

NOVEL GUIDE C.1 – Daniel’s Walk

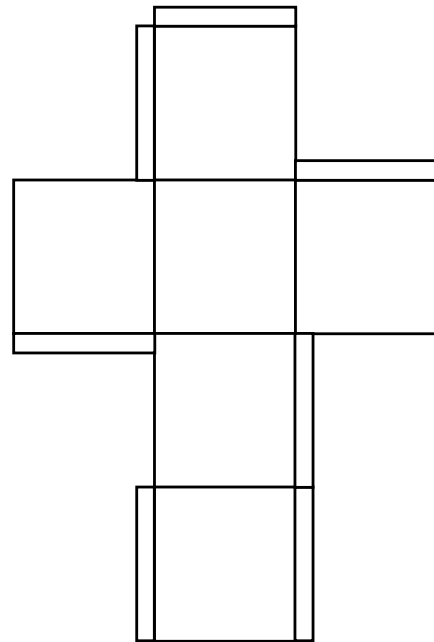
Michael Spooner grew up in the woods just north of Fairbanks, Alaska. There he learned to appreciate the wilderness and many of the practical skills of wood crafting that characters in his books employ. Some of Michael's cousins are Ojibwe. From that family connection he learned to love the histories, languages, and cultures of North America's first nations. With degrees in education and in English literature, Michael has worked since 1984 in scholarly publishing. He has been director of the Utah State University Press since 1993. He has written many chapters and articles for academic audiences and has also written *Daniel's Walk*, *A Moon in Your Lunch Box* (poems), and *Old Meshikee and the Little Crabs* (an Objibwe folktale). He regularly presents at professional conferences, and he visits classrooms to tell stories and read to students.

The journey begins...

The ruts left by the wagons that traveled the trail can still be found. The stories of the pioneers who followed the trail are a rich part of our American history. The storyteller in this book is Daniel, a 14-year-old boy. He is bothered by a dream that he had about his father. The man in the dream said that his father was in trouble. So, Daniel left the safety of his aunt's home and joined a wagon train. Before you begin the story, look at the map of the route that Daniel took on his way to his father. Use a piece of string and a ruler to find out how many miles Daniel traveled. Discuss with members of your class the hardships that he might face as a boy alone on the trail.

Charting the course...

As you read, concentrate on the friends that Daniel makes along the trail. Because of the nature of the trip, their lives become intertwined. Create a bubble chart of these characters. Place Daniel's name in the middle. As you add names, indicate ways that these characters help or relate to each other. Briefly describe each individual. Keep this chart; you will use it after you finish the book.



Journey's end...

Daniel finds his father, but the ending of the story is not what you might expect. After reading the story, discuss with your classmates other possible endings. Pick one of the endings and briefly summarize it. Share these summaries with the class. Use the information from your bubble chart to create a story box of the characters. Use the diagram to assist you in creating the box. On one side, put the title of the book and name of the author. On the remaining sides, place a drawing of each character and three adjectives to describe him or her.

Imagine you are on the Oregon Trail with Daniel. Write a postcard to a loved one at home and tell about your experiences so far on the trail. Refer to your bubble chart to tell your family about the people that you have met on the trail. One of the cards will be mailed from Fort XX and the other from Fort XX. Create a stamp that depicts the fort from which you will mail the card.

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Native American tribes all over North America spent time in sweat lodges. Information on these ceremonial buildings can be found in the histories of tribes from the Rocky Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean. The structures were usually domed and much smaller than other Indian structures. Temporary sweat lodges were covered with blankets or animal skins, and more permanent lodges were sealed with sod or mud.

Still today, Indian sweat lodges are a sacred place, associated with prayer or preparation. The purpose of the lodges is to purify the person. Viruses and bacteria are killed in the high temperatures. The Indians believe that time spent in the lodges helps them to clear the mind of anger and jealousy.