The beautiful structure, designed by Thomas Hastings of Carrère and Hastings, was covered with ornamented with allegorical statues and murals depicting the triumph of the American West (Todd, 305). The most visible feature of the exposition was the single 433-foot Tower of Jewels, the centerpiece of the buildings was generally Neoclassical, and each primary structure had a dome, giving rise to the nickname "City of Domes." The three major courts of the exposition were the Court of the Universe in the center, the Court of Ages to the east, and the Court of the Four Seasons to the west. Each exhibition palace was surmounted by a central dome, surrounded by smaller domes and half-domes (Findling 220-221).

The layout was the inspiration of British architect Ernest Coxhead. Born in 1863, Coxhead attended the Royal Academy Schools in London, and was active in the United States. The three major courts of the exposition were the Court of the Universe in the center, the Court of Ages to the east, and the Court of the Four Seasons to the west. Each exhibition palace was surmounted by a central dome, surrounded by smaller domes and half-domes (Findling 220-221).

Although international participation was limited by the eruption of World War I, the Panama Pacific Exposition managed to attract twenty-four foreign nations (Mattie 132). Older nations constructed their buildings in traditional architectural style, including a Japanese teahouse, a Norwegian chieftain's medieval castle, and a Siamese palace (Findling 221). Four nations, France, Greece, Italy and Norway, transported their pavilions from Europe, causing them to open four months late due to shipment delays (Mattie 136).

The Panama Pacific Exposition was the first fair to make use of indirect lighting. Buildings of previous fairs were lit almost entirely by an outline of incandescent light bulbs, a practice common to theater marquees. In San Francisco, three hundred and seventy searchlights and five hundred rooftop projectors reflected the texture and color of the buildings and highlighted the statuary and planting. Artificial travertine was the primary material used for the buildings of the exposition. Inspired by the California landscape, artist Jules Guérin devised the color scheme, using pastel shades of green, blue, pink, lemon and ochre. Even the shrubbery was color coordinated to the buildings. The courts abounded with sculpture, and hundreds of full-grown trees were transplanted to the fairgrounds (Findling 221-223).

The most visible feature of the exposition was the single 433-foot Tower of Jewels, the centerpiece of the fair and the entrance to the Court of the Universe. This 2.25" by 2.25" stereograph view shows the tower at an angle visible from Festival Hall. With arches larger than the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, it was ornamented with allegorical statues and murals depicting the triumph of the American West (Todd, 305). The beautiful structure, designed by Thomas Hastings of Carrère and Hastings, was covered with
The firm’s stature within the profession rapidly grew after the turn of the century following the appointment of Carr??re as Chief Architect and Chairman of the Board of Architects for the Pan American Exposition at Buffalo in 1901. The New York Public Library, completed in 1911, is perhaps the crowning achievement of the partners, and is regarded as the epitome of New York’s Beaux Arts period. Carr??re in 1901 assumed the position of chief architect and head of the board of architects responsible for designing the Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo. In the early phase of their careers, Carr??re and Hastings designed nearly all of their buildings with elaborate detailing and over scaled ornamentation. Gradually, the firm refined the work and restrained the tone. They began to borrow from late French Baroque and American Georgian sources. These later buildings show restrained classicism far different from their early ornamentation (Antilce).

The author of a children’s book about the Panama Pacific Exposition captured the essence of the tower’s appeal:

> There was the beautiful tower of Jewels, smiling and twinkling its shiny eyes at us, and saying “Come in, children: come in, and walk under my beautiful blue arches, and through my magic courts, and my sheltered gardens, and be happy, and love each other and all the children of the world. Peace I offer you, and Plenty, and Harmony, and Beauty. Here you are safe, and here you are welcome’

(Rydell 209).

To thousands of fairgoers, the Tower of Jewels provided the most vivid memory. According to Frank Todd, author of Story of an Exhibition, “when you crossed the Bay into Marin County and got on a level with the northerly ridge of San Francisco’s hills, you saw that it rose higher even than they did.”

Colonnades of green pillars encircled the tower at various levels, and salvers for fires were placed at high corners. Statues of eagles were perched on lofty galleries, symbolizing the power and dominion of the United States (Todd 305).

Every salient object and decorative design of it sparkled with rays of ruby and emerald and sapphire and aqua marine from the thousands of brilliants swinging in the breeze. And through the pierced friezes of the flanking colonnades the sky shone in burning blue,” explains Todd. The tower was most imposing, however, when low fog concealed its foundations and supporting arch, and its upper half appeared to materialize in a semitransparent gray. At the east and west of the Tower of Jewels were two side colonnades, each encompassing a small enclosed court with a mural fountain. A timeline was carved into small wall spaces on these courts and on other walls of the tower itself. Beginning with the panel to the left of the south front colonnade, the inscriptions included events relating to the Panama Canal. From within the Court of the Universe, however, the reverse inscriptions could be seen, relating to local history of California, and more specifically, San Francisco (Todd 305).

The central archway was covered by a gigantic barrel vault, 75 feet wide and 119 feet high. The walls of the vault were decorated with mural paintings by American academic muralist William de Leftwich Dodge. Born in 1867, Dodge was one of the most prominent muralists of his era, at a time when murals were regarded as an essential element of most public architecture, theaters, municipal buildings, and even some private homes (Smithsonian). The paintings were divided into one median section and two shorter lateral segments. Symbolically, they depicted the unity of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans through labor, and conquistador Francisco de Balboa upon his first glance of the “Sea of the South.” Additionally, the murals illustrated the purchase of the incomplete Panama Canal from France, and the great achievement of its completion through American intelligence and manpower. The paintings depicted the locks of the Canal swinging open, representing a gateway of nations (Newbegin).

Inside the great archway, two centrally located side portals gave access to the wings. Although these courts could be easily missed by visitors, they were a delight to those fortunate enough to have found them. The mural fountain in the eastern wing was called the Fountain of Youth. Its design was based on an adolescent girl with “Youth’s quaint stiffness of form, and all its innocence and helplessness and hopefulness.” In the western wing was the Fountain of El Dorado, composed by sculptor and art patron Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney. The legend of El Dorado was illustrated by a half-open portal guarded by two Inca statues, and from both sides the friezes showed a rush of people passing these guardians in pursuit of the Gilded King, before the magic Doors of Opportunity should close (Todd 307). The ceiling of the Tower of Jewels contained a beautifully colored pictorial design by American mural painter and illustrator Jules Gu??rin (Newbegin). As Gu??rin explained, “the blue up there blends into the deeper blue of the [William de Leftwich] Dodge murals just beneath. Those murals are in exactly the right tone. They give strength to the arch. But they are weakened by being in the midst of so much heavy architecture. Their subjects, however, are in harmony with the meaning of the tower” (Newbegin).

Upon conclusion of the fair, the citizens of San Francisco were given the opportunity to purchase the actual jewels hung from the Tower of Jewels (Zoe). A bugler playing taps atop the tower marked the conclusion of the fair on December 4, 1915. When the fair closed, there had been 18,876,438 admissions (Findling 225). The exposition did more than commemorate the opening of the Panama Canal. It celebrated the rebirth of a City, and emphasized a new, optimistic view of American society.
Works Cited


