



***Wa gi ma wub***  
***Boise Forte/Ojibwe Indian Chief,***  
***Homesteader***  
***1835-1937***  
***Vermilion Lake, Minnesota***

Little is known about Wa gi ma wub's early life. However, it is known that he was 102 years old when he died in 1937, so 1835 is generally accepted as the year of his birth.

Wa gi ma wub was a traditional band chief of the Bois Forte/Ojibwe tribe of northern Minnesota for at least 18 years, from 1880 to 1898. He was likely a chief for many years prior to 1880, but the only available records begin that year. In his role as a band chief, he signed the 1889 Nelson Act, which was a state version of the national Dawes Act. Through the Nelson Act, the Boise Forte/Ojibwe ceded their remaining reservation lands in exchange for individual ownership of land (known as *severalty*.) The Nelson Act was an attempt to end tribal ownership of land and was likely part of a larger effort to effectively dissolve Minnesota's Indian tribes.

After the Nelson Act, Wa gi ma wub and his younger brother both took homesteads in the Vermilion Lake region. A headline in the International Falls *Border Budget* newspaper on September 19, 1903, read: "Indians Make Final Proof—Appear Before Land Office to Prove Up on Homesteads." All indications are that these two Indians were Wa gi ma wub and his brother.

Wa gi ma wub was known to whites at various times as "Wake-em-up" and "Chief John Wakemup."