the schools. In order to secure adoption of Sumner's Civil Rights Act of 1875 it was necessary to delete the section on schools. Finally Vaughn shows how Barnas Sears, general agent of the Peabody Fund, helped to inhibit any tendency which might have existed to promote integrated education by lobbying against the schools section in the Civil Rights Bill and by giving financial aid from the Peabody Fund only to schools in the South which were segregated.

Butler University, Indianapolis  Emma Lou Thornbrough


John T. Flanagan has not written a biography of Edgar Lee Masters. Neither is this book a critical analysis of Masters' work, nor is it a final evaluation of Masters' place in literary history. Instead, Flanagan has published a "survey of the critical reception of his [Masters'] poetry and prose as countless reviewers, essayists, and literary historians viewed his writing" (p. iii). In brief, this is a study about what Masters' contemporaries thought of him as a writer.

During the summer of 1949 this reviewer, then a student, found Professor Flanagan to be a very sound and meticulous scholar. This book confirms such a conclusion. The notes at the end of each chapter illustrate how exhaustively Flanagan has searched at home and abroad for the comments written by Masters' critics. In short, Flanagan demonstrates impeccable scholarship in this work.

The book begins with a short introduction, followed by a chapter dealing with the life of the Spoon River poet. Basically using a chronological approach, Flanagan then takes the reader through the detailed, critical responses to Masters' poetry and prose. The early works of verse and drama are discussed, followed by comment on the *Spoon River Anthology*, which work "catapulted him [Masters] into fame and began a critical discussion of his poetry which raged unabated for several decades" (p. 21). What the reviewers had to say about the *Domesday Book*, dramatic verse narratives, fiction, biography, and later verse are all included in Flanagan's study. Lastly, the author explains how the literary historians and anthologists have dealt with Masters.
Without question, the author accomplishes what he set out to do. This is the definitive study of the critics' opinions of Masters' voluminous writings. Flanagan's prose is clear, crisp, and candid. He has great empathy for Masters, but his intimate feelings do not hamper his objectivity. Unfavorable, as well as favorable, criticism is examined thoroughly. For example, in the chapter discussing fiction Flanagan states: "On the balance it must be admitted that Masters did not write distinguished fiction" (p. 106). This same candor about what the critics wrote is displayed in every chapter of the book. And by reading what the critics had to say one gains much knowledge about Masters and the literary climate that prevailed in the United States prior to World War II. As a social critic, Masters had much to say about life. Flanagan's informative book caused this reviewer to reread the Spoon River Anthology in its entirety. Although Flanagan found many areas of agreement among the critics, his book points out that literary criticism is not an exact science.

This book will be of interest to instructors who teach literary criticism and to students who are interested in their midwestern heritage.

Indiana University Southeast,  Gerald O. Haffner
New Albany


The elections are those of 1800, 1836, 1860, 1896, and 1936. The authors: five professional historians—Merrill D. Peterson, Joel H. Silbey, Don E. Fehrenbacher, Gilbert C. Fite, and Donald R. McCoy—each dealing with a year.

It is McCoy's judgment (p. 56) that 1836 and 1896 were "on a lower level of significance" than 1800, 1860, and 1936. What about 1796? 1856? Fehrenbacher rejects them (p. 34) as choices for major cruciality because each was "reversed four years later." 1832? Silbey points out that half the states then still had "essentially one-party systems" (p. 25), where-