

A History of Fancher Furniture Co., Inc Salamanca, New York

By L. Bruce Erickson & Brian F. Erickson, 2005

The organizational meeting which created Fancher Furniture Company was held on Tuesday evening, July 18, 1911 and was held in the offices of W.H. Hazard & Co in Salamanca, New York. Legend has it that a stated purpose of the company was to provide employment in the area.

Present were: John Walrath, A.T. Fancher, E.B. Vreeland, E. Bolard, G.W. Cole, E.B. Fitzgerald, Eric Fredrikson, S.W. Wheaton, H.F. McCann and W.H. Hazard.

Honorable E.B. Vreeland was elected Chairman and W.H. Hazard, Secretary.

At the meeting of the directors the following officers were elected:

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| A.T. Fancher, President | Eric Fredrickson, Vice President |
| W.H. Hazard, Secretary | John Walrath, Treasurer |

Mr. Walrath was elected as General Manager of the Company.

Mr. Fredrickson was also elected Superintendent of the Company.

At a meeting held August 14, 1911 John Walrath was offered a salary of \$2,000. per year starting August 1, 1911.

By January 15, 1912 the records show that the firm has assets of \$61,596 while owing \$10,998.52

The records are somewhat sketchy but it looks like the Company lost \$9,520.58 through January 20, 1913.

By the January 1914 meeting Mr. Fancher was elected Chairman of the Stockholders.

By 1916 Mr. Walrath's salary was increased to \$2,400 and the firm shipped \$146,570.28 of goods. In reading the record one can assume that the only officer to draw a salary was Mr. Walrath. Also in 1916 the Company was recapitalized and the capital stock was increased from \$75,000 to \$125,000. A.T. Fancher held the largest number of share with 265 (of 1250 shares). There were a total of 18 shareholders listed.

For the period spanning from 1916 through 1925 the Company was profitable.

In January of 1931 Edward Bolard was elected President and John Walrath was elected Chairman. There is mention of the A.T. Fancher Estate being represented at the annual meeting held January 21, 1931.

Mr. Bolard served as President until October 23, 1936 when Mr. Walrath was elected President. The company has experienced some difficulty for several years. On November 2, 1936 the Company held a special meeting of the shareholders to discuss the hiring of William Dykeman as General Manager with the shareholders signing over 40% of their stock to Mr. Dykeman who was charged with securing outside financing and stopping the losses which had been realized for several years. At the Annual

Meeting held February 3, 1937 Mr. Dykeman was elected Vice President with Mr. Walrath continuing as President. There were 24 stockholders (or estates) representing 3,480 shares at this meeting.

There was a special meeting of the Directors held Tuesday August 1, 1939 for the purpose of electing a successor to William Dykeman, who died June, 1939. At that meeting Harry Witherall was appointed as Manager and C. Leonard Erickson was appointed Assistant Manager with a salary of \$55.00 per week.

Due to the deaths of the Fancher, Bolard and Dykeman over a fairly short period of time, a Executive Committee was named by the Board on October 27, 1939 to meet with management weekly. The Executive Committee consisted of: John Walrath, E.B. Fitzgerald and E.P. Vreeland.

At the Stockholders meeting held February 19, 1941 C.L. Erickson was elected as a Director and was also listed as a stockholder owning one share. Also at this meeting Erickson was elected as Treasurer and General Manager.

In April 1944 C.L. Erickson bought 100 additional shares from John Walrath as well as 1459 shares from other stockholders. Carolyn Erickson also purchased 1 share at this time. June 1944 shows C.L. Erickson buying an additional 2058 shares.

Stock certificates dated from June 1944 are signed by C. L. Erickson as president. The Minute book covering the period from 1941 through 1971 cannot be located.

In 1968 some shares of Fancher Furniture Company are transferred to Brian F. Erickson, Martha Erickson Israel and L. Bruce Erickson.

The company continued to operate with C.L. Erickson as president until 1971 when it went through a chapter 7 liquidation. At that time there were in the neighborhood of 800 employees and the products included residential furniture, piano cases and television and radio cabinets.

For many years the manufacture of cabinets was a large part of the company's business. Radio and television cabinet customers included: Admiral, General Electric, Ampex and Sylvania. Piano and organ cases were made for Baldwin Piano, Hammond Organ and also Wurlitzer jukeboxes. Sewing machine cases were made for the Singer and White Sewing machine companies

Residential furniture was made for many companies including: Pennsylvania House, Temple Stewart, Ethan Allen, Hitchcock Chair, Nichols & Stone, Masco, Lineage, Drexel Heritage and Ikea and Kittenger Furniture.

A considerable amount of furniture was also built for the hotel/hospitality industry. Some of the significant customers included Marriott Hotels, Windsor Court Hotel, and Four Seasons Hotels in addition to several of the large Las Vegas hotels.

There was even a period of time that custom library furniture was produced and marketed.

In April 30, 1971 Fancher Industries was formed to continue the business Fancher Furniture. C. L. Erickson continued as President of the re-formed company. Backing was provided by the Pittsburgh-Des Moines Steel Company.

The business continued with emphasis on residential furniture and the contract manufacture of furniture for other companies.

In 1975 the company reverted legally to use the name Fancher Furniture Company Inc.

On May 4, 1976 a meeting was held at it was agreed to purchase The Sterlingworth Corporation from James Tillotson III. Also at that time it was resolved to purchase all outstanding shares of The American Manufacturing concern from Falconer Shares Corporation. Further it was agreed to purchase the assets and business known as Harold Furniture Company Inc. (aka. Harold Chair). American Manufacturing Concern and Harold Chair were merged and became Fancher Chair Co., Inc

By September 29, 1978 Fancher Industries (dba The Fancher Furniture Co. Inc) was repurchased from Pittsburgh Des Moines Steel Company with C. Leonard Erickson continuing as President, John Elsen as Vice President and Brian F. Erickson as Secretary/Treasurer.

A special meeting of the directors and shareholders of The Fancher Furniture Co., Inc was held Wednesday December 27, 1978 where it was resolved to sell all of the stock of Fancher Chair Co., Inc (formerly known as The American Manufacturing Concern to the following: Brian F. Erickson, Martha Erickson Israel, L. Bruce Erickson, C. Leonard Erickson, John F. Elsen and Gary Henry. The name of American Manufacturing Concern which was incorporated June 8, 1910 was formally changed to Fancher Chair Co., Inc on January 11, 1979.

Also at this meeting the officers of Fancher Furniture Co., Inc were elected and they were: C. Leonard Erickson as Chairman and President, John F. Elsen as VP and Treasurer and Brian F. Erickson as VP and Secretary.

We jump to February 14, 1980 when Fancher Furniture agrees to offer its corporate guarantee for loans to GMK-Fancher Clock Co., Inc.

At Fancher Furniture's shareholder meeting held January 25, 1982 the following directors were elected: C.L. Erickson, John F. Elsen, Brian F. Erickson, L. Bruce Erickson and Martha Erickson Israel. Elected as officers were: C.L. Erickson as Chairman, Brian F. Erickson as President, John F. Elsen as EVP & Treasurer and L. Bruce Erickson as Secretary.

On February 2, 1982 Fancher Furniture entered into a partnership to manufacture and market products known as COLORGRAPH.

For many years Fancher Furniture never thrived and all of the working assets of the firm were sold to The Philadelphia Furniture Manufacturing Company Inc on the 25th day of February 1997. June 9, 2003 was the date of the final settling of the obligations of Fancher Furniture Co., Inc and the firm was formally dissolved.