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## Guide to the Jesse Shepard Papers MS 55

Finding aid prepared by Alison Hennessey

Collection processed as part of grant project supported by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) with generous funding from The Andrew Mellon Foundation.

San Diego History Center Document Collection

1649 El Prado, Suite 3

San Diego, CA, 92101

619-232-6203

January 23, 2012

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**Title:** Jesse Shepard Papers

**Identifier/Call Number:** MS 55

**Contributing Institution:** San Diego History Center Document Collection

**Language of Material:** English

**Physical Description:** 1.5 Linear feet(3 boxes)

**Date (inclusive):** 1868-1959

**Language of Materials:** Collection materials are in English, French, and Spanish.

**Abstract:** The collection contains materials related to the musical and literary activities of Jesse Shepard, who wrote under the pen name Francis Grierson, and his long-time friend and assistant Waldemar Tonner.

**creator:** Grierson, Francis, 1848-1927

**Processing Information**

Collection processed by Alison Hennessey on January 23, 2012.

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**Preferred Citation**

Jesse Shepard Papers, MS 55, San Diego History Center Document Collection, San Diego, CA.

**Separated Materials**

Original photographs separated to the SDHC Photograph Collection, OP14160/0-14160/35. Photographs accessible by copy negatives.

**Conditions Governing Access**

This collection is open for research. Access to "Anecdotes and Episodes: An Autobiography" is restricted to copy of original. Original photographs separated to the SDHC Photograph Collection are accessible by copy negatives.

**Conditions Governing Use**

The San Diego History Center (SDHC) holds the copyright to any unpublished materials. SDHC Library regulations do apply. All materials identified as copies from the Illinois State Historical Library are restricted to research use only with no further reproductions permitted.

**Immediate Source of Acquisition**

Accession numbers 730702 and 730816.

**Arrangement**

The collection is arranged into three series:

Series I: Jesse Shepard/Francis Grierson Papers

Series II: Waldemar Tonner Papers

Series III: Research

Items within each series are arranged by subject.

**Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements**

"Anecdotes and Episodes: An Autobiography" is very fragile and access is restricted to copy of original only. (January 23, 2012)

**Biographical / Historical Notes**

Benjamin Henry Jesse Francis Shepard (1848-1927) was a musician, author, lecturer, spiritualist, and self-proclaimed seer. While living in London in 1896, Jesse Shepard took the pen name Francis Grierson (Grierson being his mother's maiden name), to which many of his works are credited. Shepard was born in Birkenhead, England on September 18, 1848. When he was six month old his parents immigrated to America and in 1849 settled in Sangamon County, Illinois. In 1858, while living in Alton, Illinois, Shepard was present at the last of the Lincoln-Douglas debates. From 1859 to 1862 he lived in St. Louis and served as a page for General John C. Fremont. While living in Niagara Falls with his family in 1863, Shepard had the opportunity to play the piano and discovered his musical talents. Prior to 1887, Shepard traveled extensively performing throughout the United States and Europe at the patronage of his admirers who were often prominent writers, artists, intellectuals and politicians. Shepard received notoriety as a master of piano improvisation performing at famous salons and for European royalty. While in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1871 Shepard received instruction in holding séances furthering his interest in mysticism and Spiritualism.

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In 1887, Shepard and his close friend and personal assistant Waldemar Tonner moved to San Diego and, with the financial support of William and John High, built a Queen Anne style mansion they named Villa Montezuma. While living at Villa Montezuma, Shepard hosted many of his own salons entertaining prominent guests and fellow Spiritualists with his musical talents.

Shepard left San Diego for Europe in 1890 to focus on his writing. While living in London, he wrote poetry and eight books including "Modern Mysticism" (1899), "The Celtic Temperament" (1901), "Parisian Portraits" (1910), "The Humor of the Underman" (1911), "The Invincible Alliance" (1913) and his most famous work, "The Valley of Shadows" (1909). Shepard contributed poems, articles, and essays to various publications during this time. In addition to Francis Grierson, Shepard also used the pen name Judah P. Benjamin at least once for the publication of his poetry.

In 1919, Shepard lectured on Theosophy in Toronto. In 1920 Shepard settled in Los Angeles where he lived with Waldemar Tonner for the remainder of his life. On May 29, 1927 at the age of 79, he died while giving a piano recital at his home.

Much research has been done on Shepard. Harold Simonson conducted research at the Illinois State Historical Society and Library for his biography of Jesse Shepard titled, "Francis Grierson" (1966). Other research on Shepard's life was undertaken by Clare Crane during the restoration of Villa Montezuma in the 1970s.

### **Scope and Content**

The collection includes writings, correspondence, and articles by and about Jesse Shepard's literary and musical activities. Shepard's unpublished autobiography and the 1966 edition of *The Valley of Shadows* are included in the collection as well as articles and poems written by Shepard. Correspondence regarding Shepard's literary projects, including a poetry anthology, is included in the collection, as well as a large amount of correspondence from prominent writers and intellectuals of his day, such as Sully Prudhomme and Mary Austin. In addition to correspondence, the collection holds copies of photographs and calling cards sent to Shepard, often with notes and/or signatures, as souvenirs from admirers and friends.

Materials related to Waldemar Tonner, Shepard's assistant, include biographical and employment information, including letters of recommendation. Of particular interest are Tonner's passport issued in England by Robert Lincoln, son of Abraham Lincoln, and a letter of recommendation for Tonner from Herbert Hoover.

The collection also includes research materials from Harold Simonson, for his biography on Shepard, Villa Montezuma Curator Clare Crane's research on the Villa, previously owned by Shepard, and correspondence of Leetha Journey Probst Hofeller, a writer and friend of Shepard.

### **Subjects and Indexing Terms**

Abemelik, Princess  
Ahna, Pauline de  
Alden, Ada  
Austin, Mary Hunter, 1868-1934  
Bazalgette, Leon, 1873-1928  
Begas, Mrs.  
Behymer, L. E.  
Bell, Edward Price, 1869-1943  
Berkow, Karl  
Biedma, Patrocínio  
Bleichroeder, Harriet  
Bonaparte, Marie, Princess, 1882-1962  
Bonaparte, Roland, prince, 1858-1924  
Bornier, Henri de, vicomte, 1825-1901  
Bourget, Paul, 1852-1935  
Bragdon, Claude Fayette, 1866-1946  
Broglie, Duc de  
Calcar, Elise van, 1822-1904  
David, Samuel  
Dawson, Miles  
Delaporte, V. (Victor), 1846-1910  
Diane, comtesse, 1829-1899

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Dunbar, William  
Dyck, Ernest van  
Grierson, Benjamin Henry, 1826-1911  
Grierson, Francis, 1848-1927  
Herron, George  
Holmes, Augusta Mary Anne, 1847-1903  
Hoover, Herbert, 1874-1964  
Howe, Edith  
James, William, 1842-1910  
La Follette, Fola, 1882-1970  
La Roche-Guyon , Duc de  
La Rochefoucauld, Antoine de, Comte  
La Rouche-Guyon, Douairiere de, duchess  
Lavedan, Henri, 1859-1940  
Lindsey, Ben B. (Ben Barr), 1869-1943  
Loyson, Hyacinthe, 1827-1912  
Lytton, Edward Bulwer Lytton, Baron, 1803-1873  
MacKenzie, Cathinka, Madame  
Macleod, Fiona, 1855-1905  
Maeterlinck, Maurice, 1862-1949  
Mailhac, Pauline  
Mallarme, Stephane, 1842-1898  
Markham, Edwin, 1852-1940  
Mason, J. W. T.  
Meschi, Edward  
Miranda, Comtesse  
Mistral, Fredric  
Nilsen, Laurvik  
Nilsson, Christine, 1843-1921  
O'Shaughnessy, Edith, 1870-1939  
Petrie, Ronald  
Picard, Elise  
Pius X, Pope, 1835-1914  
Roberts, 1892-1976  
Roux, Joseph  
Scheffauer, Ethel Talbot  
Scheffauer, Herman George, 1878-1927  
Schure, 1841-1929  
Sharp, William, 1855-1905  
Shepard, Letitia  
Simon, Jules, 1814-1896  
Simonson, Harold Peter, 1926-  
Sinclair, May  
Spencer, Lilian White, 1876-1953  
Sterling, 1869-1926  
Suin, Diane Marie de  
Sully Prudhomme, 1839-1907  
Thackara , 1859-1915

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Theuriet, Andre, 1833-1907  
 Thomas, Edith Matilda, 1854-1925  
 Tonner, Lauritz Waldemar  
 Van Noppen, Leonard Charles, 1868-1935  
 Vannutelli, Vincenzo, 1836-1930  
 Verlaine, Paul, 1844-1896  
 Wagner, Richard, 1813-1883  
 Walter, Clark, 1846-1924  
 Waterman, Robert  
 Watterson, Henry, 1840-1921  
 Wendelstadt, La Baronne de  
 Wilson, Woodrow, 1856-1924  
 Wiszniewska, Princess  
 Wiszniewska, Prince  
 Wolsley, Lord  
 Illinois  
 Improvisation (Music)  
 Literature  
 London (England)  
 Los Angeles (Calif.)  
 Mysticism  
 Paris (France)  
 Piano  
 Poetry  
 San Diego (Calif.)  
 Sangamon County (Ill.)  
 Spiritualism  
 Theosophy  
 Villa Montezuma (San Diego, Calif.)  
 Writing

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Series I: **Jesse Shepard / Francis Grierson Papers**

Box-folder 1:1	<b>Original: "Anecdotes and Episodes: An Autobiography" by Francis Grierson with introduction by Waldemar Tonner, undated</b>
Box-folder 1:2	<b>Copy 1: "Anecdotes and Episodes: An Autobiography" by Francis Grierson with introduction by Waldemar Tonner, undated</b>
Box-folder 1:3	<b>Copy 2: "Anecdotes and Episodes: An Autobiography" by Francis Grierson with introduction by Waldemar Tonner undated</b>
Box-folder 1:4	<b>Copy 3: "Anecdotes and Episodes: An Autobiography" by Francis Grierson with introduction by Waldemar Tonner undated</b>
Box-folder 1:5	<b>Autobiography correspondence, 1926 March 6</b>
Box-folder 1:6	<b>Autobiography notes, undated</b>
Box-folder 1:7	<b>Book: "The Valley of Shadows" (first published in 1909), 1966</b>
Box-folder 1:8	<b>Articles and reviews on "The Valley of Shadows," undated</b>
Box-folder 1:9	<b>Illustrations for "The Valley of Shadows," undated</b>
Box-folder 2:1	<b>"Francis Grierson's Compilation of Poems for Anthology," undated</b>

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Box-folder 2:2	<b>Poetry Anthology correspondence, 1927 January 17-August 8</b> <b>Includes:</b> Letters from poets and publishing companies granting Grierson and Tonner permission to publish works in a poetry compilation.
Box-folder 2:3 Box-folder 2:4	<b>Articles by Francis Grierson, 1910 March 24-1917 June 21 and undated</b> <b>Publication correspondence, 1891 August 18-1927 April 18</b> <b>Includes:</b> Correspondence requesting articles for publication or thanking Grierson or Tonner for the works submitted.
Box-folder 2:5	<b>General correspondence (some in French), 1888 February 8-1898 October 18</b> <b>Includes:</b> Letters to Shepard/Grierson or Tonner praising Shepard/Grierson on his writing and musical abilities from prominent writers of the day and other admirers.
Box-folder 2:6	<b>General correspondence (some in French), 1901 November 3-1927 July 13 and undated</b> <b>Includes:</b> Letters to Shepard/Grierson or Tonner praising Shepard/Grierson on his writing and musical abilities from prominent writers of the day and other admirers. Letter from President Woodrow Wilson.
Box-folder 2:7	<b>Correspondence: Mary Austin, 1911 July 25-1927 July 11</b>
Box-folder 2:8	<b>Correspondence: Léon Bazalgette (some in French), 1911 October-1920 June 3</b>
Box-folder 2:9	<b>Correspondence: Patrocínio Biedma (Spanish), 1889 July 27-1902 October 14</b>
Box-folder 2:10	<b>Correspondence: Claude Bragdon, 1916 October 17-1929 August 16</b>
Box-folder 2:11	<b>Correspondence: Sir William C. Dunbar, 1912 September 16-1928 February 2</b>
Box-folder 2:12	<b>Correspondence: Hyacinthe Loyson (French), 1893 November 21-November 22</b>
Box-folder 2:13	<b>Correspondence: Fiona Macleod, 1899 May 29-1901 November 23</b>
Box-folder 2:14	<b>Correspondence: Maurice Maeterlinck (French), 1890 September 20-1901 December 8</b>
Box-folder 2:15	<b>Correspondence: Stéphane Mallarmé (French), 1892 December 27-1898 April 15</b>
Box-folder 2:16	<b>Correspondence: Edwin Markham, 1913 September 7-1916 December 31</b>
Box-folder 2:17	<b>Correspondence: J.W.T Mason, 1926 February 10-1927 June 3</b>
Box-folder 2:18	<b>Correspondence: R.H.D., 1913 September 9-1918 June 4</b>
Box-folder 2:19	<b>Correspondence: Ronald Petrie, 1927 November 16-1928 February 15</b>
Box-folder 2:20	<b>Correspondence: Sully Prudhomme (French), 1891 June 7-1898 April 21 and undated</b>
Box-folder 2:21	<b>Correspondence: Cecil Roberts, 1916 August 16-1919 October 13</b>
Box-folder 2:22	<b>Correspondence: Duchess Douairiere de la Roche Guyon (French), 1889 August 1-1911 August 11 and undated</b>
Box-folder 2:23	<b>Correspondence: Joseph Roux (French), 1889 July 24-1898 March 8</b>
Box-folder 2:24	<b>Correspondence: George Sterling, 1913 June 30-1924 December 2</b>
Box-folder 2:25	<b>Correspondence: Edith Thomas, 1924 April 12-December 19</b>
Box-folder 2:26	<b>Correspondence: Henry Watterson, 1914 October 13-1915</b>
Box-folder 2:27	<b>Correspondence: Lilian White Spencer, 1927 June 23-August 3</b>
Box-folder 2:28	<b>Correspondence: select translations, undated</b> <b>Includes:</b> Translations from French to English for letters sent by: Stephan Mallarme, Maurice Maeterlinck, Duke and Duchess de la Roche Guyon, Fredric Mistral, Mr. V. Delaporte, Henry of Orleans, Paul Bourget, Henri de Bornier, Samuel David, Andre Theuriet.

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Box-folder 2:29	<p><b>Contact cards and photographs, 1887 March-1915 and undated</b></p> <p><b>Scope and Content</b></p> <p>Contact cards and photographs (copies) with messages to Jesse Shepard/Francis Grierson from friends in Europe and the United States including: Augusta Holmes, Edouard Schuré, Monseigneur Vincent Vannutelli, Karl Berkow, Countess de Sauteiron de St Clement, Pauline Mailhac, Edward Price Bell, Princess Abemelik, Frau Begas, Pauline de Ahna, Lord Bulwar Lytton, Princess Bonaparte, Elise Picard, Ethyl Scheffauer, Herman Scheffauer, Pope Pius X, Letitia Shepard, Diane Marie de Suin, Ernest van Dyck, Paul Verlaine, Richard Wagner, Lord Wolseley, Marie Letizia Wyse y Bonaparte de Rute, Le Prince Roland Bonaparte, Duc de Broglie, Andre Cheuriet, L'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre, Henri Lavedan, la Baronne de Wendelstadt, Samuel David, Lady Hardy.</p>
Box-folder 3:1	<p><b>Events, 1913 December 5-1919 October 16 and undated</b></p> <p><b>Includes:</b></p> <p>Pamphlets, flyers, brochures and other printed materials for Grierson/Shepard's lectures, recitals and readings.</p>
Box-folder 3:2	<p><b>Articles about Jesse Shepard / Francis Grierson, 1892 November 13-1948 September 18 and undated</b></p> <p><b>Includes:</b></p> <p>Articles in various publications discussing Shepard/Grierson's literary and musical abilities.</p>
Box-folder 3:3	<p><b>Scrapbook of newspaper clippings, 1915-1948 July 5 and undated</b></p> <p><b>Album 1 of newspaper clippings, 1888 February 15-1912 November 5 and undated</b></p> <p><b>Album 2 of newspaper clippings, 1909 April 2-1913 November 12 and undated</b></p> <p><b>Miscellanea, 1916 October 24-1920 June 7 and undated</b></p> <p><b>Includes:</b></p> <p>Passes granting Shepard/Grierson access to the National Press Club of Washington, Chevy-Chase Club and The University Club, Washington D.C.</p> <p>Christmas cards sent by Waldemar Tonner and Francis Grierson.</p>
Box-folder 3:4	
Box-folder 3:5	
Box-folder 3:6	
<p>Series II: <b>Waldemar Tonner Papers</b></p>	
Box-folder 3:7	<p><b>Biographical information and passport, 1892 June 8 and undated</b></p> <p><b>Includes:</b></p> <p>Passport for Tonner signed by Robert Lincoln, then U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom (in Oversize Collections D4).</p>
Box-folder 3:8	<p><b>Employment materials, 1917 November 5-1924 July 30 and undated</b></p> <p><b>Includes:</b></p> <p>Letter recommending Waldemar Tonner for a position with the Bureau of Public Information from Herbert Hoover, then Head of the Food Administration.</p> <p>Letter of recommendation from Francis Grierson.</p>
Box-folder 3:9	<p><b>Program for Waldemar Tonner funeral services and obituary, 1947 May 28-June 8</b></p> <p><b>Miscellanea, 1916 October 24-1920 June 7 and undated</b></p> <p><b>Includes:</b></p> <p>Business card</p> <p>Passes granting Tonner access to the National Press Club of Washington, Chevy-Chase Club and The University Club, Washington D.C.</p>
Box-folder 3:10	
<p>Series III: <b>Research</b></p>	
Box-folder 3:11	<p><b>Book: "Francis Grierson" by Harold Simonson, 1966</b></p>

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- Box-folder 3:12      **Copies of correspondence from the Illinois State Historical Library, 1858 January 29-1889 October and undated**  
Includes:  
Copies of correspondence between Shepard and his family in Illinois.
- Box-folder 3:13      **Copies of correspondence from the Illinois State Historical Library, 1864 May 7-1889 October and undated**  
Includes:  
Copies of correspondence between Shepard and his family in Illinois.
- Box-folder 3:14      **Copies of correspondence from the Illinois State Historical Library, 1888 September 6-1927 June 5 and undated**  
Includes:  
Copies of correspondence between Shepard and his family in Illinois.
- Box-folder 3:15      **Villa Montezuma: history of owners and court ordered sales, 1983 February 5 and undated**
- Box-folder 3:16      **Villa Montezuma correspondence, 1958 May 19-1973 October 25 and undated**  
Includes:  
Correspondence between an owner of Villa Montezuma and the San Diego Historical Society.  
Correspondence between Clare Crane, Curator for Villa Montezuma in the 1970s during restoration, regarding research Crane conducted on the house and Jesse Shepard.
- Box-folder 3:17      **Leetha Journey Probst Hofeller, 1956 June 8-1959 May 8 and undated**  
Includes:  
Correspondence and pamphlet regarding Leetha J. Probst Hofeller.