

(Free pdf) The Ratcatcher's Child: The History of the Pest Control Industry

# The Ratcatcher's Child: The History of the Pest Control Industry

*Robert Snetsinger*

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**Robert Snetsinger : The Ratcatcher's Child: The History of the Pest Control Industry** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Ratcatcher's Child: The History of the Pest Control Industry:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Yesterday and Today By GIL BLOOM It is often times said, to know where you're going certainly helps to know where you've been.. This statement made in regard to "The Ratcatcher's Child" by Dr. Robert Snetsinger, could not be more appropriate. Written in 1983 entomologist / writer Dr. Snetsinger gives us a most interesting narrative on the field of pest control and its evolution. In his writings it becomes evident that the author has a passion for the subject in addition to a solid technical background and an appreciation for historical perspective. When you think about early pest control as a profession, what images come to mind? Are they ones of ancient alchemists brewing rats' bane or blow torch warriors battling giant nuclear insects of 50's sci-fi flicks. Perhaps the image of top-hatted fast-talking salesman or that of a cuffed uniform service technician driving a non-chrome black sedan works for you. But what's the real story, well it's all the above but much more. The fact is that the roots, along with a good deal of pest control history lie solidly within the evolution of the medical profession. Originally in the realm of with doctors and priests, the treatment for many pests and the improvement of living conditions and health become the domain of the medical arts. Early advocates of hygiene and health saw the need to reduce vermin and explored various ways to go about it. Recurring plagues and epidemics swept the world until the late 1300's when the "sciences" starting to connect rats and plague. It was at this point that the rat catcher become "a

very dignified and mysterious individual" as per an early English King. Interesting to note is that many rats were actually captured and resold to various gaming establishments for use in wagering games. In addition to training the rats ferrets were trained to seek out and capture rats. The bed bug was probably the first introduced pest to become established here in the colonies sometime in the 1700's. As the population urbanized pests increased in numbers and species. A check of business directories in 1861 revealed the presence of vermin exterminators in Philadelphia and New York City. In many cases firms were an outgrowth of chemical sales companies in others just merchants who discovered a niche. Exterminating was often a profession of immigrants who brought the "science" and poison recipes with them from Europe , primarily Germany. During the period surrounding the War between the States most men were in uniform and immigration had slowed , so to the growth of exterminators. But by 1880 some twenty vermin exterminating firms were to be found in the northeast. Big names like Orkin, J.C. Ehrlich , Getz, Rose , Sameth along with colorful ones like Henry "Cockroach" Friedman were to be found at the turn of the century. It seems much like today many individuals and professionals worked hard to upgrade the art and image of exterminators. Stories of strong personalities like Al Cossetta ,who published the "Exterminators Log" at great personnel expense. And tales of the tireless efforts of William (Bill) Buettner to establish a national organization are just a few of those related. A section and chronology of company and association history is most interesting. In fact the black and white photos of 1930 exterminating conferences sent me searching in the attic for group shots in which my grandfather Alex Feuerstein was present as a member. The book concludes with some fascinating cultural observations and some equally interesting early control methods. In our era of IPM in which traps have made a significant return to popularity , is the use of trained ferrets that far off ? In conclusion I would like to express my gratitude to the author for his endeavor. All too often significant human history is lost because at a crucial time no one bothered to take the time to record it. The book can be found on line or ordered from Pest Control Technology magazine. I urge you to get a copy for your bookshelf.

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