

(Image: Slide 1) Abd el-Kader was born in 1808 near the city of Mascara, Algeria. His father, Muhyi ad-Din, was a respected religious leader, and his early life was spent learning the skills to follow in his father's footsteps. He became a brilliant religious and academic scholar, as well as a gifted horseman.

(Image: Slide 2) At the time of Abd el-Kader's birth, the Regency of Algiers was part of the Ottoman Empire. At its height, the Ottoman Empire circled much of the Mediterranean Sea, but by the 19th century, the empire was greatly weakened, and the Ottomans were pulling out of northern Africa. France was anxious to hurry the remaining Ottomans along and establish a presence themselves. France attacked the port city of Algiers in 1830.

(Image: Slide 3) The tribes of northwest Africa asked Abd el-Kader's father to lead the fight against the French; Muhyi ad-Din suggested instead his 25-year-old son. In 1832, Abd el-Kader was recognized as Emir, or Commander, of the Faithful.

Abd el-Kader won the loyalty of most tribes in western Algeria, and the next several years were marked by French *and* Algerian victories... and two treaties. During this time, Abd el-Kader became known internationally as a leader of great courage, intelligence, and decency.

(Image: Slide 4) One of the most interesting aspects of the Emir's military career was that he treated French prisoners decently. He put his own mother in charge of female prisoners. For Abd el-Kader, war was not a reason to ignore his deep religious beliefs about decency and the value of human life. In insisting upon human treatment of prisoners, he is credited for creating a model that would eventually become the Geneva Convention on Human Rights.

(Image: Slide 5) In 1846 the founders of a new town on the banks of the Turkey River in Iowa chose to name it Elkader, in honor of the Emir's courage and spirit.

(Image: Slide 6) Ultimately, of course, the French war machine proved too much, and in 1847, Abd el-Kader decided that the price of continued fighting had become too high. Part of the agreement he made with the French was that he and his extended family would leave Algeria forever, on the condition that they could live in a predominately Muslim city in Egypt or Palestine.

The French government broke its promise to Abd el-Kader, keeping him and his extended family prisoners in France for nearly five years. During this time, visitors came from all over France to meet the famous prisoner and were moved by Abd el-Kader's intellect and sincerity. He continued to be an international celebrity.

(Image: Slide 7) In Britain, a small race horse named Abd el-Kader, known affectionately as "Little Ab" won the Grand National Steeplechase in both 1850 and 1851.

Finally, in 1852, Abd el-Kader and his extended family were liberated. They settled first in Bursa, Turkey. Three years later, they moved to Damascus, Syria. (Image: Slide 8) During the 1860 Syrian Civil War, Abd el-Kader and his Algerians saved the lives of over 10,000 Damascus Christians. (Image: Slide 9) In recognition of his courageous actions, the French bestowed on him the Legion of Honor. (Image: Slide 10) On behalf of the United States, President James Buchanan sent the Emir a gift of two Colt pistols.

(Image: Slide 11) In 1873, when Abd el-Kader was ill and appeared to be dying, the *New York Times* ran an 800-word column summarizing his career. In that column they wrote, "If to be an ardent patriot, a soldier whose genius is unquestioned, whose honor is stainless... a hero who could accept defeat and disaster without a murmur--if all these constitutes a great man, Abd-El-Kader deserves to be ranked among the foremost of the few great men of the century."

Abd el-Kader died in Damascus in 1883, at the age of 78. His remains were taken back to Algeria in 1966, following the country's success at winning independence from France.