

State Tapal* and Darbari* Tapal of Jasdan State

P.M. Medhora

State Tapal

Prior to the introduction of regular postal service for the benefit of the general public, the majority of Indian states had their own State Tapal for the exclusive use of the state's administrative work pertaining to land revenue, court matters, property or for petitions sent by the public to the authority concerned. Regular runners were employed for this work, or the post was carried by a 'Khatara Service' (bullock cart). The work was entrusted to 'Chekidars' (priests) school masters, a priest class under the supervision of a 'Fozdar' (magistrate).

Jasdan had just such a State Tapal but it was not functioning efficiently. The Dewan (state administrator) instructed all the officers and fozdars to try to run the State Tapal on proper lines as there was delay in delivering the State Post and various petitions submitted by the public. All concerned were asked to draft a proper postal scheme for their own circles.

There were ten to twelve circles to look after the State Tapal, of which Jasdan and Vinchhia were in the forefront. One Gangaram, Fozdar of Jasdan, reported to the state authority what he had planned for the Jasdan division which was under his control. He formed eight circles in Jasdan and post office 'Patels' (regions) were appointed to manage the Sarkari (official) Tapal. On September 30, 1940, he submitted his scheme as follows:

"In Jasdan district there are eight circles namely (1) Moti Aniyali (2) Kunani (3) Barwala (4) Kanesara (5) Jasapur (6) Kalasar (7) Nani Aniyali (8) Patna.

"From Moti Aniyali to Jasdan there is a regular Khatara Service in which the post is brought. A 'patawala' (runner) of Kanesara circle has to come to Kunani on every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday and a 'patawala' of Kunani has to

* Tapal = Postal Service
Darbari = On Royal

reach Moti Aniyali so as to deliver the post to be sent by Khatarra Service. Similarly, a "patawala" from Barwala has also to come to Kunani on every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday so that the post can go by Khatarra Service to Moti Aniyali. A "patawala" from Nani Aniyali circle has to go to Jasdan to deliver the post pertaining to his circle. In Patna and Jasapur the Khatarra Service is there to forward the post to Jasdan."

In Jasdan district there were 26 villages and each village had one to five patawalas as per the size and population of the village.

Similarly, Vinchhia, which was next to Jasdan, had 28 villages in its district in which an identical State Tapal was carried out by Khatarra Service. In Vinchhia, too, each village had one to four patawalas.

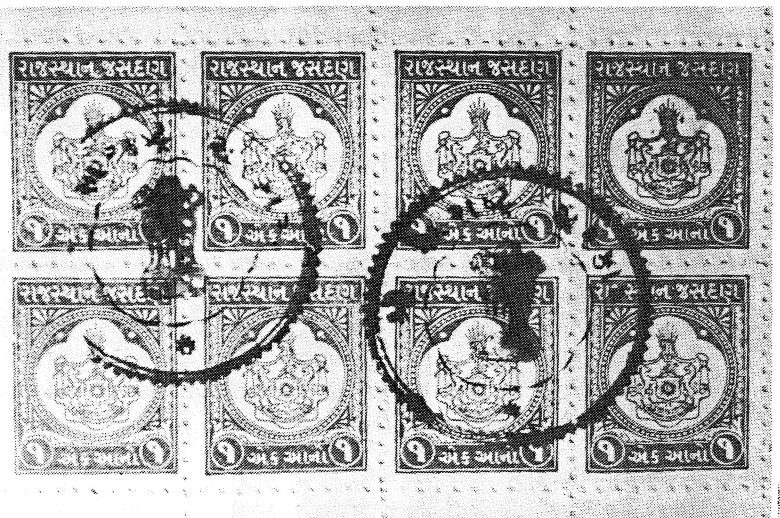
(Note: The terms used in Gujarati language for those carrying post are 'Pashayata' which means a chokidar, and 'Gamote' which signifies a person from a priestly class. The 'Pashayata' or chokidar had to play a dual role, that of a postman in the daytime and by night as a chokidar or watchman. The 'Gamote' was the head of a 'Pashayatas'.)

A complete list of all the Pashayatas and Gamotes was maintained with the number of letters carried so as to keep an up-to-date record. Regular reports were to be submitted by the Gamote to the superintendent of posts. The position of Pashayata or a Gamote was not offered to any ordinary person. The essential qualifications were that he should be a landholder and must know how to read and write.

Revenue and Court Fee Stamps

Before dealing with the revenue and court fee stamps of Jasdan, it is worthwhile to quickly review the history of the state. Jasdan is a small state in Kathiawar with an area of about 200 square

Fig. 1. A complete sheet of eight stamps of 1 anna revenue in rose colour, perforate all round showing the Crest of the State in center.



miles. The town of Jasdan is of great antiquity and probably derives its name from Swani Chashtana, the second ruler of the Kshatrapa dynasty. During the rule of the Ghoris of Junagarh, a strong fort was built here and the town was called Ghorigarh. The people are primarily farmers and more than half the state is cultivated.

While Jasdan is quite old, revenue and court fee stamps were not introduced until 1920. According to A.M. Mollah of the Fiscal Study Circle of India, revenue stamps are recorded in three series, all with 1 anna denomination—series of 1920-25, 1930-1940, and 1940-50. The court fee stamps also consisted of three series—1923-28, 1928-32, and 1945-50. These denominations range from 2 annas to 5 rupees.

The demand for revenue and court fee stamps increased over time and repeated large orders were placed with L.V. Indap & Co.

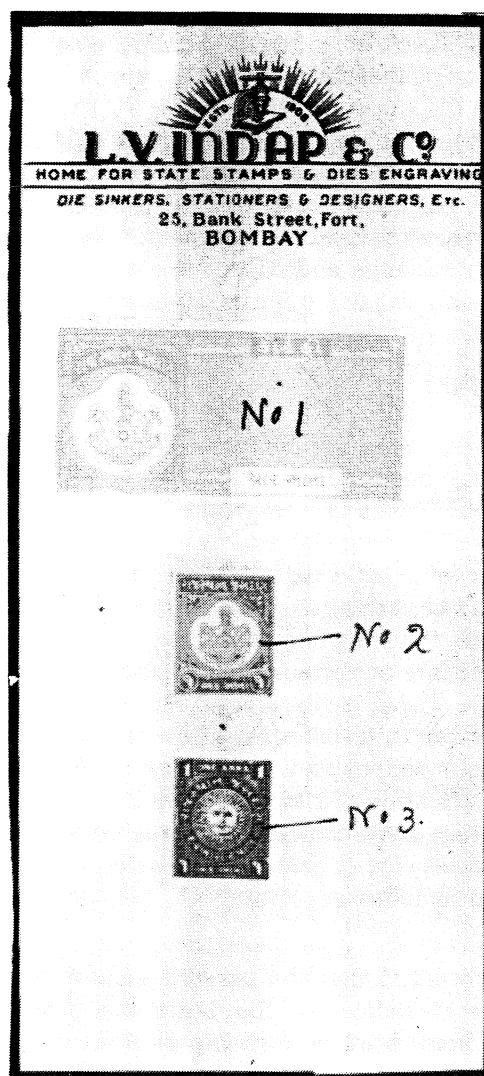


Fig. 2. Three samples sent by L.V. Indap & Co., Bombay, showing 4 annas court fee stamps; one anna revenue stamp and one anna postage stamp in orange, rose and green colours respectively.

of Bombay. These orders ranged from 50,000 to 200,000 and the cost of printing fluctuated from 6 rupees to 9 rupees per thousand. The state authority was very particular in accepting the quotations for printing fiscal postage stamps and on many occasions, Indap was threatened that if they did not reduce the printing charges, the state would place the orders with other printers.

There was an amusing incident when the State placed an order for 200,000 court fee stamps of 4 annas denomination to be printed with Indap & Co. The printers quoted the rate of 6 rupees per thousand stamps or 1,200 rupees for the order. After a few days the Dewan wrote back, saying, there is another press which is prepared to do the job at fifty per-cent less than what Indap & Co., had quoted. After an exchange of letters between the state authority and the printers, Indap stated, "looking to our past long relations, we are prepared to accept the order at Rs. 750 to print 200,000 4 as. court fee stamps." But, the state settled the bill at 700 rupees only, thereby saving 500 rupees.

The state did approach other printers like Thacker & Co., of Bombay and one Dhoomi Mal Dharamdas of Delhi, but, somehow, L.V. Indap & Co. always succeeded in getting the printing orders. The revenue and court fee stamps were mostly printed in booklets of 200 stamps, each booklet sheet with eight stamps.

The use of revenue and court fee stamps was a big source of income not only to Jasdan State but to all the Indian States.

Darbari Tapal

As the Darbar Saheb (ruler) was keen on introducing postage stamps for the benefit of the state and the public at large, he had instructed the Dewan and other top officials to devise a scheme so that people at large could take advantage of the postal system. Accordingly a draft was submitted to the Darbar Saheb on January 1, 1942 and the same was approved on January 22, 1942.

Before the final draft was submitted, the superintendent of post, the Fozdars of various circles, and other officials attached to the State Tapal were already considering what measures should be taken in the interest of the postal system in the state. The superintendent of post, in his letter dated March 8, 1940, had drawn the attention of Darbar Saheb to some irregularities and hardships that were confronted by the persons in charge of the state postal service in Jasdan. The said superintendent of post had written as follows:

It is observed that the persons employed as Pashayata or Chokidar in delivering the State post from one village to another faces a lot of hardship as there are some irregularities. Those employed in delivering the letters have to cover

a long distance on rough roads from one village to another with the result they are not in a position to give proper justice to the job. Besides, the same people have to serve as Chokidars at night and as they feel tired after the day's job, they are unable to deliver the State Post on time.

To introduce regular and proper postal service a petition was made to the Darbar Saheb on 22-12-1939, but no action has been taken so far.

The President of Jasdan State Council also agreed with the said proposal and accordingly a rough postal scheme was drafted on October 2, 1940 and was sent for the approval of the Darbar Saheb. As per the scheme, various divisions were formed from whence letters were to be sent to head post offices at Jasdan or Vinchhia. Some additions and alterations were made in this draft and a final draft was approved so that the public might know that Darbari Tapal (postage stamps) were to be issued and to which post offices the letters and the petitions were to be posted.

The new scheme was approved and introduced as per the notification dated January 1, 1942, which reads as follows:

Hazur's Order

It is observed that if and when the people of the State want to send a letter or a petition to the Hazur or to any State official, in absence of proper postal service, they have to come all the way to Jasdan. In doing so they have to undergo many hardships and so as to mitigate such hardships, a special arrangement has been made to send such letters and petitions by Darbari Tapal as per the following order —

Such petitions can be given in a closed cover after affixing a 1 anna Darbari stamp in Jasdan and Vinchhia to Jagaldars; in villages like Kamalapur, Pipardi, Lilapur, Kalasar, Shivraipur, Mothuda, Jasapar and Kothi, such petitions should be given to school masters; in Hingolgadh it is to be given to Kothari and in other small villages to Pashayata in government guest houses.

For Darbari Tapal a one anna stamp in different design has been printed and these stamps can be obtained from those officers to whom you hand over the letters and petitions.

Anyone who wants an answer to his petition has to send a similar stamp of one anna and a reply will be sent to him direct. The true copy of the above order has been sent to those concerned with a request to give it wide publicity.

22-1-1942

(Sd. Chief Karbhari)

One more order giving full details as to how the Darbari Tapal would operate was issued as follows. Incidentally this order is very meticulous.

Hazur's Order (No. 122)

Further to the above order No. 121 all are hereby informed that special arrangement has been made for forwarding all letters and petitions addressed to the Hazur and all State officials by post as follows:

For delivery of letters the villages of the State have been divided into groups and letters must be sent accordingly.

Group 1 Jasdan

Chitalia
Nani Lakhavad
Khadadhar Hadmatia
Gachhadia
Palarpar
Bakhalvad

Group 2 Vinchhia

Vangdhra
Barchia
Kotda
Revania
Kandhevalia
Dhorimali
Rupavari

Group 3 Kamalapur

Parewala
Kaduka
Madava
Kudani
Barwala

Group 4 Pipardi

Sonali
Asavpar
Bhadrawadi
Janda

Group 5 Lilapur

Lilavadar
Devpara

Group 6 Hingolgad

Bhoira
Amrapur
Gundala
Khadkana

Group 7 Kalasar

Phuljer
Somnath Piplya
Godladhar

Group 8 Shivrajpur

Goblahna
Madhavpur

Group 9 Modhuka

Bandhali
Hathsani
Devdhari

Group 10 Jasapur

Jivapur
Pratappur
Junapipalia

Group 11 Motilakhavad

Dadli
Mota Hadmalia

Group 12 Kothi

Kanesra

Group No. 1 Jasdan: All the villages under Jasdan have to send their post every Wednesday and Sunday to Jasdan P.O.

Group No. 2 Vinchhia: The villages under Vinchhia have to send their post to the Jagatdar (person in charge) at Vinchhia on every Wednesday and Sunday.

Similarly, all the villages under the remaining groups have to

send their post on every Wednesday and Sunday to the officers concerned as under:

Group No. 3 Kamalapur has to send the post to the headmaster of Compo School.

Group No. 4 Pipardi; No. 5 Lilapur; No. 7 Kalasar; No. 8 Shivrajpur; No. 9 Madhuka; No. 10 Jasapur and No. 12 Kothi—each group has to send the post collected from different villages to the school master.

Group No. 6 Hingolghadh has to give to the Kothari and group No. 11 Motilayavad has to send to the Patel in charge.

Whatever post that arrives in Vinchhia from other groups must be sent at the earliest opportunity to Jasdan. The groups which have to send the post to Vinchhia are—Pipardi has to send its post every day. Madhuka has to send its post three days a week on every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Motilakhavad has to send on every Wednesday and Sunday. Kamalapur has to send its post every day by 'Khatara Service' to Jasdan. Kalasar has to send its post every day to Lilapur and Lilapur has to send both posts together to Jasdan. Hingolghadh and Shivrajpur groups have to send their post every day with Darbari Tapal to Jasdan. Kothi group has to send its post three days in a week on Monday, Wednesday and Friday to Jasdan. Jasapur group has to send on every Sunday and Wednesday to Jasdan.

All the letters from various groups are to be carried by Pashayata (Chokidar) but when and where Pashayata is not available, it is the duty of Gamote to deliver the post.

Every leading village of a group will be supplied with a rubber stamp of its name with the date stamp with instructions that the rubber stamp with the name of the group must be applied directly on the postage stamp or stamps and then only the cover should be forwarded.

The Darbari Tapal stamps will be supplied to the head of each group and the stamps should be ordered from the Hazur's office. Every month the person in charge has to render the account of stamps sold and also the balance of stamps remaining with the person in charge.

The person in charge of every group has to keep a daily record as to how many letters received are from each village every day and how many letters are sent to Jasdan and Vinchhia, the head post offices. Similarly, a record must be kept of letters coming from Jasdan and Vinchhia for distribution or delivery to other villages and such record must be sent to the Hazur's office every month.

A copy of the above order is being sent to all the officers concerned with the above groups.

Jasdan, dated 22-1-42

Sd. Chief Officer.

Before the directive No. 122 was issued, an order was already placed with L.V. Indap & Co., to submit the design which was approved by the Darbar Saheb and the postage stamps for Darbari Tapal were ready for sale. Under such circumstances another order, No. 152 dated March 6, 1942, was issued and circulated to the heads of all of the twelve groups mentioned above. The said order No. 152 reads as follows:

The postage stamps to be issued and used for Darbari Tapal have been received and the rubber stamp to be used as a postmark is also ready. The officers concerned are hereby informed that as per the scheme these postage stamps will come into force from 15-3-1942 and wide publicity must be given to the public. The officers are requested to take delivery of the postage stamps and the rubber stamp to be used as a postmark from the head office.

Dated 6-3-1942

Sd. Chief Karbhari.

(Note: No one was allowed to enclose two letters written to two different persons or cash (currency notes) should not be sent in the cover. Anyone violating the rule was charged double postage.)

So far, Gibbons has not mentioned the exact date on which the stamps of Jasdan were issued, but the above order clarifies the true position.

If further proof is needed, I have a copy of an original letter written by a stamp collector of Bombay to the Dewan of Jasdan:

Bombay, dated 18th Feb., 1944

To
The Dewan,
Hazur Office,
Jasdan State, Jasdan.

Dear Sir,

Subject: Jasdan Darbari Stamps

Some time ago your State issued a one anna green stamp for use in Jasdan State.

I shall feel extremely obliged if you can very kindly furnish me with the following information:

- (a) Number of stamps printed to date and the name of the press.
- (b) Whether these stamps are sold in booklets and if so, how many stamps go to make up a booklet.
- (c) Names of the post offices opened in the Jasdan State with their dates and any special particulars about them.
- (d) Any general information affecting the postal administration and system of Jasdan State.

Awaiting a reply by return post,

Yours faithfully,
Sd.

On February 25, 1944, a reply was received from the Dewan's office stating:

Dear Sir,

Reference your letter dated 18th Feb., 1944 the information required is as under:

- (a) 13,000 stamps have been printed to date. They were printed by L.V. Indap & Co., of Bombay.
- (b) The stamps are sold in booklets containing 200 stamps each.
- (c) The work of the post office (carrying letters only) is done at Jasdan and Vinchhia towns and 10 villages of the State. The work at all these places began on 15-3-1942. That is the date on which the Darbari Tapal (postal system) was introduced in the State.
- (d) Nil

Yours faithfully,

Sd Dewan, Jasdan State.

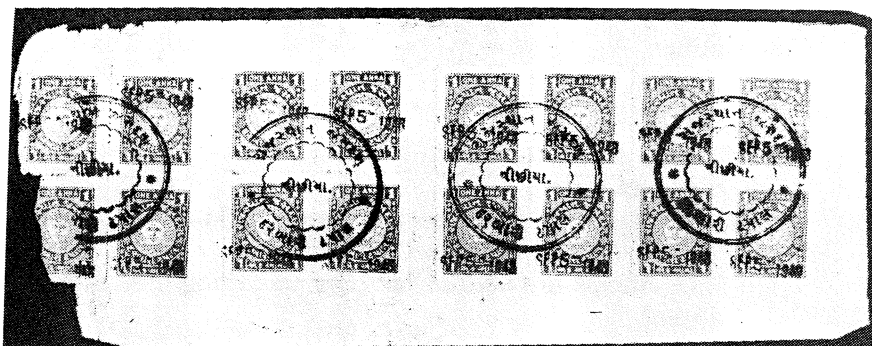
From the above reply by the Dewan it is conclusively proven (1) that the postage stamps were introduced in Jasdan State on March 15, 1942 and all the catalogue publishers can now safely put the date of issue as March 15, 1942 for the benefit of stamp collectors; (2) Jasdan and Vinchhia were the head post offices, plus there were ten other post offices whereas so far no one had known as to how many post offices there were in the state; (3) within two years, that is from 1942 to 1944, there were only 13,000 stamps printed, which means, in spite of twelve post offices, the stamps were not used by the local people; (4) the records show that during 1942 to 1944, many Indian as well as foreign stamp dealers placed orders for the mint stamps and all the orders were fulfilled by the state post office. Out of 13,000 stamps many were sold to the philatelic trade. The local demand was very limited as the people of the state were not literate.

After 1944 printing orders picked up and the records show that the state placed regular orders ranging from 5,000 to 25,000 postage stamps with the printers as and when required. We know that the Darbari Tapal came to an end on February 15, 1948, but prior to that two big orders were placed by the state, one on April 8, 1946, requesting L.V. Indap & Co. to supply 20,000 postage stamps and as late as January 6, 1947, when a further 25,000 were ordered. It is presumed that the total printing of postage stamps may be about 100,000 stamps from 1942 to 1948.

Printing of Postage Stamps

The first postage stamps were printed in booklet sheets of four, imperforate on one or two sides. Stamp no. 1 is an imperforate on

Fig. 3. A very rare cover bearing four booklet sheets of four stamps sent from Vinchhia to Jasdan addressed to Secretary Saheb, Jasdan, pertaining to some applications. The cover was posted from Vinchhia on 5th Sept. 1943. Unfortunately, one of the booklet sheets on the left is in a tattered condition. Mark the big decorative postmark of double-line circle with the inscription 'Rajsthan Jasdan' at top; 'Darbari Tapal' at bottom; the name of the post office Vinchhia in the centre and a date stamp applied on each stamp. The postmark is fairly big and decorative measuring 4.5 cm. in diameter.



the top and the other three sides are perforated; in stamp no. 2 top and right sides are imperforate whereas left and bottom sides are perforated; in stamp no. 3 the bottom side is imperforate and the other three sides are perforated; in stamp no. 4, right and bottom sides are imperforate whereas top and left sides are perforated. After about two years, the printing method was changed and the stamps were printed in booklet sheets of eight stamps, perforated all around. Each booklet contained 200 stamps. As regards the postmark, the same size and style of postmark was supplied to all the post offices with the name of the said post office in the center.

In Gibbons stamp catalogue nearly five shades of green and different perforations are listed but that was due to the printers' inability to get the same shade of green ink, the same quality of gummed paper, and the same perforating machine when an order was placed after a lapse of six to twelve months. On many occasions the printers had to inform the state authority that the same quality of gummed paper was not available in the market and that is why the order was not executed on time. L.V. Indap & Co., although a small press, satisfied the needs of other Indian states by printing their postage, revenue, and court fee stamps.

Gibbons is justified in putting a note in their catalog stating that the stamps of Jasdan are rare used on covers, for which there are various reasons. First, a majority of the people did not know how to read and write even their native language Gujarati. Second, if anyone wanted to send a letter or a petition to the state government, one had to go to a literate person. Letter or petition writing was not done free by the petition writers; they charged a small fee which poor villagers were unable to pay. Third, most of the people resided in distant villages and being poor farmers on a small scale, toiling for the whole day, they hardly thought of writing a letter. Fourth, to some poor people spending one anna on writing a letter was beyond their means, so oral messages were sent through friends or relatives. Actually one anna had immense buying power in those days. I can say from my personal experience that even in a big city like Bombay, in those days I used to have a good lunch or dinner at two annas.

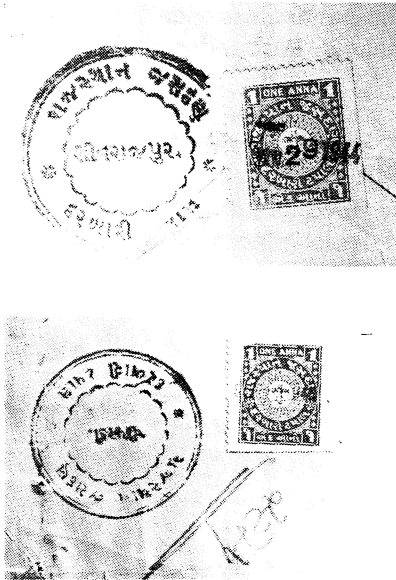


Fig. 4. The two covers with one stamp each are used from Pipardi and Shivrajpur but the postmarks do not seem to be applied on the stamp as per clear instructions. Both the stamps are from booklet sheet of four.

There are instances on record that at times there was no sale of postage stamps at all at certain post offices for nearly a month. A schoolmaster in charge of the Jasapur post office rendered the account for July, 1942, stating that there was no sale of Darbari stamps and that he had in stock stamps worth Rs. 3 and 12 annas. The said schoolmaster was advised by the high authority that he should educate the people and explain to them the advantages of using Darbari Tapal. As the people did not take the full advantage of the scheme, genuinely postally used covers are hard to find. Actually stamps used on covers with a clear strike are indeed rare.

After knowing that Jasdan had introduced Darbari Tapal, one more state in Saurashtra, namely Porbunder, also thought of introducing similar postal service, so the Dewan of Porbunder wrote a letter on October 12, 1943 to the Dewan of Jasdan requesting him to give full particulars. Accordingly the Dewan of

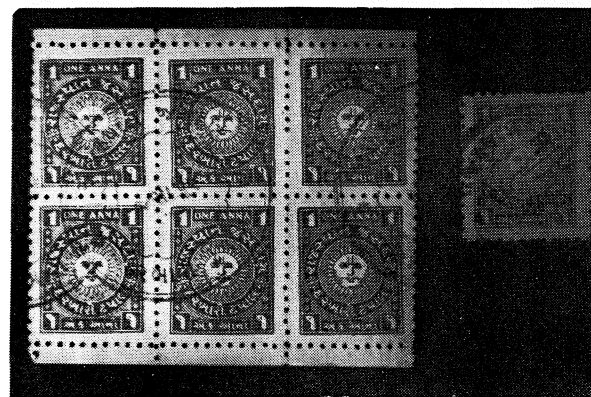


Fig. 5. A block of six stamps from a booklet sheet of eight stamps perforated all round used from Jasdan. A single is also from a booklet sheet of eight with the date inserted by hand.

Jasdan supplied the particulars vide his letter dated November 14, 1943, but somehow, Porbunder State did not introduce the Darbari Tapal.

Jasdan was merged with the United States of Saurashtra on February 15, 1948, but prior to that date orders were pouring in from dealers as well as collectors for Darbari postage stamps and all the orders were filled as late as January, 1948, by the Jasdan post office. A local dealer placed his order on February 17, 1948, but his request was turned down.

Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

As even the most casual collectors of New Jersey covers must know, five and ten cent 1847 covers with New Jersey postmarks are scarce. Just how scarce is the subject of an "in-the-works" book by the New Jersey Postal History Society. Our most ambitious project to date, *The 1847 Issue in New Jersey & Illustrated Directory of Covers* will list and hopefully illustrate EVERY known cover used with either a 5 cent or a 10 cent 1847 stamp.

Our current projection is to accumulate illustrations and information throughout 1985 in an effort to publish our findings in early-mid 1986. Prompt response is desired, please don't procrastinate. Submit your information NOW, and be an active participant in this worthy Society project, which, if we accomplish our goals, should be destined to become the acknowledged reference on the subject, and should become a model for other State Postal History Societies to follow. Credit will be given to all contributors, unless requested otherwise.

Whether you own a cover or covers, know the whereabouts of one, or just happen to have a clipping from an auction catalog, we need your cooperation to make this project a reality.

Send your Xerox's, photos, comments, suggestions, etc., to the coordinator of this project:

Brad Arch
144 Hamilton Avenue
Clifton, New Jersey 07011 USA