

General Thomas C. Hindman



Thomas Carmichael Hindman, a young Scot, was born in Knoxville, Tennessee January 28, 1828. In 1841, the family moved to Ripley, Mississippi where his father had purchased a new plantation and, while living there, young Thomas studied law and later became a practicing attorney when the Mexican War began in 1846. Hindman volunteered and served in the 2nd Mississippi Volunteer Infantry. During that conflict he had distinguished himself for gallantry. When the Mexican War ended, he returned home, resumed his law practice, and became active in politics by serving in the Mississippi House of Representatives. When his term expired in 1854, he moved to Helena, Arkansas where there were more opportunities for his political ambitions. After settling there, Hindman established a friendship with future Confederate general Patrick Cleburne. The two became law partners for a time and engaged in numerous business activities together. Hindman served in the US Congress from 1858 to 1861, at which time he resigned his seat to join the Confederate Army. He was appointed colonel of the 2nd Arkansas Infantry June 12, 1861, and brigadier general in September of the same year. He and his brigade took a conspicuous part in the Battle of Shiloh. He was wounded in that battle, and was promoted major general April 18, 1862. In May General Hindman was assigned to the command of the Trans-Mississippi district with headquarters in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Conditions were so chaotic in Arkansas at that time that Hindman had great difficulty in creating an army. But created he did, for he proved to be a man of great energy and administrative ability. He declared martial law and enforced the conscript law in the most rigid manner. He established shops for the manufacturing of arms, clothing, and other supplies, gathered together a considerable army, and saved Little Rock and the entire Arkansas valley for the Confederacy, for the time being. He fought the Battle of Prairie Grove, probably a drawn battle, although claimed as a victory for the South. Subsequently, he commanded a division at Chickamauga, and at Chattanooga, and in the Atlanta Campaign in which he was severely wounded which incapacitated him from further field duty. At the close of the war, General Hindman went to Mexico and remained there until 1867, when he returned to Helena, Arkansas where in the fall of 1868, he was assassinated in his home by an unknown assailant. That act was believed to be inspired by Hindman's outspoken and determined stand against the existing carpetbag rule in Arkansas. Hindman was buried in the Helena Maple Hill Cemetery which is also the final resting place of his friend General Patrick Cleburne. A magnificent shaft has been erected there to Hindman's memory.