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Wright teacher published in national journal

MALTA - Danielle Bell, second-grade teacher at Wright Elementary School, is the co-author of an article, "DeKalb County, Illinois: A Local History Project for Second-Graders," that was published in the January/February issue of "Social Studies and the Young Learner."

Bell's co-author is Mary Beth Henning, assistant professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb.

Henning advised master's students in elementary education and taught the graduate course "Inquiry Strategies in Elementary School Social Studies" held at Wright last spring.

The article is about Bell's project with 7- and 8-year-old students.

The students studied books, videos, Web sites and primary historical materials to learn about their community's past. Students worked in small groups to research famous people in DeKalb history.

They also created short PowerPoint presentations to share their findings with classmates.

The children studied historical figures such as the inventors of barbed wire, Native American leaders (such as Chief Shabbona) and founders of NIU.

The children were motivated by reading local historian Steve Bigolin's book "Barbed Wire Saga" and visiting local historical sites such as the Gurler House and the Ellwood House Museum.

Preservice teachers Carolyn Marshall and Jon Valentino, working at Wright, assisted the second-graders in reading DeKalb history.

In the article, Bell and Henning concluded, "Even 7- and 8-year-olds can use the tools of historians and be inspired to pursue future social studies inquiry."

"Social Studies and the Young Learner" is published four times a year and read by thousands of educators. It is the leading nationwide magazine for elementary social studies teachers. See the table of contents of the latest issue at www.socialstudies.org/publications/ssyl/.

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