


Panama Pacific 1915 Novagem/Jewel classifications

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Information concerning the varieties of jewels or 'novagems' from the PPIE Tower of Jewels

Sources: Official Novagem brochure, personal collection, verified by other collectors, 1916 warehouse statement, etc.

My passion of the fair is the Tower of Jewels. One can only imagine what 102,000 'jewels' twinkling in the sun or by searchlights must have looked like. Surely it was an awesome spectacle. After my first couple of jewels I decided to get one in every color, then one in every size and then in various combinations. There may be more than 128 combinations counting the different markings so I've given up on that! However I am trying to determine exactly which sizes and colors do exist.

Only five colors are listed in the official brochure yet three other colors are known to exist. The brochure shows them marked 'Novagem' and 'official souvenir' with the official logo on the back of the hanger.  These were not used on the tower. The differences being that the tower jewels say 'Pat. Pending or 'Patents Pending' and don't have the logo on the back. The 3/4" size also does not always have the emblem on the back.

I believe there are several typos and/or wrong information in the brochure. The listing of 1 3/4" being smaller than 1 5/8" when 34mm = 1 3/8". Additionally, I have several other novagem items with colors different than just those listed as being available. Also, most of the smaller jewels I have seen have 'novagem' on them. The ones that don't have this indicate some of the smaller sizes were probably used on the tower or other locations at the fair.

Most interesting is a 1916 warehouse listing of some 90,000 jewels that does not include any 1/2", 5/8" sizes or the colors topaz or amethyst. I have yet to see smaller than a 3/4" jewel except in a presentation case, loose or in another Novagem souvenir.

Finally, there is a reference in the illumination booklet by W. D'Arcy Ryan that 102,000 were 21-47mm and about 4,000 jewels were used on the star maiden statues. Those look to be 21mm-34mm in size but I can't be sure. There were about 90 statues with about 11-13 jewels each, which only accounts for about 1000 additional jewels.

If you have any questions, additional information, pictures, comments or jewels to trade/sell please contact me at the email address above so we can discuss it!

Legend: ✓ personally owned or I've seen one. X means believed not to exist, or not verified.

Size in millimeters Size in inches= Decimal size= Coin to compare size (Placed on top of the jewel it should cover it)	14mm 1/2"	17mm 5/8"	21mm 3/4"	26mm 1"	34mm 1 3/8"	41mm 1 5/8"	47mm 1 7/8"	47mm 1 7/8"
	.55118 \$1 gold coin (Loose only)	..66929 US dime (Loose only)	.827 US Nickel	1.02 Susan B. Anthony Dollar	1.34 Saint Gaudens \$20 gold coin	1.61 American Eagle or Casino chip	1.85 'None Almost 2"	1.85 8 prong None Almost 2"
Colors / original cost	\$.50	\$.60	\$1.00	\$1.25	\$1.75	\$2.25	\$2.75	1.00
White/clear			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jonquil/pale yellow			✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Rose Tourmaline/Pink		✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Ruby			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Amethyst/Purple			✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Unlisted but existing								
Topaz	✓		X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Olivine/Emerald			✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Aquamarine/ Light Blue			✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓
Other items								
Official paperweight ⁴	X	X	X	X	✓ ruby	✓ white	X	X

Notes: Souvenirs were marked 'Novagem - Official Souvenir - Patents Pending'. Those from the tower were marked 'Pat. Pending' or 'Patents pending'. Some have 'tags' or 'coins' attached indicating they were officially hung on the tower and were bought by purchasing a certificate to be delivered after the fair was over. There were some with 8 Prongs instead of the usual 4 holding the jewel marked 'Patents Pending'. Paperweights came in clear, amethyst, ruby, topaz, and possibly other colors.



Crystal/Clear



Jonquil/yellow



Rose/Pink



Ruby



Olivine/Emerald



Aquamarine



Amethyst/Purple



Topaz