

HIDDEN WATERS

THE FRANCE CENTER



**Home of the Chancellor
University of Maryland
System**

Welcome to The University of Maryland Foundation's France Center



HIDDEN WATERS

Hidden Waters, home of the late Jacob and Annita France, was given to The University of Maryland Foundation, Inc. in 1981. Dr. Robert Merrick, a prominent Baltimore business leader and long-time associate of Jacob France, arranged for the transfer as chairman of the France Foundation. The France Center includes an imposing Georgian-style mansion and several outbuildings, surrounded by more than one hundred acres of rolling lawn, farmland and woods.

Today, The France Center serves as the family residence for the Chancellor of the University of Maryland System. The home and grounds provide a gracious setting well-suited for University System and community events.

The University of Maryland System,

established in July 1988 by the Maryland General Assembly, is composed of 11 institutions and three research centers. It is a world-wide enterprise, serving more than 131,000 students around the globe.

Receptions, banquets and benefits for university-related programs are held at Hidden Waters, in keeping with the purposes established when it was given to the Foundation.

Visiting lecturers, dignitaries, scholars and government officials from all over the world are frequent guests. Here Maryland's business, philanthropic and community leaders have the opportunity to meet university officials, teachers, researchers, clinicians and students in the cordial atmosphere of this handsome mansion.



LOOKING BACK

A 1903 graduate of the University of Maryland School of Law, Jacob France became a prominent attorney and Baltimore banker. He was founding director of The Equitable Trust Company and served as chairman of the board from 1929 until his death in 1962. In addition, he served as chairman of the board of Mid-Continent Petroleum Corp. from 1946 until 1955. Deeply interested in the Maryland Historical Society, he served as a member of the council as well as vice president and chairman of the finance committee.

Mr. France was long active as a member and

ardent supporter of the Republican party. His wife, Annita, was the daughter of William Applegarth, Republican state senator of Dorchester County. She served in the capacity of hostess for her father throughout his political career.

Jacob France acquired the Baltimore County property just after World War I. He called it "Hidden Waters" because of several subsurface springs from which flowing streamlets were created, dammed to produce three small waterfalls. One particular pond was stocked with trout which Mr. France, an avid fisherman, and Dr. Merrick fed regularly



Walnut mantel clock given to Jacob France's parents on their wedding day, November 8, 1876.

with Uneda biscuits.

Soon after the purchase, the Frances had the grounds landscaped by one of Maryland's foremost landscape architects so that when the impressive residence was constructed later, the ornamental trees and shrubbery immediately surrounding it were in place and well developed. Mrs. France enjoyed an abiding interest in plants and the lovely grounds reflected her gardening pursuits.

Nearly 20 years after the purchase of the property, Gordon Beechler designed the Georgian-style residence which the construction firm of Eyring Brothers built in 1936. At the request of Jacob France, a

cornerstone was incorporated in the northeast corner of the house, reputed to contain a copper box in which a number of items of the day were placed:

a copy of *The Sun* of that day, a selection of U.S. coins and, for reasons unknown, a paper doll.

Hidden Waters was often the scene of patriotic celebrations on the Fourth of July, enlivened with baseball games. Ice cream and lemonade were served below Old Glory. Similarly, at Christmas the house was resplendent with holiday decorations. But most of the time, it was the tranquil, immaculately maintained home of one of Baltimore's leading financiers and his devoted wife, Annita.



Wedgwood inlays accent breakfast room fireplace, one of eight in home.

GEORGIAN GRACIOUSNESS

Hidden Waters is renowned for its exquisite woodwork and paneling in the Georgian Federalist manner and for the dramatic foyer staircase, patterned after the Gracie Mansion in New York City. The formal center hall, lit by a Palladian window at the top of the beautiful staircase, serves as a gracious reception area.

The three-story brick home has east and west wings and a two story north wing. The upper floor contains seven bedrooms including the private living quarters for the chancellor and family.



Portrait of Jacob France, painted by Florentine artist, Emma Foenic.

The west wing houses the formal living room, a smaller drawing room and an informal study, each with a distinctive fireplace. A library adjacent to the foyer includes a collection of books on Maryland history. Some of the Spode "fashion plates" collected by Mrs. France are also on display.

The east wing's formal dining room can seat 24 comfortably. Beyond the dining room is a family dining area from which one steps down into the breakfast room. French doors open to the formal boxwood gardens which offer a fragrant setting for outdoor entertaining.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT
The University of Maryland System gratefully acknowledges the efforts of Doris Patz, a dedicated volunteer, for helping to compile the material describing Hidden Waters.





Portrait of McTyre, Jacob France's prize-winning hunting dog, complemented by Wedgwood plates from Annita France's extensive china collection.

Portrait of woman in hat in living room attributed to the noted 18th century American artist, Thomas Sully.

Foyer staircase styled after one in Gracie Mansion, New York City's mayor's residence.

HIDDEN WATERS



DIRECTIONS

Beltway 695 to Greenspring Avenue, exit 22, south on Greenspring Avenue to first light, right on Old Court Road about 1 mile to entrance on right.

From downtown Baltimore, Jones Falls Expressway 83 to Ruxton Road exit, left on Ruxton Road which becomes Old Court Road about 3 miles to entrance on right.

