

Roland Edouard Tenthorey

1925 – 2016

Roland was born on January 26th 1925 in a very small village in the French speaking part of Switzerland called Les Granges de Dompierre in the state of Vaud. He was raised there in a farmhouse that has been in the family for 600 years as records show. He was the fourth of five children born to Gustave and Lina Tenthorey (nee Frauenknecht). Farming had been the Tenthorey life for centuries. He loved his chores of taking care of the livestock, mucking the stalls and milking the cows twice daily. He learned to plant crops and fruit trees and then to harvest them as well. He would cut down trees and split the timber for the only source of heat the farmhouse had...a wood stove. This humble beginning was what he often said prepared him for his life ahead.

He was educated in a one room school house which he attended with various aged children from the surrounding villages. He especially loved learning geometry and trigonometry. Since the custom was that his older brother would inherit the farm, Roland's love of math would instead make him well suited for a four year apprenticeship as a tool and die maker. Those sharp skills are required for calculations when manufacturing complicated metal parts. It was a perfect career choice.

After graduating from the technical school it was mandatory he join the Swiss Army like all the other young men of his age. He was near the border during WWII but thankfully saw no combat as Switzerland was never invaded. However the army was not his favorite experience, especially the "goose step" marching drills but he did enjoy the camaraderie and being in the great outdoors.

Not long after the military he finally set out on his own to the New World in 1951 by boarding a ship and sailing from Europe to Canada. The city of Montreal offered the best opportunities for a French speaking immigrant. He had also learned to speak fluent German growing up as most Swiss do. He arrived there with no connections or sponsor and with just \$50, a few metric measuring tools and a bit of salami in his pockets (he was not happy when a customs officer confiscated the salami). But after just a few short days he was hired at a large manufacturing company called Vickers as a Tool Maker. For a time he thought perhaps of working and saving enough money to buy some land and starting a farm of his own.

But this was not to be...taking a street car he was about to meet his future bride. One cold day he noticed a lovely girl trying to close a rusty streetcar window and offered his assistance. Once he spoke she knew his accent was not Canadian and they learned they were both Swiss! Her name was Ida Crescenzia Wohlgensinger from St Gallen and also born in 1925. She was an only child, raised by her godparents, the Buschor family in the town of Riedisheim in Alsace France as her mother, also named Ida, died due to childbirth infection six days after she was born. She only saw her loving Swiss father Ferdinand occasionally. She too was a recent immigrant but she had a sponsor who had offered her a job before leaving her homeland. She worked as a nanny for a wealthy family but after meeting Roland plans changed. They quickly fell in love and started planning their lives together, got married in 1952, bought a car and came to America. They drove route 66 to California living first in Flintridge-La Cañada in southern California where they worked, thrived, became US citizens in 1958 and where

their first child Henri was born in 1959. Later they moved north to Rancho Cordova, California and where their second son Andre was born in 1964. With their family complete they put down roots permanently.

Roland worked at several companies over the years always in the same general field either as a machinist or tool maker. He worked for Aerojet and Campbell Soup Company in Sacramento, Ampex in Sunnyvale (an electronics company which he liked the best), Kaiser Steel in Napa building the Alaskan pipeline tooling and finally retiring from Wemco in downtown Sacramento. Roland was a highly skilled craftsman and respected as such by his peers. His successful livelihood allowed Ida to stay home and raise their sons which she was also very highly qualified to do. She made their family a loving home and Roland cherished her talents especially all the wonderful treats being created in her kitchen.

Roland favorite things were: Time with the family, snow skiing, hiking and backpacking in wilderness mountain areas and taking photos of nature such as flowers and landscapes he saw. He loved to travel and bought a camper for the family adventures. He skied for over 75 years in total which he had learned in the "Old Country" going back and forth to that one room schoolhouse in the wintertime. He climbed almost every mountain he saw in the Sierra's including Mt Whitney more than once. In his youth he had also climbed Mt. Blanc, Europe's highest peak. He loved telling stories of his travels to anyone who would listen and when the weather was good and snow conditions right he was off again to explore. He would yank his boys out of school at a moment's notice to take them skiing with him.

He traveled the National Parks and believed strongly about protecting nature. He also loved backyard gardening, no doubt reminding him of his farm boy days. He loved reading National Geographic magazine and collected maps of all the places he went.

His world would come crashing down when he suddenly and unexpectedly lost his beloved Ida to a stroke in 1987. For at least two years he struggled to find his way forward. Gradually he resumed what he loved doing and set off for Alaska and New Zealand to ski and hike some more. By then his boys were grown and he was on his own and free to come and go at will. He never met a stranger and would inquire constantly to find new and interesting trails and ski slopes to take that perfect photo of a flower he had never seen or a large tree or waterfall or rock outcropping. You could say the outdoors was his real home. He fished a bit, rafted down the American River and enjoyed life to its fullest. He vacationed in Hawaii with his sons and grandson, traveled to the Ukraine and Mexico with a nephew and visited his niece Rita in Tuscany. Of course he made several trips to Switzerland to visit relatives over the years.

Roland enjoyed good wine daily, imported cheeses, fresh bread and gourmet foods. Being alone he even learned to cook the special things he loved to eat. A good cheese fondue was probably his favorite of family gathering meals. And of course the large "surprise" birthday parties for him with his family and friends every five years, starting at age 65 (after several of which he started looking forward to having). Even after giving up hiking and skiing due to his age he still kept up with weather and snow conditions around the country to stay close to nature.

He was a longtime member of the Sacramento Helvetia Verein Swiss Club and made more friends there. He was also happy to play Santa for the children as well as the members at Christmas parties. He loved each day and never seemed to express any fear of getting old. Although he had ailments he managed to live independently to the very end. He loved his grandchildren and great grandkids with the last grandson arriving just 5 months before his passing.

Roland died on March 29, 2016 at the age of 91. He lived exactly 33,300 days. He had recently fallen and fractured a hip and was in good spirits at Roseville Nursing Home when he died. He outlived his four siblings Adolph (Marie), Marthe, Linette and Alice. He leaves behind his sons Henri (Linda) in Chattanooga TN, Andre and girlfriend Tracy in Granite Bay CA, Granddaughter Sarah and fiancée Greg in Granite Bay CA, Grandson Nicolas (Meryssa) and great grandchildren Brooklyn and Ethan in Citrus Heights CA, Step-grandsons Brandon, Lucas, Jason (Misty Lee) and their son Wyatt. His nephews and nieces from his brother Adolph: Daniel, Annelise, Liliane, Jean-Marc and Pierre-Etienne and their families and many other cousins and relatives in his family and Ida's family in Switzerland and his nephews Edmond and Bernard Herold and their families in France as well as all his close friends.

As he had requested, no funeral was held but a simple gathering of friends to celebrate his life. When the time is right, his sons will take his ashes to be scattered atop Roland's favorite peak in the Sierras, Round Top Mountain which he climbed more than 30 times.

Roland wasn't overtly religious but would mention "the man upstairs" on occasion. We do know he had a strong code and sense of right and wrong and had many favorite sayings such as "Use but don't abuse" and "Live and Let Live" which he learned from his father Gustave. Roland was a vagabond type person.... a pioneer like John Muir or Lewis and Clark. In a way he was never quite tame or proper but he was loved by many and will be missed by all who knew him well.

His attitude towards life can best be summed up by one of his other sayings after living 55 years in his Rancho Cordova home, "I'm really just camping here a while".

Goodbye Roland!

By Henri and Linda Tenthorey



Roland with great grandson Ethan