

The Mississippi, Missouri, and Ohio Rivers



Mississippi River

- Mississippi River begins at Lake Itasca in northwest Minnesota and runs 2,320 miles to the Gulf of Mexico
 - approx. 90 days for a drop of rain to travel from Lake Itasca to the Gulf
 - 2nd longest river in the US
 - Runs through 2 states, forms the border of 8 more
 - Drains most of US between the Rockies and Appalachians



Mississippi River



The Mississippi River near St. Louis

Mississippi River Basin

- Mississippi River has the third largest drainage basin in the world.
 - 41% of the continental US
 - Covers more than 1 million square miles
 - 31 states



Mississippi River

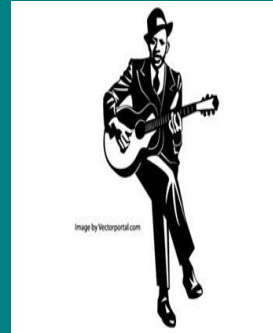


**Mississippi River
traffic near New
Orleans**

Wikipedia: Mississippi River

Mississippi Delta

- Alluvial plain between Mississippi and Yazoo Rivers
 - Not actually a delta
 - Low elevation
 - Thousands of years of flooding deposited sediment between the rivers
 - Low elevation
 - flat, fertile land
- Between Memphis and Vicksburg
- Plantation system filled with slaves and sharecroppers
- Birthplace of the Blues



Ohio River

- The Ohio River is the principal tributary of the Mississippi River (measured by volume & business)
- 981 miles long
- Begins in Pittsburg at the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers



Ohio River



Ohio River

- Many native tribes lived along river
- Border between slave and free states before Civil War
- Primary transportation route
- French and Indian War was fought for control of the Ohio River Valley



Cincinnati, Ohio: “Queen City of the West”

The Missouri River



The Missouri River is the longest in the United States at 2,540 miles

Begins at the confluence of the Madison, Jefferson, and Gallatin rivers in Montana, and flows into the Mississippi north of St. Louis, Missouri.

- The combination of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers make the 3rd longest river system in the world

Traveled by Lewis and Clark in 1804 to explore Louisiana Purchase and find a Northwest Passage

The Missouri River Basin



- The basin's elevation drops from 14,000 foot peaks to approx. 400 feet where it joins the Mississippi
- The basin is home to about 10 million people from 28 Native American tribes, 10 states and a small part of Canada
- High sediment load earned it the nickname, "Big Muddy"
- Six dams have been built along Missouri

The Missouri River



Rio Grande

- Begins in the San Juan Mountains (Rockies) and empties into the Gulf of Mexico
- Border b/w US and Mexico
 - Since 1845
 - Won in the Mexican-American War
- US and Mexico share the waters of this river



Rio Grande



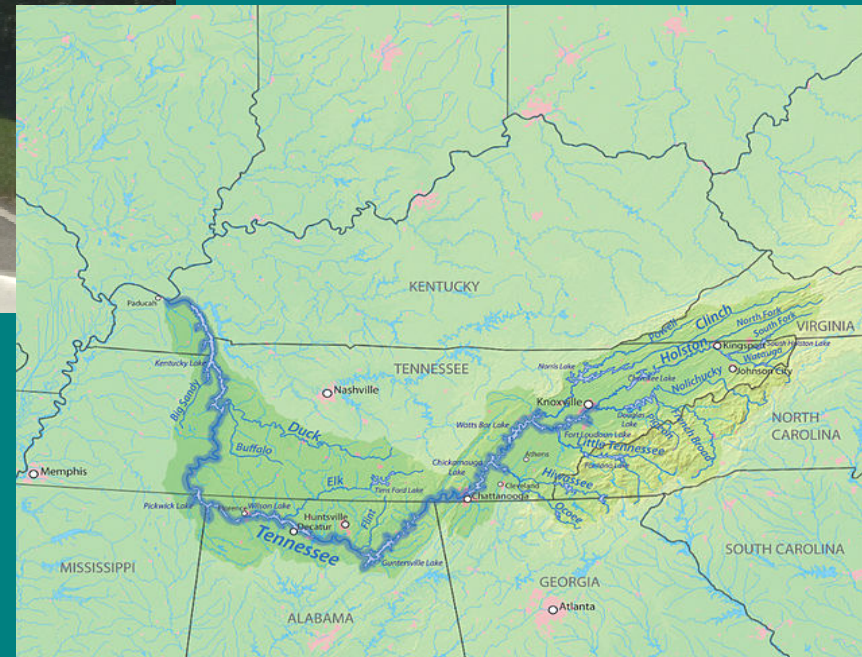
The Rio Grande in Colorado

Tennessee River



Crossing over the Tennessee on a 1.2 mile bridge along the Natchez Trace.

- Largest tributary of the Ohio
 - 652 miles
- Cherokee country
- Important battleground during Civil War

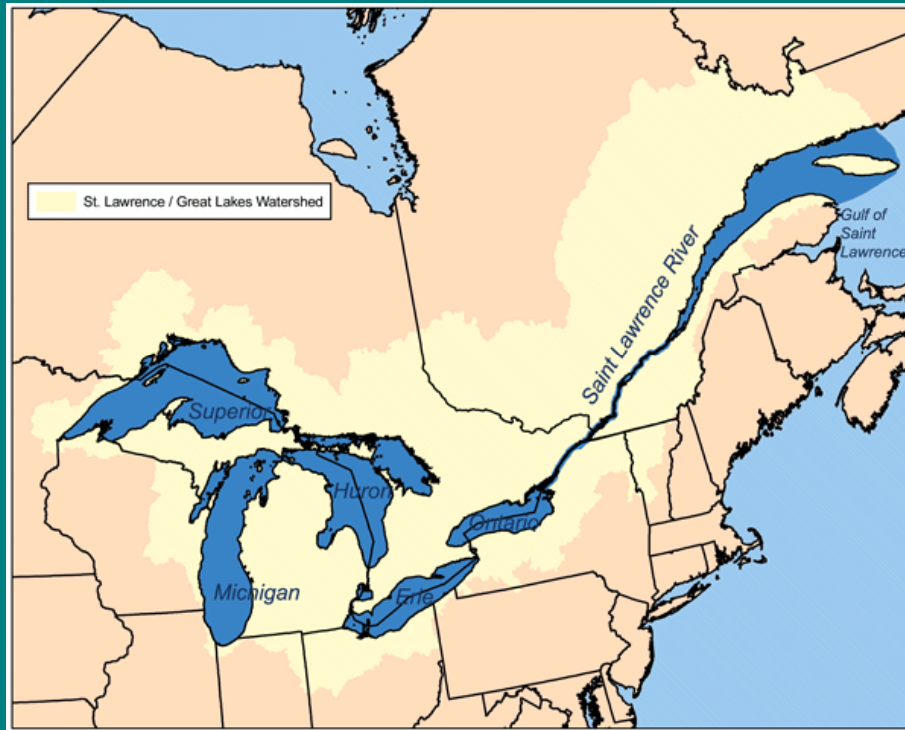


Potomac River – Nation's River

- 405 miles long
- Forms part of the borders of MD, VA, and Washington DC
- Much of our founding history happened along the Potomac
 - Washington, Civil War, etc.



St. Lawrence River



- 744 miles long
- Primarily in Canada
 - Montreal, Quebec
 - Provides part of northern border of New York
- Connects the Great Lakes to the Atlantic
- Primary drainage of the Great Lakes basin
- Main route of European explorers into interior N. America

Wabash River

- State River of Indiana
- 503 miles long
- Forms part of IN-IL border
- Proposed location of capital of Tecumseh's Indian alliance
- Battle of Tippecanoe, Vincennes
- Empties into the Ohio



Hudson River

- 315 miles through eastern NY
- Strategic importance in Revolutionary War
 - West Point
- Major commercial Waterway
 - Especially after Erie Canal
 - Robert Fulton's first steamboat service



Columbia River



- 1,243 miles long
 - Begins in Canada and empties into the Pacific near Portland, OR
- Lewis and Clark followed the Columbia to the Pacific in 1805
- Salmon prevalent
 - very important to early native cultures



The Great Lakes



Lake Superior

- Largest freshwater lake in the world (surface area)
 - fed by over 200 rivers
- Lake Superior is the largest, deepest, and coldest of the Great Lakes
 - The water from all the other Great Lakes would fit in Superior (with room to spare)
- Rich in minerals
 - Copper, iron, silver, gold and nickel
 - Mining towns



Lake Superior

- Lake Superior is said to never give up her dead.
 - The water is too cold for bacteria to grow
 - Bodies never rise to surface
- The last major shipwreck on Lake Superior was that of *SS Edmund Fitzgerald* in 1975.
 - Gordon Lightfoot song



Lake Michigan

- The only one of the Great Lakes wholly within US borders
- Bordered by Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, and Indiana
- The southern tip of the lake is heavily industrialized.
 - Chicago, Gary, Whiting Michigan City, etc.
- 12 million people
 - Chicago, Milwaukee, Green Bay, etc.
 - Indiana Dunes



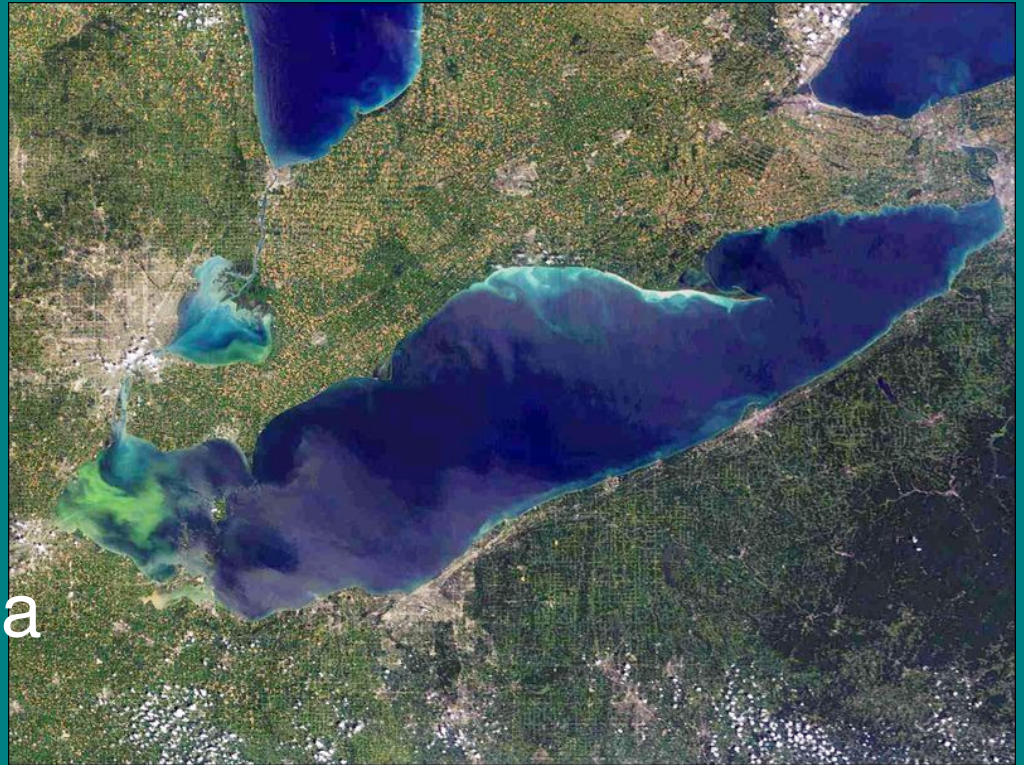
Lake Huron



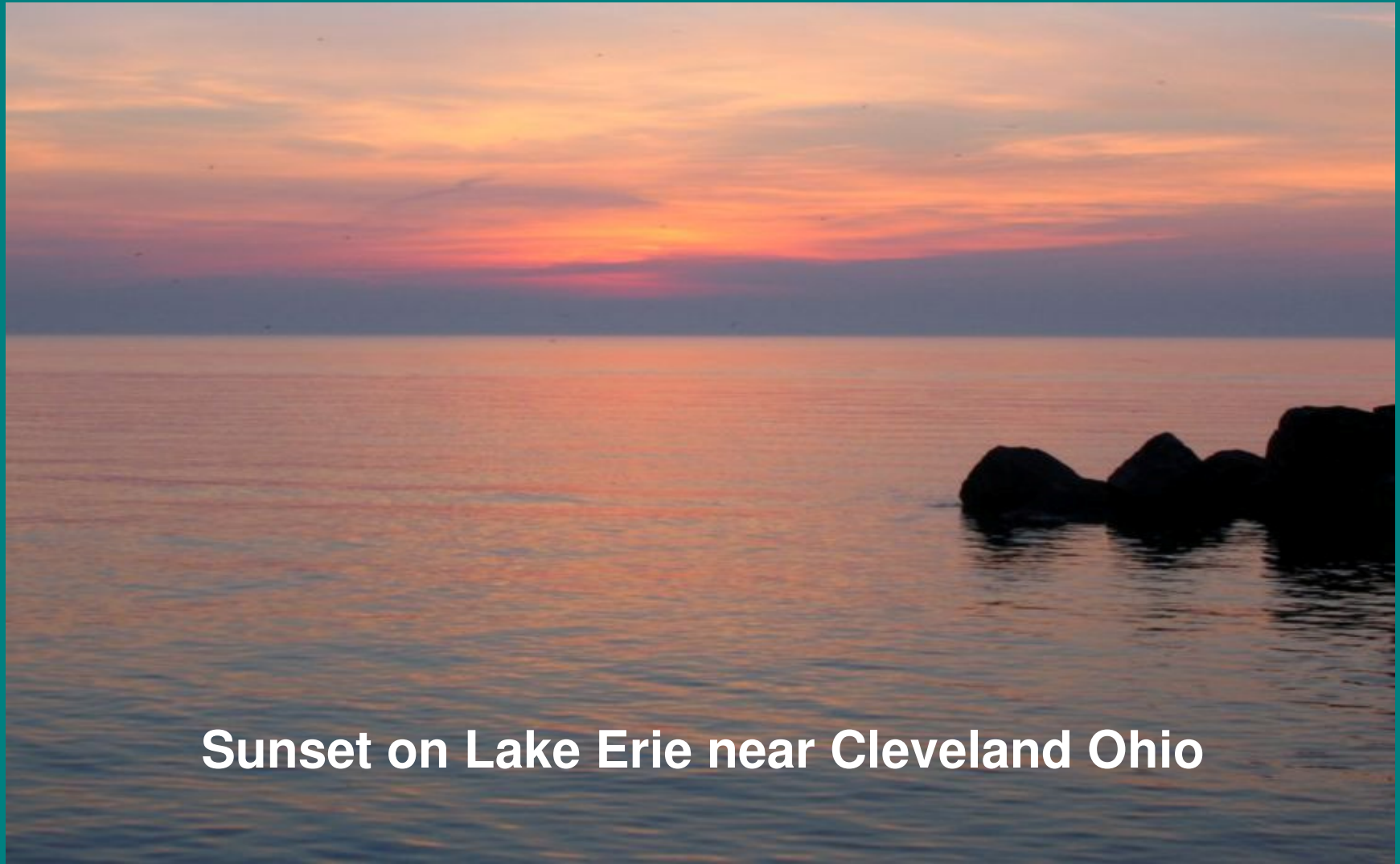
- Lake Huron is the second-largest of the Great Lakes
- Connects to Lake Michigan by the narrow Straits of Mackinac
 - Shared water
- Borders only Michigan in the United States

Lake Erie

- Bordered on the south by the states of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York, and on the west by the state of Michigan
 - Cleveland, Buffalo, Detroit (close)
- Primarily fed by the Detroit River and drains via the Niagara River and Niagara Falls into Lake Ontario.
- Commercial Fishing



Lake Erie



Sunset on Lake Erie near Cleveland Ohio

Niagara Falls



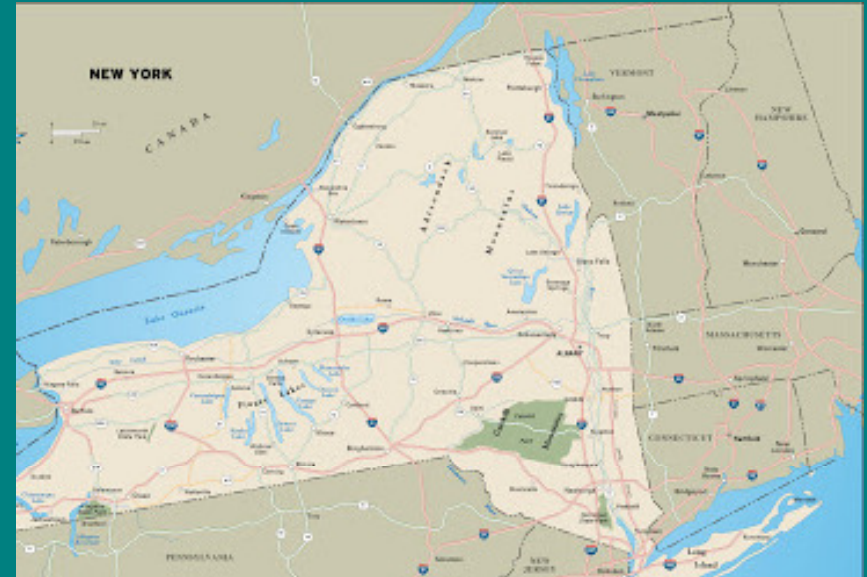
Lake Ontario



- Bordered only by New York in the U.S.
 - Rochester, Toronto
- Smallest Great Lake
- Its primary inlet is the Niagara River (from Lake Erie) and primary outlet is the St. Lawrence River
- Good fruit-growing climate
 - Commercial orchards

Lake Champlain

- Forms part of border between Vermont and New York
 - Stretches into Canada
- Drains into St. Lawrence River
- Connects to Hudson River via Champlain Canal
- Heavily fought over in the Revolutionary War and War of 1812



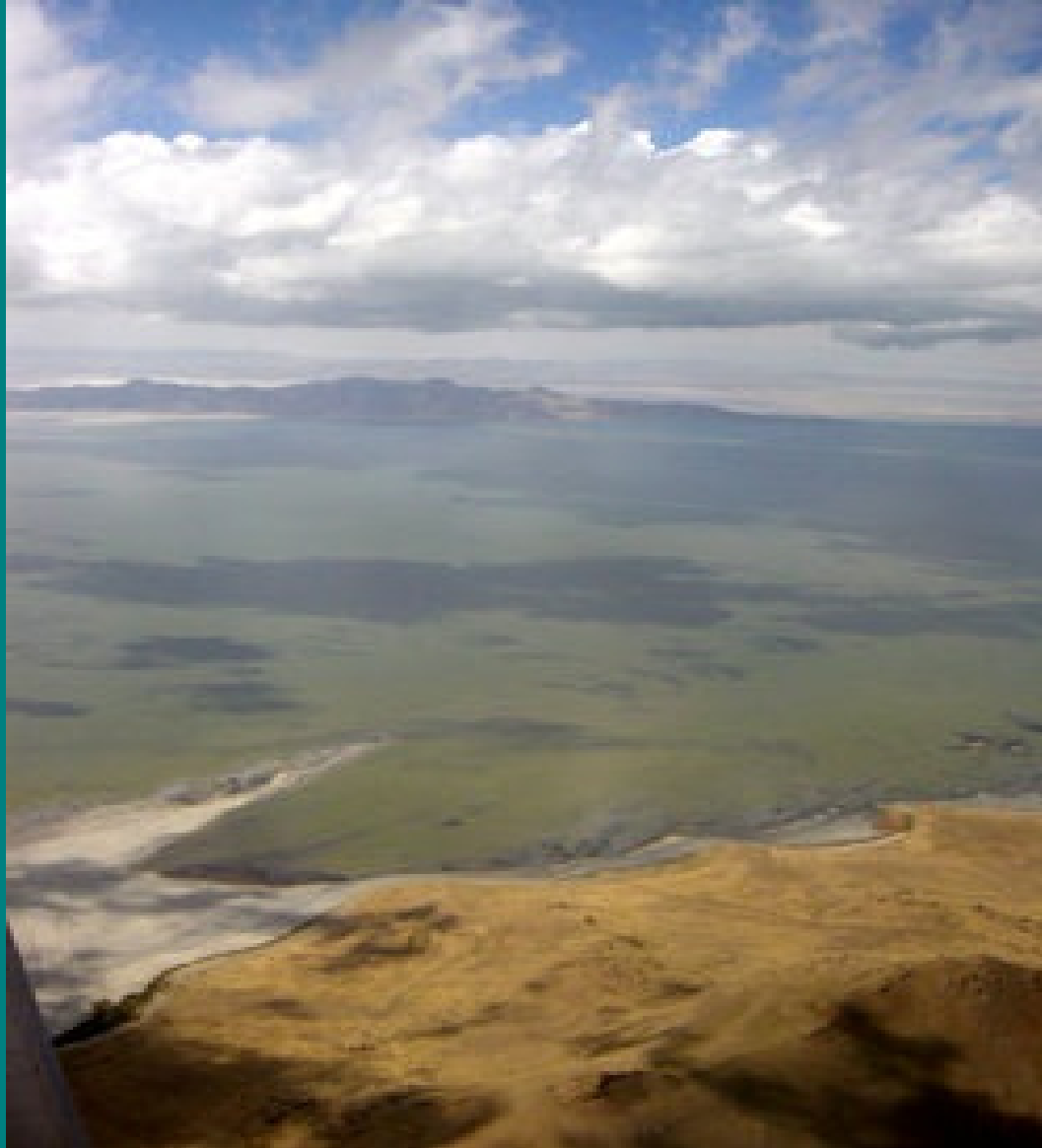
Chesapeake Bay



- Fed by many Appalachian rivers
 - Including the Potomac, James, Rappahannock & Susquehanna
 - Brackish water
 - Mix of fresh and salt water
 - Delmarva Peninsula
 - VA, MD, DE
- First English settlements
 - Important transportation route
- Key battles during Revolutionary War, War of 1812
- Known for its fishing, seafood



The Great Salt Lake



- Largest salt water lake in the Western Hemisphere
- 4th largest terminal lake in the world.
- Largest lake in U.S. that is not part of the Great Lakes

Great Salt Lake

- What is left of a much larger prehistoric lake called Lake Bonneville
 - About the size of Lake Michigan but deeper
- Climate change (32,000-14,000 years ago), caused the lake to begin evaporating, leaving Great Salt Lake
- Endorheic
 - no outlet besides evaporation
 - Saltier than sea water



Pink Floyd the Flamingo, the Great Salt Lake's solitary flamingo. Pink escaped from a local aviary and lived in the wild from 1987-2006.

