



## Two Years Before The Mast

*Richard Henry Dana*

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Two Years Before the Mast is a book by the American author Richard Henry Dana, Jr., written after a two-year sea voyage starting in 1834 and published in 1840.

While at Harvard College, Dana had an attack of the measles which affected his vision. Thinking it might help his sight, Dana, rather than going on a Grand Tour as most of his fellow classmates traditionally did (and unable to afford it anyway) and being something of a non-conformist, left Harvard to enlist as a common sailor on a voyage around Cape Horn on the brig Pilgrim. He returned to Massachusetts two years later aboard the Alert (which left California sooner than the Pilgrim).

He kept a diary throughout the voyage, and, after returning, he wrote a recognized American classic, *Two Years Before the Mast*, published in 1840, the same year of his admission to the bar.

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