

Its name is a French translation of "[Chengwatana](#)" (Pine Town), originally an [Ojibwe](#) village located just east of Pine City, along the [Snake River](#). The [Ojibwe](#) name for the city is *Ne-zhingwaakokaag* (on a land-point full of white pines).

Chengwatana was an [Ojibwa](#) village, located along the lower course of the [Snake River, Minnesota](#). Its name in [Ojibwe](#) was *Zhingwaadena*, a contraction of *Zhingwaak-oodena* or "White-Pine Town". After statehood of [Wisconsin](#) in 1848, the transient village became a permanent village located at the outlet of Cross Lake, on its south eastern shore, at the beginning of the lower course of the Snake River, named **Snake River Dam**. Elam Greeley, a lumberman whom [Greeley](#) is named after, owned the Chengwatana toll dam at the outlet of Cross Lake.

On March 1, 1856, with very informal ceremony, the village was officially named as the County Seat of [Pine County](#) and the village was renamed **Alhambra** by Judd, Walker and Company and Daniel G. Robertson; however, this name was not very well accepted. In 1857, Alhambra was renamed as Chengwatana. When the Military Road, also known as "Douglas Highway," was constructed between the modern cities of [Hastings, Minnesota](#) and [Superior, Wisconsin](#) to replace the Kettle River Trail that connected the modern cities of [Fridley, Minnesota](#) with [Moose Lake, Minnesota](#), the new road was designed to pass through Chengwatana. The village was garrisoned as a frontier military post, 1862-1863. A post office operated in the village until 1873.

When the railroad was constructed on the western shore of Cross Lake, a new village, [Pine City](#), was platted — Pine City's name being a loose English translation of *Chengwatana*. In addition, [Chengwatana](#) and [Pine City Townships](#) were also named after the village of Chengwatana. With the railroad, Chengwatana declined into a [ghost town](#). The county seat was transferred to Pine City in 1870.

A historical marker was placed at the former village site, simply stating its location, while a detailed historical marker noting Chengwatana and its relationship to the city of [Pine City](#) was placed along the railroad bridge crossing the Snake River in Pine City.

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The **Ojibwe** (also **Ojibwa** or **Ojibway**) or **Chippewa** (also **Chippeway**) is the largest group of [Native Americans-First Nations](#) north of [Mexico](#), including [Métis](#). They are the third-largest in the [United States](#), surpassed only by [Cherokee](#) and [Navajo](#). They are equally divided between the United States and [Canada](#). Because they were formerly located mainly around [Sault Ste. Marie](#), at the outlet of [Lake Superior](#), the [French](#) referred to them as **Saulteurs**. Ojibwe who subsequently moved to the [prairie provinces](#) of Canada have retained the name

[Saulteaux](#). Ojibwe who were originally located about the [Mississagi River](#) and made their way to [southern Ontario](#) are known as the [Mississaugas](#).^[1]

As a major component group of the [Anishinaabe](#) peoples—which includes the [Algonquin](#), [Nipissing](#), [Oji-Cree](#), [Odawa](#) and the [Potawatomi](#)—the Ojibwe peoples number over 56,440 in the U.S., living in an area stretching across the north from [Michigan](#) to [Montana](#). Another 77,940 of main-line Ojibwe, 76,760 Saulteaux and 8,770 Mississaugas, in 125 bands, live in Canada, stretching from western [Quebec](#) to eastern [British Columbia](#). They are known for their [birch bark canoes](#), sacred [birch bark scrolls](#), the use of [cowrie](#) shells, [wild rice](#), copper points, and for their use of gun technology from the British to defeat and push back the [Dakota](#) nation of the [Sioux](#) (1745). The Ojibwe Nation was the first to set the agenda for signing more detailed treaties with Canada's leaders before many settlers were allowed too far west. The [Midewiwin](#) Society is well respected as the keeper of detailed and complex scrolls of events, history, songs, maps, memories, stories, geometry, and mathematics.^[2]

The **Snake River** is a [tributary](#) of the [St. Croix River](#) in east central [Minnesota](#) in the [United States](#). It is one of three streams in Minnesota with this name (see [Snake River \(Minnesota\)](#)). Its name is a translation from the [Ojibwa](#) *Ginebiggo-ziibi* after the [Dakota](#) peoples who made their homes along this river. [Kanabec County](#) is named after this river.

Course

The Snake River is about 98 mi (158 km) long and with its tributaries drains a 1,009 sq mi (2613 km²) area of [Aitkin](#), [Kanabec](#), [Mille Lacs](#) and [Pine](#) counties. After initially flowing southward from its headwaters in southern [Aitkin County](#), the Snake flows through [Kanabec County](#), turning eastward near [Mora](#), [Minnesota](#), following a minor fault line. It drains into the [St. Croix River](#) 13 mi (21 km) east of [Pine City, Minnesota](#).

Associated lakes and tributaries

Two lakes are associated with the Snake River: Cross Lake and Pokegama Lake. Cross Lake is a translation from the [Ojibwa](#) *bimijigamaa* meaning "a lake that traverses (another body of water)", located 13 mi (21 km) from the river's mouth. Pokegama Lake, located 17.5 mi (28 km) from the river's mouth, also gets its name from the Ojibwa *bakegamaa* meaning "a side-lake (of another body of water)". Major tributaries of the Snake River are [Knife River](#), [Ann River](#), [Groundhouse River](#) and [Rice Creek](#).

Pine City, [Minnesota](#) - Voyageur Statue

Pine City's "Voyageur" stands watch over the Snake River, Cross Lake and historic downtown Pine City, MN (pop. 3,255).

The 35-foot tall redwood voyageur statue, carved by renowned chainsaw sculptor Dennis Roghair, welcomes visitors to the "Northwoods" as they leave downtown Pine City on "Old Hwy. 61." Located in Riverside Park, the Voyageur is dedicated to the history of the early settlers of the Pine County area. It marks the city's beginnings as a trading post for the French Voyageurs and Indians.

The odd thing about this statue is that it is made of redwood instead of Minnesota pine. [Nathan Johnson, 02/03/2007]