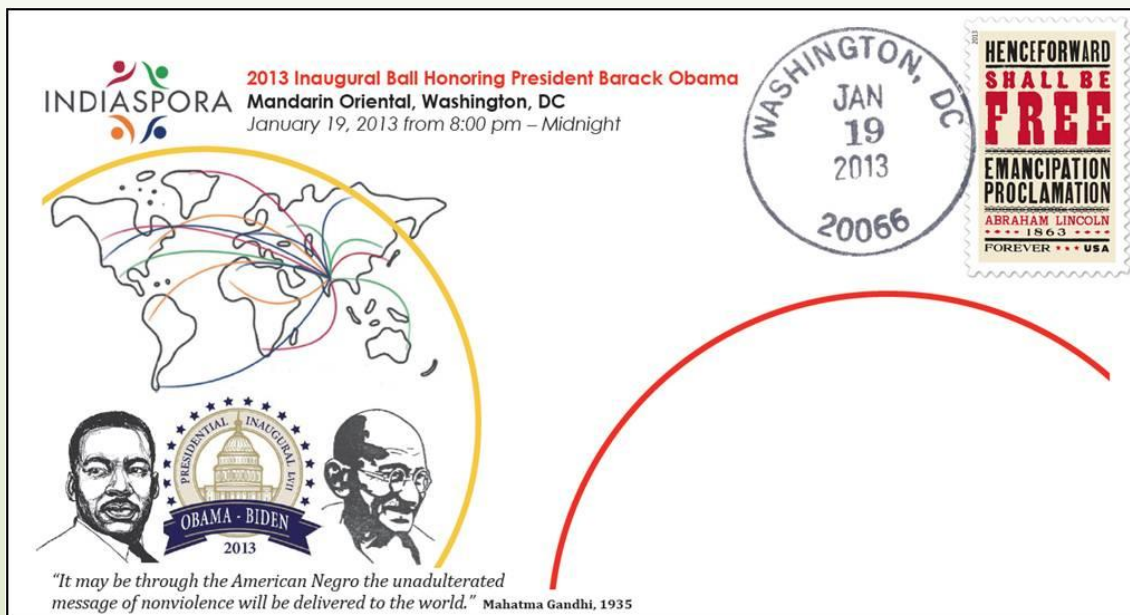




On January 19<sup>th</sup> 2013, the Indian American community, represented by a newly found organization called Indiaspora, organized its first ever Presidential Inaugural Ball at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Ballroom in Washington DC. Over 1,300 Indian Americans were in attendance to celebrate President Obama's re-election and to recognize the achievements of the 3 million strong Indian American community. Special guests at the inaugural ball included President Obama's sister Maya Soetoro-Ng, Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley, Delaware Gov. Jack Markell and several US Senators and Representatives.

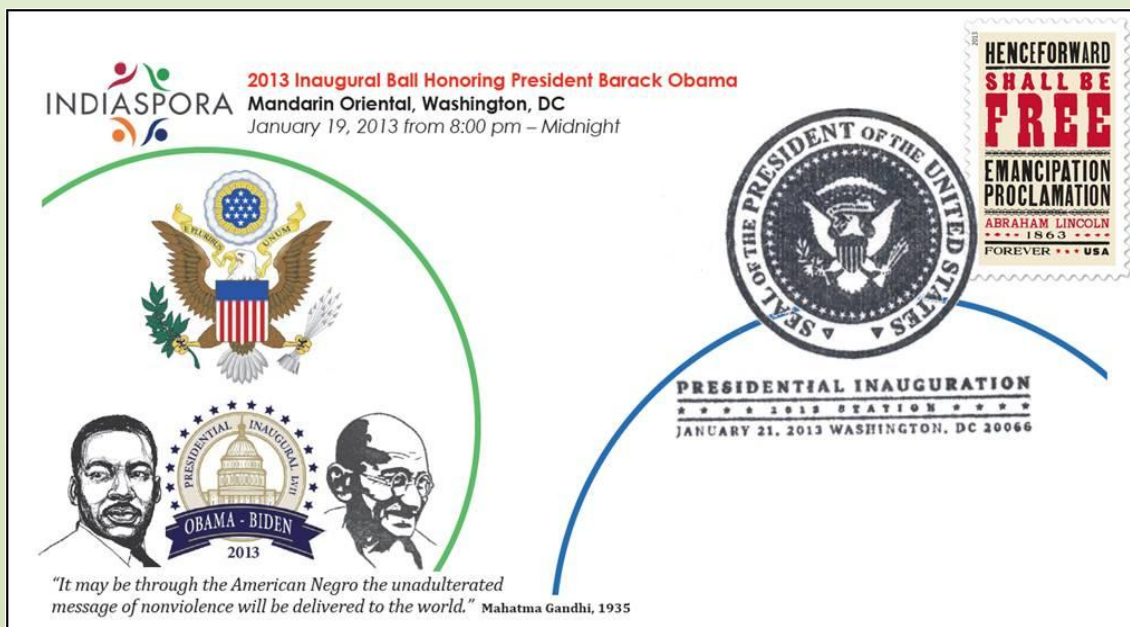
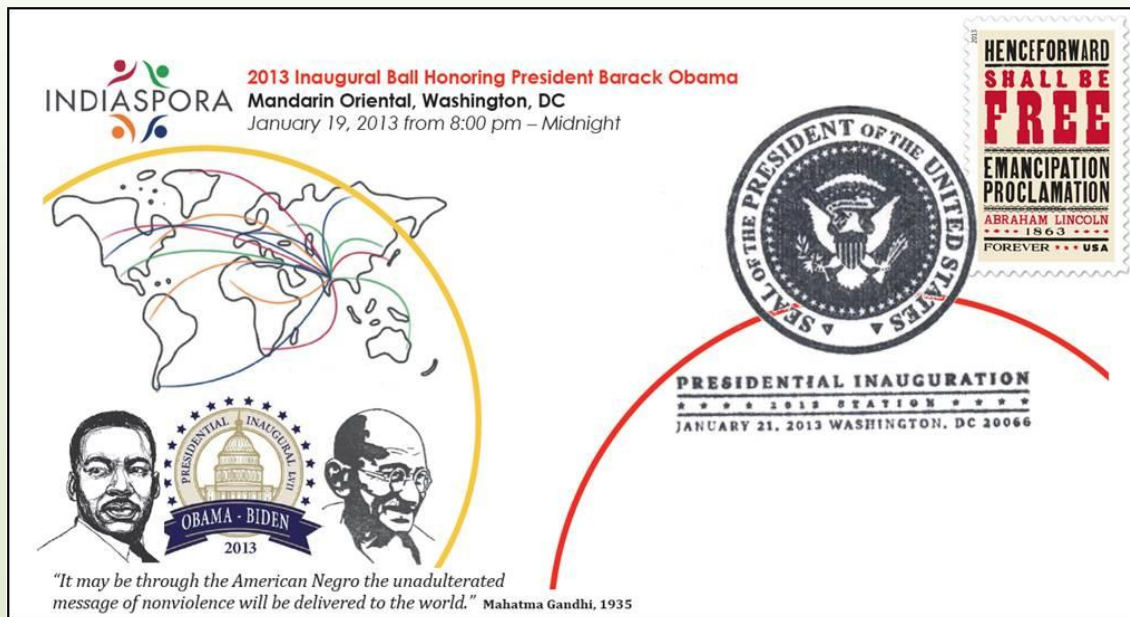
Two commemorative event covers were prepared to celebrate the occasion and cancelled with the Washington DC circular date cancel (ZIP 20066). This cancel would have normally only been available at the Philatelic counter of the Smithsonian National Postal History Museum on Saturday, January 19<sup>th</sup>. However, the counter was closed due to inaugural festivities. Alternative arrangements were made to transfer this cancel to the Union Station Post Office, so that the covers could be serviced before the inaugural ball. 250 sets of these covers were handed out as souvenirs to select guests at the ball, as they departed after midnight on January 20<sup>th</sup> 2013. An additional 50 sets were prepared and saved to be shared with friends and fellow collectors.





The cachet design on the two covers depicts two aspects of Indian-American history: Dispersion (Indiaspora map) and Assimilation (E Pluribus Unum). At the bottom right of the cachet were images of Mahatma Gandhi to the right and Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. to the left, with an icon representing the 57<sup>th</sup> Presidential Inauguration in the middle (US Capital Dome image with the text: Presidential Inaugural LVII / OBAMA-BIDEN / 2013). Beneath the images was the text: *"It may be through the American Negro the unadulterated message of nonviolence will be delivered to the world."* Mahatma Gandhi, 1935. Colorful partial circles, representing the colors on Indian and American flags were used to complete the design (saffron and red on one and green and blue on the other (this was to represent the Indian American identity, rather than India (saffron, white and green) and America (red, white and blue) separately).

150 sets each of covers were franked with the commemorative inaugural seal on January 21<sup>st</sup> 2013, the official day of the public inauguration. This cancellation carried the SEAL OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, with the text "PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION / \*\*\*\* 2013 STATION \*\*\*\* / JANUARY 21, 2013 WASHINGTON DC 20066" in three rows beneath the seal. All four covers used the Jan 1, 2013 Emancipation Proclamation stamp.

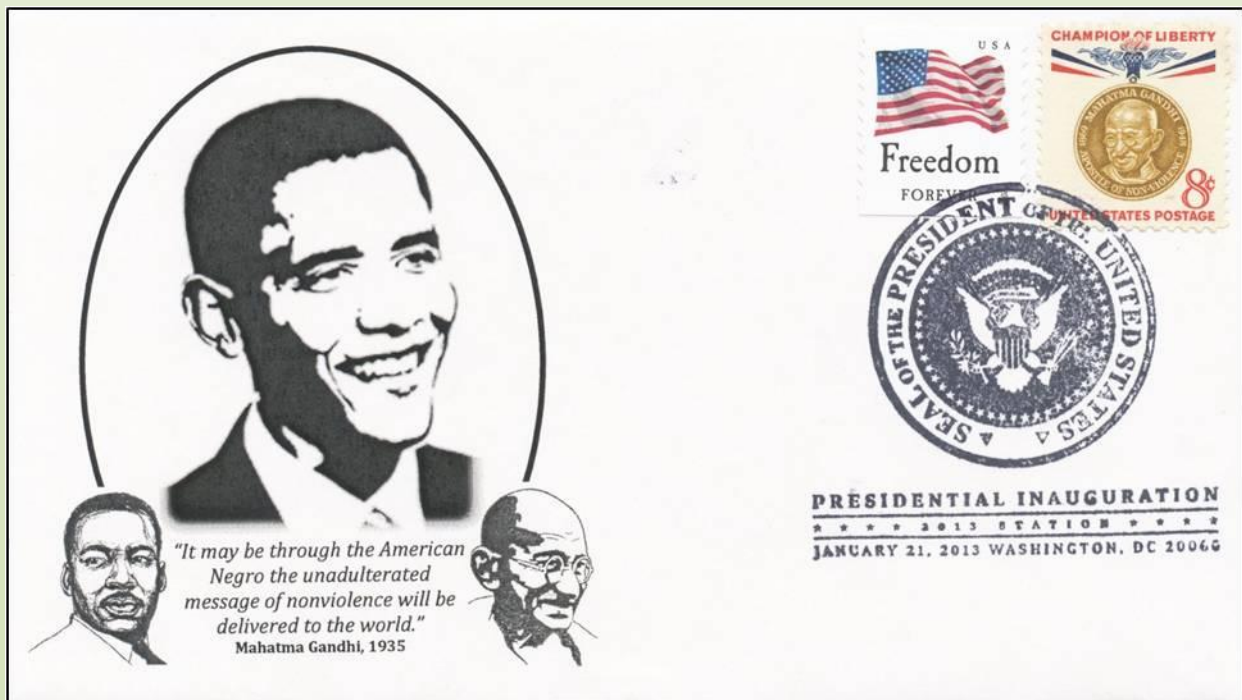
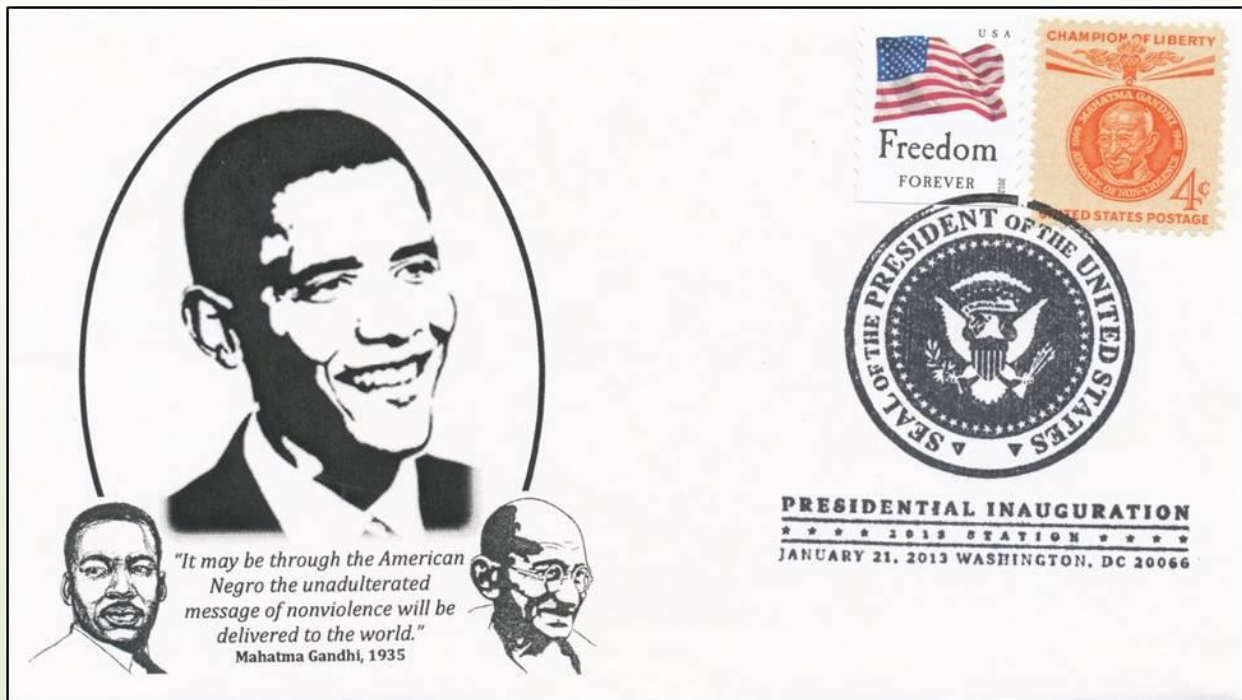






Another cachet was prepared specifically for the inaugural day, depicting images of President Obama, Mahatma Gandhi, and Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Beneath the images was the text: *"It may be through the American Negro the unadulterated message of nonviolence will be delivered to the world."* Mahatma Gandhi, 1935.

Two hundred covers were prepared in eight sets of 25 covers each, with different combinations of stamps, cancelled with the official inaugural cancel. This cancellation carried the SEAL OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, with the text "PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION / \*\*\*\* 2013 STATION \*\*\*\* / JANUARY 21, 2013 WASHINGTON DC 20066" in three rows beneath the seal. The stamps were the four different Forever flag stamps (FREEDOM, LIBERTY, JUSTICE, EQUALITY), used in combination with the two 1961 Gandhi Champion of Liberty commemoratives (4c and 8c).





Additional sets of the cachet covers from the Indiaspora Inaugural ball were prepared with the Barbara Jordan Forever stamp from Sep 2011 (10 sets), the John H. Johnson Forever stamp from January 2012 (10 sets) and \$1.05 of definitive stamps for airmail postage (5 sets).

Five additional sets of the Indiaspora Inaugural ball cachet covers were sent through the mail with the January 19<sup>th</sup> circular date cancel to an address in NY. Five additional sets were mailed to an address in Singapore with the combination definitive stamps for airmail postage. In addition, one each of the inaugural cachet covers were mailed to the NY address with the Emancipation Declaration stamp and to the Singapore address with the definitive stamps for airmail postage.

As with the 2001 Nobel centennial commemorative covers, the 2009 UN-Obama Nobel Peace Prize commemorative covers, the September 2010 Mother Teresa commemorative first day covers, and the 2011 Martin Luther King Memorial commemorative covers, the Indiaspora Inaugural Ball and President Obama Inaugural day commemorative covers will be shared with a select group of organizations and individuals. For more details, please visit [Gandhi.TopicalPhilately.com](http://Gandhi.TopicalPhilately.com).

