

FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY

The Fimbel Door family



From left: Rob, Paul, and Ed Fimbel III, ca. 2014



Fimbel employees, 1940



Fimbel trucks, 1950

Milestones

- 1924 ▶ Edward Fimbel Sr., the owner of a millwork company in Irvington, N.J., signs an agreement with Overhead Door Corporation to manufacture, distribute, and install sectional garage doors in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and southern New York.
- ▶ The company incorporates as Overhead Door Co. Inc., and soon moves to Hillside, N.J., starting operations out of a new 6,000-sq.-ft. factory.
- 1936 ▶ Paul Fimbel, Edward's son, completes a degree in mechanical engineering from Stevens Institute of Technology and later becomes a licensed professional engineer in New Jersey and New Hampshire.
- 1938 ▶ Paul joins the company as plant superintendent while the company expands operations and triples the size of its Hillside factory.
- 1946 ▶ Edward Fimbel Jr., also a mechanical engineer, begins working in the factory after serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II.
- 1951 ▶ The company opens a second factory, in Nashua, N.H. Paul moves to New Hampshire, taking over manufacturing and distribution of wood garage doors in New England.
- 1967 ▶ Overhead Door Co. Inc. and Overhead Door Corporation terminate their agreement, and the company is renamed Fimbel Door Corporation (FDC). It then forms a joint venture with Baker-Aldor-Jones of Hialeah, Fla., and commences to produce aluminum, steel, and fiberglass doors in part of Fimbel's new 142,000-sq.-ft. factory in Whitehouse, N.J.
- 1970s ▶ Fimbel purchases Better Bilt Door Co. of Egg Harbor City, N.J.
- ▶ Fimbel acquires the assets of the manufacturer of Powerlift residential operators, changes to the use of a 1/2-HP motor, and begins production in Whitehouse, N.J. Edward Fimbel III joins FDC as sales manager.
- ▶ Fimbel and Baker-Aldor-Jones part ways, and Fimbel expands its production to aluminum, steel, and fiberglass doors.
- 1975 ▶ The Hillside, N.J., factory is acquired by the state for construction of I-78, and operations are moved to Whitehouse, N.J.
- 1980 ▶ Fimbel introduces the steel and aluminum Iso-Dor line of laminated insulated doors and makes large 4"-thick insulated 16-gauge steel doors with 2-HP Powerlift operators for GM's Saturn plant in Tennessee and hundreds of 15-gauge typhoon-proof doors for the U.S. Navy in Guam. Exports spread to Europe, the Middle East, and elsewhere.
- ▶ Michael and Carl Fimbel, Paul's sons, join their father at the Nashua plant.

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Milestones

- 1984 ▶ Edward Fimbel, Sr., dies at the age of 94, and Edward Jr. becomes president of FDC.
- 1990 ▶ The Powerlift Division builds a new 62,000-sq.-ft. factory in McAdoo, Pa.
- 1991 ▶ Fimbel acquires and sets up an automated rollforming line to manufacture foamed-in-place residential and commercial insulated steel doors.
- 1992 ▶ Fimbel ceases manufacturing Powerlift residential operators due to government-mandated changes to UL 325.
- 1993 ▶ Michael and Carl Fimbel start Fimbel Paunet Corporation, a garage door sales and installation company in Nashua, and soon move operations to Merrimack, N.H.
- 2003 ▶ Amarr acquires most of Fimbel's steel door production assets and continues producing in Whitehouse and McAdoo. FDC retains the wood, aluminum, and fiberglass operations and continues producing those products in Nashua and in New Jersey buildings not used by Amarr.
- 2004 ▶ Edward III launches Fimbel Architectural Door Specialties (FADS) to make custom doors, including carriage-style doors and a unique commercial line in Whitehouse, N.J.
- ▶ The state of New Hampshire acquires the Nashua plant by eminent domain.
- 2005 ▶ Amarr moves production out of the McAdoo factory. Fimbel and FADS move back into that building and set up to produce steel, aluminum, and wood doors.
- 2007 ▶ Amarr ceases production in New Jersey and moves its production equipment to Kansas, retaining 25 percent of the Whitehouse factory as a distribution center.
- 2010 ▶ The roof of the Whitehouse factory is fitted with solar panels that generate the factory's electrical needs.
- 2013 ▶ Upon the retirement of Michael Fimbel, Carl Fimbel and his two sons, Jon and Andrew, assume ownership of Fimbel Paunet in Merrimack, N.H.
- 2014 ▶ Erin Fimbel Heindrichs, Edward III's daughter, becomes president of FADS, beginning the fourth generation of Fimbel leadership. Ed III's other daughter and son-in-law, Michaela and Chris Birdyshaw, are vice presidents.
- 2015 ▶ Paul Fimbel dies at age 101 after 75 years in the door industry.
- 2016 ▶ The Fimbel family has manufactured garage doors for more than nine decades, making it the world's oldest manufacturer of sectional garage doors still owned and operated by the founding family. Today, in Whitehouse, N.J., FDC is still run by the second generation (Edward Fimbel Jr.), and FADS is run by the third and fourth generations, paving the way for the fifth generation.



Hillside, N.J., plant, ca. 1950s



*Front from left: Paul and Edward Fimbel Sr.
Back: Carl and Edward Fimbel Jr.*



*Michaela (Fimbel) Birdyshaw, Chris Birdyshaw,
and Erin (Fimbel) Heindrichs*