

The First Moon Globe

July 20, 2009 marked the 40th anniversary of the United States' manned mission to the moon, and for a brief time there was news coverage before more pressing current events pushed the 40-year-old moon news out of the public's mind.

Actually, the year 2009 marked the 50th anniversary of two lunar events that happened back in 1959; Soviet Union's Luna 2, that crashed landed on the surface of the moon on Sept. 13, and Luna 3, that took the first photographs of the far side of the earth's satellite on October 7.

The United States sent their first unmanned mission to the moon in 1964, when, on July 28, Ranger 7 reached the surface and sent back some 4,300 photographs.

Luna 3 returned imperfect images of the far side, but when these were computer enhanced, many of the larger features became recognizable. It was not until some time later, when the United States sent a lunar orbiter on a photographic mission, that the world was able to view a representation of the features on the far, or back side of the moon.

The Hammond Map Company of Maplewood, New Jersey, my employer, made world globes and other geographical publications, and two other cartographers and I were able to prepare and market a globe of the moon, which incorporated the new Soviet information, in a relatively short time, as all that was necessary was to modify the material used in the production of globes of the world. To my knowledge, this globe is the very first lunar globe with any features on the far side ever to be manufactured. Not many were made at the time, as we knew that with additional American images, which would soon be forthcoming, much more detailed surface could be portrayed. This assumption proved to be true, and as a result, there can't be many of the original moon globes in existence.

Due to the synchronized rotation of the moon and the earth, the far side of the moon is not visible from the planet. The far side receives sunlight, but is often erroneously referred to as the "dark side" of the moon.

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