



2008

# She Touched the World

Sandra L. Reynolds

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Alexander, Sally Hobart and Robert Alexander. *She Touched the World: Laura Bridgman, Deaf-blind Pioneer*. Clarion Books, 2008. ISBN 9780618852994. \$18.00. 100 p.

Reviewer: Sandra L. Tidwell

Reading Level: Intermediate, Young Adult

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Biographies;

Subject: Bridgman, Laura Dewey, 1829-1889 --Juvenile literature; Deafblind women --United States --Biography --Juvenile literature; Books--Reviews;

A young girl, with a ribbon covering her eyes, is on the stage in front of a "tactile" world globe. An eager and astounded audience looks on. This glossy colored book cover is eye-catching. Most Americans have probably heard of Helen Keller and how she successfully met the challenges of being both deaf and blind, but few people heard of Laura Bridgman, who preceded Helen by fifty years. Laura, at the age of five, became deaf and blind after a bout with scarlet fever. A highly inquisitive and intelligent child, Laura learned about her environment by feeling and "hearing" sound vibrations. She said that her right foot "heard" better than her left foot! Laura explained her senses as being "think, nose, mouth, and fingers." *She Touched the World* is a carefully researched biography of Laura's entire life: her birth and growing-up years in Hanover, New Hampshire, her early education in Perkins School for the Blind in Boston her famous performances to exhibit the abilities she had developed despite her disabilities, and her death at age 58.

Biographer Sally Hobart Alexander became blind at age 26 and started losing her hearing the following year. She and her husband Robert coauthored this book. The narrative has a personal quality that comes from Alexander's unique perspective. Interesting black-and-white photos, detailed source notes and bibliography, and an index round out the features of this exceptional biography.