

Abstract

This essay seeks to complicate prevailing interpretations of Thomas Henry Hines and his 1864 Northwest Conspiracy, an attempt to turn the tide of the Civil War through an invasion of Canada. After the failure, Hines sought to, but could not inscribe his version of the plot into American memory by writing a series of essays for the *Southern Bivouac*. Ironically, Hines's account of his earlier escape from jail became a sensationalist hit instead of his serious narrative. Even though Hines tried to refashion himself from a renegade spy to an aspiring historian, he did not succeed. Hines may not have memorialized the Northwest Conspiracy, but he managed to solidify his place in history as a rogue. Like the Conspiracy itself, Hines's ideas were greater than his ability to produce. Ultimately, Hines could not gain a broad audience because he remained insular – trapped within his narrow perspective; in the end, he was an arrogant autobiographer than a thoughtful historian. Moreover, the Northwest Conspiracy may not have captured the collective imagination because it defied easy expectations about the Confederacy and Canada. Despite popular opinion, the connection between Hines and Canada reveals that the man and place alike can deceive upon first glance. In the end, a thrilling story or comfortable narrative may triumph over a more nuanced, problematic truth.

Keywords: *Remembrance, U.S. Civil War, Memory Studies, Northwest Conspiracy.*