

Kwiwisens (Hole in the Day II) Gull Lake, MN, 1825-1868

After the death of his father in 1847, Hole In The Day the younger ascended to his role as leader while still in his twenties. Referred to by his tribesmen as “The Boy,” he quickly put to rest any questions of his ability to lead at such a young age by alternating between civil and war leader. He was tall, graceful man, who held a controlling influence over the whole Ojibwe nation by marrying the daughter of a chief in nearly every band.

Breaking from traditional Ojibwe norms, he began the practice of negotiating special gifts and annuities for himself and other chiefs at the expense of his own people. Many neighboring chiefs resented him and suspected him of making treaties involving their land without their consent. In the 1860s, the chief’s popularity with Indian agents ended along with the favors and special treatment he had grown accustomed to. Smarting from this treatment, he started exposing the government frauds on the Ojibwe and shifted back into the role of war leader and staunch defender of his people.

In 1862 he said: “That they sold their land to the government; that they had been promised a great many things in return, but had never received them; that they had complained to their Great Father of these things, and had been promised redress bit it never came; that they were now poor and in rags, as we could see, the whole wealth of their bands being upon the backs of those present, and their families at home naked; but if they had been fairly dealt with, they would not now be in that miserable condition.”

Despite Hole In The Day’s attempts to make amends for his past transgressions, many of his fellow chiefs continued to distrust him. The Red Lake and Leech Lake bands never acknowledged Hole In The Day as their principle chief, and past animosities led to two attempts on his life. His refusal to remove to the newly created White Earth Reservation in 1867 furthered the rift between Hole In The Day and civil leaders such as White Cloud and his war chief Nebuneshkung.

Hole In The Day remained on his land near Crow Wing, and as the other chiefs assumed more power, old feelings of suspicion and hatred grew stronger, particularly among the Pillager band at Leech Lake. On August 17, 1868, Hole In The Day was shot dead in his buggy by a group of Pillager assassins.