

*Another in the Series on the
Stamps of Indian Feudatory States*

BIJAWAR

By H. D. S. HAVERBECK

Bijawar State is located in the Bundelkhand district of Central India, having an area of 973 square miles, containing 298 villages. Its geographical co-ordinates are: 24° 21' 30" and 24° 57' North Latitude, and 79° 1' 45" and 79° 57' East Longitude. It has a population of approximately 115,000 people. The capital is Bijawar City. The State pays no tribute but maintains instead a contingent of 100 cavalry, 800 infantry, a battery of four guns manned by 32 gunners. The ruler is called Sawai Maharaja. He is a Bundela Rajput by caste. For services rendered to the British during the Mutiny, he received the right to perpetuate his line by adoption and a salute of 11 guns. The exercise of supreme criminal jurisdiction and the Title of Maharaja were granted to the Chief by Queen Victoria in 1866. As may be seen from these statistics, this was a relatively important state in spite of its size and population.

The first evidence of an internal postal system appears in 1935. On July 1st. of that year the first postage stamps were issued, being a series of five denominations, 3p, 6p, 9p, 1a, and 2as. The design is an oval portrait of the Maharaja, Sir Sarwant Singh Bahadur, in a floreate frame. The stamps are inscribed, "Bijawar State" at the top and "Postage" below the portrait. The denomination appears in English and Hindi numerals at left and right of "Postage". The denomination is also spelled out in Hindi and Urdu characters in panels at left and right of the central vignette. (See Figures 1-5).

The stamps were provided to the State government by Beerindra Kumar and Co. of Saharanpur. They are printed by typography in sheets of six (3x2) on unwatermarked white wove paper that was gummed before printing. The plate was made up of six individual stereo clichés locked in a printers forme. They are perforated 11. In the



Fig. 1. Entire sheet of the 3p.

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following year, 1936, a second printing was made from the same clichés. There are some differences in the colors, but the major difference from the first printing was that instead of being perforated, they were rouletted 7.

In July of 1937, five more stamps were added to the series. These were: 4as, 6as, 8as, 12as, and 1 rupee. The designs are similar but larger in format. The portrait of the Maharaja is reproduced by means of a sixty point half tone screen. The denominations



Fig. 2. Entire sheet of the 6p.

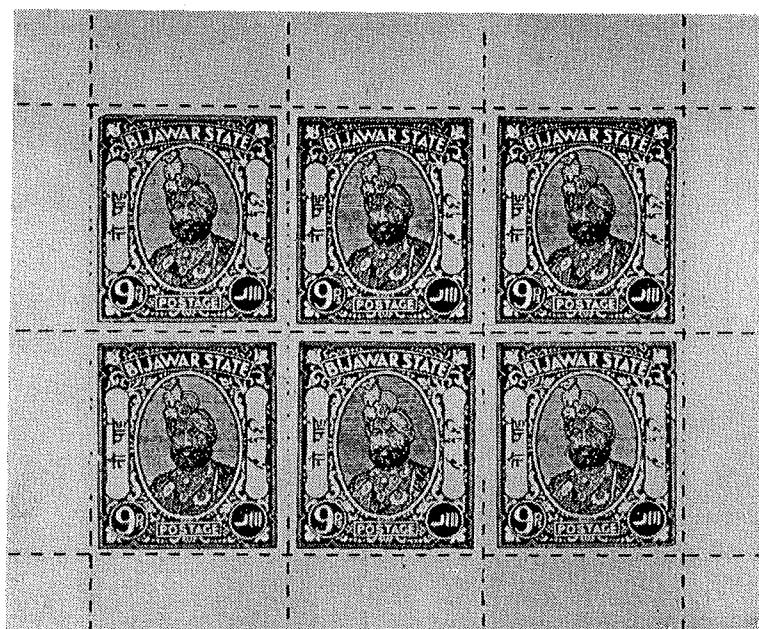


Fig. 3. Entire sheet of the 9p rouletted.

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written in the side panel are Urdu on the left and Hindi on the right. (See Figure 6 for the details). It is not known who produced these stamps. They are lithographed on a soft white wove paper, in sheets of six (3x2). The gum was added after the printing. The perforation gauges 9. There is one major error in this series. This is clearly illustrated in Figure 6. The Denomination in the left lower corner of position 2 on the plate of the 1 rupee stamp has the denomination expressed as 1 Rs. instead of 1 R.

In all three of these issues there are errors of perforation. The stamps may be found with both horizontal and vertical lines of perforation missing and also completely im-



Fig. 4. Entire sheet of the 1a.

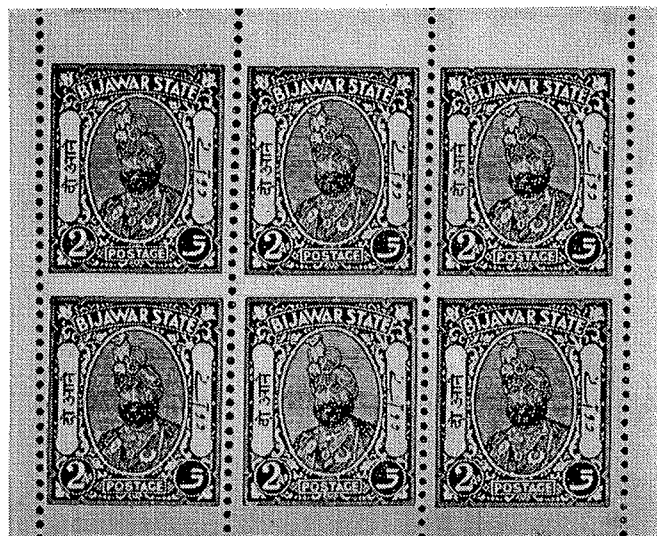


Fig. 5. Entire sheet of the 2a showing variety "Imperforate Horizontally."

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perforate. It is also possible to find copies tête-bêche. This is caused by two impressions of the plate being made on the same sheet of paper by a work and turn process. This means that after one impression was made the sheet of paper was taken off the press and replaced in the opposite way to receive the second impression of the plate. One of these double sheets is illustrated in Figure 7.

We have been able to determine something of the operation of the State postal system from details supplied by the Chief Minister of the State. There are five branch post offices

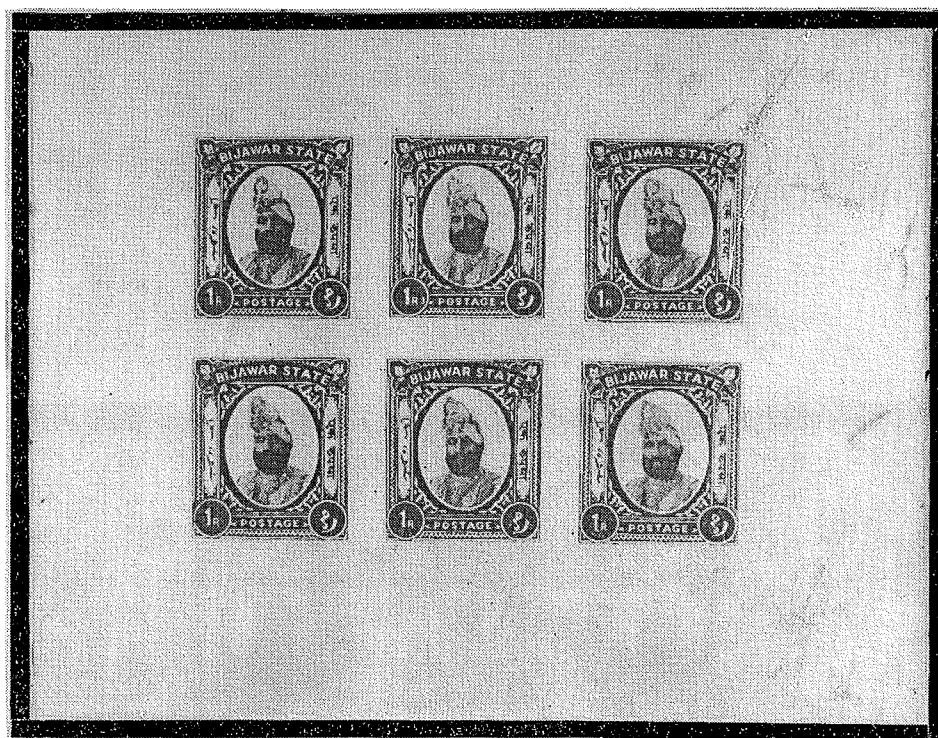


Fig. 6. Entire sheet of the IR showing IRs in position 2. (Courtesy of Mr. C. T. Sturton).



Fig. 7. Example of work and turn double sheet.

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Fig. 8. Type I. Cancellations.

in the State, each worked by a State employee in addition to his normal work. Four of these are conducted by revenue officials and the smallest one by a school teacher. In addition to the internal mails, the State post offices handle all mails received from British Territory. No extra charge is made on British Indian mails, but all letters delivered and despatched within the State are charged according to the British Indian postal rates. A number of runners are employed to carry letters and postal packets from the head post office in Bijawar City to the districts and then to the villages. Money orders are registered and insured letters are carried from the British post offices to the district branches in the same way. The runner system thus provides a regular link of dispatch and delivery between British and State post offices as well as between districts and villages within the State. Unfortunately, the information did not include a list of the operating post offices. From the evidence of the few cancelled copies of the stamps observed, it has only been possible to identify one post office, the one in Bijawar City itself.

Conditions in Bijawar, as described above, illustrate the complications of the Indian postal system, the State having its own services which co-operate with the postal service provided by the British Indian authorities. In some States, the local service and the central service overlap, with consequent wastage of effort, but in Bijawar, the two system seem to have been co-ordinated effectively.

It is not known at this time how long the State postal service continued to operate. The latest date observed for a used copy with a legible date was August 2, 1938. Perhaps some of our readers in India can supply this information.

Up to this time of writing, only two types of cancellations have been seen. This first type (Fig. 8) has so far only been found on the first two issues. The second type (Fig. 9) has only been observed on the third issue. Used copies of all the stamps are rare, no covers, other than philatelic ones, have been encountered.



Fig. 9. Type II. Cancellation.

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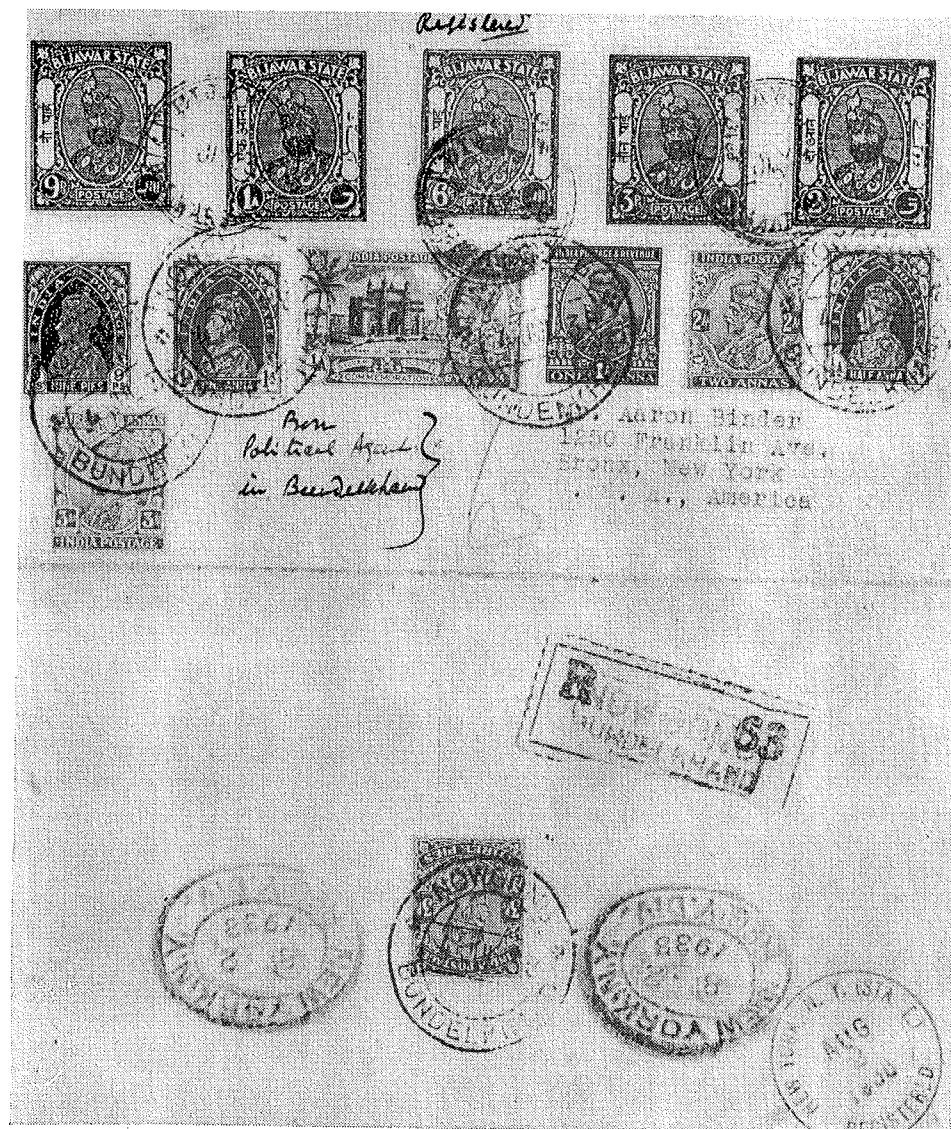


Fig. 10. Front and back of a cover, showing postal markings.

CHECK LIST:

July 1, 1935. Typographed on unwatermarked white wove paper, Perf. 11

1. 3 pies	Brown	c	RR
a. Imperforate		RRR	—
2. 6 pies	Carmine	c	RR
4. 1 anna	Blue	c	RR
5. 2 annas	Dark Green	c	RR
a. Imperf. between horizontally		RRR	—

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1936. Typographed on unwatermarked white wove paper, rouletted 7

6. 3 pies	Dark Brown	s	RR
a. Printed on the gummed side		RRR	—
7. 6 pies	Brown Red	s	RR
8. 9 pies	Violet	s	RR
9. 1 anna	Indigo	s	RRR
10. 2 annas	Dark Green	s	RR

Of all the above stamps multiple pieces 4N, covers RRRR

July, 1937. Lithographed on unwatermarked white wove paper. Perf. 9.

11. 4 annas	Orange	s	RR
a. Imperf. between horizontally		RR	—
12. 6 annas	Lemon yellow	s	RR
a. Imperf. between vertically		RR	—
13. 8 annas	Emerald Green	s	RR
14. 12 annas	Robin's Egg Blue	s	RRR
15. 1 rupee	Bright Violet	s	RR
a. Imperf.			
16. 1 rupee (1Rs)	Bright Violet	R	RRR

Multiple pieces 6N, Covers U
