including a traditional 'Blouse & Skirt' house.

Inside we share facts about the village of Swetes and the Blouse & Skirt House.

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MORE INFO
268 462 1469
museum@andw.ag
The Museum of Antigua and Barbuda

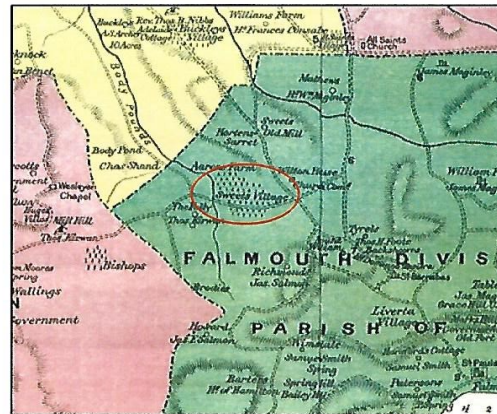
SWETES VILLAGE UNCOVERED
SWETESVILLAGEUNCOVERED@LIVE.COM

The History of Swetes Village

Swetes Village was named after a plantation owner named Colonel Main Swete (1673-1735), an Englishman who inherited the land from his first wife and came to live in Antigua, where he served in the House of Assembly in 1704 and 1715. The map below, from 1747, has the name Col. Swete exactly where the village is now:



By the 1800s, Henry Gale owned a 180-acre portion of Swete's land. After the great earthquake of 1843, a section of his property was sold to the formerly enslaved laborers—cheaper than rebuilding the destroyed cottages. The result was Swetes Village. It was quite a large village by the time the map below was drawn in 1891. Note that the name was spelled Sweets, which is how it appeared on maps until the 1980s.



The Blouse & Skirt House

In the old days, there were two kinds of cottages that poorer people lived in. One was made of wattle and daub: woven sticks plastered with mud and roofed with cane trash. Old-time Antiguan names for these cottages were "trash houses," or "Tan off 'n fire" ("Stand back 'n Fire") houses, named for the practice of throwing the daub at the walls.



The other type was called the "blouse-and-skirt" house, named because the foundation was wider than the top half, like a blouse over a skirt. The lower part was constructed of stone and the upper part of wood.

The house in Swetes Village is over 100 years old. The original owners were Samuel and Elisabeth Joseph, who had lived next door in a wattle-and-daub house before they constructed their blouse-and-skirt house. In 1950, two hurricanes ravished Antigua—Baker and Dog, known locally as Cat and Dog—and many of the old cottages were blown down, never to be rebuilt. The house in Swetes survived, and has endured several hurricanes since then, as well as the 1974 earthquake. It is currently the home of Egbert Lewis.

This photo from Desmond Nicholson's website shows another blouse-and-skirt house, on the right in the photo.

