



# Louis Braille: A Touch of Genius

*C. Michael Mellor*

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"We the blind are as indebted to Louis Braille as mankind is to Gutenberg." - Helen Keller

Three great men were born in the early weeks of January 1809: Abraham Lincoln, Charles Darwin, and Louis Braille. Only one has remained virtually unknown — the man who invented a means of reading and writing still used today in almost every country in the world, adapted to almost every known language from Albanian to Zulu.

Born sighted, Louis Braille accidentally blinded himself at the age of 3. He was lucky enough to be sent to a school for blind children in Paris, one of the first in the world. There, at the age of sixteen, he worked tirelessly on a revolutionary system of finger reading that became braille. He was a talented musician, astute businessman, and genius inventor — collaborating with another Frenchman to invent the first dot-matrix printer around 1840.

*Louis Braille: A Touch of Genius* is the first ever, full-color biography to include thirty-one of his extant letters, some written by his own hand, and translated into English for the first time.

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