

FIRST ISSUES OF THE INDIAN PRINCELY STATE OF ORCHHA 1913-35

PURPOSE, IMPORTANCE, AND PHILATELIC BACKGROUND

- Orchha was a Bundelkhand princely state in Central India ruled by the Bundela Rajput dynasty. Although integrated with the British Indian postal system, it maintained its own postal administration and issued distinctive postage stamps between 1913 and 1935.
- The exhibit traces the development of Orchha's postal adhesives beginning with the unissued essays of 1897 bearing jeweler's imprints and continuing through the issued stamps and their numerous printings and shade varieties.
- Orchha philately presents one of the most challenging and rewarding fields among the Indian States. The issues are characterized by multiple shades, color changes, and lithographic printings, providing ample opportunity for specialized study.
- The exhibit seeks to provide a systematic treatment of Orchha stamps and postal history, illustrating their evolution over nearly three decades and emphasizing the importance of essays, issued stamps, varieties, and postal usages.

SCOPE OF THE EXHIBIT

- I. Essays of 1897 – Unissued essays bearing jeweler's imprints; design characteristics and production varieties.
- II. First Issued Stamps of 1913 – 1/2 Anna Green; 1 Anna Red; shades, printings, and postal usages.
- III. The 1914–1935 Issues – 1/4 Anna, 1/2 Anna, 1 Anna, 2 Anna, and 4 Anna denominations with numerous shades and printings.

PHILATELIC MATERIAL SHOWN

- Essays and proofs.
- Mint and used stamps.
- Shade and printing varieties.
- Blocks and multiples.
- Covers and postal usages illustrating rates and routes.
- The first two stamps have never been seen on an intact cover and hence unpriced in the SG catalog. I am showing one of two known covers bearing the first stamp the 1/2a green in this exhibit.
- The only known imperial combination cover is also shown in this exhibit.
- The 1 anna error of color is also shown in this exhibit which has not been cataloged by SG. It is printed in yellow-orange the intended color of the 4 anna stamp instead of the correct scarlet.

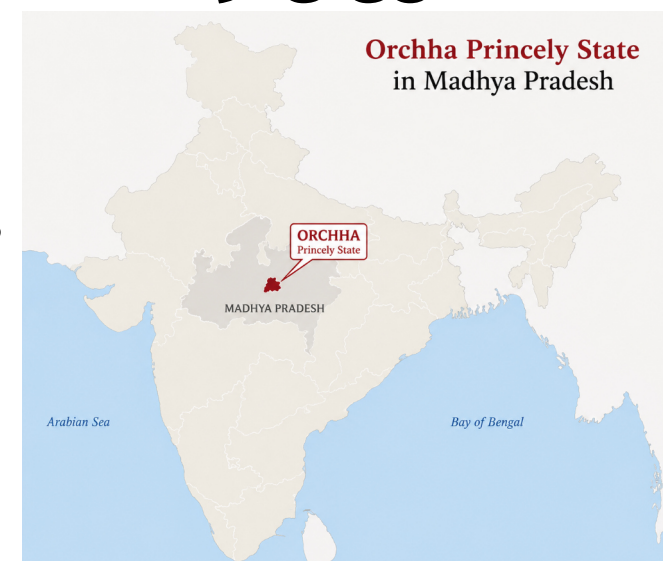
WHAT IS NOT SHOWN

Not all laid paper varieties of the first issues are shown here, as they rarely show up for sale in auction.

FIRST ISSUES OF THE INDIAN PRINCELY STATE OF ORCHHA 1913-35

HISTORICAL AND PHILATELIC BACKGROUND

- Orchha was an Indian Princely State of the Bundelkhand Agency in Central India, covering approximately 2,000 square miles.
- Population was approximately 335,000 in 1891, residing in the capital Tikamgarh (Tehri) and over 700 towns and villages.
- Strategically located between the major commercial centers of Cawnpore (Kanpur) and Allahabad.
- Ruled by Maharaja Pratap Singh (1874–1930) and Maharaja Bir Singh Deo (1930–1956), the latter depicted on the 1935 and 1939 stamp issues.
- Orchha maintained its own currency, the Gajashahi Rupee, valued at approximately 10–11 annas of British Indian currency in 1931–32.
- No organized state postal service existed before 1895. Fifteen post offices were established that year at police stations (thanas) for the transmission of ordinary inland letters.
- Postage was initially prepaid in cash at 2 annas per letter; official correspondence was carried free of charge.
- Postal services for postcards, registration, and parcels appear to have been introduced between 1914 and 1917.
- British Indian post offices operated independently at Tikamgarh, Baldeogarh, and Jatara.
- Until about 1930, the Orchha State Post and Imperial Post maintained separate postal networks with no documented mail exchange.
- Combination frankings of Orchha and British India are exceedingly rare; the only recorded example is exhibited here.



OUTLINE OF EXHIBIT

- Essays of 1897 (Jewelers imprints)
- 1913 issues 1/2 Anna Green & 1 Anna Red
- 1914-35 Issues
 - 1/4 Anna Bright Ultramarine, Grey Blue & Deep Blue
 - 1/2 Anna Green, Dull Green & Apple Green
 - 1 Anna Scarlet, Indian red & Carmine
 - 2a Red-Brown, Light Brown, Chestnut & Purple-Brown
 - 4a Ochre, Yellow-Orange & Yellow

Rare items framed in RED



Original Research

REFERENCES:

- 2007 British Commonwealth Stanley Gibbons Catalogue.
- The Postage Stamps of Orchha By II. D. S. Haverbeck
- The Postage stamps of Orchha by David Bradley & Bruce Tolley
-



1917 outgoing mail from TIKAMGARH, Orchha to KOTAH (distance of 140 miles) using a KGV postal stationary paying the 1/2 anna onward postage rate for out of state and half anna internal Orchha rate paid by 1/4 anna grey-blue (2 stamps). Front has indistinct square circular cancel of Tikamgarh PO obliterating the postal stationary indicium as well as the 1/4 anna stamp. Back has square circular cancel of Tikamgarh canceling the 1/4 anna stamp as well as a circular delivery cancel of Kotah delivery 8am 29 OC 17. The **ONLY KNOWN** combination cover of Orchha.

Ex. McGuillicuddy