

My Story  
Jerry Wright



In 2007 when I was invited to become president of Sons of Norway Mjosen Lodge in Pope County, Minnesota. I thought I should get a Norwegian vest to honor my Norwegian heritage. My mother's parents (Petter Rogstad and Karen Østhagen) both emigrated from Norway in 1906 and 1907 respectively. My Norwegian grandfather's birthplace was in the community of Sandsvær south of Kongsberg and my grandmother's birthplace was in the community of Rendalen in Hedmark County of Norway. When I sent out an email request to some of my 2<sup>nd</sup> cousins in Norway, I got a response back that indicated I could go to a tailor and have one made but for at least \$500 US dollars. The response that interested me most was a couple of my cousins on my grandmother's side of the family. They would be willing to make me a vest using a fabric print similar to that used on vests worn by Rendalen men years ago. The next spring my cousin Jørann from Elverum made a trip to Minnesota with her husband (a retired military man) to visit friends in Baxter, MN. During this trip she took measurements to bring back to Norway and make a vest. That fall their friends were returning to Minnesota and brought this vest back to Glenwood. During our Sons of Norway Christmas party in 2008 I was honored to wear this vest for the first time. In August 2010 my wife Sue and I travelled back to Norway for my 3<sup>rd</sup> time (previously with my mother in 1994 and with my wife in 1998) to show off my vest to all of my cousins and give my cousins who made this vest a sincere thank you and heartfelt hug (Jørann Haugseth-Millehaugen from Elverum on the left and Aslaug Høy-Ekholt from Kongsvinger on the right).

