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## Review of *Holy Ground, Healing Water: Cultural Landscapes at Waconda Lake, Kansas*. By Donald J. Blakeslee.

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**Holy Ground, Healing Water: Cultural Landscapes at Waconda Lake, Kansas.** By Donald J. Blakeslee. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2010. x + 252 pp. Maps, photographs, illustrations, tables, appendix, notes, glossary, bibliography, index. \$45.00 cloth, \$22.00 paper.

In *Holy Ground, Healing Water* readers are treated to a historical journey through the changing cultural landscapes of the Waconda Lake area, northcentral Kansas. This region provides the setting for discussion of unique and representative Native American and Euro-American cultural developments in the Great Plains. Don Blakeslee, anthropologist with Wichita State University, briefly reviews roughly 13,000 years of Native traditions, based on archaeological investigations in the region, then discusses the Pawnee Trail, early European and Euro-American expeditions, complex Native-Native and Native-Euro-American interactions during the 19th century, sacred and secular perceptions and uses of Waconda Spring, and Lincoln Park, a local example of the many late-19th- to early-20th-century recreational and educational parks that once dotted the nation. Blakeslee has not only uncovered significant themes that defined Waconda, but places them in the context of broader cultural and historical issues.

Among many contributions is Blakeslee's expertise regarding the Pawnee Trail and sacred geography of the historic Pawnee people. A central thread of the first half of the book is the ancient Pawnee Trail, which ran between the Platte and Arkansas Rivers of Nebraska and Kansas. It was not only a route of Native travel and interaction in prehistory, but later a pathway associated with international intrigue as Spanish, French, and Euro-Americans entered the Plains. This humanly constructed feature played a dynamic role in the development of the region's varied cultural landscapes, as well as in the history of multiple groups and nations—Native, Spanish, French, and American.

Many readers will find Blakeslee's generalized review of Native American cosmology and specific discussion of this region's sacred geography fascinating. Prehistoric Native construction of a sacred landscape is interpreted from the Sage site intaglio identified during archaeological survey in Mitchell County. Combined

with distinctive natural features that took on special meaning for Pawnees and others, we are provided with insight into Native ideologies. Discussion of the role of Waconda Spring in Pawnee cosmology (chapter 5) helps readers understand the dynamic nature of cultural landscapes, especially when the vastly different Euro-American perspectives and uses of this natural spring are subsequently analyzed (chapter 7). Especially interesting are comments on the various stories or myths developed by Euro-Americans as they defined their own place in this region, a related theme in discussions of the "Post Rock Landscape" (chapter 6).

This book is written for both general readers and specialists interested in archaeology, anthropology, geography, and Native, Euroamerican, environmental, and social history. For the most part, its style is appropriate for nonspecialists, including useful maps, other illustrations, and a glossary. Professionals will find the endnotes and references essential for evaluation and further research. Whether readers are attracted to this book by its focus on the Waconda region or the Great Plains as a whole, they will gain new insight, both specific and broad, into a variety of stimulating subjects related to changing cultural traditions in the Great Plains. **Lauren W. Ritterbush**, *Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work, Kansas State University*.