

Chiricahua & Mescalero Apache

*former
students*

Kaderli

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Mrs. Elizabeth Kaderli
P. O. Box 3015
Midland, Texas

Dear Mrs. Kaderli:

I don't find much here on the Mescalero Apaches. During the Civil War these Indian in Western Texas under their chiefs Cadete and Nicolas kept Fort Davis, then occupied by the Confederates in the Big Bend country, in a state of siege. They wiped out the settlements along the Rio Bonita, ambushed and destroyed a column of Confederate cavalry under Lieutenant May, and depopulated the entire area.

After the Union forces had run the Confederates out of New Mexico, General J. H. Carleton, U.S.A., went after the Mescaleros in East Texas and Southwestern New Mexico with three columns, all with the same orders: "The men are to be slain whenever and wherever they can be found. The women may be taken prisoners, but, of course they are not to be killed."

Captain McCleave with two companies of Californians encountered the Mescaleros in Canyon del Perro, shot it out with them, and routed them. The Indians knew when they had enough. They also knew better than to surrender to the Californians. Instead they fled to Kit Carson, who was in their country with five companies, and surrendered to him.

Cadete, whose Indian name was Gian-na-tah (Always Ready), made a short speech to Carson, which is preserved and is reminiscent of the famous "From where the sun now stands" utterance of Chief Joseph of the Nez Perces on a similar occasion: "You are stronger than we. We have fought you as long as we had rifles and powder; but your weapons are better than ours. Give us like weapons and turn us loose, we will fight you again; but we are worn out; we have no more heart; we have no provisions, and no means to live; your troops are everywhere; you have driven us from our last and best stronghold and we have no more heart. Do with us as may seem good to you, but do not forget that we are men and braves."

Carson, the old frontiersman, understood the Indians. He took the liberty of disobeying Carleton's extermination orders. Instead he sent the Mescaleros to the Bosque Redondo reservation.