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## BOOK NOTES

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*The Forgotten Senator: The Life and Character of Preston B. Plumb.* By Johanna D. Wickman. (Casper, WY: Bellis Perennis, 2023, 364 pages, paper \$29.95.)

In *The Forgotten Senator*, the first biography of Preston Plumb in over a century, Wickman underscores Plumb's influence in both Kansas and national politics. Instead of a traditional narrative, Wickman infuses the text with extensive quotations from correspondence and interviews from the 1910s, forming a "compilation of stories in the words of those who actually knew the man" (p. 16). Plumb moved to Kansas Territory in September 1856, bringing Sharps rifles, ammunition, and other supplies to aid the free-state cause. With a background in journalism, he worked for the *Herald of Freedom* in Lawrence before becoming involved in state politics. With the coming of war, Plumb helped raise the Eleventh Kansas Infantry and served in major engagements in the trans-Mississippi theater. He helped found Emporia, where he established the city's first newspaper and a successful law office. Plumb's leadership abilities blossomed after he entered the U.S. Senate in 1877, where he eventually served as chairman of the Committee on Public Lands. Though few may recognize his name today, readers will come to appreciate his incredible story.

*The Wapsipinicon Almanac: Selections from Thirty Years.* Edited by Timothy Fay. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2023, xiv + 253 pages, paper \$27.50.)

For thirty years, Iowa printer Timothy Fay produced *The Wapsipinicon Almanac* by hand through an arduous process involving an antique Linotype machine, a letterpress, a paper cutter, stitches, and glue. This anachronistic labor of love provided a vehicle for an eclectic annual assortment of short stories, poetry, book reviews, and nonfiction essays chronicling the experience of Iowa life, especially in the state's small towns and rural areas, such as Fay's home town of Anamosa, situated along the Wapsipinicon River. In *The Wapsipinicon Almanac: Selections from Thirty Years*, Fay delivers a representative sample of some of the *Almanac's* most evocative contributions. The book's essays, reflections, and fiction offer a range of insights into a slower-paced existence that modernization has largely swept away. The tension between town life and country life is a consistent theme that will resonate with many

readers across the plains states. Original artwork and advertisements selected from the *Almanac's* thirty years illustrate the text, making the book not just illuminating and insightful but also beautiful.

*105 Meadowlark Reader: A Kansas Journal of Creative Nonfiction.* Edited by Cheryl Unruh and Tracy Million Simmons. (Emporia, KS: Meadowlark Press, nos. 1–4, 2021–22, paper \$16.99 per issue.)

On the back of each issue of the *105 Meadowlark Reader: A Kansas Journal of Creative Nonfiction* is a Kansas county map, showing at a glance which counties have contributed to the volume. The ambitious project of this relatively new periodical is to tell true Kansan stories—that is, stories by and about regular Kansans. Each issue is themed yet contains writing from more than thirty authors, resulting in a marvelous diversity of material and approaches. For instance, the first issue features Ginger Zyskowski's narrative of her grandfather's early-twentieth-century production and consumer engineering work, including inventing a nut-butter grinder and a lawn sprinkler. The same issue contains a personal essay about receiving difficult medical news and another on the nature of leadership in Kansas. Some of the authors have moved to the state recently; others belong to families that have been here for generations. They span a wide range of ages. These are volumes to dip into and savor. The editors also provide substantial practical information about reading and writing in Kansas, so, finally, each issue is an invitation to its readers to pick up their pens (or plug in a keyboard) and get writing.

*Shadows and Sorrows.* By Michael D. Graves. (Emporia, KS: Meadowlark Press, 2022, 207 pages, paper \$16.99.)

Another fine addition to the Pete Stone, Private Investigator series, *Shadows and Sorrows* portrays Pete Stone struggling after his boyhood friend Cocky Wright dies in an airplane crash and he is framed for espionage. Stone rejects the accusations and sets out to clear his name. The search for the truth entangles him with the FBI, the Mafia, congressional candidates, and the German American Bund. Take another trip back to 1930s Wichita with Stone to uncover the answers amidst crashes, baseball, and ghosts from the past in this page-turner.