

## A HISTORY OF CROSS LAKE, CHENGWATANA AND PINE CITY

Researched and Reported

By

Ann Vach, Historian

The two lakes and the river are the most important natural resources to this area now, as they were in the past. The watery highway was a route used for thousands of years, first by the Indians, and later by explorers, traders, loggers, and the early pioneers.

Evidence of Archaic, Old Copper and Woodland Cultures are found on the shores of Cross Lake, Pokegama Lake and Snake River. An Arville Complex of Indian Mounds, including 13 linear and two circular mounds were situated on the bank of the Snake River in Royalton Township. There were 115 mounds in Pine City Township Section 9, where Pine Camp stood. These mounds are completely destroyed, but were surveyed by Prof. T. H. Lewis of St. Paul in 1889.

Cross Lake was named for the "lake which flows, meaning the river crossed over," making it appear to be a cross. The Indians originally called Snake River Gin-abig-O-Zibi. This meant crooked and winding like a snake. Later, various names were used by traders such as Serpent, Kanabec, Pokegama, and Snake River.

### *The Indians and Early Traders*

The Dakota (Sioux) Indians originally occupied this area. Later the Ojibway (Chippewa) Indians obtained weapons from explorers and traders and drove the Sioux to the south and the west.

In 1600 the French and English traders found the route to this area, and they built their trading posts on the banks of Cross Lake, Pokegama Lake and Snake River. They traded guns, kettles, beads, blankets and trinkets to the Indians for rich pelts of furs.

An ancient village and trading post was located on the east shore of Cross Lake, where the Snake River leaves the lake and flows eastward to the St. Croix. Originally the village was called Chang-wa-do-nang, meaning "steep or erupted end of a hill." Later it was called Chang-wah-O-dana meaning, "pine trees near by." In the minutes of the Pine City Board of Supervisors meeting of July 7, 1884, it was spelled Changwatana.

In 1838 the United States government ratified a treaty that turned the entire Snake River Valley over to White exploitation. Many greedy loggers took advantage of the treaty before it was ratified by logging, which caused much misunderstanding between the Indians and the loggers.

In 1837 John Boyce with eleven men and six oxen established a camp at the mouth of the Snake River, only to find considerable trouble with the Indians, who refused to allow Boyce to remove any of their "Chingwack" Pine. They claimed, "White Man pay no money, no pines."

Because of the treaty Indians in this area expected their first payment for their land in July 1838. The chosen place for payment was where Stillwater now stands. Many Chippewa went there from hundreds of miles in their canoes. But it was not until the first week in November, when the old stern-wheel arrived with all the Indian supplies which was to constitute the payment. The stern-wheel carried 100 barrels of flour, 25 barrels of pork, kegs of tobacco, bales of blankets, guns and ammunition, and a cask of Mexican Pesos. Unfortunately all of these supplies had to be sacrificed, except for whatever the Indians could carry off on their backs. This was so because by that time all lakes, rivers and streams were frozen and the deep snows had come. The Indians could not use their canoes to return home and had to walk. Many of the old, as well as some young Indians died on the trails back home. Thus, their first payment was a curse rather than a blessing to the Indians, who suffered the consequences.

### *Platting and Land Sales*

On March 3, 1849, the Territory of Minnesota was created by an Act of Congress. Four other names were suggested for our state, but the name of Minnesota remained, meaning, "Land of sky-tinted water." (*Today the name "Pollution-tinted water" might fit better--A. Vach.*) Surveying of the land began under the law at the same time, and the lands were subdivided and opened for sale to the public.

Land offices opened where the land was offered for sale, thus bringing land barons to Chengwatana. Large tracts of land were purchased by Charles P. Daly from New York, Daniel A. Robertson of St. Paul, the Munch Brothers of Taylor Falls, Walker from Illinois, and Herman Trott.

Daly and Robertson were aware of the advent of the Government Road and the Railroad. The 1854 platted town of Chengwatana shows a Territorial road planned to run through the center of town, crossed by a new truss bridge with a 200-foot span. Water running along the entire town plat had a fall of sixty feet per mile. It shows a dam with gates thrown across the river to facilitate the passage of logs from the great Pine region beyond. Opposite the dam a sawmill was erected. Streets were planned to be 80 feet wide, except for two avenues at 150 feet wide. Provisions were made for a spacious park with liberal grants for education purposes. Lots were surveyed to be 50 X 50 feet. Two lots were to be given to each denomination for churches and an additional lot was to be provided for a pastor's house. 177 blocks on the north side of the river and 21 blocks on the south side were surveyed. Most of the streets and avenues were named after prominent men of the time, such as Walker, Judd, Payte, Daly, Greeley, Folsom, and Robertson.

From 1856-58 Daniel Robertson and Charles Daly were anxious to sell their land and attract people to a settlement at Changwatana. They had letters and pamphlets sent to various agents and friends asking them to interest immigrants in Chengwatana. Their biggest mistake was setting a price of \$4.00 an acre on their land for sale to the railroad. They would have gained far more by donating the land to the railroad.

In 1856 Judd, Walker and Robertson made an effort to change the name of the old Indian Town Chengwatana to Alhambra. The town was surveyed, but the name of Alhambra was not accepted. The name Chengwatana remained, and it was the county seat.

### ***The Coming of the Railroad***

The first railroad land grant was made in 1854 for a railroad from St. Paul to Lake Superior. However, during the enrollment some fraudulent changes were made in its provisions. After it passed in both houses and was in the hands of the President, the bill was indefinitely postponed.

On May 5, 1864, Congress made a land grant of alternate sections on each side of the planned railroad to aid building the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad and the grant was 20 sections per mile. The State of Minnesota gave an additional seven sections per mile of swampland. The city of St. Paul issued \$250,000 in city bonds for a period of twenty years. St. Louis County issued \$150,000 in city bonds for the same period. From the proceeds of land and bond sales, an excellent thoroughfare was built and maintained. The holders of the franchise of this road changed hands many times before the railroad was completed.

The building of the railroad began in 1865 and was completed to Duluth in 1870 at a cost of \$7,700,000. The road was named the Nebraska and Lake Superior Company. Later it was changed to Lake Superior and Mississippi. In 1875 the name changed to St. Paul and Duluth. (Folsom: 1888:667.)

### ***The Chengwatana Dam***

Elam Greeley built Chengwatana Dam in 1849. It was a most important dam, as it served as a sluiceway for logs from the upper region of the Snake River. All the lakes, rivers and streams in the area were used to transport logs to the Snake River. These included the Knife River, Ann River, Ann Lake, Groundhouse River, Mission Creek, Pokegama Creek and Rice Creek all of which depended on the Chengwatana dam.

Records of the time indicated that charges from three cents to twenty cents per thousand logs were charged for sluicage through this dam. Later a general law was passed by the legislature of Minnesota, which regulated the erection of sluice-dams. Special reference in the act was made to the Snake River Dam at Chengwatana, which was to collect ten cents per thousand on logs and lumber sluiced through the dam.

An expert would mark each log with a trademark by ax, as the logs passed through the sluice-way. Later iron branding axes were used to mark logs with the owners' initial or trade mark. As the logs came through the dam a tally of footage was made for each owner.

Since the dam was also a bridge, in 1876 the question came up, "Who owns the Chengwatana dam?" The public believed that it was a highway to be kept in repair at the public expense. Adolph Munch appeared to be the present owner of the dam. He had purchased its franchise and the land around it in 1858 from Greeley. A Chengwatana Dam Charter was granted in 1840 for the purpose of sluicing logs down the Snake River to the St. Croix for a period of twelve years. Munch renewed the franchise in 1859 and again in 1861. Although the dam charter required the Chengwatana Dam to raise the level of Cross Lake at least 5.5 feet, it was actually built with a head of ten feet flooded.

High water caused by the dam allowed steamers to provide supplies to logging camps upstream as far as Grasston and Brunswick. The Snake River and Cross Lake would be filled with logs until August in the early years.

In the spring of 1886, water was low and logs were held up on shore throughout the entire area. Later in the year when the rains came, all the gates of the dams were opened along all the lakes, rivers and streams up the Snake River. Hundreds of thousands of logs were rolled from the landings into the rivers and streams, headed for the Snake. It caused the greatest logjam in the history of the St. Croix. Loggers at Knife Lake wrote that their foreman Push was very angry. He ordered them to St. Croix to help with the logjam. The crew left with teams cross-country to St. Croix. People came by train to see the sight. The Snake River was blamed for the greatest logjam in St. Croix history.

In 1898 most of the original dam washed out after heavy rains. Suddenly farmers learned how much land they could gain with the dam out and the water gone. In June 1900, 30 farmers who had land flooded by the dam took twenty-five pounds of dynamite and blew ten feet of the pier. The sluice gate was loosened and the bridge was damaged. Munch repaired the damage. Those who depended on the dam questioned when the farmers purchased their land – before or after the Chengwatana flooded their land. Lawsuits followed. Long before the dam was blown out again, newspaper headlines stated: "Chengwatana Dam is Doomed." "Either the Dam Must Go or Owner Must Regulate It!"

On Monday, May 31, 1903, at 1:30 a.m. fifteen masked men on the east side of Snake River and fifteen masked men on the west side of the dam placed 200 hundred pounds of explosives stuck into gallon jugs and fixed fuses to them. Five of the eight charges exploded. Three piers and two gates were damaged at a cost of \$850 in direct damage to the dam and indirect damage of \$2,500 in lost log-sluicing tolls.

In 1911 John Myron Allen purchased the dam with no intention of using it for logging purposes. Allen organized the Eastern Minnesota Electric Power Company. Allen and his crew began constructing a new dam in April 1912. All backwaters that were held by

the Chengwatana Dam were released. The courts ordered the dam to be dismantled and directed that the new company dam be lower and be built below the site of the Historic Chengwatana Dam.

On May 14, 1930, the new dam was dynamited. It was repaired and used until large cakes of ice ruined the dam. Things did not go well for the Eastern Minnesota Electric Power Company. On September 20, 1938, H.C. Wenzel, Commissioner of Conservation ordered removal of the dam, and the order was appealed to Ramsey District Court.

In 1840 an old settler by the name of Kirkland from Quincy, Illinois tried to start a colony. He had worked some time on the bank where Pine City is now located. He became discouraged by Indian trouble and left in 1841.

### *The Platting of Pine City and Chengwatana*

Pine City was platted on October 14, 1869, in the office of the Register of Deeds for Pine City. Chengwatana was platted January 16, 1870.

"I hereby certify that the within plat was filed in this office for record on the Sixteen day of January AD 1870 at 3 o'clock P.M. and was duly placed in the book of town plats." --Adolph Munch, Register of Deeds

All avenues and streets were platted 60 feet wide, except Eighth Avenue, which was 45 feet wide. Five avenues west of Sixth Street were twenty feet wide. North Avenue was thirty feet wide and Railroad Avenue east from Eighth Avenue to Sixth Avenue was fifty feet wide. Railroad Avenue west from Fifth Avenue was sixty-five feet to south of Seventh Avenue, where it was fifty feet wide. Full blocks were platted at 300 feet X 300 feet. Fractional lots were marked on the Plat. Pine City is laid out on lots no. 1,2,3,4,5, and 6 in Section 33 of Township 9 north, Range 21 West.

"I, the undersigned do hereby certify that the annexed Plat of Pine City was made by me, that the same is based on careful survey made by me and is a correct plat thereof. That good and sufficient stones have been fixed under my direction at the Center of Section 33 at the southeast corner of Block 10 and at the quarter Section corner 30 feet north of the N.E. corner of Block 13. The stones are sunk under the surface of the ground marked with a Cross cut out in upper side indicating the point of intersections, as a fixed and permanent point from which to make future surveys. That land embraced in the third survey and plat is that which is described on the annexed certificate and acknowledged as the property of the Town of Pine City. Dated this day October 14, AD 1869. Signed \_\_\_\_\_

(There was no signature, as someone copied it.)

The railroad made Pine City and with logging and the Chengwatana Dam's help the town grew rapidly. Boarding houses and saloons were much in demand.

Pine City was incorporated on February 14, 1881, with a population of approximately 1,000. In 1872 the County seat was moved from Chengwatana to Pine City by popular vote. The first courthouse was where Nichols Café is now located. The town had a jail and record house, school, post office, depot, two boarding houses, brick yard, brewery, two blacksmith and wagon shops, two saw mills, a liquor and wine store, drug store, meat market, and three general stores. Water supply for the trains was a windmill. There was a loading dock on the south bank for trains and steamers. Pine City had 96 homes and no electricity. Streets were graded, but not paved, and there were three churches.

Eighteen years later, in 1899, the population was 1200. Electricity had been added. Water was supplied from a cistern below the fire hall which was 22' X 16' X 7' deep. Water was also supplied from the river and Cross Lake, which surrounded Pine City on three sides at the time. The City had a volunteer fire department with one chief and 36 men. Fire equipment included one watrous steam engine, two hose carts, and 2000 feet of 2 ½" hose. Fire alarms were by bell and steam whistle. There was a new courthouse and a bank. Adam Lumber Company and H. J. Rath were located on the West Bank of Cross Lake. The planing mill ran three months of the year doing custom work. It advertised a building and yard on solid ground with night and Sunday watchmen. It sold fuel, wood and sawdust. It could cut 2000 feet per twelve hours.

C & A. Burger was located on Cross Lake and had a planing saw and was a shingles mill. It advertised a building on solid grounds with a mill running three months a year. It did custom work, and had steam power and tubular lanterns. It could process 3000 feet per day.

E. Buselmeir Brewery was located on Cross Lake. It had a capacity of 4,000 barrels per year, had no watchmen, but a man slept on the premises. It had steam power and used wood for fuel. It had Brewer Lamps and 100 feet of 1 ½' hose. Pine City Mill and Elevator Company had a capacity of 120 barrels per day. It used wood fuel, had electric lights and was three stories. It used a 60 horsepower Dynro engine.

Robinson Park and the fairgrounds were located in the center of town where the water tower and library now are. Pine City now boasted a depot, two livery stables, six churches, a new school, five saloons, two hotels and two boarding houses. It had one potato warehouse and one grain warehouse, a millinery shop, and two icehouses. Pine City Electric Light Company produced electricity. There was a hardware store, printing shop, newspaper, three general stores, a barbershop, furniture and undertaker operation, jail, feedstore, meat market, photo shop, Pine City Mill & Elevator Company, a cigar factory, and two blacksmith and wagon shops. The town consisted of approximately 140 structures.

According to Knauer's survey in January 1853, a military road lay northwest along the east shore of Rush Lake. It crossed the Snake River at the outlet shore of Pokegama Lake, then ran north along the northeast side of Pokegama Lake, northward to Kettle River.

*(In 1853 Knauers cannot possibly have surveyed at the outlet shore of Pokegama. Pictures and maps show the outlet at least 1/4 mile wide, maybe wider. Pokegama Lake was joined together with the Snake River. -A.Vach.)*

In 1854, Simpson surveyed a new route for the government or military road through Chengwatana, on the East Side of Cross Lake saving a number of miles.

Robertson's papers noted, "Proposition for the completion of road from Superior to St. Paul, making a good and continuous road for coaches and carriages from St. Paul to Superior." No doubt the road was cleared of trees and brush. But, there was no gravel or grading and it was a total disaster.

### ***The Sioux Uprising and Chengwatana's Defense***

Shortly after the Civil War the 1862 Sioux uprising began and defense of the Minnesota frontier fell to the state. Washington shrugged off Minnesota's appeal for help, until Governor Alexander Ramsey addressed a telegram to Abraham Lincoln asking for help. The war department appointed Major General John Pope as Commander of the newly created "Department of Northwest." With headquarters in St. Paul it was comprised of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and the Territories of Dakota and Nebraska. It had strict instructions to take prompt measures to bring peace, security and protection to the people.

In Minnesota, Indian warfare was closely akin to guerrilla fighting. Raiding groups spread in many directions. It was necessary to provide for protection of the settlers and isolated farms throughout the vast wilderness area. The terror of Indians, real or imagined reigned everywhere in the threatened areas. Many times men would gather together armed with guns or other weapons and no Indians appeared. Stockades were built in some areas.

On September 9, 1862, Governor Ramsey outlined widespread defensive measures to secure the frontier. A total of 2,150 troops, together with several hundred irregular mounted men were scattered at various points along the Indian border from Chengwatana in St. Croix Valley to Crow Wing on the Mississippi and Fort Abercrombie on the Red River. Troops were deployed all along the frontier, wherever it was exposed to Sioux depredations, southward to the Iowa line.

The first outside aide to reach Minnesota was on September 4, 1862, when troops arrived from St. Louis. These were parolees who had surrendered and were exchanged for Confederate prisoners. One must conclude that Chengwatana had a population that needed protection at the outbreak of the Sioux uprising in 1862. There was a command Post for three years and perhaps longer. Little is written about Chengwatana fortifications. Evidently mounted men from 1862 to 1865 or 1866 maintained the post. In July 1865 an army quartermaster advertised for bids to furnish hay for a number of remaining garrisons and Chengwatana was named, among a number of other posts.

Colonel Frances Roach Delano took command of five companies. One company was stationed in Chengwatana, but it is unknown if there was a fort of some kind, or how many men were involved. There must have been some kind of shelter. Gradually in 1866 confidence was restored and the remaining men were dismissed from their duties.

In the January 3, 1900 Pine Poker issue it was noted that an old structure in Pine County, known as the Goodwin Barn, had burned to the ground. It was built in 1855, six years before the outbreak of the Civil War. It was first used for a carpenter shop, but since 1864 had been used for stabling purposes. The lumber and timbers in the old building were sawed in a mill located at that time where the bridge crosses the river. It is possible that this building was used for troops in 1865-66.

### *A Railroad Excursion Northward*

In 1869, a group of railroad excursionists planned to use rail as far as Rushseba (Rush City) and then use the old military (government) road, as it was called to push further north. Among the travelers was young John Townsend Trowbridge, a well-known editor and writer, who wrote, "For the first fifty miles we traveled on rail newly laid and thereafter in wagons." Notes from his record of the trip help us to understand the area back then::

Thursday morning August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1869: "We are off. Arrived at White Bear (St. Paul's favorite picnic spot ten miles away. The next station is Forest Lake, where there is a still more extensive body of water and a beautiful townsite on its bank. We pass through a rolling country of oaks opening and occasional native meadow, once the beds of lakes, converted by time and vegetable decay into grasslands of exceeding fertility. A few scanty settlements scattered along or near this part of the route. At Rushseba (Rush City) fifty miles from St. Paul, we come on the end of the completed tracks and we might almost say of civilization, northward hence, and the wilderness. Here we find an unfinished depot building, in a little clearing of the woods. After dinner (served on rough-boarded tables under the depot roof) we form a group, with the woods and wagon in background, and an Indian in foreground and give the photographer a few shots of us. Then we were on our journey. It is like getting an army in motion. We climb into seats in the strong canvas covered concord coaches, the tinkling of horse bells resound pleasantly in the woods, one after another the wagons take the road, and we go rolling and plunging into the forest.

"Late in the afternoon we reach our first camping grounds. Chengwatana, where there are a few wooden houses and huts of half-breeds, besides a sawmill, on the east shore of Cross Lake. While our tents pitching on the stumpy shore, and our supper preparing at the stage house, we embark on the lake in a barge manned by laborers from the railroad. The lake is four miles in length from north to south. It is quire narrow. However, Snake River, flowing throughout it from east to west, forms a watery cross, that gives the name. The Chengwatana Dam has flooded thousands of acres above and drowned timber. Fires



have destroyed much that the water spared. Western shores peopled by melancholy hosts of dead trees, standing mournfully in the water or charred and dark on the banks. Lifting their blasted trunks and skeleton arms against the sky, giving to the scene by this (evening) light a most unearthly aspect.

“Rowing up the river we pass Indian burial places on the north shore (now known as Wood Pecker Ridge). Rude wooden crosses are visible among the dead tree trunks, and a deserted village of skeleton wigwams, whose bare poles will be re clothed with skin or birch-bark, when the red nomads return to catch fish in these waters and hunt deer in these woods. A week ago there were 300 Ojibways on this camping ground. Now we see but a few brown squaws on the bank, and half a dozen Indian children paddling away from us in a canoe.

*(Trowbridge's statement that "there were 300 Ojibways in this campground a week ago" is probably not accurate. History written by others, states that there are many Indian camps, but the groups are small -40 to 80 Indians to a camp." Minnesota History September 1860: 103-05. A.Vach)*

“Chengwatana should have had the railroad depot, but it made the mistake of setting too high a price on what it thought was indispensable to the railroad company. The railroad company accordingly stuck to its own land, and put the track on the other side of the lake. It is the railroad that makes the town, no towns that make the railroad. We row over to the solid stone piers of the unfinished bridge, and high embankment, and the village of board-shanties (now Pine City) about which ruddy Swiss laborers are washing their rough hands and bearded faces, their days' work done, then return in the twilight to Chengwatana and supper.” Trowbridge continues describing the events of the night and mentions swarms of mosquitoes.

Friday 13, 1869: “A cold, wet morning. The lake is both basin and mirror to us, making our toilet. Some, however, seek the little dark washroom of the stagehouse and perform their ablutions there. Mr. Felton lay his toothbrush on the sink, only afterward finds a rough fellow used the toothbrush to disentangle his locks with it. He remarked, ‘Confound the little fool of a thing.’”

“The stagehouse table has its limits and we ate breakfast by relays.” After breakfast Trowbridge started to walk. He could outwalk the wagon, cautiously moving through mud-holes. Townbridge describes the entire trip to Duluth.

### ***The Recreation Era Begins***

By 1897, logging was coming to an end and a new recreation period began. Steamers that once navigated up the Snake River for logging purposes were converted to passenger steamers. The Kate R and Stowe carried 80 passengers. A full-page ad in the St. Paul press noted that Pokegama and Cross Lake fishing and camping were excellent.

Smaller passenger boats were built, as were resorts, such as Engle Nook Inn on the west shore of Cross Lake. Park Hotel was on Pokegama. Dancing and moonlight trips were very popular.

According to local newspaper accounts, Captain Bergman of the steamer, "Informed that his boat was in fine shape, as soon as the logs get out of the way, he will make regular trips between Pine City and Pokegama Park Hotel. Mr. Bergman installed a jacket around the boiler so that the passengers will not feel heat. Pine County Pioneer, May 10, 1901. Another ad noted that the cost was twenty cents per round trip.

Engle Nook Inn advertised, "Get your Sunday dinner at Engle Nook Inn. Boats will meet at dock at lower Main Street about 12:15 p.m. Dinner and trip both ways, fifty cents."

Railroad trains brought passengers from the Twin Cities, Duluth and other small towns located on the rail. Fishing was excellent on Cross and Pokegama Lakes and camping was popular. The Inns and hotels were filled.

All of this came to an end when the dam was ordered to lower the water. An article in Pine Poker read, "What would be result of the dam taken out? What would become of the summer resorts at Pokegama? What would call the thousands of people that come and go through Pine City every season? Whom would it benefit? Those who have purchased cheap lands and want something for nothing? These are the only ones that the dam, as asked for in the complaint, will benefit."

By 1922, when the dam was lowered or taken out, there were complaints about the lakes being polluted and the smell being unbearable.

### *Copper is Discovered*

In 1848, David Dale Owens, geologist for the government, reported copper in trap rock in Chengwatana, on the banks of the Snake and Kettle Rivers, but it was not until in 1880 that copper mining began by J. Bennett Smith and his two associates. But through the years, Smith had different partners. Smith would report "new vein" and "50% copper," and "...before long copper ore will be shipped from here by carload." In 1905 Smith predicted he would strike it rich by January 1906. After almost 30 years, Smith had failed to strike it rich.

May 3, 1906 Pine Poker: "Chengwatana Company is the name given a new organization which will prospect for copper. The new company with nominal capital of \$50,000 was incorporated to engage in mining business at Chengwatana. H.C. McCollom, R. C. Cone and W.H. McCollom perfected incorporation under laws of Minnesota. Two Sullivan diamond drills will be used at once. These drills are capable of drawing core from a depth of 1,500 feet and if copper in paying quantities is to be found the drills will do the business."

## *The Military History*

The Naval Militia Third Division was established in Pine City on January 13, 1913, with 70 men registered from ages 18 – 45. Qualifications for an armory required a naval Militia Division, a site for building and \$1,000 in order to receive a \$15,000 appropriation from the state. With the Naval Militia 3<sup>rd</sup> Division organized, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Hodge donated three lots for the armory site. Merchants and citizens raised the \$1,000 needed.

Stekla Hall was rented at \$20.00 a month, where the third Division met every Friday, unlike the U.S. Navy, where daily drills and training was required.

On November 15, 1913, building of the armory began and it was completed on November 6, 1914. The New armory had large doors on the east. Boats were stored on ground floor and could be taken out for training on Cross Lake.

The Third Division received their first uniforms on April 12, 1913. Each man received two uniforms, one white and one blue with hats to match. If shoes were issued, it was not mentioned in the distribution.

The same year, 35 members of the Pine City militia took their first trip on the Great Lakes. The two-day trip was meant to adjust the men to ocean trips. In August the entire Third Division with other Militia Divisions boarded the Gopher and sailed the Great Lake.

The “war scare” became a reality when Lt. Robert Wilcox, on April 6, 1917 received a call in the afternoon to be in Duluth with the Pine City Third Division the next day. News spread rapidly through the small town and plans for a program were made. Old Glory was seen everywhere from flagstuffs to baby carriages. Everybody gathered at the armory to see “our boys” off. Of course, there were speeches and prayers. The Militiamen’s Departure moved many hearts to teary farewell, and they watched until the train was out of sight, then quietly one by one moved to their homes. Three of the men did not pass the physical examination.

Wherever there was a German Community, a fear overcame the American people. (This was much like in World War II, when the Japanese were feared.) National Guards were sent to guard grain elevators, bridges, and certain industries. In Pine County it was feared that the bridges may be dynamited. A company of 16 National Guardsmen and two officers arrived in Sandstone to guard the railroad bridge over the Kettle River. Great precautions were taken by our government to keep all modes of transportation in running order, which was very important with the American entanglement in the European conflict. Every small town formed a National Guard.

Pine City’s Naval Militia Third Division existed only six years. A meeting date for reorganizing was set for February 7, 1920 at 7:30 p.m. at the armory, but there was no

report of the outcome of that meeting. From 1920-24 there was no army or defense activities at the Armory. On May 29, 1924, sixty-two recruits enrolled in E. Battery of the 125th Field Artillery of the Minnesota National Guard mustered in at armory. Drill night was set for every Friday night. Uniforms were to arrive before the unit left for Camp Custer, Michigan. Horses and guns arrived in Pine City after the battery returned from camp.

Training was held once a week and 10 days every summer at various camps. Horse-drawn cannons and equipment were used in the first years and later trucks were purchased and a garage was built in back of the armory. When they went to camp all equipment was loaded on flat cars and coaches.

The armory was home of the National Guard for 52 years. In 1973 the unit was redesignated as Service Battery 151 Field Artillery Battalion. This changed Pine City's unit from a fighting unit to a service unit. The Pine City area never had a population sufficient for a headquarters or administration unit.

June 30, 1976, the National Guard moved into its new armory. Attempts were made to restore the old armory, but lack of funds prevented it from happening. The armory is on the National Registry. Pine City was home of the G.A.R. in the early years, and remains a home for the V.F.W. and the American Legion.

Cross Lake never gained historic popularity as great as Pokegama Lake and Pine City did. Many small towns along the railroute have faded into the past, as did Chengwatana. Pine City remains. Logging, railroad, steamers, and recreation all contributed to make Pine City's history well known. In addition, Pokegama Lake had a huge clam population and the clamming industry in the early 1900's brought much commerce and many people to the area. Pine City had two button factories related to the clamming industry. Eventually, the government strictly limited the taking of clams, however it was too little too late. The clams were decimated and never recovered.

The Cross Lake Shore today is dotted with homes. Two hundred years ago it was dotted with two Indian villages, one at Chengwatana and the other at Pine City. Chengwatana and Cross Lake might have become predominant over Pine City and Pokegama Lake, had the railroad been placed differently. What seemed like a good economic decision by land owners of Cross Lake at the time, to charge the railroad a big price for their land, may have been the one factor that prevented Cross Lake and Chengwatana from rising to dominance.

We know that Chengwatana existed in 1871 and 1872, because it was platted. However, by 1874 it became Pine City and in fact Pine City's supervisors noted payment of Cross Lake bills. The history surrounding the loss of Chengwatana and Cross Lake the town is not clear, but the mystery contributes to what is an interesting history of the area.

Whatever the history, and no matter the outcome for people and their towns and structures, one fact remains constant and that is that Cross Lake, Pokegama Lake and the Snake River remain the most important natural resources.

--Ann Vach. January 17, 2000.

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## HISTORICAL TIMELINE

### POKEGAMA, CROSS LAKE, AND CHENGWATANA HISTORY

- 1854 Chengwatana was organized.
- 1856 March 3 – Pine County was organized
- 1856 Effort to change name of old Indian Town Chengwatana to Alhambra
- 1856 Chengwatana became the County Seat.
- 1858 Pine County was reorganized.
- 1869 October 14 – Pine City was platted.
- 1870 Pine City plat was filed in Chengwatana, placed in book of town plats.
- 1871 January 31 – town of Cross Lake was organized.
- 1871 Vote to divide the Town of Cross Lake failed.
- 1872 County Seat moved to Pine City from Chengwatana by popular vote.
- 1872-3 Town of Cross Lake elected officers and held town meetings.
- 1874 April 8 – Pine City was organized
- 1874 Debt of old Town of Cross Lake was paid by Pine City.
- 1874 April 8 – An act of the Minnesota Legislature entitled “an act for the division of Pine County into three commissioner’s districts and four towns.”
- 1874 April 8 - – first election held in Pine City.

The history surrounding the Town of Cross Lake is not clear, but the mystery contributes to what is an interesting history of the area.

*Pine City Township Records*