



### THE VILLA MONTEZUMA: WORTH PRESERVING

The Villa is a Palace of the Arts, a High Victorian example of architectural exuberance from the booming 1880s in San Diego. Located in the Sherman Heights Historic District of downtown San Diego, the Villa was built by the mysterious musician and Spiritualist Jesse Shepard. (Jesse was later known as author Francis Grierson.) This 1887 masterpiece was designed by architects Comstock & Trotsche and constructed by Cheney & Leonard.

The Villa was a private residence until the late 1960s when it was purchased by dedicated members of the San Diego Historical Society in order to turn the Villa into a museum. They arranged to transfer ownership to the City of San Diego and to have the Villa restored by the San Diego Historical Society. The Villa became Historic Site No. 11 within the City of San Diego, and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The museum opened in 1972.

### THE FOVM: HARD WORK & FUNDING RESULTS

In 2005 the Friends of the Villa Montezuma, Inc. (FOVM) undertook a multi-year effort to gather restoration funding. Thanks to the FOVM's nonstop devotion, this magnificent museum has undergone several phases of restoration. In the next phase the FOVM seeks funding to repaint the museum's exterior so that we can reopen.

The FOVM and its members have been honored for extraordinary achievement and dedication to the museum by, among others, the City of San Diego Historical Resources Board (a 2010 Preservation Advancement Award) and the Congress of History of San Diego and Imperial Counties. Join the FOVM today!

## RESTORATION!

Restoration work on the Villa's tower window, tower roof, and the original finial from over the "Four Seasons" tower was completed by Owen Sutton of Home Restoration and Remodeling of San Diego (finial reinstalled in 2014).

The archaeological dig in the museum backyard was completed in May 2012.

Phase 1 (replacement of the sewer line and front steps) was completed in 2013.

Phase 2 (restoration of the foundation, roof, and chimneys) was completed in 2015 thanks to a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).

In Phase 3 the FOVM is seeking funding to repaint the museum exterior and reopen.

We thank the staff of the City of San Diego Park and Recreation, City Engineering, and District 8 for all the support for the museum.

While the Villa is closed for restoration, take a walking tour of the Sherman Heights Historic District and view Jesse Shepard's neighborhood (the largest historic district in San Diego). See [www.VillaMontezumaMuseum.org](http://www.VillaMontezumaMuseum.org) for details.



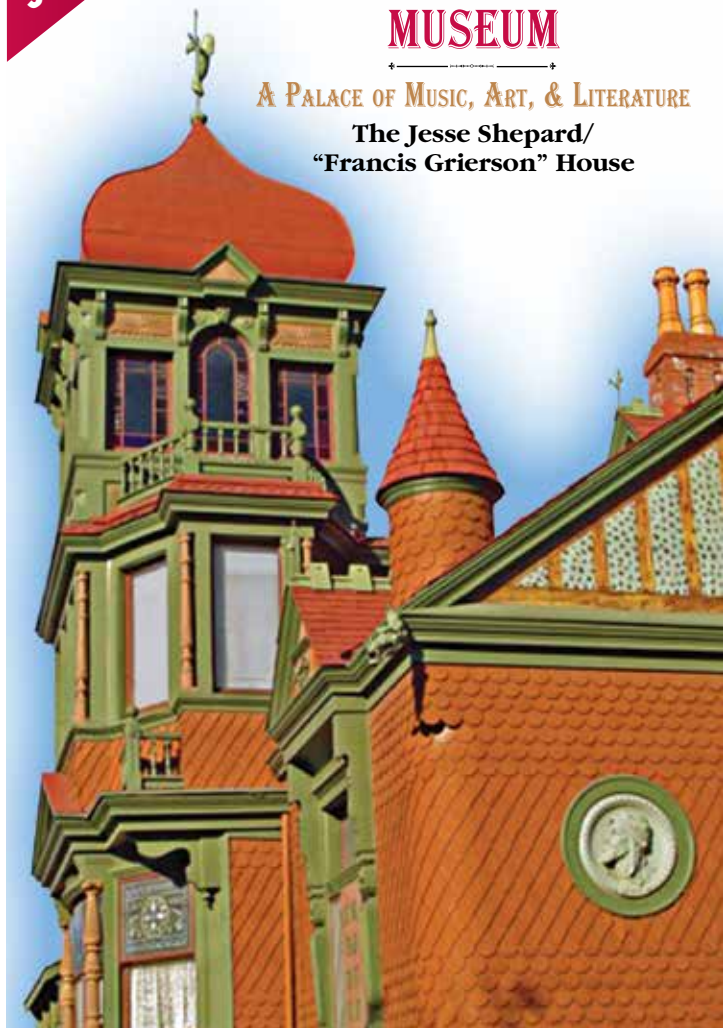
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Phase 3  
Restoration next!  
Join the FOVM today.

## THE MAGNIFICENT VILLA MONTEZUMA MUSEUM

A PALACE OF MUSIC, ART, & LITERATURE

The Jesse Shepard/  
"Francis Grierson" House



Friends of the Villa Montezuma, Inc.  
Sherman Heights Historic District, San Diego, CA  
[www.VillaMontezumaMuseum.org](http://www.VillaMontezumaMuseum.org)  
619-255-9367



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



**“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

**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 was a page for General John C. Fremont during the Civil War. 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 almost 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 picked the location for his 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. Under this name, “Francis Grierson,” Jesse is still known today; 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.

**IT’S NOT HAUNTED,  
IT’S ENCHANTED.**

**SUPPORT THE FRIENDS OF THE  
VILLA MONTEZUMA**

- Serving the museum since it opened in 1972.
  - Became an official auxiliary group of the San Diego Historical Society in 1976 (through 2005).
  - Incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2006.

**THE FRIENDS OF THE VILLA MONTEZUMA, INC.**

is a nonprofit public benefit corporation devoted solely to the ongoing restoration and operation of the Villa Montezuma Museum. Our mission is to raise funds for the preservation and operation of the museum, to educate people about this architectural and cultural resource, and to operate the museum under the Accreditation Standards of the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). Our diverse group includes people from all across the country who love this unique, romantic mansion.

The FOVM is a member of the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), the California Association of Museums (CAM), the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Victorian Society in America.



**SERVING SINCE 1972  
INCORPORATED 2006**

*Mailing Address:*

657 20th Street, San Diego, CA 92102-2810

Message/Information Line: 619-255-9367  
FOVM@VillaMontezumaMuseum.org  
www.VillaMontezumaMuseum.org

**BECOME A FRIEND!** Membership benefits while the Villa is closed for restoration include a complimentary walking tour of the Sherman Heights Historic District for you and a guest, and member rates for special events, lectures, and programs like the Victorian Valentine Tea. The FOVM 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
- Corporate Benefactor** \$10,000
- Other Donation** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- New Membership**       **Renewal**
- Gift Membership for those listed below**

(your name: \_\_\_\_\_)

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Business Listing \_\_\_\_\_

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**Please make your check payable to the  
Friends of the Villa Montezuma, Inc.**

**Mail to**

**Friends of the Villa Montezuma, Inc. (FOVM)  
657 20th Street • San Diego, CA 92102-2810**