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Guest Editorial

INDIAN PHILATELY LACKS LUSTRE

Having come in contact with most of the Indian Philatelists of the old school and knowing their approach and interest to stamp collecting, we feel the present day philatelists are far behind their old counterparts. Barring a few serious collectors, most of the stamp collectors used to collect whatever came their way and in doing so they were deriving pleasure as well as satisfaction. They had the passion and a curious inkling of meeting other philatelists and showing them what new items they acquired and such type of philatelic friendship know no bar between a rich and a poor stamp collector.

Leading and respectable philatelists like late C. D. Desai, N. D. Cooper, Jal Cooper, R. F. Stoney and R. F. Shroff to name a few, were always ready to guide junior philatelists. We had the pleasure to meet C. D. Desai on a number of occasions, whereas with N. D. Cooper, R. F. Shroff and D.E. Wadia we used to discuss for hours together once or twice a month. Late D. E. Wadia who had written a series of article on India 1854 issues was a keen student who acquired philatelic training under the expert advice and supervision of N. D. Cooper. Those giants had a mastery over other side lines of Indian philately, such as Indian postal history, early Indian cancellations and India used abroad. They were simply engrossed in the hobby forming collections in their own sweet way unmindful of winning an award or not. Actually they never aspired for a gold medal inspite of having fantastic material for the simple reason that the knowledge they had was their gold mine.

After the sad demise of the above stalwarts, many new faces came on the philatelic horizon and with the power of their purse, they have been able to form better collections, but, knowledgewise one cannot put them on par with the stalwarts of the old school who left behind wealth of knowledge for posterity. The present philatelic trend can be compared to a rat-race, everyone trying to add only the

costly items by money power with the sole intention of winning a gold medal. In a way the present philatelic trend has made this once fascinating hobby nothing but a commercial proposition.

Prof. Einstein has rightly said, "The deeper we search, the more we find there is to know, and as long as human life exists I believe it will always be so". But we regret to observe that the present day award winners and so called prominent philatelists have never applied their minds on philatelic research in the right sense of the word so that they can be instrumental in promoting the hobby.

Within the last eighty years Indian philately has not made any substantial progress. There is nothing to boast about for winning gold medals at international stamp exhibitions by half a dozen Indian philatelists; what is important is, what worthwhile research they have made and what role they have played in promoting the hobby. In most of the philatelic meetings various suggestions are put forward but have we ever acted upon them? Some of the philatelists of middle order are at times greatly disappointed when their entries are not properly judged at competitive exhibitions. One disgruntled stamp collector one day asked us, "How is it that a couple of jury members who have never formed a collection of their own and even not capable to discuss with ease some of the points raised by philatelists find a place on a panel of jury." Frankly we had no answer to his question.

-Late. P. M. MEDHORA

Our Second Sunday Meetings were held at the CPMG's Conference Hall, Anna Road, HPO, Chennai - 600 002. (10.30 - 12.30 pm) regularly where around 35 members attended with President Shri Balakrishna Das presiding. Mr. G. Ram Mohan spoke on "Charka in Philately" in August 2003.

We regret
to inform
that
India Post Commemoratives stamps
issue wing
took an
unannounced holiday
in July & August.

Young Collectors beware!
You will be 'dumped' with heavy
lots in November and December.

Be prepared.



INDIAN STATES REVENUES - A POPULAR CHOICE

by PETER COLLINS

In India, in the days of the British Raj, there were 563 independent Princely States. Some were only a few acres in area, some occupied hundreds of square miles. The lands had been acquired through conquest, by gifts for services to other great land owners, by inheritance, or by grant from the contemporary government or ruler. By a series of treaties and agreements with the British, the Indian princes retained autonomy over their internal affairs, while acknowledging overall British sovereignty and accepting Britain's judgement and ruling in the administration of external matters.

Some States were wealthy by virtue of their natural products, mineral deposits or forests. The Rulers of these territories were invariably rich beyond imagination. Like all rulers, they taxed their subjects to provide income for their State and themselves. Following the European practice dating from the 17th century, it was decreed that no receipt for a cash payment above a certain sum should be legal unless it bore an official tax or fee seal, and that no legal transaction should be recognised unless the appropriate duty was paid upon it and an official seal confirming this was attached to the document. The classes of tax therefore fall into two categories, Judicial and Fiscal. In the 1860s, several States introduced official stamped paper on which to record, for example the institution of Court proceedings and the recording of legal decisions (JUDICIAL) and dealings in cash transactions, bonds, loans and mortgages (FISCAL).

Both the postal and fiscal stamps of the Indian States have had considerable appeal for philatelists for many years. The locally produced issues gave scope for philatelic study and the use of various scripts (Hindi, Gujarati and Urdu) provided a challenge for linguistic de-

fectives, while productions by Waterlow, Bradbury Wilkinson and other top quality printers resulted in many beautiful classic printings with attractive related essays, progress proofs, die proofs, plate proofs and specimen sheets.

One discouragement to the collection of fiscal stamps was the lack of literature on the subject, and absence of sources of supply.

Walter Morley, in 1904, published a fiscal catalogue which listed 44 revenue stamp producing Indian States. Forbin, in his 1915 'Catalogue de Timbres Fiscaux', recorded stamps from 60 Indian States. A third catalogue was produced before World War I by the well-known London dealers Bridger & Kay who, at that time, made a speciality of revenue issues.

In 1984, two U.S. students of fiscal philately, Adolph Koepfel and Raymond D. Manners, produced a magnificent comprehensive priced listing of revenue stamps from over 300 Indian States, including issues from provinces formed since 1950 from an amalgamation of former ancient States. With imaginative pricing in U.S. dollars, the apparent value of these issues released a stream of Indian States revenue stamps on to the market from Indian offices, traders and collectors. Koepfel's prices proved to be wildly optimistic, and, if one accepts that his valuations are about ten times true catalogue price and that selling prices are a fraction (one third to one fifth?) of catalogue, one has an idea of market value on which to deal.

The high catalogue prices and initially strong auction realisations as never-before-seen fiscals from some of the smaller Indian States came on to the market and were eagerly bought, have ensured that Indian revenue stamps will continue to appear regularly from archives, office files and under the floor boards of the great sub-continent.

At the September auction of Empire stamps by Christie's Robson Lowe in London, an accumulation of revenue stamps by an eminent British collector formed a valuable and extensive section. In order to give as many collectors as possible the opportunity of acquiring a worthwhile and interesting nucleus, the collection was offered in eight albums, each containing a few hundred stamps, mainly from 50 to 60 different States, set out in each album in roughly alphabetical order. A total of two or three stamps is all that has been issued by some States.

A further group of India Empire revenues provided another small section, and an attractive, colourful accumulation of Stamped Papers was offered as a single lot. The size of the Stamped Paper entires makes them difficult to collect and display. We suggest they are best cut or (preferably) folded so that only the design is exposed and the long manuscript text does not occupy space in the display.

While there is adequate basic guidance available for the formation and expansion of a collection, it is apparent from items which come from India from time to time and from correspondence we have exchanged, that there is much scope for further exploration and study in every aspect of every issue of every State.

Some highlights noted within the sections offered included Arms stamps of Ajaigarh, a colourful flag issue of Akalkot, a range from Bahawalpur from crude litho-

graphs to delicate Waterlow specimen stamps, small receipt stamps and large size Court Fee issues from the State of Bastar which have a portrait of the Ranees reminiscent of Ava Gardner in the film 'Bhowani Junction', a pair of Bhor 1898 1a, one being the variety with inverted frame, and a strange 'bullet' design from Bundi. The Datia items provided material for study of different printings, and there were historic World War II WAR PURPOSES overprints with an Indian St. George-like character on a horse, knocking a Nazi soldier for six with his lance. India issues with monarchs' heads from Queen Victoria to King George VI overprinted for various States were in evidence. Kumar Sain State included la. tete beche varieties on pelure paper.

Moslem teaching prohibited the reproduction of any living thing by an artist, and early stamped papers and stamps showed elaborate designs which it was intended it would be difficult for forgers to copy. Later issues embodying portraits of rajas, ranees, nawabs and hizams may have evolved as religious tenets had less influence, or as an imitation of the British style depicting the monarch's head.

A further collection of Indian States revenues, made over a lifetime by an eminent Continental collector, and including proofs and essays, was on offer, broken into 24 lots, in the Stamps of the World auction at Robson Lowe's Bournemouth saleroom on 4th October 1990.



Jhalawar State Court Fee Stamp in a style adapted from the British India type.

(Courtesy : India Study Circle 1991)



MIGRATORY BIRDS ON STAMPS

P. J. Lanspeary

One of the great sights of nature is the southward migration of White Storks when in autumn hundreds of birds together cross over the Straits of Gibraltar on their way to Africa. Using thermal air currents, they seem to soar and drift along effortlessly. They arrive at their main breeding areas of Europe, North Africa and Asia in the northern spring. They leave in autumn to winter in southern Africa.

White Storks can be seen on migratory sets from Albania 1965 (SG 933/8), Bahrain 1992 (425/40) and Venda 1984 (91/4). On two air stamps of Algeria 1949 (290 and 292) two appear in flight over a mosque showing the typical silhouette of storks on migration with neck and legs outstretched.



Many sets of stamps have been issued entitled 'Migratory Birds' and some of these show the migration routes by means of arrows on maps. Apart from these designated sets, many general bird issues include migratory species.

From London to Cape Town is 10,000 kilometres, a distance which is travelled twice a year by millions of birds

on migration. Similar journeys are made between North and South America, across Asia and over the Pacific Ocean. Many of the birds flying these long distances are small, like the Barn Swallows that breed in northern Europe during spring and summer and then, to escape the cold winter months, fly to South Africa.

Large numbers perish

The Barn Swallow is one of the best known and most popular visitors to Europe. Birds arrive from South Africa during April/May and are soon busy nest building. By the end of August they have reared their young and



The 'bullet' type from Bundi.



One of the 'elaborate designs' for Stamped Paper, locally printed for use in the State of Aligarh.



PJL ENTER LANGUAGE PCL

Indian Empire Court Fee stamp of KEVII, overprinted for use in Kathiawar State. Cancelled by triangular puncture.

are preparing to fly south. Many reach Africa via the Straits of Gibraltar and cross the western part of the Sahara desert during October when large numbers perish. Presumably the advantages of migration, such as improved food supply, outweigh the dangers of the desert crossing.

The destination of the Swallows from western Europe is the south-east corner of South Africa, which is reached after a comparatively leisurely journey of some two months. Recoveries of ringed birds provide evidence that those from Britain tend to concentrate around Durban.

A set of four stamps issued by Ciskei in 1984 (60/3) comprise four members of the swallow family --Banded Sand Martin, House Martin, Greater Striped Swallow and Barn Swallow. Each design shows the southward migration routes marked by green arrows. House Martins are not normally found in the extreme south of South Africa as indicated by the arrow.

For many centuries man has been aware of bird migration--there are references to it in the Bible relating to the White Stork and Barn Swallow--but only during the last 100 years or so has the matter been seriously studied. Well into the eighteenth century many ornithologists, including one so observant as Gilbert White, believed that some species hibernated during the European Winter.

Less competition

Some 15,000 years ago central and northern Europe was covered by ice. When the ice started to melt, the ice-cap retreated, vegetation spread slowly northwards and the birds followed. New areas became available where there was less competition for food and the migrants were able to raise more young. Thus natural selection came into play, depending on whether migration or staying put favoured raising the larger number of young. As the migration distances increased there must have come a point where the chances of survival increased by not migrating. It has been estimated that, of the hundreds of millions of birds that move into Africa each autumn, only half survive to return to their breeding grounds the next year.



No doubt the migration process is continuous--some populations will be increasing their seasonal journeys while others become more sedentary. For instance, increasing numbers of Blackcaps and Chiffchaffs are overwintering in Europe instead of making the long and dangerous haul to tropical Africa. Another sign of a decrease in migration

may be the breeding in their normal non-breeding areas of European Bee-eaters and White Storks.

In spite of all the scientific studies made in recent years, bird migration is still not fully understood. How does a bird find its way over thousands of kilometres back to the same locality, even the same garden, where it was hatched? Why do birds that breed in Europe set off for Africa while it is still relatively warm and the natural food

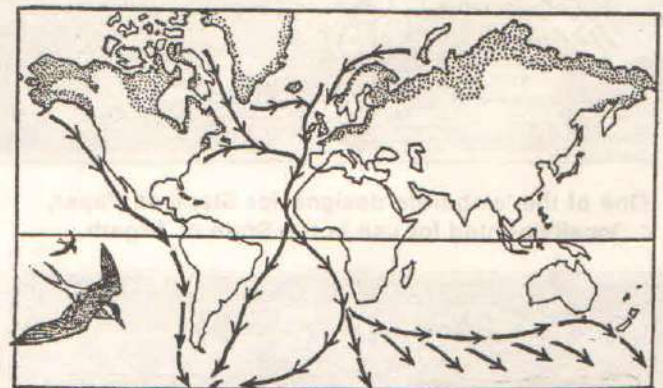
supply is plentiful? How do they know that their food supply, of insects for example, will not be available in winter?



Much has been discovered from mass observation and radar. It has been found that some species migrate at night and others by day and that the sun and stars are important aids to navigation. More precise information has been obtained from systematic ringing of young birds and adults that have been trapped. Rings are stamped with the address of the sponsors who should be contacted when a ringed bird is caught or recovered. By the use of such techniques, information about times, routes and rates of movements have been gathered.

Ospreys are common throughout much of the Old World and North America. They breed in the cooler northern areas and leave for warmer southern climates every autumn. A 1983 set from Gambia (510/3) shows different portraits with the same background to each design, a map with arrows indicating the breeding range and migration route. The southward movement is shown ending in the Gambia although Ospreys also move into many parts of southern Africa.

A 1983 Venda set comprising the European Bee-eater, Tawny Eagle, Violet Starling and Abdim's Stork (71/4) is interesting from a migration point of view. Each design includes a map of Africa with the breeding area and migration route marked in red.



Southward migration of the Arctic tern, which nests in the far North

European Bee-eaters breed all around the Mediterranean and in autumn depart in noisy flocks for India and Africa. This normal migratory pattern is upset to some extent because a few small breeding colonies exist around Cape Town. These colonies breed during the southern hemisphere summer. Since all the Bee-eaters disappear from South Africa to fly north, the question arises whether these birds which breed around the Cape in the southern

summer will do so again during the European summer.

There are five sub-species of the Tawny Eagle and the one named on the Venda stamp, *Aquila rapax nipalensis*, breeds in Russia, China and Mongolia and migrates through Egypt to Africa.

The most beautiful?

The Violet, Amethyst or Plum-coloured Starling, perhaps the most beautiful of the African starlings, has a fairly well defined migration pattern within the continent.



The sub-species shown on the stamp moves regularly between Senegal and Uganda/Kenya/Tanzania, going south for the breeding season which takes place in early summer at the beginning of the rains. Many African bird species have irregular seasonal movements related generally to wet and dry periods.

Abdim's Stork follows a regular migration pattern, breed-

ing from Angola across to Ethiopia and moving as far south as the Transvaal during the non-breeding season, October to March.

More daylight

The unchallenged champion migrant is the Arctic Tern. They breed around the Arctic circle in the northern hemisphere summer and then fly all the way to the Antarctic, where they spend another summer, thus enjoying more daylight than any other creature on earth. Their main migration paths in the west are the coasts of North and South America. Birds that breed in Siberia follow the west coast of Africa and ringed birds have been recovered all around the coast of Cape Province. They cannot travel the most direct routes because of changing wind directions and it has been estimated that they fly 40,000 kilometres in a year. This compares with 20,000 kilometres travelled by many small birds, such as warblers, that breed in northern Europe and winter in southern Africa.



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Arctic Terns appear on migration sets issued by Denmark in 1999 (1183) and St

Pierre and Miquelon in 1995 (930).

In the New World the main migration routes are north to south from Alaska and Canada down to Central and South America. A 1995 release by Canada featured the Belted Kingfisher and Northern Pintail (1656/8).

The designs include the lines of migration of both species with a map showing the breeding areas in northern North America and the wintering regions in Mexico and Central America.

Remarkable feat

Another notable North American migrant is the Ruby-throated Hummingbird. Ruby-throats spend the winter in Mexico and fly north in early summer. They go as far as southern Canada, a journey of over 3000 kilometres, including a flight of nearly 800 kilometres across the Gulf of Mexico. This is a remarkable feat for birds just nine centimetres long from bill tip to tail end. Surprisingly, Ruby-throats do not appear in any migration sets but are well represented in general issues. A USA 29c stamp of 1992 depicts a male hovering over a red flower (2673).



Many birds migrate between Canada and the USA and as long ago as 1916 a Migratory Bird Treaty was agreed by those two countries. In 1966, to mark the 50th anniversary of the

Treaty, the USA issued a 5c, value which showed symbolic birds flying past each other over the Great Lakes and the border between Canada and the USA (1286). Since the signing of the Treaty protection of many

species has been enforced and several bird sanctuaries have been established.

Another Treaty, for the International Protection of Migratory Water Birds, was marked by the Netherlands in 1999 by the issue of two 80c, values illustrating the White Spoonbill and Sandwich Tern (1932/3). Both these species breed in Europe during the summer and migrate to Africa each winter.



A number of wading birds breed around the Arctic Circle and make long migrations to the southern hemisphere. Some reach Australia but many stop off on islands in the Pacific Ocean. Four of these-Wandering Tattler, Ruddy Turnstone, Pacific Golden Plover and Sanderling-can be seen on a 1990 issue from the Marshall Islands (226/9).

Passage migrants

A close relative of the Pacific Golden Plover, the American Golden Plover, breeds in northern Canada and migrates to South America via the West Indies. This Plover is included in a set of four migratory birds brought out by Barbados in 1994 (1018/21). The other three are the Ruddy Turnstone, Whimbrel and Louisiana Heron, all of which are passage migrants through the West Indies.

A set of four values released by Hong Kong in 1997 (884/7) featured the Yellow-breasted Bunting, Great Knot, Falcated Teal and Black-faced Spoonbill. Having bred in northern China and Asia, these four are passage migrants through Hong Kong on their way to wintering grounds further south. The Great Knot goes as far as Australasia.



Six values entitled 'Seasonal Birds' came from North Korea in 1996 Issued in two miniature sheets of three stamps (MSN3610 and MSN3622), the sheet margins have the migration routes shown by means of arrows. One set consists of Common Shelduck (although the scientific name for Crested Shelduck is inscribed on the stamp), Demoiselle Crane and Mute Swan. These three migrate in an east/west direction unlike the more usual north/south. They all breed in northern Russia and China and some of the populations find their way to Korea. Southward movement is discouraged by extensive high regions such as, in this case, the Himalayas.

The other three birds in the Korean set are Eastern Broad-billed Roller (Dollar Bird), Yellow-rumped Flycatcher and Eurasian Cuckoo. The Flycatcher and Cuckoo breed in Korea in summer and move south to Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines for the winter. The Dollar Bird is unusual in having breeding populations in both the northern and southern hemispheres. The birds that breed in Korea during summer spend the winter in Malaysia, Sumatra and Borneo, while those that breed in Australia fly north in winter to the New Guinea region. The name Dollar Bird is derived from a round silver patch on the wings, conspicuous in flight.

The Eurasian Cuckoo is the same species that visits Britain every spring, well known on account of its call. They have a typical migration pattern going north in April to breed right across Europe and Asia. The European birds return south in August/September, reaching the whole of southern Africa except the south-west corner.

Inbuilt mechanism

As is well known, adult Cuckoos have nothing to do with rearing their young and they leave Europe several weeks before the young birds are ready to go south. Unaided by their parents there must be some inbuilt mechanism which tells them when to go and in what direction.

Two very different kinds of bird appear on a 1999 Philippines miniature sheet comprising two 8c. values, Spotted Greenshank and Tufted Duck (MS3227). The Greenshank (also known as Nordman's Greenshank) is very rare and breeds only on Sakhalin Island in northeast Siberia. They winter in southern Asia and the Philippines as far south as Borneo, where they may be seen around sea coasts.

The Tufted Duck is common throughout Europe and Asia with a breeding range which takes in most of northern Europe and Asia. In winter they migrate to southern Europe and Asia--some birds reach North Africa.

Although described as a migratory bird on the 25c. Venda stamp of 1984 (93), the sub-species of the Black Kite shown is resident from Senegal across to the Sudan and down to Cape Province. Apart from localised movements they do not migrate.

There are at least seven different races of the Black Kite, one of the most numerous and successful birds of prey. The Far Eastern race breeds widely in China and Japan and migrates south to southern Asia. During migration they normally fly at a height of 150 metres in large flocks. Flight is leisurely and graceful, with long, slow wing beats interspersed with periods of gliding. A Ryukyu Islands 3c. value of 1963 shows Far East Black Kites on migration--the gliding, soaring flight is well caught in the design (144).

Invasions or irruptions

In 1996 and 1997 the Faroe Islands issued four stamps entitled 'Invasion Birds'. Pictured are the Red Crossbill and Bohemian Waxwing (1996, 292/3) and Bullfinch and Redpoll (1997, 321/2). Invasions, more usually known as irruptions, are irregular migrations that take place because of unusual climatic conditions, leading to a shortage of food. Most irruptive species are highly specialised feeders and breed in the great forest belt which stretches across North America, Europe and Asia.

Ascension is about half way between Africa and South America and, like Tristan, gets its share of vagrants. Five appear in a 1998 Ascension set--Barn Swallow, House Martin, Cattle Egret, Eurasian Swift and Allen's Gallinule (747/51). No doubt they arrive in Ascension having been blown off course like the Tristan vagrants.

Migration must be beneficial, though it is difficult to understand how, for example, the immense journeys of Arctic Terns can be of benefit, as so many birds perish on the way. Migration permits occupancy of regions of the world on a temporary basis that would otherwise be unvisited--an important factor in the food supply. The origin of the migratory instinct presumably lies in the evolution of species as they were (and are still being) affected by long term climatic changes.

(Courtesy : Gibbous SM 2003)



THE WORLD'S FIRST AERIAL POST, ALLAHABAD 1911

Dr. D. J. Banerjee

India has the great distinction of being the first ever country in the World to inaugurate an official Air Mail flight. Aeroplane was successfully flown only eight years before, in USA by the Wright brothers and was still, a thing of fun and showing aerobatics.

Pioneering aviators took their rickety, small machines all over the world to fly them in exhibitions and carnivals for money. The usefulness of the aeroplanes were still not fully understood almost three years later during the First World War. In 1911 an United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh) Industrial & Agricultural Fair was organised at the historic city of Allahabad. Two aviators, Henri Pequet, a Frenchman and Keith Davis, a Britisher were invited to show their skill with their flying machines. The credit for conceiving the idea of carrying souvenir mails, to raise funds for charity, goes to Capt. (later Sir) W. Wyndham. He approached the Government of India for permission for carriage of mail with an official postal marking. This was readily granted and M. Henri Pequet agreed to carry the mail in his small Humber-Sommer biplane.

The newspapers of the day took up the cue and going through the yellowing brittle pages, one could feel the excitement and expectations mounting up.

The first mention of the Air Mail was published in The Pioneer published from Allahabad, on February 4, 1911:-

AVIATION AT ALLAHABAD

THE FIRST AERIAL POST

A charge of 6 annas per letter or card will be levied. This amount will be given without deduction as a donation for the new building of the Oxford and Cambridge Hostel at Allahabad.



Waxwings, which feed mainly on berries, especially the Rowan, are typically irruptive. A severe winter may lead to a poor crop of berries in the ensuing season, forcing the birds to move south in search of their preferred food. Southern areas of North America and Great Britain receive great influxes of Waxwings at irregular periods. Birds sometimes appear in places where they do not normally occur, apparently not from choice but as the result of unexpected conditions, such as gale force winds which blow them off course while on migration.

Blown off course

The remote island of Tristan da Cunha is about half way between the tip of South Africa and the south-east coast of South America. In 1989 four values from there featured vagrants--Cattle Egret, Spotted Sandpiper, American Purple Gallinule and Barn Swallow (486/9). All these four migrate between the northern and southern hemispheres and are likely candidates to be blown off course.

From their original homes in Africa and southern Eurasia, Cattle Egrets have spread to most continents of the world and if sufficient numbers arrived there, might well colonise Tristan. Rails are usually thought of as weak fliers and sedentary, but some members of the family migrate over long distances. American Purple Gallinules move between North and South America and individuals land up regularly in Tristan, having been blown across the southern Atlantic while on migration. No doubt the same conditions account for the appearance of Spotted Sandpipers, which migrate between North and South America via the West Indies.

1. Only postcards and letters not exceeding 1 ounce will be accepted.

2. Letters for Transit must be stamped, addressed and fastened in the ordinary way. Enclose the letter or postcard in a 2nd envelope alongwith a B.P.O. for 6 pence and forward the same to the Chaplain, Holy Trinity Church, Allahabad, who has agreed to forward the mail to the postal authorities. For convenience, postage stamps of 8 annas can be used in lieu of postal orders.

3. A B. P. O. of 6 pence will be available in any post office in India for 6 1/2 annas.

4. Letters and postcards will be received through the post or by hand at the above address upto Saturday, 18th February 1911.

5. Local letters sent by hand must accompany 6 annas in cash.

M. Pequet made long flights over the exhibition grounds on 3rd and 4th February 1911 without any mail. On the later date the propeller shaft of his plane broke down and had to be replaced.

The location of the receiving station was at Naini junction across the river from Allahabad, a distance of 5 miles. Through the kindness of Capt. Palmer, a large site near the central jail was cleared by convicts for the plane to descend. The Aerial Post Committee decided to send complimentary letters to the crowned heads in Europe, leading members and officials in the House of Commons, House of Lords and Chief of Aero Clubs.

The Pioneer reports on 16th February that the Committee has decided to send a postcard bearing the picture of the biplane in which the mail is to be carried, signed by M. Pequet the aviator in charge and stamped with the special postmark, to any address in India and abroad. These must reach the Chaplain, Holy Trinity Church, Allahabad, by Saturday 18th February 1911 with Re 1 per card in cash or Money Order. The Postmaster General has assured that the special postmark prepared at the Postal Works, Aligurh, will be destroyed alongwith the die on the day, following the Aerial Flight.

With wind and weather permitting the flight will take place on 20th February 1911 at 4-30 P.M. from the polo grounds adjoining the exhibition.

There were no notifications in the papers for the reasons why the date of the flight were advanced by two days.

Meanwhile two of M. Pequet's countrymen, M. Tyall and M. Jullerot made a number of cross country flights at the Allahabad exhibition on 15th and 16th February 1911 drawing large crowds.

The Pioneer of 18th February 1911 carried a curious letter from the Chaplain of Allahabad:

To
The Editor,
Sir,

A large number of letters are being sent or brought to me, to be posted by the Aerial Post. I

should be much obliged if you would kindly allow me to say through your columns that I have nothing what soever to do with this or any other way of posting letters.

14th February 1911
Allahabad

Chaplain of Allahabad
G. E. Oldham

Whatever the reasons for the rejoinder was, enthusiasm was mounting up at Allahabad. On 17th February Henri Pequet made a demonstration flight for 3 hours. Mr. Murray, the Secretary was taken for a ride across the country for 19 minutes.

Over 3000 letters have already arrived and one had a Rs. 25 stamp on it. The Oxford and Cambridge Hostel has been turned to a small G.P.O.

On February 18, 1911, spectators were gathering from early afternoon. The mail was brought in 2 postbags, and after being re-sealed in the aviation shed under the superintendence of Mr. Bann, Postmaster, were tied on to the biplane, one being put on the passenger seat and the other on the outside of it. M. Pequet then mounted the plane and it left the aviation ground a little after 5-30 P.M. After circling twice around the exhibition ground, the biplane made straight for Naini and alighted gracefully in a specially prepared ground near the Central Jail, after being in the air for 13 minutes.

After depositing the mail, M. Pequet flew back to Allahabad, the whole thing taking about 1/2 hour.

The aviator was cheered on starting and on his return and was congratulated by a number of admirers. The mail will be distributed from Naini in the usual way.



Another newspaper report quotes it's Allahabad correspondent 'over 5000 letters were flown and the aviator signed 400 postcards and a total of Rs 2600 could be raised for the Oxford and Cambridge Hostel'.

Thus history was created 75 years ago, in the confluence of Ganges and Jamuna. Though regular Air Mail took many years to materialise, the first ever official carriage of Air Mail took place in India.

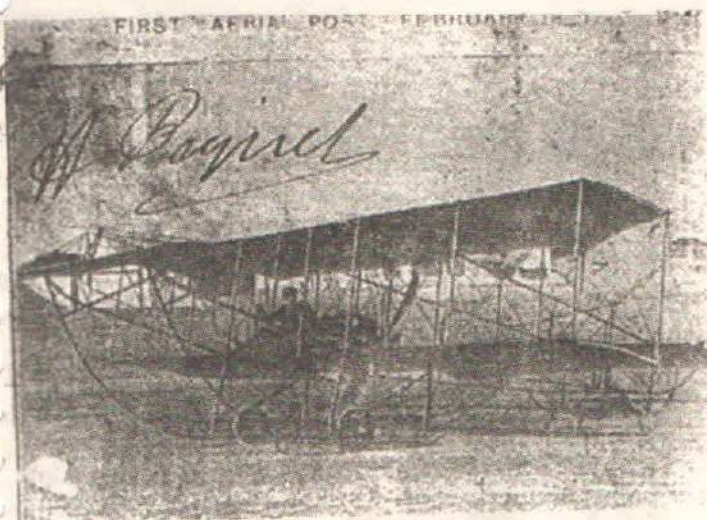
The special postmark was in the form of a circle with an aeroplane cruising over mountains in the centre, the inscription inside the circle reading 'FIRST AERIAL POST UNITED PROVINCES EXHIBITION ALLAHABAD 1911'. Covers and cards carried this special cancellation in magenta ink together with the postmarks of Allahabad and the destination office.

There is a controversy about the number of covers carried, most aerophilatelic publications put the number to be about 6,500. Though the Statesman reported the Souvenir cards signed by the pilot numbered 400, this probably was bit on the higher side. Most Aerophilatelic publications put the number at 40, of which only 12 were believed to-exist.

The notes of a veteran Aerophilatelist, Mr. K. L. Shridharani recorded the number of Souvenir covers as:-

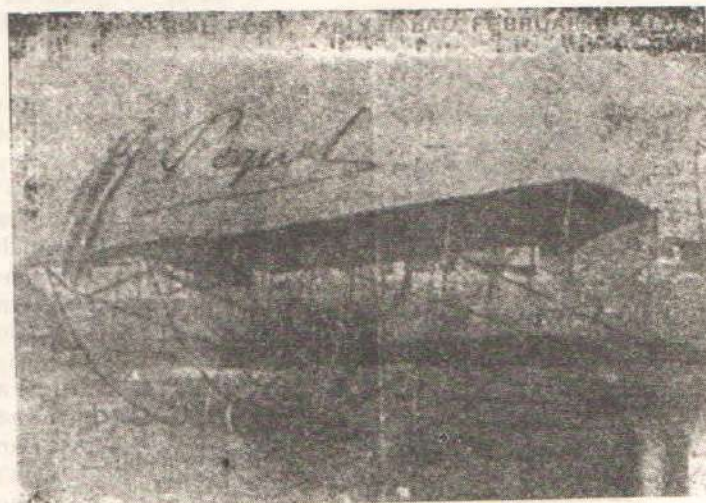
- (1) Large pictorial cards depicting plane and signed by the pilot - 24 carried
- (2) Large pictorial and signed by the pilot, promoter Walter Wyndham & Postal Officials - 6 carried
- (3) Souvenir cards depicting place and signed by the pilot and presented to the Exhibition Employees - 30 carried of which 6 exists

I have seen only one card of the 2nd category, which is in the Fitzerald Collections in the British Museum, London.



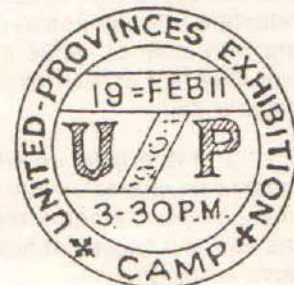
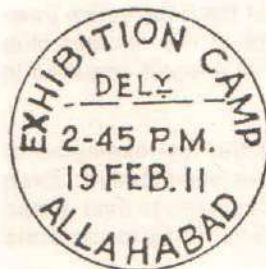
Two types of the souvenir cards have been recorded.

Type A (Figure 2) bears the inscription 'FIRST AERIAL POST FEBRUARY 18, 1911' over the picture of the Aeroplane.



Type B (Figure 3) has the inscription 'FIRST AERIAL POST ALLAHABAD FEBRUARY 18, 1911'.

The signatures of the pilot vary slightly in the two types. Probably he had to sign too many covers in a hurry. I have seen one cover, where M. Pequet has signed on the embossed stamp. the signature totally differs from any of his, on the souvenir cards. Handwriting experts certify the latter as genuine.



There was a Post Office in the Exhibition grounds. This office used a special canceller for all the days of the exhibition. Some of the covers have this cancellation on it as well. (Figure 4)

The most interesting and historically important cover has been acquired by fellow Aerophilatelist, Mr. Pradip Jain of Patna very recently. This is a Registered letter sent through the First Aerial Post by M (Motilal) Nehru to J (Jawaharlal) Nehru who was studying in London at that time.

It is needless to say, that there are a large number of forgeries of this Aerophilatelic gems in circulation. Mr. Stephen Smith described some of them as follows : 'the ink used is too dark, practically dark purple in shade, and the cancellation is larger by a millimeter and half. I find that the Allahabad datestamp is very difficult to forge.

The value and importance of Allahabad covers were not realised for a long time. However, today it is prized item in serious Aerophilatelic collections around the world.

The Government of India issued a set of three stamps in 1961 on the 50th anniversary of the flight. There was a re-enactment of the flight also at Allahabad.

(Courtesy : Signet 1986)



A Powerful and Frightening Image

The Atomic Bomb

Maiken Naylor

One of the most powerful symbols to come out of the 20th century and World War II is the mushroom-shaped cloud accompanying an atomic bomb explosion. It is instantly recognizable as a sign of war, death, and destruction. The grim reaper and the horsemen of the apocalypse of earlier times have been superseded by the monstrous cloud that sucks up what the fireball of the explosion has destroyed and carries it to ever greater heights, only to shower down as a toxic, lethal rain of radioactive fallout in areas far beyond its origin.

The destructive power of such a bomb is vastly greater than that of any explosive known to earlier gen-

erations of belligerents. For lack of a better measure it is expressed as equivalent to tons of TNT, the material of heretofore conventional weapons. But mere tons do not adequately describe it; this power is measured in kilotons, and even megatons, of TNT. It is small wonder, then, that there are few stamps that bear this frightening image. The few nations which possess nuclear weapons have been reluctant to issue postal reminders of the destructive powers they control, while nonmembers of the nuclear club can only hint at their apprehension of a world engulfed in nuclear war.

In this article we will examine the few examples of mushroom clouds on stamps that have been issued. Even stamps that commemorate treaties designed to limit or ban the use and spread of nuclear weapons rarely incorporate such a design.

The atomic bomb was the culmination of an intensive, secret WWII scientific venture called the Manhattan Project. The United States was in a race with Germany to be the first to have such a weapon, which could determine the outcome of the war. The theoretical and experi-

mental aspects of nuclear fission had been explored in earlier years, leading to the splitting of the uranium atom under slow neutron bombardment by Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassmann in 1938. If such a chain reaction could be sustained, an explosion would likely result. The U.S. was first able to produce such a weapon, test it, and use it against Japan on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. So massive were the effects of these bombs that Japan surrendered to end the war. This was the only time nuclear weapons have been used against another nation.

The successful application of nuclear fission was now known and before too many years the Soviet Union, Great Britain,

and France had acquired the secrets of nuclear bomb production. They were followed by Peoples Republic of China and later by India and Pakistan. There ensued a period of building and testing of nuclear weapons, stockpiling them, and seeking ever more powerful weapons.

Because of the expected destruction, the first tests after World War II took place on Bikini Atoll in the South Pacific.

The Marshall Islands in 1996 issued a set of

semipostals intended to assist the Bikini refugees on the 50th anniversary of their displacement. Two of these stamps show actual photos of the first two US nuclear tests in 1946. This test series was called Operation Crossroads and the tests were named Able (2), an airdrop, and Baker (3), an underwater shot. The awesome size of the Baker test can be appreciated by noting the naval vessels in the foreground, dwarfed by the ascending fireball. The Marshall Islands also issued a souvenir sheet of 15, named Events of the 20th Century 1940-1949, which makes a reference to nuclear destruction with a stamp showing a grinning skull against a mushroom cloud. This 1998 stamp (Scott 679g) is described as "Mankind Faces Atomic Age."

The Marshall Islands stamps for Able test (Scott B1c) and Baker test (Scott B1d) included a surtax to benefit the people of Bikini who have yet to return to their homeland.

From 1945 to 1988 the U.S. conducted a total of 930 known nuclear tests with a combined yield estimated to be 174 megatons. Approximately 137 megatons of that total were detonated in the atmosphere. Similarly, the British government conducted tests on islands off Australia; the USSR in the Ustyurt desert and on islands off Siberia; France in the Algerian desert. All these tests were atmospheric or under water. There was widespread, loud condemnation of testing both home and abroad, and the World was gripped by the fear that an accidental release of a nuclear weapon could result in instant retaliation, followed by the global destruction of all life and environment.

The drive for nuclear superiority was finally suspended by the 1963 "hot line" agreement between the U.S. and USSR which kept a telecommunications line open between Washington, D.C., and Moscow to avoid any accidental start to a war. This was followed by the limited Test Ban Treaty of August 1963 between the U.S., the United Kingdom, and USSR prohibiting tests



Mankind Faces the Atomic Age
Marshall Islands (Scott 679g)



Operation Crossroads, Able Test
Marshall Islands (Scott B1c)



Operation Crossroads, Baker Test
Marshall Islands (Scott B1d)



Cessation of Nuclear Testing
United Nations (Scott 133)



Beryllium Atom in Mushroom Cloud
Nicaragua (Scott 897)



Plus Jamais (Never Again)
Belgium (Scott 1581)



Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
United Nations, Geneva (Scott 23)



Proposed Design for 1995 USPS Stamp
From 1995 Linn's U.S. Stamp Yearbook.

of nuclear devices in the atmosphere, in outer space, and underwater, while allowing nuclear testing to continue underground.

This provided the occasion for the United Nations to issue the first stamps (Scott 133) displaying a mushroom cloud with a padlock inscribed "cessation of nuclear test-



ing." But a year later the Peoples Republic of China detonated its first bomb. In 1967 the same three signatories agreed to the Outer Space Treaty banning nuclear weapons from space or any celestial body such as the moon. In the same year, alarmed by the Cuban Missile Crisis, when Soviet missiles were brought to the western hemisphere, Latin American countries banded together for the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in

Latin America (also known as the Treaty of Tlateloco). This treaty obligates Latin American parties not to acquire or possess nuclear weapons, nor to permit the storage or deployment of nuclear weapons on their territories by other countries.

Mexico marked both the 10th and 30th anniversaries of the Tlateloco treaty with stamps showing mushroom clouds. The 10th anniversary (Scott C533) shows an adaptation of Leonardo da Vinci's drawing of Vitruvian Man, a male figure inscribed both into a circle and a square. Da Vinci based this figure on ideal proportions given in writings by the first century AD Roman architect Vitruvius who enjoyed a revival in the Renaissance. On the stamp the human form has been replaced by a skeleton topped by a grinning skull against the lurid background of a nuclear explosion, a portent for humanity in the nuclear age. The 1997 stamp (Scott 2021) mirrors a healthy green tree over the shape of a mushroom cloud in a red sky, signaling an alternative of fiery destruction.



Nineteen sixty-eight brought the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, a multilateral agreement signed and ratified by the U.S., USSR, UK, and 133 non-nuclear-weapon states. It seeks to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and to assure that the peaceful nuclear programs of non-nuclear-weapon states were not

diverted to weapons production. The United Nations noted this event with stamps in 1972 (New York, Scott 227; Geneva, Scott 23) showing an atomic cloud crossed out. Belgium also observed the 25th anniversary of this treaty (but not until 1995) with another impressive example of a mushroom cloud inscribed with the words "plus jamais" -- never again. (Scott 1582).

The mushroom symbol is also used in an off-beat issue from Nicaragua. (Scott 897). Einstein's law $E=mc^2$ is shown in a 1971 set of stamps showing the ten mathematical formulas that changed the face of the earth, and it featured a stylized mushroom cloud. Inside the mush-

room cap appears a beryllium atom with four electrons orbiting a nucleus of four protons and five neutrons. Beryllium is a highly efficient generator of slow neutrons when bombarded with alpha particles, and many serve as a source of neutrons to initiate nuclear fission. At the base of the mushroom are rolling churning clouds of debris as seen on many actual photos of nuclear events. However, front and center in the picture is a prone white-draped figure being irradiated from upper left, watched by a technician behind a window to the right. This peaceful application of nuclear energy somewhat mitigates the stark symbolism of the mushroom cloud.

Another unusual example showing a nuclear explosion is from Upper Volta (Burkina Faso) in 1977 (Scott 443). Stamps showing Nobel laureates are popular with collectors and many are issued by third world nations who have no Nobel laureates of their own but want to share in the philatelic market. Here Linus Pauling is commemorated for his Nobel prize in chemistry in 1954 "for the study of the nature of the chemical bond and the determination of the structure of molecules and crystals." But in the background, behind some molecular structures, a vast fireball



Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons
Burkina Faso (Scott 443)

is rising introducing a jarring element into the stamp design. Why this strange admixture? Pauling was deeply involved in the peace movement and campaigned ceaselessly, "not only against nuclear weapons, tests, not only against the spread of these arm-

aments, not only against their very use, but against all warfare as a means of solving international conflicts." He eloquently described "the consequences, should there be a major war involving hydrogen bombs; a thousand million men and women dead, and the earth's atmosphere permeated with toxic radioactive substances, from which no human being, animal, or plant would be safe." He initiated a declaration, signed by 52 Nobel prize winners, warning "all nations must come to the decision to renounce force as a final resort. If they are not prepared to do this, they will cease to exist." So, in effect, this stamp not only celebrates Pauling's 1954 Nobel prize in chemistry, but his 1962 Nobel prize for Peace as well.

Fifty years after the end of WWII, the USPS planned to include a picture of the Hiroshima bomb as a historic event in a souvenir sheet commemorating the end of the war. However, due to objections from Japan followed by pressure from the White House, the design was replaced with a picture of President Truman announcing the end of the war. No less than five different private labels have been printed showing the A-bomb stamp design, or similar ones, in response to, or as a protest against the USPS action. One such label appears on an August 1995 American First Day Cover Society cover shown nearby. Another label replaced captions above and below the mushroom cloud with "Japan Surrenders 1945" and "U.S. Surrenders 1994".

Other stamps showing nuclear explosions include Bangladesh (Scott 282); Kenya (Scott 367); Marshall Islands (Scott 520); and Rwanda (Scott 170-175).

Maiken Naylor is a retired science librarian, was a

spectroscopist associated with the data reduction effort for the 1962 U.S. Dominic I atmospheric test series in the Pacific. She is the author of the SCI-PHILATELY web-site, a selective history of science on stamps <http://buffalo.edu/libraries/units/sel/exhibits/stamps/> Her home mailing address is 24 Fenwick Road, Tonawanda, NY 14151; and her e-mail address is mnaylor@acsu.buffalo.edu



(Courtesy : Topical Time 2002)



KEYS TO INDIAN POSTAL HISTORY

Brig. D.S. Virk

(Contd.)

PART - II

The Lists

20. With the development of Railways in the second half of the 19th Century, the Railway Mail Service became the primary postal arm for sorting of the bulk of Indian mail. For its sorters the supervising officers produced what they called Transit Lists,, giving the names of the Post Offices

and RMS sections to which mails for other post offices and RMS sections may be given for further disposal. In 1878, under direction from D.G. P.O., the Inspector General of RMS produced two printed lists giving all the information that the sorters, or for that matter post offices, required for sorting mail, forwarding unpaid mail to bigger offices and reporting irregularities and missendings to the concerned Postal Officers.

Alphabetical List

21. The quarterly list of Indian Post Offices, later called the Alphabetical List, gave in alphabetical order the names, classification, affiliation, location, capabilities and controlling officers of individual post offices and much further useful information. The contents of the List for April 1882 were as follows:-

List of Indian Post Offices.

List of Village Branch Offices, i.e. Offices which do not transact money order business and which can not receive or deliver value-payable parcels or insured letters or parcels.

List of Railway receiving offices.

List of changes in Post Offices.

List of offices to and from which insurance is partial.

List of offices which can not insure articles for despatch.

List of season post offices.

List of examples of post offices which though spelt differently are liable to be mistaken for one another.

List of post offices liable to be confounded with other offices owing to similarity of names.

List of offices of Indian Exchange.

List of offices of Foreign Exchange.

List of Foreign Money Order Exchanges.

List of Post Offices situated near sub-treasury.

List of sub offices which are authorized to dispose of Foreign money order applications without reference to the Head Office.

List of Dead Letter Offices and Enquiry Offices.

List of Anchi Post Offices in Mysore.

List of Post Offices in Ceylon.

List of old Native names of Post Offices with their present names.

List of Railway stations where there are no Post Offices with the names of Post Offices through which they are served.

List of Native states where there are no post offices, with the names of the Post Offices through which they are served.

List of Tea Gardens in Assam.

List of important places other than Native States and Railway Stations where there are no Post Offices, with the names of the Post Offices through which they are served.

Information for the disposal of articles addressed with the name of a Province, District, or other Territorial division without the addition of any post-town.

List of Districts in India.

22. From July 1890, it was decided to number the editions of the Alphabetical List with retrospective effect and the current list thus became the 51st Edition. The List was printed in this form till the end of 1893. The Lists missing in the Postal Library collection are those for the years 1878, 1879, 1881, 1883, 1884, 1885, 1888, 1891 and 1893.

The Classified List

23. This List was entitled "Classified List of Indian Post Offices"- The contents of the List for 1882 read:-

1. List of Head Offices with the Sub, Branch and Village Offices in account with them and List of Sub Offices in account with more than one Head Office, arranged Circle wise.
2. List of Disbursing Offices with the Head Offices attached to them.
3. List of Head Offices attached to each Super intendent's or Independent Inspector's Division.

4. List of Head Offices attached to each Examiner's Division.
5. List of Village Offices, i.e., offices which do not transact money order business and which can not receive or deliver value-payable parcels or insure letters or parcels.
6. List of offices to and from which insurance is only partial.
7. List of Post Offices which cannot insure articles for despatch.
8. List of season Post Offices.
9. List of offices of Indian Exchange.
10. List of offices of Foreign Exchange.
11. List of Foreign Money order Exchange.
12. List of Post Offices situated near Sub Treasuries.
13. List of Sub-Offices which are authorized to dispose of Foreign Money Order applications with out reference to the Head Office.
14. List of old Native names of Post Offices with their present names.
15. List of Railway stations where there are no Post Offices, with the names of Post Offices through which they are served.
16. List of Native states where there are no Post Offices, with the names of the Post Offices through which they are served.
17. List of Railway receiving offices.
18. List of Railway Mail Service Divisions.
19. List of Railway Mail Service Letter Boxes.

24. Over the years there were a few changes in this pattern of contents-the list of changes in post offices was added by 1884 and the Telegraphic Misconnection Code had appeared by 1891. The Classified List was also numbered retrospectively but from the 53rd edition in January 1891. The List was published till the end of 1893. The editions for the following years are not held by the P & T Library:-

1878, 1879, 1880, 1881, 1883, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889 and 1893.

Quarterly List

25. In January 1894, the Alphabetical and Classified Lists, were amalgamated and a Quarterly List incorporating most of their information was issued by the Director General. The information not included in the List was either transferred to the Guide or to a new six monthly "Compendium of Information". Though the Compendium was discontinued in August 1991, the Quarterly List has appeared regularly without a break.

26. The Alphabetical List of Post Offices was removed from the Quarterly List of April 1911. An amended and fuller version was included in the Post Office Guide.

27. The Quarterly Lists of the following years are missing from the P & T Library:-

1894, 1896, 1897, 1900, 1904, 1915.

Annual Reports

28. The Annual Report submitted by the D.G. of POs to the Government summarised the activities, the progress and problems of the Department during the year under review. The Reports on record in the P & T Library begin from 1854 and continue to the present day without any break. Unfortunately some of the old reports have reached a breaking point and hardly bear touching and require re-copying and preservation. The reports give a good background for a postal history study but their bones are required to be fleshed up with other material mentioned earlier.

Postal Workshop Stamp Book

29. This publication also goes back to 1881. It was sent periodically by the Superintendent Postal Workshop, Aligarh to all PMGs and Stock Depots. It contained specimens of all stamps, seals and badges authorised to be used by the Post Offices and Controlling Offices of the Department and manufactured in the Postal Workshop. Unfortunately the P & T Library does not have a single copy. As this is the book that philatelists should like to see, perhaps the Post Office Department will endeavour to collect all the copies available in Circle Offices and Stock Depots and place them in the Directorate Library.

Lists of Officers and Records of service

30. From 1881 Lists of Officers of the Post Office Department drawing Rs. 200 or more, were printed periodically for information and record. The printed Lists available in the Library go back to 1884 and the Records of services to 1898. This is perhaps a material only for the specialist. I spent many happy weeks last summer compiling a brief record of service of the Postal Officers who volunteered for field service and accompanied the field post offices on various campaigns upto the end of World War I.

(Courtesy : Signet 1986)



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