meeting in March some four months before it was adopted by the Jackson, Michigan, meeting July 6. Eli Thayer raised a good part of his Emigrant Aid money from churches rather than financiers. That the initiative and referendum, and the recall "were in general use by 1912" is an overstatement. There was provision for initiative and referendum in sixteen states, and four have since been added, but such procedure is now possible in only four states east of the Mississippi River. The recall had been adopted in eight states at that time.

The work represents a splendid objective, and it will prove useful to students in the field.

*University of Nebraska*  
James L. Sellers


During the past few years scholars have become interested in the yeoman class of the Old South. That there were farmers in the region and that they were prospering is something of a new idea. That they had developed an agency for the securing of credit, the buying of their supplies, and the marketing of their crops is something that neither earlier writers nor more recent ones have even suspected.

Professor Atherton has now supplied that information and filled one more gap in the record of this neglected, but important, group. He shows that in regions where the small farmer predominated, and even in areas where farmers were scattered about near large plantations, there were country storekeepers who were themselves small businessmen, and who rendered all the services to their customers that the factor in the coastal cities rendered to the large planters. And they prospered. Some of them went on to become factors and some of them were content to grow wealthy in their own neighborhoods.

The factorage system had developed in the Southern colonies in an early period for the marketing of tobacco and rice. With most of their capital tied up in land and labor and with efforts centered primarily on the raising of a single cash crop sold in distant markets, the planters were glad to
turn their marketing over to capable outsiders. These were either the agents of large concerns in England or independent middlemen who resided at some convenient shipping point. They sold the planter's crops on commission and purchased his supplies. They were both respected and hated according to the degree of prosperity existing at any time.

This system was passed on to the Cotton Kingdom, and Charleston, Mobile, New Orleans, and other towns had their factors, their warehouses, and their shipping facilities for cotton just as the old eastern centers had had theirs for tobacco and rice. To these the large planters turned for services. Into their keeping again went a large amount of Southern happiness and well-being.

The small farmer, however, could raise cotton as well as the planter, but he could not use the factorage system. So to take care of his needs the country store appeared, with its "petticoats, pills and plows" and with a proprietor who soon established credit in New York or elsewhere and who passed it on to the lesser folks he served. He marketed their crops, served as their banker, and developed a business policy that served his customers as well as the factor served the planters. He thus became an essential feature of the yeoman life of the section.

Professor Atherton has done an excellent job and an important one. His scholarship is sound, his style good, and his grasp of the subject in its larger setting unusually satisfactory.

The University of Chicago

Avery Craven

*Plain Folk of the Old South.* By Frank L. Owsley. (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1949, pp. xxi, 235. Maps and index. $3.50.)

The first four chapters of this very valuable study are revised lectures that were delivered at Louisiana State University in 1948 in the series known as the Fleming Lectures in Southern History. In a fifth chapter, accompanied by a number of statistical tables, the author analyzes holdings of land and slaves through the use of typical Southern counties. This extra chapter, plus an index and footnotes in connection with each chapter, makes the study much more useful to students and teachers of the history of the Old South.