

Charles Dickens: 1812-1870

■ **Feb 7, 1812:** Born in Portsmouth, England

■ **1816-22:** Family moves to Chatham, Kent, and later to London

■ **1824:** Father imprisoned for debt – Charles, 12, removed from school and sent to work for several months in blacking factory – experience haunts him for life

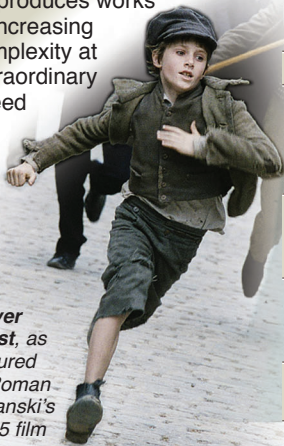
■ **1830:** Begins work as lawyer's clerk, learns shorthand and switches to journalism

■ **1833:** Contributes short stories and essays to periodicals under pseudonym "Boz"

■ **1836:** Marries **Catherine Hogarth**, with whom he has 10 children. Publishes first book: ***Sketches by Boz***

■ **1837:** ***Pickwick Papers***, published in monthly installments, makes Dickens' name. Now writing full-time, he produces works of increasing complexity at extraordinary speed

Oliver Twist, as pictured in Roman Polanski's 2005 film



■ **1842:** Received with huge enthusiasm on visit with Catherine to North America

■ **1843:** Publishes ***A Christmas Carol***

■ **1850s:** Works such as largely autobiographical ***David Copperfield***, ***Bleak House*** and ***Hard Times*** see increasingly sharper satire and assaults on social injustice

■ **1856:** Continued wealth and success allow him to buy Gad's Hill Place, grand country house he admired as a boy in Chatham

■ **1858:** Leaves Catherine, becoming involved with young actress **Ellen Ternan**. Begins series of paid readings, which are instantly popular

■ **1870:** Dies following stroke. Buried in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey

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