



THE SPANISH PERIOD CORNER

Don Peterson



Philatelic Souvenir of the Peace Jubilee Washington, DC May 23-25, 1899

Over the years, I have collected several philatelic souvenirs of the Peace Jubilee, May 23-25, 1899, held in Washington, DC. Interestingly, these post-Spanish-American War items were pieces of wallpaper affixed with Spanish Philippine stamps. Until now, they were a mystery. However, after a bit of research at the Archives of the National Museum of American History in Washington, DC, I solved the mystery.

On May 23-25, 1899, a large privately-funded celebration, called the Peace Jubilee, was held in Washington, DC, with the stated goal to "celebrate the re-establishment of peace between the United States and Spain." It was a recovery effort following the Spanish-American War a year earlier. Thousands of people came to the City from all over the United States, attracted in part, by cut-rate train fares. Hundreds of souvenir vendors and hustlers also descended on the City with their buttons, medals, posters, etc. The three-day event included parades of military, naval, and civilian organizations; gun boat salutes; concerts; patriotic speeches; historical pageants; and a Ball at the Convention Hall. Although funded by private donations, the Governments of Spain and the United States planned to use the event to re-establish diplomatic relations. During the event, the Minister of Spain, Duc D'Arcos, representing King Alfonso XIII, met with President William McKinley at the White House to formally initiate the renewal of diplomatic relations. By all accounts, it was a success.

Below is an example of a vendor's souvenir showing a Spanish Philippine stamp (Scott #144) with the slogan handstamp "SOUVENIR OF THE PEACE JUBILEE WASHINGTON, D.C. MAY 23, 24, 25, 1899."

The postage stamp and slogan handstamp were affixed to the backside of wallpaper. The two-lined slogan handstamp occurs in two formats: in a straight line, or wavy line, as shown below. Other Philippine stamp examples are known, also applied on wallpaper. The handstamp occurs in blue-green or carmine, and is also known on Puerto Rico Scott #211. I suspect that Cuba stamps may also have been applied to these Peace Jubilee souvenirs.



Reference: Archives of the National Museum of American History, Washington, DC