

Charles Dickens

1812 -1870



Charles Dickens was born in Portsmouth on 7th of February, 1812 into a middle class family of civil servant John Dickens who was an open-hearted and kind man. Charles spent his childhood in the atmosphere of love and friendship, although endured harder times later on.





The happiest years were between 1817 and 1822, when John Dickens held a good post in the Chatham Dockyard. It was an enchanted time for little Charles.

When Dickens was sixteen he went to London, because his father secured the position of a clerk there.

Very soon Charles realized that his happy childhood had been left behind, after his family moved to London in 1822.



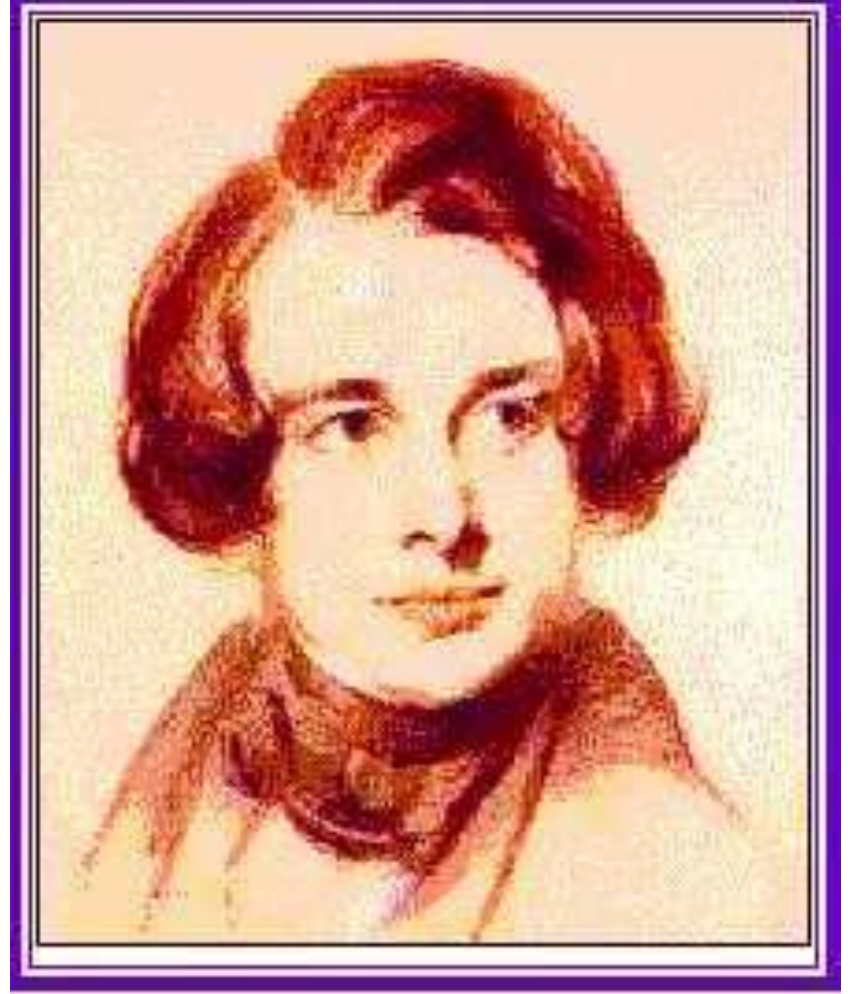
The family lived in poverty. Their household consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Dickens, their five children, a servant and James Larmert, a relative by marriage. Charles schooling came to an end and he had to contribute to the family funds. John Larmert found him a job in a warehouse for several shillings a week.





Meanwhile, John Dickens was put into Marshalsea Debtors prison for his debts and his family had to follow him into the prison because the debts were great and they had nobody in London to address for money. They had to stay in prison until Mr. Dickens could pay all his debts.

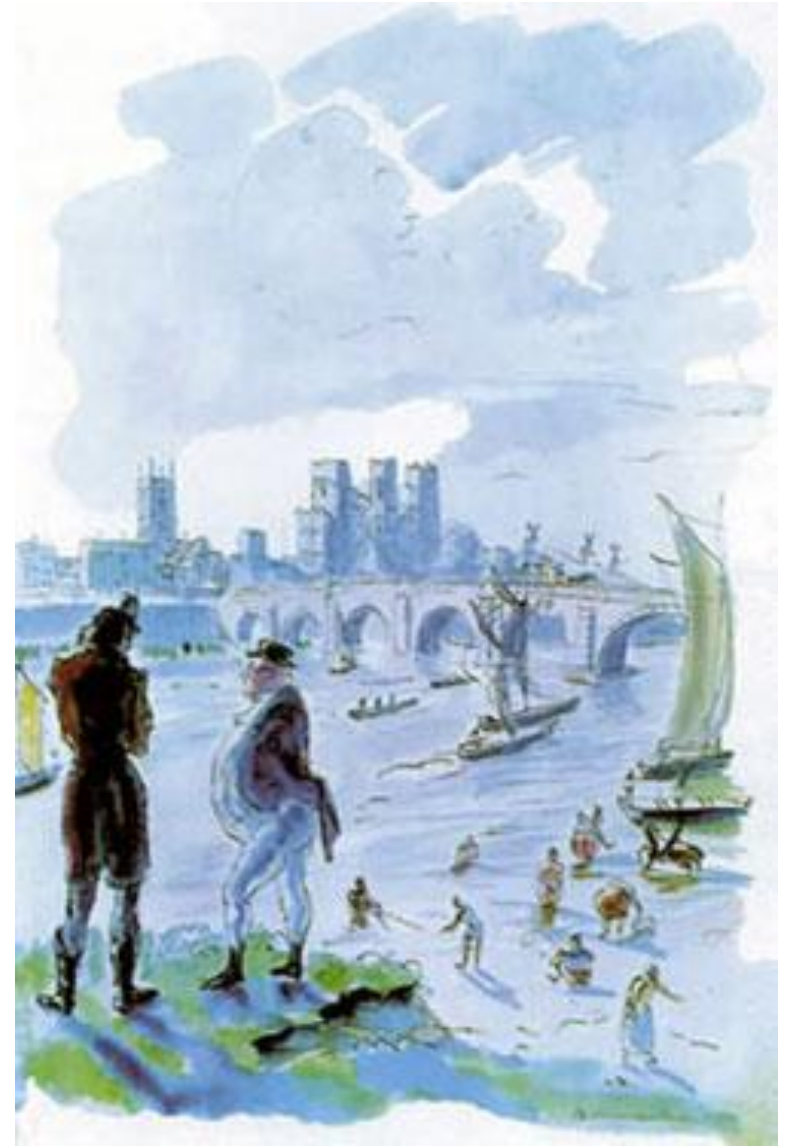
After being released John Dickens decided to take his son away from the warehouse, but his mother didn't want to lose the money her son was earning. Charles Dickens could never forgive her. When Dickens was fifteen he became a lawyer's clerk. In 1822, having learned shorthand, he secured a full time position in the "Mirror of the Parliament."



He wrote sketches and signed them “Boz”. It was his nickname. As a result his first book “Sketches by Boz” was published on his 24th birthday. The next two years Charles Dickens devoted to his famous “Pickwick Papers”, the publication which brought him fame and money.



Illustrations to “Pickwick Papers”.



5d



1812/1870
Charles Dickens



Pickwick

5d



1812/1870
Charles Dickens



Micawber

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1812/1870
Charles Dickens



Scrooge

5d



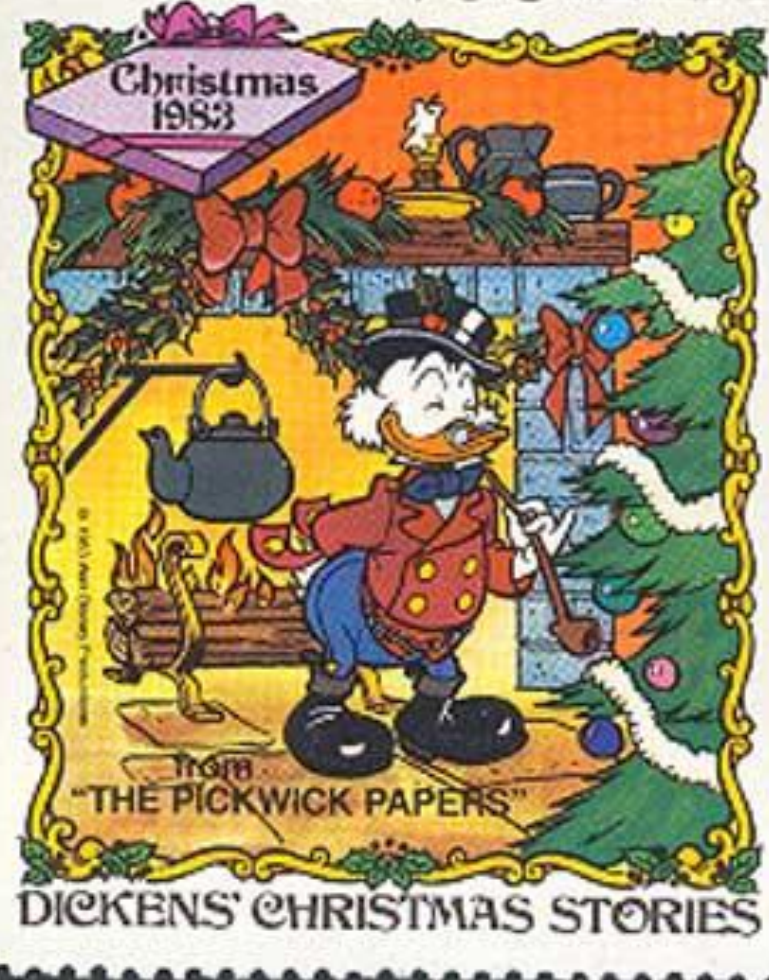
1812/1870
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Oliver

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ANGUILLA



DICKENS' CHRISTMAS STORIES

At 25, in 1837, Charles Dickens was already famous. It was a successful period of his life: his first son was born, his family moved out of lodgings into a twelve-room house. During the next six years of writing Charles Dickens observed life and attacked debtors, prisons, schools and workhouses.



The conditions of Yorkshire boarding school were described in “Nicholas Nickleby” (1839). He lived at 48, Doughty Street from April 1837 to December 1839 and secured his reputation here. This house is still standing there.



Charles Dickens was a very thoughtful writer.

There was a very important element in his work which is above all the others. It is the power of characterisation. Most of the people in his stories are in a sense “types”, they are based on real life people, though he gave them an independent vitality.



His visit to the USA in 1842 was not casual. His purpose was to see for himself if the republican experiment in the United States had brought a desirable freedom and equality for all the Americans. Dickens was stuck with horror at meeting slavery there.



- **Dickens's love of humanity and the inherent goodness of common man opposed to the egoism of the upper classes makes him a central figure in the literature of England in the 19th century. Charles Dickens undertook several trips in 1864-1869 to Australia, the USA and Ireland. Afterwards he became ill and died on 9 June 1870. He was buried in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey in London.**

