

HISTORIA POSTAL DE LAS TARIFAS DE LOS CORREOS EN COLOMBIA by Carlos Valenzuela Acosta

A review by Jim Cross



This 110 page hardbound volume was compiled by the author and printed in Bogota with the patronage of Comestibles Italo S.A. The book may be ordered from the Club Filatelico de Bogotá, Cl. 121 No.9B-27, Bogotá, Colombia. Price \$15.00 postpaid.

The book begins with an introduction and a brief summary of the history of Colombia postal rates. Carlos has assembled approximately 1000 photocopies of documents affecting postal rates. Naturally it is impossible to reproduce all of these documents in this book. The book predominately concerns the rates for letters, newspapers, printed matter, post cards and other mail which is franked with postage stamps. It does not cover the rates for parcel post which are classified both by the nature of the shipment and the distance to the destination and are quite lengthy. It also does not include early airmail rates which Carlos has previously covered in another publication.

The summary is followed by a chronological listing of the documents. For the period thru 1902 the full text of the documents is given. From 1903 to 2002 the data is summarized in tables. The author warns that the

tables for the period from 1952 to 1961 may not contain all of the changes which occurred. Early in the history of COPAPHIL Alex Rendon reported that he had attempted to make a study in the archives of ADPOSTAL and was unsuccessful, because the material was not organized.

Carlos has had the cooperation of the officials for the period from 1963 thru the present and this data is believed to be complete.

In the early years changes in postal rates were not too frequent, but in recent years decreases in the value of the Colombian peso in foreign exchange have necessitated more frequent changes.

This publication still leaves a few unanswered questions about the nineteenth century postal rates, either because the regulations were not published or they have not been found. For example: while the decree setting rates when Colombia joined the U.P.U. in July 1881 is published in detail and the decree raising the letter rate from 5 centavos to 7 centavos effective 1 November 1881 is included, the decree raising the foreign letter rate to 10 centavos effective 1 January 1882 is not included.

A notice of 4 Feb 1870 published in Diario Oficial No. 1812 suppressed a surcharge which required letters between the State of Panama and the other states of Colombia to bear double the regular postage. However, there is no indication of the authority by which this surcharge was put in effect or when it was effective.

The publication is in Spanish and the documents are reprinted as they were published. The text of some of the decrees is not easy to understand. For example some of the early nineteenth century rates are based upon distances expressed in miriametros. I had to search in several reference sources before I found the meaning of this term which is no longer commonly used in countries using the metric system. The tables which give the rates since 1903 are logically arranged and should be easily understood even by non-Spanish speaking readers.

This book fills a gap in previously published reference material and should be a must for any serious collector of Colombian postal history.