matters in the volume. All in all, the volume reflects the excellent work of the editor.

*Louisiana State University*  
Walter Prichard

(Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1948, pp. xi, 111. $2.00.)

Since 1938, Louisiana State University has followed the practice of inviting outstanding Southern historians to present a series of lectures in honor of the late Walter Lynwood Fleming. The lecturer for 1947 was Thomas D. Clark of the University of Kentucky and his subject was “The Rural Press and the New South.” The lectures have subsequently appeared in book form as published by Louisiana State University Press.

Professor Clark, whose full-length study of *The Southern Country Editor* appeared recently (The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis, 1948), demonstrated clearly in his lectures the importance of the rural editor in the study of the cultural history of the South. Country editors necessarily were “toms-of-many-Tinkers.” Frequently unlettered, these men were forced to pour forth reams of sage advice on education, politics, farm finance, and a myriad of other subjects. At the same time they must scrupulously recognize the importance of public relations by personalizing the news and setting it to the standards of rural communities. Setting his own type, soliciting advertisements, and collecting from delinquent subscribers were all in a day’s work for the average editor.

Professor Clark’s lectures were at their best in describing the highly personalized character of the average country weekly. Frequent use of names, the sometimes irresponsible reporting of idle gossip, the relation of folklore, and the reporting of freaks of nature, all indicated that the rural paper was often ordinary conversation set to print.

The present writer, however, wishes that the lectures might have given more space to the breaks in unanimity among the press, particularly in the political sphere. Southern editors did not all agree on politics even during the period of Reconstruction, and the Populist period saw the establishment of a National Reform Press Association
that soon counted in its membership numerous Southern editors who did not even have to change the crossings of their t's to fit comfortably into the press program of the Populist party (e.g., Frank Burkitt of the Okolona, Mississippi, Chickasaw Messenger). These editors might have been in the minority, but they too played a part in influencing the society of the South.

The author presents interesting information on the extent to which advertising (especially of patent medicines) and political printing kept editorial pens still on controversial subjects. The restraining hand of personal violence as a limitation on a free press might have received elaboration. It was not at all rare for outspoken editors to face death at the hands of an outraged opponent. Within a year's time (1886-1887) two Jackson, Mississippi, "reform" editors were killed after writing stormy editorials affecting state politics.

Only one lapse in editorial work (p. 53) caught the eye of the reviewer. The book is attractively printed and bound. Professor Clark has added another valuable work to his lengthy list of studies in the social history of the South.

Millsaps College

James S. Ferguson

The State Historical Society of Missouri. A Semicentennial History. By Floyd C. Shoemaker (Columbia, State Historical Society of Missouri, 1948, pp. 193. Illustrations, bibliography, and index. $3.50.)

The development of historical societies in the United States varies from state to state, with no two states following the same pattern. Few if any of the societies have set down the history of their organization and development in as detailed a form as Missouri has done in this semicentennial volume prepared by its secretary.

The historical society movement was inaugurated by Massachusetts in 1791, and within the next fifty years some sixty-five societies came into existence. Missouri, along with other states of the Middle West, organized a historical society during this period but it was shortlived and came to an end with the death of its first president in 1849. It was almost fifty years later, in 1898, that the Missouri Press Association launched the present society.

The decision to locate the headquarters of the society on the campus of the state university at Columbia has played