



## Swiss American Historical Society Review

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Volume 42 | Number 1

Article 6

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2-2006

### Swiss Roots

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#### Recommended Citation

(2006) "Swiss Roots," *Swiss American Historical Society Review*. Vol. 42 : No. 1 , Article 6.

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[www.swissroots.org](http://www.swissroots.org)

## How Swiss are you? Find out at [www.swissroots.org](http://www.swissroots.org)

What do Renée Zellweger, Bob Lutz, Johann August Sutter, and Louis Chevrolet have in common? They are all American individuals with Swiss roots. Since the early 18th century, thousands of Swiss citizens have emigrated to the U.S. – whether they were motivated by curiosity, hopes for a better future, or because of economic hardship in Switzerland.

Today, over one million Americans have Swiss roots, more than 5,000 American cities have Swiss names, and countless U.S. citizens are intrigued by the culture, diversity, and beauty of Switzerland. By the same token, there are many Swiss who have strong affinities to the U.S. for reasons of tradition, personal interest, or fascination by the American way of life.

Beginning in 2006, all these people will have access to a tool allowing them to explore their interest: [www.swissroots.org](http://www.swissroots.org). This website is part of a project organized by the official Swiss representations in the U.S. in cooperation with numerous local Swiss associations. **swiss roots** is supported by Switzerland promotion agencies such as Presence Switzerland, Switzerland Tourism and Pro Helvetia. It offers a platform to promote cultural, tourist, and economic interaction between the U.S. and Switzerland.

The centerpiece of the campaign is the website [www.swissroots.org](http://www.swissroots.org) which offers Americans the possibility to discover their Swiss roots and the land of their ancestors with just a few mouse clicks. To be launched in March 2006, the **swiss roots** website will include features such as genealogical search engines, interactive communication tools, community sites, a wide range of interesting and surprising information on Switzerland, profiles of famous Swiss emigrants and the **swiss roots** event calendar. Visitors will have the opportunity to exchange ideas with like-minded people in both countries. Americans who feel inspired to visit the land of their forefathers can use the website's resources to book their trips.

Various events will be organized throughout the U.S. to promote **swiss roots**. An exhibit about Swiss overseas emigration will be shown on Ellis Island from August to October 2006. A Swiss Postal Bus will drive through several U.S. states and will be present at several **swiss roots** events.

Additional events will promote **swiss roots** in the five U.S. states that have the highest concentration of Americans with Swiss roots which are California, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and New York. Just to mention a few of them: “Tell-Spiele” in New Glarus, Wisconsin; Basle Carnival Days in Los Angeles; a Swiss “Sängerfest” in Toledo, Ohio; the Green County Cheese Days in Monroe, Wisconsin.

**swiss roots** is a unique opportunity to bring Swiss and Americans together, to bring together people from two countries with close ties, common interests and shared traditions. **swiss roots** offers the chance to learn more about each other’s heritage while discovering exciting and surprising Switzerland. **swiss roots** is an ambitious endeavor dedicated to reviving old connections and creating new friendships. Find out more about **swiss roots** on [www.swissroots.org](http://www.swissroots.org).