

THE 15c 1978 VIKING MARS ISSUE

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this exhibit is to introduce the Viking Mars mission and to educate the viewer about the stamp issued to commemorate the Viking project. This illustrated mail exhibit shows the development of the stamp from its inception to production, first day activities, cachets, and uses.

Included are signatures of the designer and engravers, a publicity photograph, various freaks, original engraved cachet plates, original cachet artwork, and a wide variety of cachets and uses.

Unusual, scarce, and/or difficult-to-acquire items are highlighted by a blue dot (●).

Background

On July 20, 1976, the United States landed the first of two probes on Mars. Dubbed Viking 1, its objectives were to transport to Mars, locate landing sites, act as a communication link, and conduct scientific investigations. The second probe (Viking 2) landed on the planet on September 3, 1976. A year later, the United States Postal Service (USPS) chose "a fitting commemorative" to honor the Viking Mars spacecraft.

The stamp was issued on July 20, 1978 at Hampton, VA. The first day ceremony was held at NASA's Langley Research Center, the management and control center for the Viking missions.

Exhibit Plan

THE VIKING MISSIONS	FIRST CACHETS	Rubber Stamped
Viking 1 (A)	ISSUE-SPECIFIC CACHETS	Paste-On
Viking 2 (B)	Printed	GENERAL-PURPOSE
THE STAMP	Engraved	CACHETS
The Design	Hand Colored	CORNER CARD
Production Data/panes	Hand Drawn	COMBINATION FDCs
Freaks	Hand Drawn/ Hand	DUAL FDCs
Plate Blocks	Painted	UNCACHETED FDCs
First Day Ceremony	Silkscreened	AUTOGRAPHED
CANCELLATIONS		FDCs
Official		USES
Unofficial		CONCLUSION



Martian surface as seen by a Viking Mars Lander