

Chapter 1 : My Year Before the Mast by Annette Brock Davis

My Year Before the Mast tells the story of Annette Brock Davis's life on the sea as the first female crew member of a commercial sailing line. Her courage and determination to break into a closed male world are central to this book, but we cannot ignore the fact that, while this is a book about a woman's struggle, it is also a book about the sea.

Reviews 30 Tracing an awe-inspiring oceanic route from Boston, around Cape Horn, to the California coast, *Two Years Before the Mast* is both a riveting story of adventure and the most eloquent, insightful account we have of life at sea in the early nineteenth century. Richard Henry Dana is only nineteen when he abandons the patrician world of Boston and Harvard for an arduous voyage a Tracing an awe-inspiring oceanic route from Boston, around Cape Horn, to the California coast, *Two Years Before the Mast* is both a riveting story of adventure and the most eloquent, insightful account we have of life at sea in the early nineteenth century. Richard Henry Dana is only nineteen when he abandons the patrician world of Boston and Harvard for an arduous voyage among real sailors, amid genuine danger. Published in , this book is the account of Richard Henry Dana, a Harvard graduate, who spent two years as a regular sailor on a merchant ship in the mids. This text is a slow read at times and often, especially early on, very repetitive. Thus it took me a while to really get into it. However, it is an interesting anthropological study of the life of an American merchant vessel in the s. Dana was not really a writer, so I can forgive some of the elements of his style that I found grating to read. For example, for most readers Mr. Dana gives too much specific and very detailed information on the smallest details of sailing, pulling in sails, especially during storms minute details of ship life, etc. I could not begin to understand a lot of it. Interesting to me, No. This chapter focuses on the people of what was at that time a foreign country. It reveals a lot about the attitudes of the period, and was fascinating. I also liked how much the text kept reinforcing the Yankee work ethic. Hard work and hardship did not bug these men. The only thing that seems to really upset them is treatment that denies them dignity. I believe the book really hits its stride in the last quarter. No way around it. Dana is concise and to the point in this chapter, and it works well. I feel my understanding of the world, and early America, is a little broader. For that, I am glad I read it. In that regard, Richard Henry Dana, Jr. A young Harvard man, he signed on as a common seaman aboard the brig *Pilgrim*, bound for California from Boston, to help improve his health. Had it been smooth sailing over benign seas under a wise and beneficent captain, with good food and a leisurely stay on California beaches, we likely would never have heard of Dana. But, thanks to the treacherous and icy waters of Cape Horn, a power hungry c In a way, the best thing for a writer is misfortune. To wit, re living conditions: When he and his shipmates mistakenly believe war has broken out with France and they might be captured and spend time in a French prison, they view the prospect as a pleasant break from their hard routines and shipboard incarceration. Part of the lasting success of this book lies in its rich complexity: In fact, most all the language of *Two Years Before the Mast* tends toward the formal and writerly. For despite it being a journal of a common seaman, Dana is an uncommon jack-tar, with a Harvard education, bourgeois manners, and Boston connections that keep him, just barely, from spending another two years in California hauling hides. Some of his not-so-well-connected mates, from whom he always keeps a distance, at least in his mind and in his journal, were not so lucky. Though nominally an American, Dana exhibits a tone, demeanor and delicacy more English than Yank. This delicacy also leads Dana to omit from his narrative most anything that might cast him in a common light--such as his consorting with Indian prostitutes in California. Upon returning to Boston, he graduated first in his class at Harvard, became a celebrity with the publication of *Two Years Before the Mast* in , married, and became a prosperous Boston lawyer. However, he never seemed to settle into a life of propriety, as if inoculated against it on his rough and formative two-year voyage. This unresolved inner conflict apparently resulted in a series of nervous breakdowns, which he cured with long sea voyages. Yet we sense this conflict between his upper-crust snobbery and his genuine affection for the rigorous life and his vigorous shipmates seething beneath the surface throughout his journal. We see a young man made over by his experience--a patrician who, in his heart, becomes a common sailor, but one who never comes to relinquish his previous social status and persona. For most memoirs to succeed, the reader must be convinced that the author has set off on a

sincere sojourn of personal discovery, to find his or her true self. Here, in *Two Years Before the Mast*, we see that discovery take place before our eyes, even if the author never fully admits it. Based on his autobiographical *Two Years Before the Mast*, a recounting of his , seagoing-adventures aboard the *Pilgrim* outbound and *Alert* return , Mr. When you are desperate, you do what you have to, right? We both learned so much. He kept a very detailed journal throughout. Do you know what reefing a sail is? His descriptions of icebergs were praised by Herman Melville. Wherever he went, Dana was friendly and eager to help without regard to social class or race; he was also curious to visit all places of worship, respecting various religious traditions, characteristics setting him above men of his or any age. There is also a 24 years later Epilogue where Dana returns to the California and to recount the changes which have occurred in the intervening years. He concludes with a brief update on what happened to some of his mates, those he was able to locate. Without being the least bit sentimental, the author is a very empathic man, concerned for all and saddened by many things he sees. It was the main reason he wrote the bookâ€™to address the injustices borne by the ordinary sailors. After he was admitted to the bar in , he went on to specialize in maritime law, and defended many common seamen in court. I think there were just a few too many references to the California coast described in enough detail that the effect was to pry out long-lingering ghosts haunting the coastline of my own isle of denial. The complete and utter irretrievability of that outpost wilderness fills me with something more than sadness and something less than rage. The book itself is a fascinating look at pre-gold rush California, and Dana treats the California coastline and journey there and back from Boston as a sort of seafaring pioneer narrative. This is an excellent read for any twentysomething who is still not convinced of what their life and career should look like. The long expositions on the technical aspects of navigation under canvas may not be of interest to those without familiarity with maritime life, but his personal narrative of daily life aboard a sailing vessel and the work of the cowhide trade in early California make the book worthwhile. I recommend it to those with an interest in nautical life in the days of sail. No time for sentiment onboard, as RHD says. Then I recall the great joy of their tea and molasses, or after reefing the topsail, some grog with rum. The weather around Cape Horn was abysmal, with big seas and sleet and snow, but they were on their way to pick up hides dropped down from the high coast of Santa Barbara. Dana observes that if the Californians ever learn to make shoes, their services will no longer be required: A century earlier, John Adams in Galicia observes that the only ones thriving are the clerics of numerous churches, convents etc. The fear of the captain and mates, the appreciation of the cook and his tea, the hard work and danger aloft--these remain with me fifty years after reading Dana. I did get down the coast to Dana Point, CA where I was impressed how the mock-up of the brig *Pilgrim* was even smaller than I envisioned. Most versions also include an equally interesting Afterward, in which the nowsomething author returns to California in , post-statehood and post-Gold Rush. Surprisingly modern in some ways; in other respects, disturbingly old-fashioned. As far as I know, there are no other contemporary books in English with as much detail on California during the years between Mexican independence and USA statehood. As mentioned, I expected it to a skimmable slog, but was surprised to, for the most part, actually enjoy it. I got a 99c Kindle version. Paradoxically, reading this 19thC text via an e-reader app is probably the best way to do it, because you can use the built-in dictionary function to look up much of the archaic and nautical terminology. Just as much time is spent on land as at sea, engaged in the hides trade, visiting with Spanish and Indian locals, riding horses, attending wedding fandangoes. A few things struck me. Martha Stewart would be proud. The sheer amount of time two years and labor involved in getting the hides back to the east coast is astonishing. Yet Dana befriends a fellow sailor, uneducated but brilliant, who bests him in their arguments about the Corn Laws and other topics. I want a 19th century sailor to clean my house for me every week. So when in Dana gets his hands on some newspapers from "the city of Mexico," he is bewildered to see Taney Roger B. Then, in September , they encounter the brig *Solon* near Bermuda and ask its men who is President. They respond, "Andrew Jackson. This book has, essentially, two scenes that are varied throughout the book. The first scene is "life on board the 19th century clipper ship". The tyranny of the captain most notably , travelling around the cape, the daily routine monotony of , encountering other ships, talking to the other sailors, the daily routine complaining about , and so forth. I would be lying if I said I understood all of the sailing vocabularly how many sails did they have on those clipper ships? To me, it

sounded like about a thousand or so! None the less, life on a ship is life on a ship. Were this book merely a description of life at sea, I probably would not have read it. According to Starr, this book was the ONLY English language book written about California at the time of the gold rush of , and so it plays a prominent though largely forgotten? When Dana sails into San Francisco at the time of this book, there was one ! Dana treats the residents of California as one might expect from a wealthy white dude from the east coast of the U. Dana is quick to see the potential in California but equally as quick to dismiss the current residents as hopelessly lazy. At one point Dana refers to the "California Disease" laziness. By the end of his time on the coast, he is calling California "Hell". That probably has more to do with his daily work processing hides than California itself. Dana was a student at Harvard in the s who, following an illness which compromised his eyesight and forced an extended leave from study, signed on as a rank-and-file seaman aboard a merchant vessel bound to California via the arduous passage around Cape Horn. The book is delightful both as a portrait of life at sea in the days of sail and as a sketch of California a This book is, I suppose, something of a family favorite. The book is delightful both as a portrait of life at sea in the days of sail and as a sketch of California as it was before the Gold Rush of One of the high points of that trip was a visit to the mission of Santa Barbara and its beautiful old fountain, from which Dana had watered his own horse during an excursion ashore some years prior.

Chapter 2 : My Year Before the Mast | RedShelf

My Year Before the Mast has 3 ratings and 1 review. Rebecca said: An excellent read, as evocative as if one were sailing the high seas with Annette herse.

Development[edit] In , Republic Studios announced plans to make a version of the film starring James Dunn and produced by Bert Clark. Edward Small announced plans to film the book in under his deal with United Artists. Alan Ladd was announced as star. Howard da Silva, who had just achieved fame playing Judd in Oklahoma! John Farrow watched some test footage she made and was impressed; she was brought back to play the female lead. This prompted them to decide to shoot *Two Years Before the Mast* entirely within the confines of the studio. May cost a hundred thousand. Depends on how long it takes those chins to sprout. But meantime, we can be shooting storms and Miss Fernandez. Four stage were combined into one, for the interiors. There was another stage holding the water tank. This also meant that Barry Fitzgerald, who became a star in *Going My Way* while the film was waiting for release, was upped to above the title billing. Box Office[edit] The film was one of the most popular movies released in the US that year, Los Angeles Times describing it as "a phenomenal hit". Y] 05 June Y] 24 Aug Y] 30 Aug Y] 14 Sep New York Times Current file 10 Sep New York Times Current file 06 Dec Y] 04 Mar Y] 26 Apr Y] 12 Mar Y] 23 July National Library of Australia. Retrieved 3 March Y] 16 June

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Nothing went right, or fast enough for him. He quarrelled with the cook, and threatened to flog him for throwing wood on deck; and had a dispute with the mate about reeving a Spanish burton; the mate saying that he was right, and had been taught how to do it by a man who was a sailor! But his displeasure was chiefly turned against a large, heavy-moulded fellow from the Middle States, who was called Sam. This, of course, was an accident, but it was set down against him. The captain was on board all day Friday, and everything went on hard and disagreeably. We worked late Friday night, and were turned-to early Saturday morning. John, the Swede, was sitting in the boat alongside, and Russell and myself were standing by the main hatchway, waiting for the captain, who was down in the hold, where the crew were at work, when we heard his voice raised in violent dispute with somebody, whether it was with the mate, or one of the crew, I could not tell; and then came blows and scuffling. You see your condition! Will you ever give me any more of your jaw? Will you ever be impudent to me again? Make a spread eagle of him! Upon hearing this, the captain turned upon him, but knowing him to be quick and resolute, he ordered the steward to bring the irons, and calling upon Russell to help him, went up to John. Sam by this time was seized up, as it is called, that is, placed against the shrouds, with his wrists made fast to the shrouds, his jacket off, and his back exposed. The captain stood on the break of the deck, a few feet from him, and a little raised, so as to have a good swing at him, and held in his hand the bight of a thick, strong rope. The officers stood round, and the crew grouped together in the waist. All these preparations made me feel sick and almost faint, angry and excited as I was. A man, too, whom I had lived with and eaten with for months, and knew almost as well as a brother. The first and almost uncontrollable impulse was resistance. But what was to be done? The time for it had gone by. The two best men were fast, and there were only two beside myself, and a small boy of ten or twelve years of age. And then there were beside the captain three officers, steward, agent and clerk. But beside the numbers, what is there for sailors to do? If they resist, it is mutiny; and if they succeed, and take the vessel, it is piracy. If they ever yield again, their punishment must come; and if they do not yield, they are pirates for life. If a sailor resist his commander, he resists the law, and piracy or submission are his only alternatives. Bad as it was, it must be borne. It is what a sailor ships for. This was too much, and he muttered something which I could not hear; this brought as many more as the man could stand; when the captain ordered him to be cut down, and to go forward. As soon as he was loose, he ran forward to the forecabin. At this moment I would have given worlds for the power to help the poor fellow; but it was all in vain. The mate now went forward and told John quietly to go aft; and he, seeing resistance in vain, threw the blackguard third mate from him; said he would go aft of himself; that they should not drag him; and went up to the gangway and held out his hands; but as soon as the captain began to make him fast, the indignity was too much, and he began to resist; but the mate and Russell holding him, he was soon seized up. When he was made fast, he turned to the captain, who stood turning up his sleeves and getting ready for the blow, and asked him what he was to be flogged for. Have you ever known me to hang back, or to be insolent, or not to know my work? He can help you! I could look on no longer. Disgusted, sick, and horror-struck, I turned away and leaned over the rail, and looked down into the water. A few rapid thoughts of my own situation, and of the prospect of future revenge, crossed my mind; but the falling of the blows and the cries of the man called me back at once. At length they ceased, and turning round, I found that the mate, at a signal from the captain had cut him down. Almost doubled up with pain, the man walked slowly forward, and went down into the forecabin. Every one else stood still at his post, while the captain, swelling with rage and with the importance of his achievement, walked the quarter-deck, and at each turn, as he came forward, calling out to us, "You see your condition! Now you know what I am! Yes, a slave-driver" a negro-driver! Soon after, John came aft, with his bare back covered with stripes and wales in every direction, and dreadfully swollen, and asked the steward to ask the captain to let him have some salve,

or balsam, to put upon it. Nobody is going to lay-up on board this vessel. Russell to take those men and two others in the boat, and pull him ashore. I went for one. The agent was in the stern sheets, but during the whole pullâ€”a league or moreâ€”not a word was spoken. We landed; the captain, agent, and officer went up to the house, and left us with the boat. I, and the man with me, staid near the boat, while John and Sam walked slowly away, and sat down on the rocks. They talked some time together, but at length separated, each sitting alone. I had some fears of John. He was a foreigner, and violently tempered, and under suffering; and he had his knife with him, and the captain was to come down alone to the boat. But nothing happened; and we went quietly on board. The captain was probably armed, and if either of them had lifted a hand against him, they would have had nothing before them but flight, and starvation in the woods of California, or capture by the soldiers and Indian blood-hounds, whom the offer of twenty dollars would have set upon them. The two men lay in their berths, groaning with pain, and we all turned in, but for myself, not to sleep. A sound coming now and then from the berths of the two men showed that they were awake, as awake they must have been, for they could hardly lie in one posture a moment; the dim, swinging lamp of the fore-castle shed its light over the dark hole in which we lived; and many and various reflections and purposes coursed through my mind. I thought of our situation, living under a tyranny; of the character of the country we were in; of the length of the voyage, and of the uncertainty attending our return to America; and then, if we should return, of the prospect of obtaining justice and satisfaction for these poor men; and vowed that if God should ever give me the means, I would do something to redress the grievances and relieve the sufferings of that poor class of beings, of whom I then was one. The next day was Sunday. We worked as usual, washing decks, etc. After breakfast, we pulled the captain ashore, and finding some hides there which had been brought down the night before, he ordered me to stay ashore and watch them, saying that the boat would come again before night. They left me, and I spent a quiet day on the hill, eating dinner with the three men at the little house. Unfortunately, they had no books, and after talking with them and walking about, I began to grow tired of doing nothing. The little brig, the home of so much hardship and suffering, lay in the offing, almost as far as one could see; and the only other thing which broke the surface of the great bay was a small, desolate-looking island, steep and conical, of a clayey soil, and without the sign of vegetable life upon it; yet which had a peculiar and melancholy interest to me, for on the top of it were buried the remains of an Englishman, the commander of a small merchant brig, who died while lying in this port. It was always a solemn and interesting spot to me. There it stood, desolate, and in the midst of desolation; and there were the remains of one who died and was buried alone and friendless. Had it been a common burying-place, it would have been nothing. The single body corresponded well with the solitary character of everything around. It was the only thing in California from which I could ever extract anything like poetry. Then, too, the man died far from home; without a friend near him; by poison, it was suspected, and no one to inquire into it; and without proper funeral rites; the mate, as I was told, glad to have him out of the way, hurrying him up the hill and into the ground, without a word or a prayer. I looked anxiously for a boat, during the latter part of the afternoon, but none came; until toward sundown, when I saw a speck on the water, and as it drew near, I found it was the gig, with the captain. The hides, then, were not to go off. The captain came up the hill, with a man, bringing my monkey jacket and a blanket. He looked pretty black, but inquired whether I had enough to eat; told me to make a house out of the hides, and keep myself warm, as I should have to sleep there among them, and to keep good watch over them. I got a moment to speak to the man who brought my jacket. Everything has been moved in the hold, from stem to stern, and from the waterways to the keelson. We had frijoles, the perpetual food of the Californians, but which, when well cooked, are the best bean in the world, coffee made of burnt wheat, and hard bread. It was now dark; the vessel was hidden from sight, and except the three men in the house, there was not a living soul within a league. The coati a wild animal of a nature and appearance between that of the fox and the wolf set up their sharp, quick bark, and two owls, at the end of two distant points running out into the bay, on different sides of the hills where I lay, kept up their alternate, dismal notes. I had heard the sound before at night, but did not know what it was, until one of the men, who came down to look at my quarters, told me it was the owl. Mellowed by the distance, and heard alone, at night, I thought it was the most melancholy, boding sound I had ever heard. Through nearly all the night they kept it up, answering one another slowly, at regular intervals.

This was relieved by the noisy coati, some of which came quite near to my quarters, and were not very pleasant neighbors. The next morning, before sunrise, the long-boat came ashore, and the hides were taken off. We lay at San Pedro about a week, engaged in taking off hides and in other labors, which had now become our regular duties. This, they told me, was a worse harbor than Santa Barbara, for south-easters; the bearing of the headland being a point and a half more to windward, and it being so shallow that the sea broke often as far out as where we lay at anchor. The Lagoda was lying there, and slipped at the first alarm, and in such haste that she was obliged to leave her launch behind her at anchor. The little boat rode it out for several hours, pitching at her anchor, and standing with her stern up almost perpendicularly. The men told me that they watched her till towards night, when she snapped her cable and drove up over the breakers, high and dry upon the beach. On board the Pilgrim, everything went on regularly, each one trying to get along as smoothly as possible; but the comfort of the voyage was evidently at an end. You may thank your stars if you ever see that place. You had better have your back sheathed, and your head coppered, and your feet shod, and make out your log for California for life! If any one was inclined to talk about it, the others, with a delicacy which I hardly expected to find among them, always stopped him, or turned the subject. But the behavior of the two men who were flogged toward one another showed a delicacy and a sense of honor, which would have been worthy of admiration in the highest walks of life. Sam knew that the other had suffered solely on his account, and in all his complaints, he said that if he alone had been flogged, it would have been nothing; but that he never could see that man without thinking what had been the means of bringing that disgrace upon him; and John never, by word or deed, let anything escape him to remind the other that it was by interfering to save his shipmate, that he had suffered. Having got all our spare room filled with hides, we hove up our anchor and made sail for San Diego. In no operation can the disposition of a crew be discovered better than in getting under weigh. No one went aloft beyond his ordinary gait, and the chain came slowly in over the windlass. Nobody broke his back or his hand-spike by his efforts.

Chapter 4 : Two Years Before the Mast - Wikipedia

Get this from a library! My year before the mast. [Annette Brock Davis] -- In , a young Canadian woman rejected the expectations of society and her upper-class family and became a crew member aboard one of the last great four-masted sailing vessels that still plied the.

He gives descriptions of landing at each of the ports up and down the California coast as they existed then. The headland bluffs near Mission San Juan Capistrano presented an obstacle to taking the cow hides to the beach for subsequent loading onto the ship. Some hides get stuck part way down the cliff and Dana is lowered with ropes to retrieve them. Being an intelligent and educated person, he learned Spanish from the Californian Mexicans and became an interpreter for his ship. He befriended Kanaka native people of the Sandwich Islandsâ€™ Hawaiian Islands sailors in the ports, one of whose lives Dana would save when his captain would as soon see him die. He spent a season on the San Diego shore preparing hides for shipment to Boston, and his journey home. Homebound[edit] Of the return trip around Cape Horn, on his new ship the Alert, in the middle of the Antarctic winter, Dana gives the classic account. He describes terrifying storms and incredible beauty, giving vivid descriptions of icebergs , which he calls incomparable. The most incredible part perhaps is the weeks and weeks it took to negotiate passage against winds and stormsâ€™all the while having to race up and down the ice-covered rigging to furl and unfurl sails. At one point he has an infected tooth, and his face swells up so that he is unable to work for several days, despite the need for all hands. Upon reaching Staten Island known today as Isla de los Estados , they know they have nearly come around the Horn. After the Horn has been rounded he describes the scurvy that afflicts members of the crew. But you can read, and so you must have read it. His chapters describing Cape Horn must have been written with an icicle. This appendix recounts his visit to California in , after the Gold Rush , by which time the state had been totally transformed. During this trip, he revisited some of the sites mentioned in the book as well as seeing old friends, including some that had been mentioned in the book, and others he did not like, such as the company agent he had worked with, Alfred Robinson , who by this time was himself an author of a book on California. Dana expressed gratitude to Robinson for being polite to him, despite Dana not being kind to him in his book. He visited the Fremont mining operations in Mariposa County. Along with Jessie Fremont and her party, he went to Yosemite Valley. A final note records the fate of his ship, the Alert. In during the Civil War , it was captured by the Confederate commerce raider Alabama , the crew were forced into the boats, and the ship was destroyed. Two Years Before the Mast was finally published in September in two versions, [4] without credit to Dana on the title page. During a part of this day we were hove to, but the rest of the time were driving on, under close-reefed sails, with a heavy sea, a strong gale, and frequent squalls of hail and snow. As far as the eye could reach, the sea in every direction was of a deep blue color, the waves running high and fresh, and sparkling in the light, and in the midst lay this immense mountain-island, its cavities and valleys thrown into deep shade, and its points and pinnacles glittering in the sunâ€™. But no description can give any idea of the strangeness, splendor, and, really, the sublimity, of the sight. Its great sizeâ€™ its slow motion, as its base rose and sank in the water, and its high points nodded against the clouds; the dashing of the waves upon it, which, breaking high with foam, lined its base with a white crust; and the thundering sound of the cracking of the mass, and the breaking and tumbling down of huge pieces; together with its nearness and approach, which added a slight element of fear,â€™all combined to give to it the character of true sublimity. His cheeks were of a handsome brown; his teeth brilliantly white; and his hair, of a raven black, waved in loose curls all over his head, and fine, open forehead; and his eyes he might have sold to a duchess at the price of diamonds, for their brilliancyâ€™Take him with his well-varnished black tarpaulin stuck upon the back of his head; his long locks coming down almost into his eyes; his white duck trousers and shirt; blue jacket; and black kerchief, tied loosely round his neck; and he was a fine specimen of manly beautyâ€™ His strength must have been great, and he had the sight of a vulture. It is strange that one should be so minute in the description of an unknown, outcast sailor, whom one may never see again, and whom no one may care to hear about; but so it is. Some people we see under no remarkable circumstances, but whom, for some reason or other, we never forget. He called himself Bill

Jackson^l. Writes Morris, "Dana is something more of a poet than either he or his contemporaries were aware; and that his ignorance of this gift was a loss to him as well as to us. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. When he returned to San Francisco in he was treated as a minor celebrity. To this day the book is regarded as a valuable historical resource describing s California. The geographic headland he wrote of, and the adjacent city, are named Dana Point for him. There are schools named for him in Southern California , including:

Chapter 5 : Before Moby-Dick, There Was "Two Years Before the Mast" | Arts & Culture | Smithsonian

My Year Before the Mast tells the story of Annette Brock Davis's life on the sea as the first female crew member of a commercial sailing line. Her courage and determination to break into a closed male world are central to this book, but we cannot ignore the fact that, while this is a book about a woman's struggle, it is also a book about.

Nov 20, Rick Skwiot rated it it was amazing In a way, the best thing for a writer is misfortune. In that regard, Richard Henry Dana, Jr. A young Harvard man, he signed on as a common seaman aboard the brig Pilgrim, bound for California from Boston, to help improve his health. Had it been smooth sailing over benign seas under a wise and beneficent captain, with good food and a leisurely stay on California beaches, we likely would never have heard of Dana. But, thanks to the treacherous and icy waters of Cape Horn, a power hungry c In a way, the best thing for a writer is misfortune. To wit, re living conditions: When he and his shipmates mistakenly believe war has broken out with France and they might be captured and spend time in a French prison, they view the prospect as a pleasant break from their hard routines and shipboard incarceration. Part of the lasting success of this book lies in its rich complexity: In fact, most all the language of Two Years Before the Mast tends toward the formal and writerly. For despite it being a journal of a common seaman, Dana is an uncommon jack-tar, with a Harvard education, bourgeois manners, and Boston connections that keep him, just barely, from spending another two years in California hauling hides. Some of his not-so-well-connected mates, from whom he always keeps a distance, at least in his mind and in his journal, were not so lucky. Though nominally an American, Dana exhibits a tone, demeanor and delicacy more English than Yank. This delicacy also leads Dana to omit from his narrative most anything that might cast him in a common light--such as his consorting with Indian prostitutes in California. Upon returning to Boston, he graduated first in his class at Harvard, became a celebrity with the publication of Two Years Before the Mast in , married, and became a prosperous Boston lawyer. However, he never seemed to settle into a life of propriety, as if inoculated against it on his rough and formative two-year voyage. This unresolved inner conflict apparently resulted in a series of nervous breakdowns, which he cured with long sea voyages. Yet we sense this conflict between his upper-crust snobbery and his genuine affection for the rigorous life and his vigorous shipmates seething beneath the surface throughout his journal. We see a young man made over by his experience--a patrician who, in his heart, becomes a common sailor, but one who never comes to relinquish his previous social status and persona. For most memoirs to succeed, the reader must be convinced that the author has set off on a sincere sojourn of personal discovery, to find his or her true self. Here, in Two Years Before the Mast, we see that discovery take place before our eyes, even if the author never fully admits it.

Chapter 6 : Two Years Before the Mast (film) - Wikipedia

Two Years Before the Mast is a memoir by the American author Richard Henry Dana Jr., published in , having been written after a two-year sea voyage from Boston to California on a merchant ship starting in

Chapter 7 : Two Years Before the Mast () - IMDb

The playboy son of a wealthy shipping magnate discovers at first hand the desperate privations suffered by the crew of one of his fathers ships when he is unwillingly pressganged aboard.

Chapter 8 : Two Years Before the Mast: A Sailor's Life at Sea by Richard Henry Dana Jr.

Get this from a library! My year before the mast. [Annette Brock Davis] -- A memoir of Annette Brock Davis's life at sea as the first female crew member of a commercial sailing line.

Chapter 9 : Two Years Before the Mast -Download Free Ebook Now

DOWNLOAD PDF MY YEAR BEFORE THE MAST

Two Years Before The Mast is Richard Henry Dana Jr.'s account of his life as a common seaman aboard the brig the *Pilgrim* which set out from Boston on August 14, destined for California by way of the treacherous Cape Horn. Dana gives a detailed account of the workings of the ship, the day-to-day.