(Written text and photographs provided by Mary Kathleen (Fransen) Verlinich Johnson). Anne Marie Fransen was born on December 12, 1912, on the homestead farmed by her parents near Coleharbor, North Dakota, and was the daughter of John August and Anna Katarina (Johannesson/Nelson) Fransen. She grew up in the Coleharbor community and was confirmed in the Lutheran faith. Anne Fransen graduated from Coleharbor High School and the Capital Commercial College of Bismarck, North Dakota. She worked at the State Capital and was deputy clerk in the U.S. District Court in Bismarck, North Dakota, for 25 years. Anne retired in 1979 due to ill health. Anne Marie Fransen never married. Anne Marie Fransen died on June 19, 1980, of ovarian cancer at age 67 in Bismarck, North Dakota. Interment was at the Fairview Cemetery in Bismarck, North Dakota.
SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS


Victoria and Anne: The Fransen Sisters. (A special tribute provided by Mary Kathleen (Fransen) Verlinich Johnson). Four year old Victoria and 6 month old Anne were the first children to be baptized, on July 20, 1913, at the newly established Augustana Lutheran Church of Underwood, North Dakota. The church was established on July 7, 1913. Services were held alternately in English and Swedish with English being spoken the first and third Sundays and Swedish the second and fourth Sundays. The following year their brother, Arvid, was born. The lives of John, Mary and Robert were blessed beyond measure by our aunts who lived an hour away. On rainy days Dad would announce, “it’s too wet to work, we’re going to Bismarck.” Our first stop would be “Anne and Tory’s” and when they came home from work on their lunch break we would be waiting for them. Donning an apron over their dresses, within minutes they would serve a lunch for seven.

Every Thanksgiving our family would gather at their home for turkey dinner. We kids would arrive with our suitcases packed. When it was time for our parents to leave Dad would pass out Christmas shopping money. After a visit to Santa Claus we would spend the week-end buying gifts for every member of the family. In the middle of the shopping we would stop at Lucas’ downstairs cafe for supper. On Sunday morning we would go to First Lutheran Church together and they would proudly introduce their niece and nephews to all their friends. At the end of the week-end we would take the bus back home to Coleharbor North Dakota.

On Christmas Eve day Arvid, John and Robert traveled to Bismarck to bring Anne and Tory to the farm. They had so many gifts that they barely fit into the car! Bernice and Mary stayed home to prepare the traditional Swedish Christmas dinner of lutefisk, mustard gravy, potato sausage, and rice with lingonberries. There was an almond in the rice pudding and whoever got the almond was to be married within the next year. Year after year it went to Anne and despite the forecast she managed to remain happily independent. Mary remembers being just six years old and filled with exciting anticipation when she took the bus by herself to Bismarck for the first time. The bus driver was instructed to make sure his young passenger didn’t get off at an earlier stop. Well, it was easy to know which stop was Bismarck because the bus drove into the bus garage and, with special permission, there were Anne and Tory eager to make sure they were seen.
One of the highlights of staying with Anne and Tory was a visit to their place of work. Anne took us to the U.S. District Court and showed off the court room. Letting us take turns sitting in the large oak witness stand, she told us how she swore in the witnesses with an oath in which they “promised to tell the whole truth, nothing but the truth, so help me God,” She often told us about interesting cases that came before the court.

Tory took us to her office at the Gold Seal Company which was a company that was started by North Dakotan, Harold Shafer. They produced products such as Glass Wax which we kids didn’t have much use for; however, we did like the boxes of Mr. Bubble that she gave us for bubble baths.

In the summer Anne and Tory spent a number of days on the farm, traveling to Coleharbor by bus. They enjoyed putting on their farm clothes, going out to the fields to eat lunch with Arvid and helping Bernice with shelling peas or husking corn. And, they always initiated an afternoon of picking June berries.

Victoria and Anne enjoyed many close friendships and often traveled with their friends. They also went by train to Glasgow to visit Aunt Mary and their Montana cousins. Occasionally they traveled to Minneapolis to visit uncles, aunts and cousins. Victoria and Anne traveled to Sweden 1977 to set foot on the “homeland” and to visit, in person, their relatives who remained in Sweden. They were avid letter writers and news of extended family members was always treasured.

Anne died as she was about to begin her retirement years. Victoria, therefore, learned to live alone during retirement. Having such a partnership throughout their life this was a hard adjustment. When Arvid and Bernice moved to Bismarck they were close by. Victoria continued to look forward to interesting things to do and she would be the first to travel to visit Mary after her move to Alaska. She was quite a trooper, being willing to put on high boots, jump in a boat and travel up and down the river for a chance to see the scenery, visit Eskimo villages where the children surrounded her with attention. In her later years Victoria was determined to keep her beloved home and lived independently until it became necessary to go into a care center for her last three years.

Victoria and Anne spent their lives close to their North Dakota birthplace, warmly connected to extended family and dedicated to their respective careers.