

Summary Article: **Gimbel**

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(gĭm'bƏl), family of American merchants and philanthropists. **Adam Gimbel**, 1815–96, b. Bavaria, emigrated (1835) to the United States and traveled up and down the Mississippi River peddling notions. He set up (1842) a small business in Vincennes, Ind., and expanded it considerably over a period of 40 years. He sold his business to join his sons, **Jacob Gimbel**, 1850–1922, b. Vincennes, and **Isaac Gimbel**, 1857–1931, b. Vincennes, who had opened in the 1880s a successful department store in Milwaukee, Wis. In 1894 the Gimbels founded a large department store in Philadelphia, and in 1910 a store was opened in New York City under the direction of Jacob Gimbel. Other businesses were absorbed; Saks and Company was purchased in 1923. Branch stores were also opened in Pittsburgh, Chicago, Detroit, Beverly Hills, Calif., and other cities. During his lifetime, Jacob Gimbel gave generously to Jewish charities. **Charles Gimbel**, 1861–1932, b. Vincennes, for many years headed the Philadelphia establishment and was active in many philanthropies of the city. Another brother, **Ellis A. Gimbel**, 1865–1950, b. Vincennes, headed the department stores for several years and was the founder of the Gimbel Awards. The three other sons of Adam Gimbel, Louis S., Daniel, and Benedict, were also connected with the firm. **Bernard F. Gimbel**, 1885–1966, b. Vincennes, grad. Univ. of Pennsylvania (B.S., 1907), son of Isaac Gimbel, was president of Gimbel Bros., Inc., from 1927 until 1953, when he became chairman of the board. His son **Bruce Alva Gimbel**, 1913–1980, b. New York City, grad. Yale (B.A., 1935), then succeeded to the presidency. He became chairman in 1973 and retired in 1975. In 1973 the company was absorbed by Brown and Williamson Tobacco Corp. (later Batus Inc.). The last Gimbel's store closed in 1987.

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