

Class Notes: Walking in history's footsteps;

Duncan Creek students take immigrant trek

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

December 8, 2003 Monday, Home Edition

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The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
ajc.com

Section: Gwinnett;

Length: 245 words

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Body

Fifth-grade **students** at **Duncan Creek** Elementary learned recently that immigration to America in the early 20th century was not as simple as "crossing the pond," as the British would say.

As part of the grade's social studies curriculum, teachers and parents staged a simulation of Ellis Island.

For the Journal-Constitution About 150 **students** participated in the learning experience, which required them to research their assigned homelands and then assume the roles of **immigrants** seeking entry into the United States.

Whether they hailed from Italy, Scotland, Ireland, Greece, Russia or Jamaica, most **immigrants** came with hopes of a better life, said fifth-grader Brittany Mitcham, a **student** in Melanie Mount's social studies **class**. "Many were fleeing wars or famines in their native countries," said Brittany. "Their lives were very difficult, and they were looking for work and a chance to make a better life."

Not everyone who tried made it to the promised land, the **students** learned. Families were sometimes separated when quotas were filled, and **immigrants** were sent back to their homelands when disease barred their entry into the United States, said fifth-grader Pam McGregor, whose adopted homeland was Russia.

Media specialist Terry Starner helped **students** research their adopted homelands and the issues **immigrants** faced. **Duncan Creek** parents staffed the many checkpoints the **immigrants** moved through in their re-enactment of the quest to gain access to the United States.

Graphic

Photo: The halls of **Duncan Creek** Elementary School were recently transformed into a simulation of Ellis Island to help fifth-graders experience what immigrating to America might be like. / Photos courtesy of **Duncan Creek** Elementary School; Photo: Colie Tirocke (left) and Taylor Tschantz, **students** in teacher Beth Hendry's fifth-grade **class** at **Duncan Creek**, dressed the part for their role as **immigrants**. / Photos courtesy of **Duncan Creek** Elementary School

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Subject: IMMIGRATION (90%); PRIMARY SCHOOLS (90%); STUDENTS & STUDENT LIFE (90%); HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCE (89%); PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS (78%); CURRICULA (78%); FAMILY (77%); FAMINE (70%)

Company: DUNCAN CREEK ELEMENTARY (55%)

Organization: DUNCAN CREEK ELEMENTARY (55%)

Industry: PRIMARY SCHOOLS (90%); FAMINE (70%)

Geographic: UNITED STATES (94%); UNITED KINGDOM (79%); SCOTLAND (79%)

Load-Date: December 8, 2003