

The first English speakers

*Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP
Attorney-at-Law (Switzerland), Solicitor (Hong Kong),
Solicitor (England & Wales)*

English speakers came to Zug long before the commodity traders. The most important early example was the Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company, founded in Cham in 1866 by the American brothers Charles and George Page. The company produced condensed milk for export, much of it to Britain. Its founders brought American and British management practices to the canton.¹ The company merged with the firm of Henri Nestlé in 1905 and became part of the Nestlé group, which moved its headquarters to Vevey. Part A described the role of the milk factory in the industrialisation of the canton. For the history of English in Zug, it marks the first time that a significant enterprise in the canton was managed by English speakers.

The early English presence remained limited. The industrial workforce of the canton was local or came from neighbouring regions and from Italy. The tourists who visited the lake and the mountains in the nineteenth century included many British travellers, but they came as guests and did not settle. English was the language of a few managers, merchants and visitors. It had no place in the daily life of the canton until the middle of the twentieth century.

1 Notes

1. Chamapedia (local encyclopedia of Cham), article "Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company", chamapedia.ch: founded 1866 in Cham by Charles Albert Page, a former New York Times journalist then serving as US trade vice-consul in Zurich, and George Ham Page, together with further investors; merger with Nestlé in 1905. ←

For general information only. This article does not constitute legal or tax advice, does not replace advice on an individual case and creates no lawyer-client relationship. It reflects the legal position as of September 2026.

Online version: helveticaregister.com/zug-the-first-english-speakers