



The Vacuum Cleaner: A History

By Carroll Gantz

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House cleaning has been an innate human activity for centuries, but only since the early 19th century have mechanical devices replaced the physical hard labor (performed mostly by women). Mechanical carpet sweepers were replaced by manual suction cleaners, which in turn were replaced by electric vacuum cleaners in the early 20th century. Innovative inventors, who sequentially improved vacuum cleaners as electricity became commonly available, made these advances possible. Many early manufacturers failed, but some, such as Bissell, Hoover, Eureka, and others, became household words, as they competed for global dominance with improved features, performance, and appearance. This book describes the fascinating people who made this possible, as well as the economic, cultural, and technological contexts of their times. From obscure beginnings 200 years ago, vacuum cleaners have become an integral part of modern household culture.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Intriguing...very much recommended." --Midwest Book Review.

About the Author

Carroll Gantz is a professional industrial designer who holds several dozen patents. A long-time Black & Decker design director, and a Carnegie Mellon University professor, he is a past president of the Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA). He lives on Seabrook Island in South Carolina.

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