



Photos: R. Marquez-Maden, L. Torio

THE VILLA MONTEZUMA, a Palace of the Arts, a High Victorian symbol of boomtown San Diego, was built by the mysterious musician and Spiritualist Jesse Shepard (later known as author Francis Grierson). This 1887 masterpiece was conceived of by Jesse and designed by Comstock and Trotsche. The Villa was purchased by concerned citizens in 1970, who transferred ownership to the City of San Diego. The Villa was restored under the stewardship of the San Diego Historical Society and placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Now the magnificent museum, built on the hill of what is now the Sherman Heights Historic District, with its views of the bay and downtown San Diego, needs a new foundation. The western wall, with its original brick, needs to be replaced, and in 2006 the San Diego Historical Society Board voted to temporarily close the Villa for restoration.

The original Friends of the Villa Montezuma served as an auxiliary group to the San Diego Historical Society for almost 30 years. To further assist the City of San Diego and the San Diego Historical Society with the needs of this important architectural and cultural gem, the Friends of the Villa Montezuma incorporated as a nonprofit public benefit corporation in 2006. You can help by becoming a Friend of the Villa Montezuma, Inc., or by making a donation to help the restoration.

**“OLD HOUSES AND PALACES CHARM,
NOT BY THEIR COST, NOT EVEN BY THE
PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN THEM,
BUT BY THAT RARE AND INSCRUTABLE
COMBINATION OF
MYSTERY, BEAUTY, AND ILLUSION.”**

*FRANCIS GRIERSON,
“THE INVINCIBLE ALLIANCE,” 1913*



657 20TH STREET
SAN DIEGO, CA 92102

Friends of the Villa Montezuma, Inc.
Membership Department
657 20th Street
San Diego, CA 92102-2810

Place
Stamp
Here

THE MAGNIFICENT VILLA MONTEZUMA HOUSE MUSEUM

A PALACE OF MUSIC, ART, & LITERATURE

✦ ————— ✦
The Jesse Shepard/
Francis Grierson House
✦ ————— ✦

BECOME A FRIEND! JOIN TODAY!



Friends of the Villa Montezuma, Inc.
Sherman Heights Historic District, 20th & K Sts., San Diego

**JESSE SHEPARD/FRANCIS GRIERSON:
ONE MAN, MANY MYSTERIES**



BENJAMIN HENRY JESSE FRANCIS SHEPARD

was born in England on September 18, 1848. He was raised on the American Prairie, saw Lincoln and Douglas debate, and his home was a stop on the Underground Railroad. Jesse's musical talent was evident early. His virtuoso piano improvisations and beautiful singing voice led young Jesse to become a sought-after performer on the Continent. After about 20 years traveling Europe and entertaining the courts with his charm and musical

genius, Jesse came to San Diego through contacts made with his involvement in Spiritualism. Jesse envisioned the Villa Montezuma, a Palace of the Arts, on the crest of Sherman Heights, overlooking downtown and the San Diego Bay. It was here Jesse began his literary career, eventually writing under the *nom de plume* Francis Grierson. It is under this name, Francis Grierson, that Jesse is still known today, as his books, essays, and writings are studied on college campuses for their insights into America's Civil War era. Jesse died in Los Angeles on May 29, 1927.

12/06



BE A FRIEND! Become a key partner in the preservation campaign. Your membership donation directly assists the Friends' work. Membership benefits while the Villa is closed for restoration include a Member's rate for special events, lectures, programs, and walking tours of the Sherman Heights Historic District. The Friends of the Villa Montezuma, Inc., is a 501-c-3 charitable organization. Your membership donation is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

ANNUAL LEVELS OF SUPPORT

- Individual/Family \$25
- Professional \$50
- Supporting \$100
- Patron \$250
- Benefactor \$500
- Individual/Family Lifetime \$1,000
- Business Friend \$1,000
- Corporate Patron \$5,000
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**Please make your check payable to the
Friends of the Villa Montezuma, Inc.,
and send to
Friends of the Villa Montezuma, Inc.
657 20th Street • San Diego, CA 92102-2810
Please seal the sides of this mailer!**

❖ ————— ❖
**IT'S NOT HAUNTED.
IT'S ENCHANTED.**
**SUPPORT THE PRESERVATION OF THE
VILLA MONTEZUMA**
❖ ————— ❖

THE FRIENDS OF THE VILLA MONTEZUMA, INC.
is a 501-c-3 nonprofit public benefit corporation solely devoted to the ongoing restoration and operation of the Villa Montezuma House Museum. Our mission is to raise funds for the preservation and operation of the Villa Montezuma, to enhance public education about this architectural and cultural resource, and to work with the San Diego Historical Society in the operation of the museum under the Accreditation Standards of the American Association of Museums.

YOUR SUPPORT OF THE
FRIENDS OF THE VILLA MONTEZUMA, INC.,
AND THE
MAGNIFICENT VILLA MONTEZUMA
IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.

DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.



**A CALIFORNIA NONPROFIT
PUBLIC BENEFIT CORPORATION**

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