POSTAL CONVENTION

Signed at Bogotá March 6, 1844
Senate advice and consent to ratification June 12, 1844
Ratified by the President of the United States June 28, 1844
Ratified by New Granada [1] *December 1, 1844*
Ratifications exchanged at Bogotá December 20, 1844
Entered into force December 20, 1844
Proclaimed by the President of the United States February 22, 1845
Replaced by later agreements

8 Stat. 584; Treaty Series 53 [2]

Postal Convention between the United States of North America and the Republic of New Granada

The Republics of the United States of North America, and of New Granada,[1] being desirous of drawing more closely the relations existing between the two countries and of facilitating the prompt and regular transportation of the correspondence of the United States across the Isthmus of Panamá, have agreed to conclude a Postal Convention—for which purpose, his Excellency the President of the United States named, as a Plenipotentiary, William M. Blackford, their Chargé d'Affaires at Bogotá, and his Excellency the President of New Granada, Joaquin Acosta, Colonel of Artillery and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs—who have agreed upon the following articles.

Article 1

The Packet vessels of war of the Republic of the United States will disembark at Chagres or Porto-bello, the sealed bag or packet, which may contain the letters and newspapers, destined to cross the Isthmus of Panamá, which said bag or packet shall be delivered to the postmaster, of one or the other of these places, by whom it shall be forwarded to Panamá, for the consideration of thirty dollars for each trip—provided the weight of the bag or

[1] The state of "Greater Colombia," which gained independence from Spain in 1819, included the present states of Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, and Venezuela. In 1830–31 it split up into Ecuador, Venezuela, and the republic of New Granada, and by 1863 New Granada had become the United States of Colombia.

[2] For a detailed study of this convention, see 4 Miller 529.

packet should not exceed one hundred pounds, and in the proportion of twelve dollars more for each succeeding hundred pounds, which sum shall be paid though the excess should not amount to one hundred pounds.

ARTICLE 2

With respect to the letters and newspapers the said vessels may have on board, which shall not be intended to cross the Isthmus, but to be delivered at any point on the Atlantic coast of New Granada, the practice, established conformably to the New Granadian rates of postage, shall be continued.

ARTICLE 3

The Consul, or other Agent, of the United States at Panamá shall receive the bag, unopened, and, after delivering to the Post office all the correspondence, except letters to himself, directed to Panamá or other points of the Granadian Territory, (which correspondence shall be subjected to the usual rates of postage established in New Granada), he shall retain the remainder to be forwarded to its destination as soon as an opportunity occurs.

ARTICLE 4

The Post Office at Panamá will charge itself likewise with forwarding the mail bag or packet, which it may receive from the Consul or other Agent of the United States, to the Post office of Chagres or Porto bello, at which time it shall be delivered to the Consul, or other Agent, of the United States, or, in their default, to the Commander of the vessel of war, calling for it, under the same conditions stipulated in the 1st Article.

ARTICLE 5

The Consul, or other Agent, of the United States residing at Panamá, shall be the person whose duty it is to pay for the carriage of the bag, across the Isthmus, as well as when he receives it from the Post office at Panamá after it has crossed the Isthmus, as when he delivers it to the said Post office to be sent to Chagres, or Porto Bello.

ARTICLE 6

The said packet vessels which shall or may be established, will bring to the Ports of New Granada at which they may touch—and will also take from them to those of the United States—all official and private letters and newspapers, without any compensation whatever—Granadian vessels will be subject to the same conditions if, at any time, it may be thought advisable to contribute with them to the establishment of a line of packets between the ports of the United States and those of New Granada.

ARTICLE 7

The packet vessels of war of the United States will also carry, free of charge, all the official or private letters and newspapers, which may be delivered to them, from one port of New Granada to another at which they may touch.

ARTICLE 8

If the Government of the United States should think fit to employ steamers, as packets, between New Granada and the said United States—the coals which may be brought for the use of such vessels shall then enjoy, in the Granadian Ports, the same exemptions, as to introduction and deposit, which may have been granted in said ports to the coals destined for the steamers of any other power.

ARTICLE 9

The Republics of the United States and of New Granada, being desirous of avoiding all interpretations, contrary to their intentions, declare, that any advantage, or advantages, that one or the other power may enjoy, from the foregoing stipulations, are and ought to be understood in virtue and as in compensation of the obligations they have just contracted in the present postal convention.

ARTICLE 10

For the purpose of carrying into effect the provisions of the present Convention as soon as possible, the two high contracting parties have agreed, that said provisions shall begin to be enforced immediately after the Governor of the Province of Panamá has official knowledge that the present convention has been ratified by the Government of New Granada, and that the Consul, or other agent, of the United States shall have communicated to him that it has been also ratified by the Government of that Republic.

ARTICLE 11

The present Convention shall remain in force and vigor for the term of eight years, to be counted from the day on which the exchange of the ratifications may be made—which shall take place in Bogotá as soon as possible—and shall continue in the same force and vigor for another term of four years more; and so on, always for another term of four years more, until one of the two Governments shall give the other six months notice of its wish that the same shall terminate.

In faith whereof the Plenipotentiaries of the two Republics have signed and sealed the present Convention in Bogotá, on the sixth day of the month of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty four.

Wm M. BLACKFORD [SEAL]
JOAQUIN ACOSTA [SEAL]