

*A Standard History of Starke County Indiana* was authored by Joseph N. McCormick and was published in 1915 by the Lewis Publishing Company of Chicago and New York. On pages 471 and 472 there is a biography of Melvin Hicks Fancher and it read: "Melvin Hicks Fancher There is no better farms in Starke County than can be found in the vicinity of Hamlet in Davis Township. It is a picture of comfortable prosperity, substantial homes, large barns, sleek stock and well filled fields. When it is revealed that within the memory of men still in middle age this landscape alternated with woods and swamps, it is astonishing what a brief generation has accomplished.

One such farm that represents the best in productiveness and general improvements is the Fancher farm in section 20. The manager is Melvin H. Fancher, who operates the 480 acres comprising his father's homestead and is also the individual owner of eighty acres lying in section 18. All his own land has been brought into a high state of cultivation, while 400 acres of the homestead are improved. It is fine land, sandy loam, with clay and gravel base. Mr. Fancher has had charge of this farm for seven years, and in the meantime purchased the eighty acres in section 18. He has broken up a large acreage, and erected the handsome eight room house which is his residence. One special distinction that belongs to Mr. Fancher is that he did the first commercial onion growing in this county. His venture was made in 1904. The second year he planted sixteen acres in that crop and his total yield was 13,000 bushels. On one measured acre, probably the best, he grew 1,305 bushels of screened onions. That set a mark for yield per acre that has never been surpassed in this county. He has kept up his work along this line until two years ago, and onion growing in the meantime has become one of the big crops of Starke County. In later years corn has been a profitable crop with him. A hard worker and thrifty business man, he neglects no opportunity to make farming both pleasant and profitable, and takes much pride in his fine stock.

Melvin H. Fancher has had his home in this county and township since 1886. He was born in Berrien County, Michigan, November 16, 1864, and was reared there on a farm and had his education from local schools. Arriving at his majority, the desire for travel and adventure asserted itself, and he spent four years west of the Mississippi, visiting all the states and territories and also northern Mexico. At the time the plains were vast unfenced areas, covered with cattle and buffaloes, and he had many varied and romantic experiences in roughing it during the days that have now passed forever. On his return he joined his parents at their home at their home in Starke County, and has since applied himself industriously to the business of farming and home making.

His father, Jonathan W. Fancher, was born near Syracuse, New York, on October 7, 1836. When a child he lost his mother and then went to live with an uncle, and learned the trade of tight-barrel cooper. At the age of sixteen he found his way to Niles, Michigan, and later found work at his trade in Buchanan, in the same state, which was his home until his removal to Starke County in 1884. While in Buchanan he married Margaret Roe. She was born near South Bend in 1842,

and the last fourteen years of her life were passed as an invalid, until her death in 1907. In spite of her affliction she was a good wife and mother to her family, and was an active member of the Christian Church. Jonathan Fancher now spends most of his time in California, where he has some business interests, chiefly in the manufacture of various kinds of cement products. After moving to Starke County about thirty years ago he bought and improved the large farm now operated by his son.

Melvin H. Fancher was married in Davis Township to Miss Leora Pease. She was born in Illinois in 1871, came with her parents when a small girl to Starke county, and died here in 1898 without children. After her death Mr. Fancher was married in Chicago to Miss Minerva J. Fleming. The marriage ceremony was performed by Rev. Johnston Myers, the distinguished Baptist minister of that city. Mrs. Fancher was born in Adams County, Illinois, September 15, 1869, grew up near Quincy and finished her education in that city. She is a woman of exceptional culture. Her home was in Chicago for several years before her marriage. She is the mother of four daughters: Edna, aged thirteen and in eighth grade of school; Grace, aged eleven and in sixth grade; Leora, aged six; and Julia, aged four. They also have an adopted daughter Ruth, whom they fostered since she was two years old, and she finished the grade school course in 1911 and spent one year in high school. Mr. Fancher is a democrat.”