Editors' Note

Bob Hesketh and Chris Hackett

Past Imperfect publishes articles in any field of history written by active students attending colleges or universities in the prairie region. The name *'Past Imperfect'*, with its play on the grammatical term, evokes a sense that our understanding of history can never be perfect. Each new generation may develop fresh insights, but older understandings are all too often lost. We can share glimpses of the past, small moments of revelation. *Past Imperfect* hopes to provide a few such glimpses. Its underlying purpose is threefold. First, it can help students to publish earlier in their careers by providing greater support and assistance than students can normally expect from traditional academic journals in honing analytical, organizational, and writing skills to publishable standards . Our contributors will learn 'the ropes' of publishing and be better prepared when they do submit to established journals. In the process, we hope that important material will be published which might otherwise be lost. Second, the region's best students will have a forum in which they can demonstrate their proficiency as historians and make their work known to the academic community many of them hope to enter. In this regard, our 'Contributors' section helps to advertise the interests and accomplishments of *Past Imperfect*'s authors and editors. (Who knows, perhaps the elusive jobs that hover tantalizingly and, it seems, perpetually on the horizon will some day become reality.) Third, *Past Imperfect* will provide a bench mark against which students can measure themselves; it will make students aware of one another's work and perhaps even help to foster a sense of community among the students studying history on the prairies.

The idea for *Past Imperfect* originated with the editors in the fall of 1991. Soon after, the project won the backing of the University of Alberta History Graduate Students Association and the support of the Department of History and the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research. The intention was to publish the first issue by July 1992. The tight time schedule -- and the myriad tasks the editors faced in establishing a new journal -- meant that we sought submissions for this first issue largely among students within the Department. The referees we approached to read the papers submitted to *Past Imperfect* responded with enthusiasm for the project. Their detailed criticisms helped our contributors and the editors immeasurably. The journal, itself, was produced on an MS-DOS computer using Pagemaker 4.0 and then printed on the University of Alberta Printing Services's Docutech system.

In bringing the first issue to life, the editors and the HGSA have accumulated numerous debts. The faculty of the University of Alberta Department of History was receptive to the concept underlying *Past Imperfect* and agreed to provide assistantship financing to the editors and some financial backing for production costs. The faculty's allotment of scarce resources to *Past Imperfect* during a time of financial restraint is eloquent testimony to its commitment to student scholarship. Our particular thanks to the Acting Chair, Dr. D.R. Owram, for his encouragement and solid advice at every stage in the production of this first issue. Within the Department, Professors C.M. Small, F.A. de Luna, P. Lawson, R.J. Martin, D.R. Marples, N. Wickenden, and B.M. Smith deserve particular mention for their contributions. Dr. J.E. Foster provided valuable advice on the practical issues connected with editing a journal, along with prescient warnings about the work involved. In the Department office, Betty Yellowlees and Linda Bridges generously helped us establish *Past Imperfect* as a formal 'entity' and smoothed our way through the University bureaucracy. The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research supported the project with a grant for promotional purposes; our thanks to Associate Dean Dr. P. Demers for her enthusiasm and suggestions. The Edmonton and District Historical Society helped to publicize *Past Imperfect*, and we particularly thank David Kales for his work on our behalf. Our contributors put up with short deadlines and other heavy-handed editing demands so that the first issue could be published on schedule. Bob Irwin and Greg Kennedy undertook the subscription drive. Mike Hawkins provided essential technical assistance concerning the layout of the journal. He also donated the document for and designed our first cover. Our wives, Betty Matwichuk and Robin Adkins listened with interest and patience to our ramblings about *Past Imperfect*. We benefited from their understanding and suggestions.

We have numerous plans for the future. *Past Imperfect* has already received its first submissions for the next issue, some from students attending other universities. We particularly hope that the contributors to our next issue will be representative of the entire geographic area served by the journal. We also hope to sell more subscriptions to students and faculty at other institutions in the region (hint! hint!). We are investigating the possibility of publishing some articles in French. We also plan to include a calendar of coming events so that we can help publicize important student undertakings in the region, such as the University of Manitoba History Graduate Students Association's annual February Riding Mountain Conference. But, for now, we think you will enjoy the first issue of *Past Imperfect*. If you have any suggestions or comments, please write and let us know.