

N. WILDENSTEIN, 82, DEALER IN ART, DIES

Expert on 18th Century French
Works Founded Firm in
Paris and New York.

WELL KNOWN AS TURF MAN

Started Career as Poor Youth—
Sold Valuable Paintings to
American Collectors.

Nathan Wildenstein, dean of French art dealers, and an authority on eighteenth-century French art, died yesterday at his home in Paris after an illness of about a year, according to word received here. His age was 82.

M. Wildenstein started his career as an art dealer and connoisseur about sixty years ago as a poor youth in Paris. He later sold millions of dollars worth of paintings, sculpture and tapestries.

He had no formal art training, but seemed to possess an unerring instinct that enabled him to discern the best in art. He disliked travel and had never visited the United States, but was well known in this country because of the objets d'art he sold to Americans.

The founder and head of Wildenstein et Cie. in Paris, he also founded Wildenstein & Co., art dealers here, a firm located for many years on Fifth Avenue and now at 19 East Sixty-fourth Street. He founded the local company in 1903 and some years later sold his interest in it. His Paris firm, however, does much of its American merchandising.

Georges Wildenstein of Paris, son of Nathan Wildenstein, is a stockholder in the local firm and also was connected with his father in France. Felix Wildenstein of New York, a second cousin of Nathan Wildenstein, is president of the local firm.

Born in Strasbourg, France, Mr. Wildenstein had lived most of his life in Paris. Besides his art interest, he owned large racing stables. One of his horses, Charlemagne, won the Grand Prix at Deauville twice.

M. Wildenstein was an adviser in matters concerning art to the famous financial family of Rothschild in France. Americans often turned to him for advice and for paintings. He added extensively to the Altman, Henry Clay Frick, E. J. Berwind, Jules S. Bache and William Randolph Hearst collections. Among the paintings he sold to Americans was Fragonard's "Le Billet Doux," to Mr. Bache. This painting brought \$95,000 at a public sale about twenty-five years ago, prior to Mr. Bache's purchase.

He sold for the Altman collection, Valesquez's "The Christ and the Disciples." This hangs in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He sold, to Mr. Frick, Chardin's "La Serinette" and the "Portrait of Madame d'Haussonville," by Ingres. To Mr. Berwind he sold David's "Madame de Richemont."

For his work in French art, he was made an Officer of the Legion of Honor. He had a fine private art collection.

M. Wildenstein's son Georges also is noted as an art authority and has written extensively on the subject. He is editor of the Revue des Beaux Arts and the Gazette des Beaux Arts.

His widow, Mme. Laure Wildenstein, and a daughter, Mlle. Elizabeth Wildenstein, also survive.