

## ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT FORMER U.S CONSULATE GENERAL



The former Consulate General in Alexandria reflects the city's rich cultural heritage and its cosmopolitan character and was once the home of Alfred de Menasce, a successful banker from a family of Jewish philanthropists and civic leaders. Architect Victor Erlanger, an Alexandria native but a French citizen, designed the residence in Palladian Neo-Renaissance style in 1922. Erlanger's design incorporated classical decorative elements into the square symmetrical house whose downstairs rooms open onto a central hall. An imposing marble staircase divides into two flights and leads up to the former private apartments.

Lawyer Naguib Ayoub Bey and his wife Mary, descendants of Christian Syro-Lebanese emigrants, took up residence in the house in 1929. Mary's nephew Pierre and his young wife Isabelle moved in ten years later and raised their family of five children in the house. The United States Government bought the property in 1962 in order to relocate its expanding and well-used Thomas Jefferson Library. The once much-loved family home became a window on America. Thousands of Egyptians passed through its doors to learn English, borrow books, and exchange views on regional and international issues. These cultural activities ended, however, with the outbreak of the June 1967 war. The building stood empty for twelve years. Its reopening as the American Cultural Center in 1979 underscored the confidence the United States had in Egypt and in its commitment to building strong bilateral relations. Although the U.S. Embassy closed its consulate in Alexandria in 1993, the American Center in Alexandria remained open as an American Presence Post in order to promote mutual understanding between the peoples of Egypt and the United States through a full range of programs.

In July, 2012 Secretary of State Hillary Clinton re-inaugurated Consulate General Alexandria and following renovation of the facility, it became the Consulate General and served that function until January 2013.