



AMERICAN HEROES



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Helen



KELLER (1880-1968)



The girl who overcame blindness and deafness and inspired millions



Helen Keller was born in 1880 into a wealthy Alabama family. She was a healthy, happy baby but just after she had started to say her first words, she became very sick and lost the use of her eyes and ears.

Helen became so willful and destructive that some of her relatives wanted to send her to a lunatic asylum. But her father wrote to The Perkins Institute for the Blind in Boston, asking for guidance. The Institute sent Anne Sullivan to Alabama to become Helen's teacher.

When Sullivan was 14, she had been admitted to The Perkins Institute where she learned to "talk" to blind people by making signs on their hands.

The first thing Helen did when she met Sullivan was rummage through her baggage for something to eat. Then she kicked her new teacher, hard.

But very slowly, the child began to trust Sullivan, and within months Helen was connecting the signs made on her hands with objects she touched. Suddenly, Helen's world blossomed.

Helen learned new words by the hundreds, and was soon able to read using words which had been printed in raised letters.



Helen Keller as a young girl.