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Special Stamps To Mark Apollo 8 Moon Flight

HOUSTON - As a tribute to the Apollo Astronauts, who will be the first Americans to circle the Moon later this month, the Space City Cover Society will issue two special Covers and a NASA Local commemorative souvenir sheet of stamps to mark the spectacular event. Liftoff of Apollo 8 from Kennedy Space Center Is scheduled for December 21st, with the historic looping of the moon set for Christmas Eve.

The Space City Cover Society, an international group of space devotees, is headquartered in Houston, Texas, the NASA Control Center. An envelope to stamp collectors is a "cover." A "Local," in philatelic circles, is a private stamp, and represents the non-government cost of delivering a letter from any given local point to a post office; in this instance 30 miles from the NASA area to the Houston main post office.

It is believed that NASA strongly favors sending Apollo 8 into a braking maneuver as it approaches the Moon, after which the Spacecraft will go into a lunar orbit and remain there for about 20 hours, circling the Moon 10 times. According to NASA's announcement, this historic event should occur Christmas Eve, as an unforgettable Xmas gift to the American people.

The first cover to be prepared by the Space City Cover Society will be cancelled at Houston, Texas, on the day of liftoff. The cover (50c) will be flanked with a U.S. commemorative stamp, but also will bear the special Apollo 8 NASA Local stamp and the colorful NASA Local cancel.

A second cover (50c) will be issued the day Apollo 8 circles the Moon. This cover also will be cancelled at the Houston post office and will carry a U.S. commemorative stamp and the Apollo 8 NASA Local stamp and NASA Local cancel, the date of the historic circumlunar flight around the back side of the Moon.

The specially designed Apollo 8 NASA Local souvenir sheet of 10 stamps (50c) will be printed bi-color, offset and perforated with marginal inscriptions on each sheet.

A limited number of the two historic covers is being prepared and may be ordered, along with the Apollo 8 NASA Local sheet from the Space City Cover Society, P.O. Box 53545, Houston Texas, 77052. A 10 cent handling and postage fee must be added to each order because all material will be sent under separate cover — after the events — to insure a clean cover. To minimize addressing and shipping errors, the Society requests addressed gummed labels.

If Astronauts Frank Borman, James Lovell and William A. Anders are sent around the Moon, and are successful in their mission, it will smooth the way for the first manned American landing on the Moon. Astronaut Borman will command the three man team. Only the command and service modules will be flown, but it will be the first time man has ridden on a Saturn V Moon Rocket. If the Apollo 8 crew, which has been training for almost two years, has a successful flight, Apollo 9 hopefully will be launched in February, 1969.