

Mars in the Title

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Abstract

Edgar Rice Burroughs, one of the most financially successful and culturally influential authors in history, future creator of Tarzan, struggled to find a title for his first attempt at fiction. While writing it, he tried *My First Adventure of Mars*, *The Green Martians*, and *Dejah Thoris, Martian Princess*. He used that last when he submitted the first of three projected installments to Thomas Newell Metcalf, the managing editor of *The All-Story* magazine. After revising and augmenting the work on the basis of his own imagination and Metcalf's editorial advice, Burroughs submitted a completed manuscript which Metcalf told him in his acceptance letter would be published as *In the Moons of Mars*. When it began its serial publication in February 1912, however, it was called *Under the Moons of Mars*. It was instantly popular under that title, but when McClurg & Company brought it out as a free-standing book in 1917, it bore the title *A Princess of Mars* (Wikipedia, *A Princess of Mars*). Why all this indecision about a title? Because titles are enormously important.