



---

Download audio -- choose a format: \_\_\_\_\_ | [MP3](#)

---

He called another Meridian employee, Hassan Rateb, who spoke Greek. Mister Rateb was able to reach members of the family living in Washington State. He then made plans for the visitors to fly there the next day.

The Meridian Center also helped the family find a room at a local hotel. The center even sent a representative to help the family get on the correct plane the following day. This kind of work is just one example of what Meridian International Center does for foreigners in the United States.

Meridian International Center was established in Nineteen-Sixty. Since that time, it has become a leading organization in the area of cultural understanding. Its purpose is to increase international understanding through the exchange of people, ideas and the

Classroom program with an award. The German car-maker also gave Meridian a financial gift to be used for more teaching about foreign cultures in schools.

Meridian International Center also supports art programs and international art shows. The center works with museums and cultural organizations around the world to present foreign art in America. Many of the shows travel to museums around the United States after opening in Washington. The program helps build understanding and support for international art in the United States. The Meridian Center also American art to foreign countries for people to enjoy. Music, dance, literature readings, and other cultural events are also supported by the center.

Karen Jacob is the Communications Director for Meridian. She says the cultural programs run by the center are very popular. The public, she says, can learn a lot about a foreign culture through art.

Earlier this year, the wives of South Korean President Kim Dae-jung and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak spoke at the Meridian Center. They were in the United States for official visits with their husbands.

In April, Meridian opened an important show of Iranian art. The show includes eighty-eight modern paintings by fifty-four Iranian artists. It was organized with the help of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. The show is the first major cultural exchange of its kind in many years.

Meridian International Center uses two interesting houses as its headquarters in . . . Meridian House and the White-Meyer House. John Russell Pope designed both buildings. Mister Pope was a famous American architect. In addition to Meridian House, he designed the Jefferson Memorial, the National Gallery, and the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

-Meyer House are on a national list of historical places. An iron fence, trees and beautiful plants surround the center for privacy.

Ambassador Irwin Boyle Laughlin had Meridian House built in the early Twentieth Century. He purchased the land in Nineteen-Twelve, but delayed building the house until his retirement in Nineteen-Twenty. The building is filled with art collected by Ambassador Laughlin during his service as an American diplomat.

- -old house still has the electric lift system, or elevator, put in when the building was first built. People who work at the center say the Laughlins had to run a ' s street car system to power the elevator.

' daughter, Gertrude, lived at the Meridian House while growing up. The house became hers when they died. In Nineteen-Sixty, she sold the house to a

And this is Shirley Griffith. Listen again next week for another EXPLORATIONS

» » **Publishers: Please contact us if you would like to use our scripts**

---

E-mail: <a href="mailto:special@voa.gov">special@voa.gov</a>	VOA Special English
Web: <a href="http://www.voa.gov/special">http://www.voa.gov/special</a>	Washington, D.C. 20237
Fax: 202-619-2543	USA

---