

Moving West

Betsy McCall
GEO 200

AGENDA



- Introduction
- Current Region
- New Region
- Location
- Connectivity
- Conclusion



INTRODUCTION

In this presentation, we will look at the region I currently live in, Western New York, and examine the region I intend to move to, the Pacific Northwest. We'll consider their differences and similarities, and what to expect from my new location.



Current Region

Western New York

Starting: Northeast, United States, North America

- Where I am now is the United States, in the Northeast region.



(FreeWorldMaps.net, 2021)

This comprises the typical Northeastern states in the United States. While certain maps encompass Ohio, sections of Michigan, West Virginia, and Virginia, others may omit Maryland and Delaware. The exclusion of Maryland and Delaware aligns with the Mason-Dixon line. It is evident that the region's identity may be shaped by the states that sided with the Union or seceded during the Civil War (Delaware, Maryland, and West Virginia remained in the Union). Notably, the US Census Bureau does not incorporate Maryland or Delaware in its Northeastern map (The Geography Division, 1984).

Starting: Northeast, United States, North America

- Where I am now is the United States, in the Northeast region.



(Mappr, 2024)

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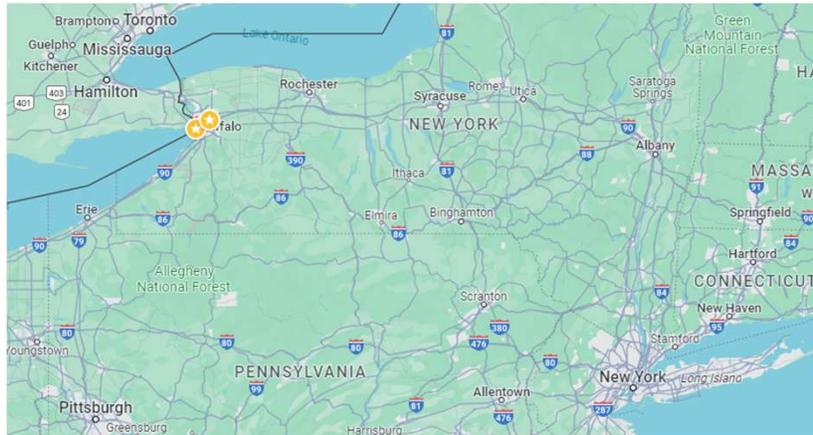
Referring to the provided map for guidance, the southern boundary of this region spans roughly 38 degrees latitude (N), reaching up to about 47.4 degrees latitude (N) at the northernmost tip in Maine. In Maine, its easternmost point lies at approximately -67 degrees longitude (W), while its westernmost point is situated on

the border between Pennsylvania and Ohio, approximately -80.5 degrees longitude (W).

Referring to the included map, this region is situated in the northeastern part of the United States, hence its name. The states within its boundaries either belong to the original 13 colonies or were territories owned by one of the colonies during the formation of the United States. To the north lies Canada, with part of the Canadian border being land and part consisting of the St. Lawrence River and the two eastern Great Lakes. The western neighbor of this region is the Midwest. Its southern border is shared with states in the Southern part of the United States, including West Virginia and Virginia. The eastern boundary is marked by the Atlantic Ocean. The Census Bureau

further divides this region into Middle Atlantic states and New England, with New York considered part of the Middle Atlantic Region (The Geography Division, 1984).

Buffalo, New York



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The metropolitan area where I reside is Buffalo, NY, situated on the western periphery of this region and on the Eastern Shore of Lake Erie, in close proximity to Niagara Falls. Although Buffalo is significantly smaller than New York City, it holds the position of the second-largest city in the state. Its downtown is positioned at approximately $42^{\circ}53' 12.5''$ N, $78^{\circ}51' 28.2''$ W, approximately a 25-minute drive from Niagara Falls (Google, 2024). Buffalo is part of the Upstate New York region and falls within the subregion of Western New York known as the Buffalo/Niagara Frontier, encompassing the areas along the Lake Erie shore in New

York (Clarion Publications, 2008).

Demographics of the US Northeast

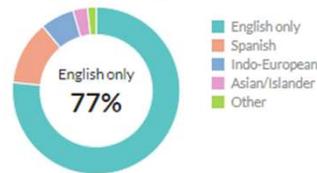
Language

24%

Persons with language other than English spoken at home

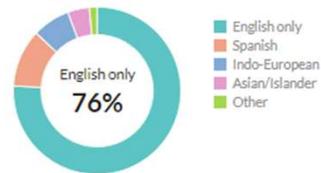
about 10 percent higher than the rate in United States: 22%

Language at home, children 5-17



Show data / Embed

Language at home, adults 18+



Show data / Embed

(Census Reporter, 2024)

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The Northeastern region of the United States comprises areas that were integral to the original 13 colonies forming the nation in 1776. While not all states were independent colonies initially, they were territories controlled by others in the region, later attaining statehood (New World Encyclopedia contributors, 2020). Culturally, the majority of Northeastern states are rooted in a distinct Protestant/Puritan ethos that prioritized education, extending westward along the lakeshore into Ohio. Pennsylvania's cultural roots are notably shaped by Quakers and the Amish, with Amish settlements stretching into Ohio as well. The southernmost part of

the region exhibits a distinct mid-Atlantic culture, reaching into the Midwest, including parts of Ohio around Columbus. Appalachian culture, originating in western Pennsylvania, extends south and west into West Virginia. The cultural mosaic includes contributions from Germans, Catholics, Scots, Amish, Quakers, English Puritans, and more recently, Eastern Europeans and the Irish (Woodard, 2011). Jewish influence is particularly pronounced in the vicinity of New York City. Furthermore, the Northeast hosts the largest population of individuals of Indian (Hindu/Sikh) descent outside of India (New World Encyclopedia contributors, 2020). The region's diversity is so vast that any brief discussion inevitably omits more than can be covered, contributing to its tendency toward political liberalism (New World Encyclopedia contributors, 2020).

Industrial Legacy



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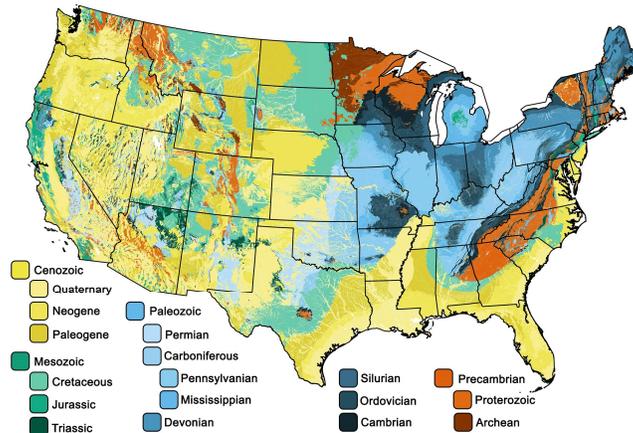
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The eastern segment of this region is characterized by fishing villages extending from Maine to Maryland, with a significant presence of international Atlantic shipping. While the area is susceptible to hurricanes, it experiences them to a lesser extent than the Southeastern United States. Conversely, the western part of the northeast region is marked by industrial activities. The Ohio River is formed by the confluence of the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers in Western Pennsylvania, ultimately connecting to the Mississippi River. The Great Lakes offer shipping opportunities into the Midwest, facilitating the transport of grain, cattle, and goods to and from Canada

(New World Encyclopedia contributors, 2020).

Geological Legacy



(Earth@Home, 2021)

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Geologically, the northeast boasts diverse features. The southwestern part of Pennsylvania and the western part of Maryland encompass sections of the Appalachian Mountains, once home to substantial coal deposits. The western areas of New York bear the imprints of the last ice age, including the Great Lakes and the Finger Lakes.

Regions along the lake shores and the Finger Lakes are known for wine production. Niagara Falls stands out as a prominent natural attraction in the region, drawing numerous tourists. Some Native American tribes, such as the Seneca, maintain a presence in the Northeast (New World Encyclopedia contributors, 2020). Additionally, the region occasionally experiences minor earthquakes (Gregory, 2021).

In terms of climate, the region faces the potential for substantial winter snowfall, either due to lake-effect snow or nor'easters, accompanied by hot and humid summers. However, it typically experiences a visually stunning display of fall foliage.

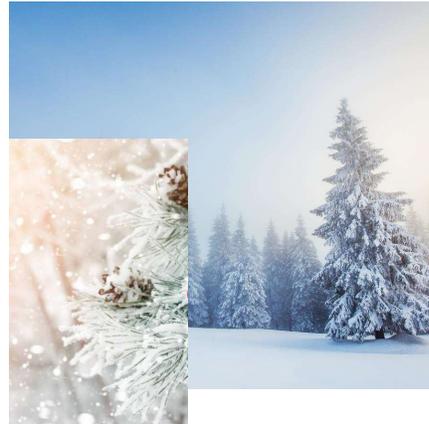
In this map, you can see the age of the rocks in the Northeast, scoured down by past ice ages and advancing glaciers.

History and Trade



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Throughout history, human activities during the colonial era contributed to the deforestation of the region, although some natural landscapes have endured. The transformation of the land is evident through farming, mining, and industrialization. A notable and historically significant alteration to the landscape is the

Erie Canal, constructed to facilitate shipping between the Great Lakes and the Atlantic Ocean, overcoming the navigational challenge posed by Niagara Falls (New World Encyclopedia contributors, 2020).

The Northeastern part of the United States, particularly its eastern section, is occasionally referred to as a megalopolis, forming a vast urban complex along the entire eastern coast, roughly from Boston to Baltimore. Despite variations in density across different sections, the overall population density remains consistently high, and the cities are interconnected by I-95, along with numerous train and subway routes facilitating rapid travel across the region. Despite spanning multiple states, it is often viewed as a cohesive entity. New York City, a component of this

megalopolis, stands as the largest city in the United States (New World Encyclopedia contributors, 2020).

Maple syrup is among the notable products produced in the northeast, spanning both sides of the US-Canada border. Additionally, Niagara Falls, where hydroelectric power was invented, features one of the original power stations accessible as a tourist attraction along I-90.



New Region

Pacific Northwest

The Pacific Northwest, United States



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The Pacific Northwest typically encompasses Washington and Oregon, occasionally extending inland to include Montana and Wyoming. It may also involve Alaska and the northern parts of California, and, if disregarding national borders, British Columbia as well. At times, it consists solely of the coastal areas of Oregon and Washington, reaching only to the Rockies, with the eastern parts of these states falling within the Frontier West region. According to the US Census, the broader Pacific region includes Alaska, Hawaii, and California, in addition to Washington and Oregon (The Geography Division, 1984). However, for the purpose of this

discussion, I will focus specifically on the states of Washington and Oregon, making some generalizations that may include Northern California and southern British Columbia, with a more specific emphasis on the location of Seattle, Washington.

The Northwestern United States



(Maps as Art, 2024)

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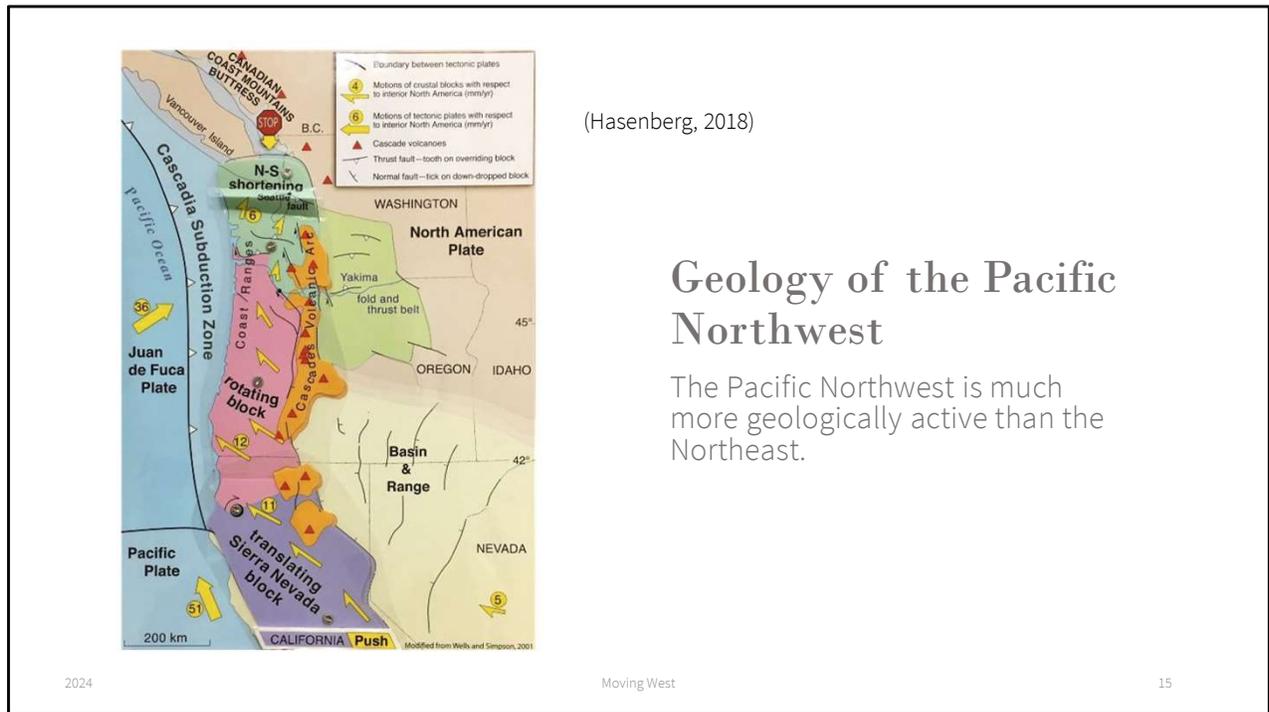
Considering solely the states of Washington and Oregon, the northernmost boundary is marked by the 49th parallel, while the southernmost one is approximately along the 42nd parallel. In this two-state region, the westernmost point of Washington state lies at around -127.7 degrees longitude, with the easternmost

extent reaching -116.5 degrees (Google, 2024). It's crucial to note that these dimensions heavily rely on the specific states or parts of states included in the definition.

Downtown Seattle is situated at approximately 45.6 degrees latitude, -122.3 degrees longitude (Google, 2024).

In a relative sense, the Pacific Northwest occupies the northwest corner of the United States, aligning along the Pacific coast to the west. The Canadian border lies to the north, unless British Columbia is included. As part of the broader Pacific region, it can extend as far north as Alaska. The eastern boundary of the region is described either as the Rocky Mountains, the Great Plains, or even the Midwest, contingent on the extent to which the region is expanded eastward. The Northwest may extend

southward only to the California border or as far as the Napa Valley. The Pacific region, in its entirety, can encompass all of California and include Hawaii (Google, 2024).



The western segment of the United States along the Pacific is situated on multiple tectonic plates, featuring a strike-slip fault. Along the Cascades, a small portion is subducting under the North American plate, and a (failed) rift in the western states, particularly further south, has given rise to the basin and range topography

in the west. In essence, the region is geologically active, experiencing earthquakes and hosting volcanoes (USGS, 2021). I vividly recall the eruption of Mt. St. Helens. Despite the geological activity, the climate is generally mild. While snowfall occurs in the mountains, cool summers prevail due to ocean breezes. Temperature fluctuations are narrower compared to much of the country. Additionally, it stands as a prime region for winemaking, with Washington State gaining renown for its pinot noirs (Touropia.com, 2021).

The Pacific coast fosters a shared culture that leans strongly liberal and is environmentally conscious, extending from the coast to the Rockies, not only in Oregon and Washington but also encompassing California

and British Columbia. As one moves eastward into the Rockies, the Basin and Range region, and the Great Plains, the culture tends to be more conservative (Woodard, 2011). Since my focus is specifically on the Seattle area, I will emphasize the coastal regions.

The region is marked by a rich tapestry of Native American cultures, although they are not extensively integrated into the predominant white population's culture. Substantial influences come from Asian immigrants, particularly from China and Japan, as well as other parts of Asia. Latino influences, especially from Mexico, also play a significant role (Gastil, 1973).

Hydroelectric Power & Industry

Hydroelectric Power



(Harrison, 2014)

Wine and Natural Resources



(Jetset Magazine Staff, 2012)

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Presentation title

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One of the primary alterations made by humans in the region involves the construction of numerous dams along the Columbia River and other rivers in the area. This alteration of water flow has not only provided energy but has also impacted river ecosystems and influenced the landscape (National Park Service). The introduction of wineries is another noteworthy change, initiated by settlers as the region's grapes are not native. Additionally, humans have modified the shoreline and implemented changes in forest management practices. The consequences of the latter are evident in the frequent occurrence of forest fires in the West. Urbanization has

also had an impact on the region, at least along the coastline (the population is much less dense as you move inland The region has a strong influence of surviving Native American cultures, and it has not escaped the effects of climate change (NatureServe, 2021).

Comparing Regions

We'll look at similarities and differences.



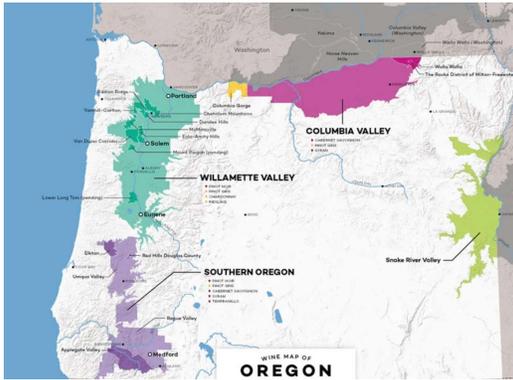
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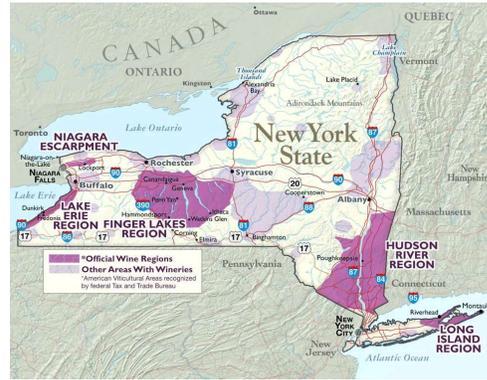


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Similarities



(Roth, 2023)



(JoseM-L, 2014)

Honestly, when choosing a second location for potential relocation, my starting point was the place where I grew up. Although I currently live in Buffalo, my hometown near Cleveland shares similarities with Buffalo, albeit being a bit larger. Having lived in various parts of the Northeast, the Midwest, and south of the Mason-Dixon line, I've come to appreciate two specific aspects about my hometown that I wish to maintain: access to an urban environment without it being overly massive, and a relatively consistent climate that avoids uncomfortably hot summers prevalent in the South. While I explored other international locations like Reykjavik, Iceland; Auckland, New Zealand; Edinburgh, Scotland; Toronto, Canada, among

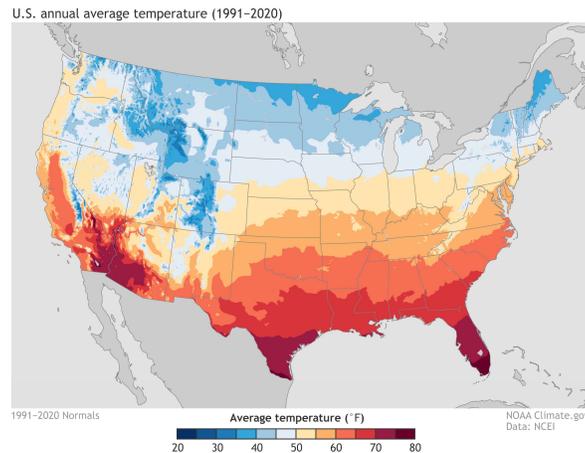
others, many of these options proved impractical in reality. Several countries have strict immigration policies, and as someone over 50, I recognize that I may not live long enough to sufficiently contribute to their tax base. Seattle is a city I have genuinely considered for relocation; I even interviewed for a job there. Hence, it is the location I have chosen, given that it already encompasses some crucial features I was seeking. Perhaps, two decades ago, I might have opted for a city in Hokkaido, but the prospect of starting over doesn't hold the same appeal as it once did.

The significant commonalities lie in the overall size of the cities. Although Buffalo is smaller than my hometown of Cleveland, the metro area boasts a population exceeding a million. Seattle, larger than Cleveland but not as extensive as the DC metro area where I have also lived, provides an ideal size that offers access to civilization without requiring a complete sacrifice of access to suburban or rural environments. Portland, another city in the region, is sufficiently sizable to provide a rich cultural experience without the challenges associated with a megalopolis (Touropia.com, 2021).

Having resided in both blue states, red states, and swing states (leaning redder), I've navigated various political landscapes. While I may not fully grasp the political sensibilities of Democrats in Maryland, living in a blue state is significantly less frustrating for me compared to places like Indiana. I prefer residing in a location that doesn't treat women as second-class citizens, doesn't aim to deny my rights as

an LGBTQ individual, and doesn't attempt to alienate me due to my lack of belief in a higher power. While no place is perfect, especially in the era of COVID, a location's political leanings have real-world, life-and-death consequences. As I've aged, the political climate of a place has become more central to my decision-making process. Feeling a sense of welcome in a place matters, especially since I don't particularly fit in well, even within my extended family. Both places also boast excellent universities and community college systems, a crucial factor for me as I currently work in education.

Differences



(Lindsey, 2021)

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The climate exhibits some differences. The Pacific Northwest experiences less variability, with summers not being as hot and winters receiving less snow. However, I consider this a trade-off I can live with because I strongly dislike hot summers. The geology in the Pacific Northwest is more active compared to the Northeast, with the

presence of volcanoes, although most are relatively quiet and closely monitored. I don't mind the regular snowfall in the Northeast because it allows for planning, but if I ever miss snow, I can easily drive into the Rockies and experience it to my heart's content. While Seattle may be pricier than the part of the Northeast I currently inhabit, I've previously managed living in the relatively expensive DC. Another notable difference is the presence of the ocean. While I used to swim in Lake Erie as a kid, I can do it without encountering jellyfish or sharks.

Choosing a location intentionally with few differences means there aren't many major distinctions. However, one significant change would be the distance from my immediate family. My parents and my brother, along with

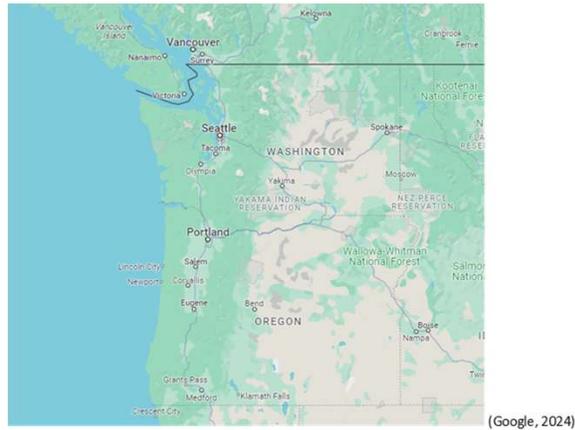
his family, still reside in Ohio. When I lived in Maryland, which was only a 6-hour drive away, I didn't see them often. Now, they are only about 3 hours away, making visits more frequent and convenient. Moving to the other side of the continent would make visits more expensive and time-consuming, causing them to occur less frequently, which could be a source of unhappiness for my mom.



Location

Seattle, Washington

Seattle, Washington



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According to Google Maps, Seattle, Washington is located at approximately 47.584448 degree North, 122.325598 degrees West (2024).

Relatively speaking, Seattle is on the eastern shore of Puget Sound. If we only consider the Pacific Northwest in the United States, it is near the northwest corner of that region, west of the mountains. It is south of the Canadian border.

Known For

Amazon



(Wikipedia, 2024)

Space Needle



(Insight Pest Northwest, 2024)

Seattle is well known for being the birthplace of Starbucks, Amazon and grunge rock. It is a leader in high technology and international trade. It's also well-known for seafood (like many coastal cities). They have a relatively high Native American population and a large Asian population as well. The Space Needle is a popular tourist attraction downtown. Though, I can't say I'm all that excited about the Gum Wall (The Emerald Palate, 2022).

Tourism



(National Park Foundation, 2024)

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Seattle is also well known for its scenery, such as Mount Rainier, the second tallest mountain in the continental US. There are a number of national parks in the area, and Seattle is the place to pick up cruises to Alaska. You can also take tours to see local whale pods. And, of course, it's well-known for its rainy weather (Seattle Travel, 2023). Having grown up in Cleveland, Ohio, though, with more than 300+ days of overcast skies every year, this will feel like home.

Industry

Boeing



(Josephs, 2023)

High Technology



(Reed, 2023)

Defense



(Cox, 2020)

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Seattle, Washington is the largest city in the Pacific Northwest, and is a major port of entry for international trade with the US. Seattle manufactures high technology goods, and is one of the world's leading centers for this, primarily Microsoft products. While Boeing moved its headquarters out of the area, there is still a large aviation manufacturing sector here. The US Department of Defense has a significant presence. Biotechnology and fishing are also prominent (Britannica).



Connectivity

Home of



(Starbucks, 2015)

Starbucks



(Port of Seattle, 2024)

Port Seattle



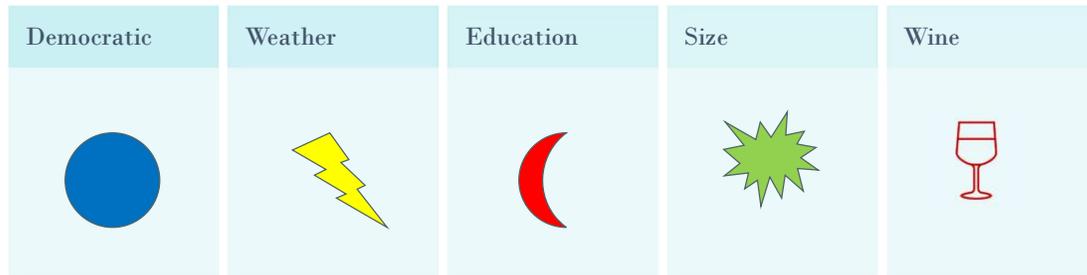
(Stein, 2019)

I-5 & I-90

Seattle is the largest city in the Pacific Northwest with a metro area of around 4+ million people, so it draws in a lot of trade and tourism through the region. Seattle is a major international trade port bringing in goods from all over the world and exporting goods from the US to Canada, Asia and elsewhere (Britannica). The Seattle area is a major manufacturing hub for planes and high technology. It's likely that significant parts of the computer you are working on right now uses products made in Seattle. Seattle is home to Amazon and Starbucks, both of which are ubiquitous across America (The Emerald Palate, 2022). Seattle is connected to the

rest of the United States through international airports, cruise line and shipping hubs, major rail lines and highways (Britannica). I-5 connects the entire West Coast all the way down past Los Angeles. I-90 connects Boston, MA to Seattle, WA and goes right past where I am living now, and also past my parents' place (Google, 2024).

Reasons



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My choice for this location, or near it, is linked to several factors. The first is that I have interviewed for jobs in the area several times before, and visited once as a tourist once upon a time. While it is bigger than some metro areas I've lived in, it's not as big as the East Coast megalopolis or the DMV. The weather is also much more mild than the DMV, where I found the summers to be much too hot for my taste. Even in Western New York, the summers can be uncomfortable. In Seattle, the summers are generally so mild that few people have air conditioning (though, after the heatwave in 2021, perhaps that will change). The winters are milder than

the Great Lakes area, but if I want snow, I have ready access to the mountains, unlike when I lived in Columbus. The area is culturally more aligned with my politics than the direction Ohio has gone. Seattle has high levels of education and good schools I could teach at (Britannica). Though, the last time I was there, the freeways could use some repair. I have a cousin that lives in the area, but I haven't spoken to her in years. I would be basically going there on my own, but that's okay; I've started over in a new city many times. The milder weather would make it a decent place to retire, in my book, much preferred to a place like Florida. You might get an earthquake in Seattle, but you won't be running from hurricanes. I've toured and sampled many wineries within a day's drive of my previous residences. It would be nice to have a new haunting ground to try out new places I haven't been before. Vancouver, British Columbia isn't far away, nor is Portland, Oregon, and both would also be nice places to visit that are pretty inaccessible (relatively speaking) from where I am now. And with cruises to Alaska taking off from here, perhaps I could add to my list of states I've visited.

Conclusion



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Relocating is always hard, and going someplace with few connections or support is harder, but I've moved for work before to places where I had no other support, so this is something I have some experience doing it. Moving to Seattle from Buffalo would be the furthest I've ever moved before (the previous longest move was from Columbus, Ohio to Maryland), so it would be very expensive. Getting the resources set aside to afford such a move would be difficult, and very likely, I would have to choose a different moving option than I've used in the past. Maybe some people would even choose to divest most of their possessions and start over, but I don't think that's really my thing. However, it would be very easy direction-wise, since I-90 starts in Seattle and passes right past where I am living in New York now, so it would be hard to get lost... just get on the road and drive west! This location was chosen to minimize the culture shock (something I absolutely would encounter moving into the Deep South), and so many popular brands got their start in Seattle, that I expect it would feel fairly normal. Seattle's metro area is about twice the size of the Cleveland-Akron metro area where I grew up, but not as large as the DMV metro area where I lived before moving to Buffalo, so I expect it would have some benefits of both locations. And without a passport, until I acquire the latest ReallD, Canada will be just as inaccessible to me now as it's been for 20 years. Access to great American wineries will be familiar. Better access to sports than I had in Columbus, for sure. There is a possibility that it will be more isolating than where I've been living for a while, since most of the people I know will be several days' drive away rather than several hours.



THANK YOU

Betsy McCall
b.mccall@snhu.edu
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