

# U S EXPLORATION OF MARS, THE RED PLANET

## A Synopsis

### Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this article is to present and discuss pre-production and first day information, including first day cancellations and cachets, and post=first day items for three of the four United States issues that feature the planet Mars between 1991 and 2016. The first stamp, which honored the two Viking missions launched in 1976, was issued in 1978 and is the subject of a separate article (see bibliography- Nafziger, 2015).

### Article Content

Brief backgrounds of each mission to Mars and the planet itself are given, followed by information leading to the issuance of the stamp. First day ceremony programs for each of the three stamps are discussed. Any known predates and/or errors are listed. The article is illustrated with a variety of pertinent items.

### Research Sources

Relevant subject data are distributed throughout the philatelic literature. This required identification, consolidation, and summarization into one coherent article that could be accessed easily by collectors. Much research was required to obtain background and pre-production material from primary sources such as the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the National Postal Museum library, the USPS library, and the National Archives.

### Importance

Space and astronomy are recognized as popular topics for collectors. This article consolidates the important information available on the planet Mars derived from a wide variety of sources. The article was featured on the cover of the issue of *First Days* in which it was published.

### Bibliography

- Amick, George, *Linn's U.S. Stamp Yearbook - 1991* Linn's Stamp News, Amos Press, Sidney, OH, 1992, pp. 118-124.
- Amick, George, *Linn's U.S. Stamp Yearbook - 1997* Linn's Stamp News, Amos Press, Sidney, OH, 1998, pp. 234-241.
- Nafziger, Ralph H., *A Viking Cachet Catalogue*, *First Days*, vol. 26, no. 4, July/August, 1981, pp. 568, 570-573.
- Nafziger, Ralph H., *The 1978 Viking Mars Issue*, *First Days*, vol. 60, no. 5, September/October, 2015, pp. 12. 14-19.
- Tan, Victor, *Viking Cachets Update*, *First Days*, vol. 30, no. 5, July 1, 1985, pp. 671-674.

Tan, Victor, *1991 Space Exploration Issue cachets and Cancellations*, *First Days*, vol. 38, no. 3, April 15, 1993, pp. 218-221.

Tan, Victor, *Cachet and Cancellation Check Lists for the 1997 Mars Pathfinder Issue*, *First Days*, vol. 46, no. 2, March 1, 2001, pp. 106-111.