

Mohan to Mahatma: Gandhi's Life & Legacy

This exhibit is an exploration of events that shaped Mohandas Gandhi's life and the subsequent legacy that followed him, through the worldwide influence of his ideas and ideals. A window into Gandhi's life, a collection of experiences that led Mohan to evolve in many dimensions, is presented through historic and philatelic material. Our journey will take us from Gandhi's birth in 1869, through significant events in his life [in Southern Africa, England & India], pause for a brief moment during and after the last days of his life, and end with popular current retrospectives on the eventful life that transformed him into the "Great Soul" [Mahatma].

Exhibit Plan

When the subject of an exhibit is a personality, the natural order for an exhibit plan is expected to be chronological. The story line presented here is organized to explore specific elements of the Gandhi's life and legacy from two facets: (1) events that shaped his life and ideals and (2) our historical perceptions of the same. These events and perceptions are grouped into logical blocks and a semblance of chronological order has been maintained within each group, when deemed necessary to organize the story, as shown in the exhibit plan to the right. →

Let's first begin here, at the 'hinge' between his Life and Legacy, on this title page.

The 1948 Memorial Issue, barely six months after his assassination.

Gandhi was remembered with a memorial issue on the first anniversary of India's independence. This issue represents the irony- the disconnect between how Gandhi lived and how he was later remembered. Not keen on his modest attire, the stamp designer added imaginary clothing to the portrait that looks quite artificial in the bi-color designs. The set included the **most expensive face value for a commemorative stamp from India until then (10 Rs)**, to honor a man who mostly used post cards! Few, if any, in India could afford the high value stamp in the set, which had no legitimate postal rate to be used for.



India (1948). Mint Service overprinted 10 Rs stamp. Service overprints on other three lower values shown later in this exhibit. BPA #39000, 1960. **Only 100 overprinted by Government. Only 15 mint stamps exist in private collections.**

India (1948). Specimen overprinted stamp found inside folder and envelope addressed to the Indian UPU Delegation in Berne. Specimen overprints on other three lower values shown later in this exhibit. **Only 100 overprinted by Courvoisier. Only 12 sets known in existence today.**

Most of the SERVICE overprinted stamps were cancelled with the GOVERNOR GENERAL'S CAMP PO postmark, but for a few with a less common PRESIDENT'S CAMP PO mark (the offices of Monarch and Governor-General were replaced by the new office of President of India on 26th Jan 1950). Mint copies of the Gandhi SERVICE usage have the distinction of being the most expensive stamps from Independent India - and hence **the most forged stamps from India.** Not exactly an honor, when memorializing the nation's leader who fought all his life for honesty.



India (1950). Late use of lowest value Service overprinted stamp with PRESIDENT'S CAMP PO | NEW DELHI postmark. RPSL#124768, 1983. **One of only two known.**

Life [1869-1948]

- Early Years [1869-1891]
- Legal Professional [1891-1902]
- Participant in Wars [1899-1945]
- Political Organizer & Negotiator [1894-1932]
- Architect of Civil Disobedience [1905-1945]
- Social Experimenter [1904-1948]
- The Final Days [1947-1948]

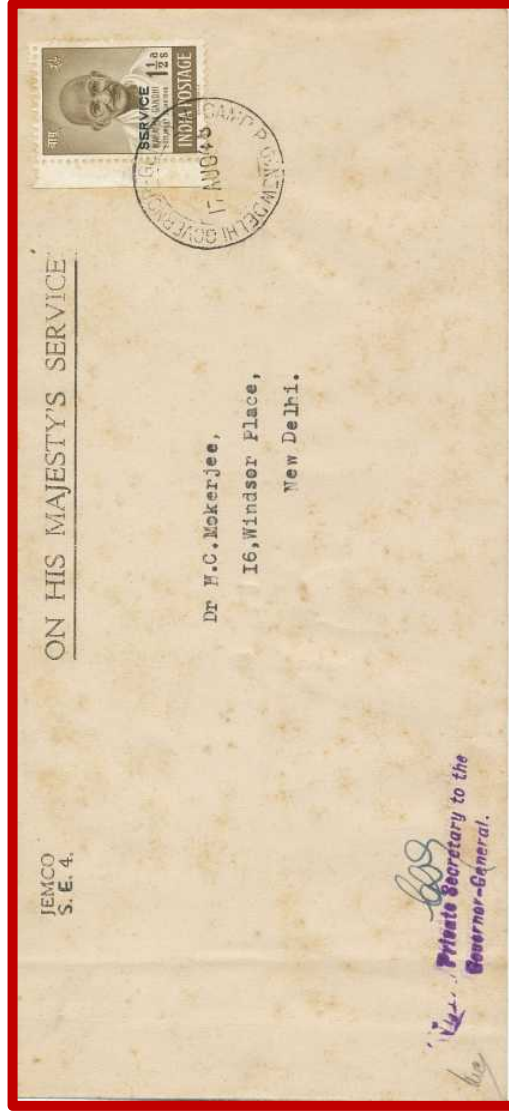
Legacy [1948-2020]

- The Morning After- Memorialized in India
- India After Gandhi
- Lasting Impressions
- No Man is an Island
- Inspiration and Legacy
- Lip Service and More

Total Number of Pages [Ledger Size] ... 80



India (1948). Bromide essays in two sizes (100% and 125%) of two-color design considered for the 12as value and later adopted only for the 10 Rs value. Discovered in the personal collection of the first Indian Postmaster General of Independent India. **Only known copies.**



India (17 Aug 1948). Entire cover on official service cancelled with the GOVERNOR GENERAL'S CAMP PO | NEW DELHI circular date stamp. With Governor General's cachet in the bottom left, signed by his private secretary (worn 8 in 48 of CDS looks like 6). **Less than 5 such covers known.**

Items of philatelic significance marked with a □ . Items of historic significance marked with a □ . Significant items or narrative that involved personal research marked with a ⚡ .

Synopsis

The following is this Thematic exhibit's plan, with sub-sections to be tracked in page titles of the exhibit.

(7) Early Years

- a. Birth & Early Schooling [1869-81]
- b. Family, India College, UK Law School [1881-91]

(8) Legal Professional

- a. Business Lawyer- India/South Africa [1891-96]
- b. Lawyer Turned Activist in Natal [1896-1902]

(9) Participant in Wars

- a. Anglo-Boer War [1899-1902]
- b. Natal's Zulu Rebellion [1906]
- c. First World War [1914-18]
- d. Second World War [1939-45]

(10) Political Organizer & Negotiator

- a. Natal Indian Congress [1894-14]
- b. Indian National Congress [1897-1948]
- c. First Indian Round Table Conference [1930]
- d. Second Indian Round Table Conference [1931]
- e. Third Indian Roundtable Conference [1932]

(11) Architect of Civil Disobedience

- a. *Satyagraha* in Southern Africa [1906-14]
- b. *Swadeshi* -Boycotting Imports [1905-35]
- c. Boycott of KGV Coronation in Durban [1911]
- d. Untouchability- *Harijan* Movement [1916-34]
- e. Fighting for Peasants' Rights [1917-18]
- f. Boycott of Prince of Wales Royal Visit [1921-22]
- g. The Simon Commission Boycott [1928]
- h. *Dandi* March- Against Salt Tax [1930]
- i. Separate Electorates & Provinces [1932-42]
- j. The Quit India Movement [1942-47]
- k. Boycott of WWII Victory Celebrations [1945]

(12) Social Experimenter

- a. Life in Ashrams [1904-48]
- b. Fasting for Moral & Social Causes [1911-48]

(13) The Final Days

- a. Partition and Independence [1947]
- b. The Assassin's Bullet [1948]

(1) The Morning After- Memorialized in India

(2) India After Gandhi

- a. First Death Anniversary- Martyr's Day [1949]
- b. Carrying the Torch [1948-84]
- c. Free India Stands... for World Peace [1949-69]
- d. Neighbors: Ceylon, Nepal, Tibet

(3) Lasting Impressions

- a. Simplicity in a Greeting with Folded Hands
- b. Simplicity in a Postcard
- c. The Modest Attire
- d. The Spinning Wheel
- e. The Tri-Color Flag
- f. Vegetarianism and Animal Rights

(4) No Man is an Island

- a. Those who Shaped his Thoughts- Henry David Thoreau, John Ruskin and Leo Tolstoy
- b. Adversaries and Associates- Winston Churchill, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Vallabhbhai Patel
- c. Friends and Admirers- Rabindranath Tagore, General Smuts, Louis Mountbatten, Albert Einstein
- d. Followers and Adherents- Nehru, Luthuli, Mandela, Tutu, Martin Luther King Jr.

(5) Inspiration and Legacy

- a. Anti-War Movements
- b. Anti-Apartheid Movement & African Nationalism
- c. Khilafat Movement and Pan-Arab Nationalism
- d. Fighting Totalitarianism in Europe
- e. The Indian Diaspora

(6) Lip Service and More

- a. Race, Religion and Humanity
- b. Monuments and Memorials
- c. The Smile that Never Fades
- d. Is there a Gandhian Utopia Anywhere Today?
- e. Conclusion

Total Number of Pages

80

Directing the Jury's Attention to the Philatelic and/or Thematic Significance of Material in this Exhibit

While images and events depicted in the commemorative stamps and cancellations speak for themselves, I would like to draw attention to material with both historic and philatelic significance that is less obvious.

Philatelically, the most notable items in the exhibit are related to the 1948 Gandhi Memorial Issue from India. The most valued stamp set from India is the service overprint of this issue. Shown is the entire mint set with RPS or BPA certificates [only 15 copies of the 10 Rs value in private hands]. The photographic essay of the 1948 Gandhi Memorial issue from India, showing the 12As value [not as issued] in the 10Rs design and two sizes, is the only one known to exist. This material surfaced in the late 1980s along with related Gandhi covers and stamps from India, including the Specimen OVPT set of the 1948 issue [only 12 copies known to exist]. The *L'Administrateur de Courvoisier S.A.* envelope that contained the specimens and essays, addressed to *le Directeur Général des Postes, Légation des Indes, Berne* is shown.

Special postal markings associated with the service overprinted issues include the more common GOVERNOR GENERAL'S CAMP P.O. marking (including one on an official cover signed by his private secretary) and the less common late use of the PRESIDENT'S CAMP P.O. immediately after India transitioned from a Dominion to a Republic and the Governor General's Office was replaced by the office of the President of India. The Service stamp on piece with the uncommon PRESIDENT'S CAMP PO cancel is one of only two ever shown in exhibitions globally.

Special postal markings and cancellations that are uncommon include cancellations from the 1930-32 First, Second, and Third Indian Round Table Conferences in London [provided as proofs for approval, applied to registered mail, or applied to Certificates of Posting, International Reply Coupons, and parcel labels], slogan marks placed on Calcutta-Delhi mail during Gandhi's last fast in January 1948, cancellations from the meetings of the Indian National Congress, slogan marks on his first death anniversary, relevant APO and FPO cancels from the Boer War, Zulu Rebellion, World War I and World War II, and ONE DAY commemorative cancels from Luxembourg, Prague, Fiji, Sierra Leone and Rangoon from the 1969 Gandhi Centenary. Worth noting is the historic significance of a cover addressed to Gandhi at Kingsley Hall in London during the second IRTC from C. Rajagopalachari (cover initialed C.R.), with the uncommon GANDHI ASHRAM SALEM dispatch CDS. Rajaji was from Salem and went on to become the first Indian Governor General of Independent India, who was later associated with authorizing the release of the SERVICE OVPT of the 1948 Gandhi memorial issue to raise funds for philanthropic social service activities.

Examples of postal history with usage dates, origins, destinations, routes, rates writers or addresses of historic significance include: Early Boer War usage to New Zealand [December 1899- coinciding with dates of Gandhi's service], rare Boer War Indian Volunteer Contingent covers, Boer War POW Camp markings from India and St. Helena, Zulu Rebellion military mail, military mail from the Indian National Army in Japanese occupied Malaya [from divisions labeled Gandhi Brigade, Gandhi Regiment and Gandhi Guerilla Regiment in manuscript], Japanese occupation Navy military mail from Andaman Islands and Nicobar Islands to Japan, Nazi Germany military mail with *Indische Legion* markings of Regiment 950 and Legion 950 [defected former Allied Indian Soldiers in Europe], propaganda labels mentioning Gandhi on Nazi Germany military mail, Axis propaganda air drop leaflets from the Italian and Burmese fronts depicting Gandhi, Allied Air drop leaflet depicting Subhas Chandra Bose, and air drop leaflet of Gandhi-Jinnah Appeal for Peace by the Indian Government in 1947 (only 15 known).

Unusual usage examples of the Prince of Wales Camp PO cancels are shown, including two covers from Lord Mountbatten-one after he met his future wife Edwina and one from Burma in 1922 (both initialed "LM"). All known variations associated with the Prince of Wales Royal Visit (dispatch mark, receiver mark, registration mark, registration label, and postage due marking) are shown. Also of historic significance are postal cards written and signed by Gandhi and his assistants from Sabarmati and Sevagram Ashrams and Yeravda Central Prison, relating to key subjects and events. A letter from Phoenix Ashram in Durban, written by Gandhi's son Manilal and including his dad's autograph (1944) and a subsequent one from 1953 are included. Khadi (Gandhi inspired domestic handloom) sale receipts from India, Burma and Ceylon are presented along with banned "boycott foreign goods" labels that escaped postal inspectors and went through the mail. Two letters to Gandhi, one to Kingsley Hall London during the Round Table Conference and the other to Birla House Delhi (where he was killed) shown.

The photographic bromides of artist's designs from the 1969 Mauritius Gandhi centenary set and souvenir sheet [sheets shown at the beginning and end and individual stamps elsewhere in the exhibit] include several UNIQUE items. Three sets of stamp bromides are believed to exist, of which the set shown is the only known set APPROVED, each with a handstamp and signature. Also shown is the only known souvenir sheet bromide [also APPROVED] and one of two existing bromides of the souvenir sheet border. Also shown are all bromides associated with the 1969 Gandhi centennial stamp design competition held by *Deutschen Bundespost*. Watercolor essays include APPROVED designs from Bhutan, Egypt, and Poland; and the only known unissued items from Vietnam, including essays featuring Gandhi and Indira Gandhi and a watercolor essay of the Tagore stamp that was later issued. Also of particular philatelic interest are the only known approval sheets of two designs of the 1945 Victory issue [including the UNISSUED design] from India, complete with the signatures of the head engraver and the Officiating Master of the *India Security Press*. To comply with the requirements of the Government of India for exhibits shown in India, subsequent relevant post-independence archival material from India in my collection from the 1969 Gandhi issues and later are not included in the exhibit, as the provenance of how these materials made to market legally is not known.

Examples of EFOs include the 2c 1969 Mauritius and an inverted copy of an inland letter sheet from India [also printed on the wrong side]. Other philatelic materials of significance include the Gandhi stamp from the UNISSUED 1979 Nicaragua Einstein-Gandhi issue [only released with overprints]; gutter pairs from Ireland and Antigua and progressive color proofs and trials. All known "uses abroad" examples of the 1948 Indian Gandhi issue are presented- from Nepal and Tibet [multiple POs and mixed India-Tibet franking on registered cover]. From Nicaragua, a rare first day use is shown from the 1994 Gandhi issue [local usage rate]. Records from Managua indicate that only five such covers were processed on the day of issue [unlike several official cachet FDCs] and the fate of two are unknown. Material in the section labeled 'No Man is an Island' include items related to: Those who Shaped his Thoughts: *Henry David Thoreau, Leo Tolstoy, John Ruskin*; Adversaries and Associates: *Winston Churchill, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Maulana Azad, Sardar Patel, Khan Abdul Gafar Khan*; Friends and Admirers: *Louis Mountbatten, Albert Einstein, General Smuts, Rabindranath Tagore*; Followers and Adherents: *Albert John Luthuli, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu*. Some historic non-philatelic materials of thematic interest include a letter from the India Independence League of Kedah during the WWII Japanese Occupation about Gandhi's 1943 fast, with Japanese censor chop, a letter from Gandhi's son at the Phoenix ashram in South Africa, a letter from Lord Mountbatten, a letter from John Ruskin, and a few stamp issues considered cinderellas (covering thematic subjects not covered by legitimate stamps).

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