

The following is the Jon Lomberg introduction to *The Martian Chronicles* that was part of *Visions of Mars*, a collection of Science Fiction, Art, and Audio about Mars that was produced by The Planetary Society and traveled to Mars on a silica glass DVD on board the *Phoenix* spacecraft. Currently, the works of Bradbury and many others are sitting on Mars awaiting discovery by future explorers to the Red Planet.

The Martian Chronicles

(1950)

Ray Bradbury

(United States of America, born 1920)

The Martian Chronicles is (with Burroughs' *A Princess of Mars* and H. G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds*) one of the three most widely-read books about the Red Planet.

Ray Bradbury's first science fiction story was published in 1941. In the more than half century since then, his sense of the human endeavor and his poetic expression of such feelings as loneliness and nostalgia, have moved the hearts of millions of readers. Bradbury has also written poetry, drama, and screenplays, including the film adaptation of Herman Melville's novel *Moby Dick*. Most of his work has been fantasy, horror, and "mainstream"; but largely due to *The Martian Chronicles* and a powerful short novel, *Fahrenheit 451*, his name has become synonymous with science fiction in many languages around the globe. Asimov, Bradbury, and Clarke represent the ABCs of science fiction for most of the literary world.

The Martian Chronicles is a collection of stories written between 1946 and 1950. The stories are interconnected so as to convey the feeling of a novel, which covers the exploration and settling of Mars, between 1999 and 2026 by ordinary men and women mostly from the Mid-West and Western United States of America.

There is little concern in this work for the high technology required for interplanetary travel and planetary colonization. The focus of attention in Bradbury's fiction has always been on the roles of individuals in changing societies. When Bradbury described the feelings of the inhabitants of Mars and the colonists from Earth, he was writing about the hopes and fears of average Americans transplanted to the exotic locales of outer space. Nevertheless, the author has maintained a strong personal interest in the realization of planetary exploration, and has played an active role in defending the importance of space science to his fellow citizens. Bradbury was one of the original members of The Planetary Society's Board of Advisors. He was present at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory for the landing of Viking 1 on Mars and may be heard in the radio documentary on the audio portion of this disc.