

NANDGAON - A FIRST ISSUE COVER FROM THE NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM VAULTS

by W. Danforth Walker, RDP, FRPSL

Introduction

In May 2023 the author was invited to the Smithsonian National Postal Museum (NPM) to view and talk about selected Indian Princely States material from their vault. The audience was potential bidders in a major India postal history auction who took the opportunity to view lots in Washington DC a few days before the New York City auction. Since the author's specialty and area of greatest knowledge are the India Princely states, this was the area that the author discussed using items from the NPM vault. The Curator of Philately, Daniel Piazza, pulled out some very interesting items from the NPM vault, items that the author had not seen from the NPM holdings in two prior visits over probably a 40 year plus period.

This issue of the India Post will discuss a first issue Nandgaon cover with seven copies of Nandgaon's first half anna blue stamp franking the cover. Also discussed will be another, confirming cover, of the first issue of Nandgaon owned by the author. Finally, will be a review of the first two stamps issued by the Princely State of Nandgaon.

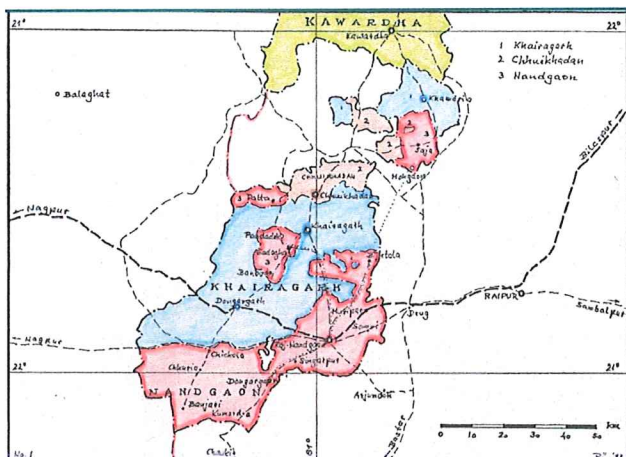


Fig 1: Detailed map of Nandgaon

Nandgaon

Nandgaon is in central India with the capital city of Raj-Nandgaon having a railroad station on the Bengal-Nagpur railroad line. It is a very small state, only 871 square miles and like many Indian Princely states, parts of the state are separate from each other, in Nandgaon's case there is a main (larger) area containing the capital city and three smaller areas. See de-

tailed map of Nandgaon as Fig. 1, courtesy of Peter Rover. The only population I could find for Nandgaon was for 1901 and in that year the population of the state was 126,356. Nandgaon issued stamps for postal use from 1891 (or as early as late 1887¹) until the stamps were withdrawn from postal use on 31 December 1894. Further printings took place of stamps in 1895 but these stamps were not used for postal service and can be distinguished from postal issues.

Nandgaon the First Issues

Nandgaon's first issue consists of two stamps, a half anna blue Fig. 2 and a two annas rose Fig. 3. The half anna blue has a color variety listed in Gibbons as "dull blue" Fig. 4 but this color variety is not listed as used. Unused copies are relatively accessible but used stamps with genuine cancel are very difficult to acquire.



Fig 2: 1/2 anna blue (SG 1) Fig 3: 2 anna rose (SG 2)

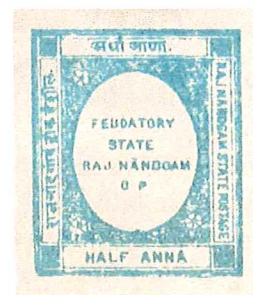


Fig 4: 1/2 anna blue (SG 1a)

The two stamps were printed by lithography at the India city of Poona. Both stamps were printed in sheets of 64 stamps consisting of four panes of 16 (4 x 4). The four panes per sheet have horizontal and vertical margins ranging between 6 to 15.5mm. Based on a sheet (less one stamp) in the author's collection of the two annas stamp, and four additional multiples of the half anna (including a part sheet of two horizontal panes of 12 and 16) and an additional part pane of 12 (4 x 3) of the two annas, it appears to the author that



Fig 8 & 9: Author's cover bearing 1/2 anna strip of 3 + 2 anna



Fig 10



Fig 11



Fig 12

Postally Used First Issue Stamps

The author has been collecting Nandgaon stamps for over 45 years and has accumulated only three probable postally used genuine first issue stamps. Fig. 10 is a copy of the half anna first issue stamp with a manuscript cancel similar to the manuscript cancels on the NPM and author's covers shown above. Fig. 11 is also a copy of the half anna first issue stamp with an intaglio seal cancel reading "STATE POST/CP/RAJ NANDGAON". Fig. 12 is also a copy of the two annas first issue stamp with an intaglio seal cancel reading "STATE POST/CP/RAJ NANDGAON". Both Fig. 11 and Fig. 12 are genuine postally used Nandgaon first issue stamps, but no genuine covers with this intaglio seal cancel are known to the author.

Acknowledgment

I wish to acknowledge Charles Shreve, Director-Siegel International for arranging with the Smithsonian National Postal Museum for the author to view some wonderful Indian Princely states material from the NPM vault, Daniel Piazza, Curator of Philately NPM for selecting some wonderful items to discuss from the vault, Srinivas Prava and Sandeep Jaiswal for sharing their expert knowledge with the author.

¹ Rover, Peter, Nandgaon – Additions and Corrections, India Post Vol. 39, No. 161, March 2005, page 17.

² Rover, Peter, The Typographed Stamps of Nandgaon, India Post Vol. 26, No. 111, Jan.-Mar 1992, page 2.

³ Rover, op. sit pages 2-3.

⁴ Jefferies, Hugh (ed.) (2023) *Stanley Gibbons Stamp Catalogue, Commonwealth and British Empire Stamps 1840-1970* 125th ed. London Stanley Gibbons, Nandgaon, note following SG 2.

KING GEORGE V POSTAL STATIONERY WANTED BY COLLECTOR

I am planning on forming an eight frame exhibit on KGV postal stationery. I am interested in acquiring anything and everything including ordinary postcards, envelopes, registered letters, postal orders, reply coupons, wrappers, official postcards. I am especially looking for UPU reply postcards used back to India, archival items including Proofs & Essays, Errors & Varieties, usages to unusual destinations and combination usages.

Please send offers by WhatsApp to +1 401 688 9473 or by email to sj722@aol.com or send to:

Sandeep Jaiswal FRPSL PO Box 8689 Cranston, RI 02920 USA