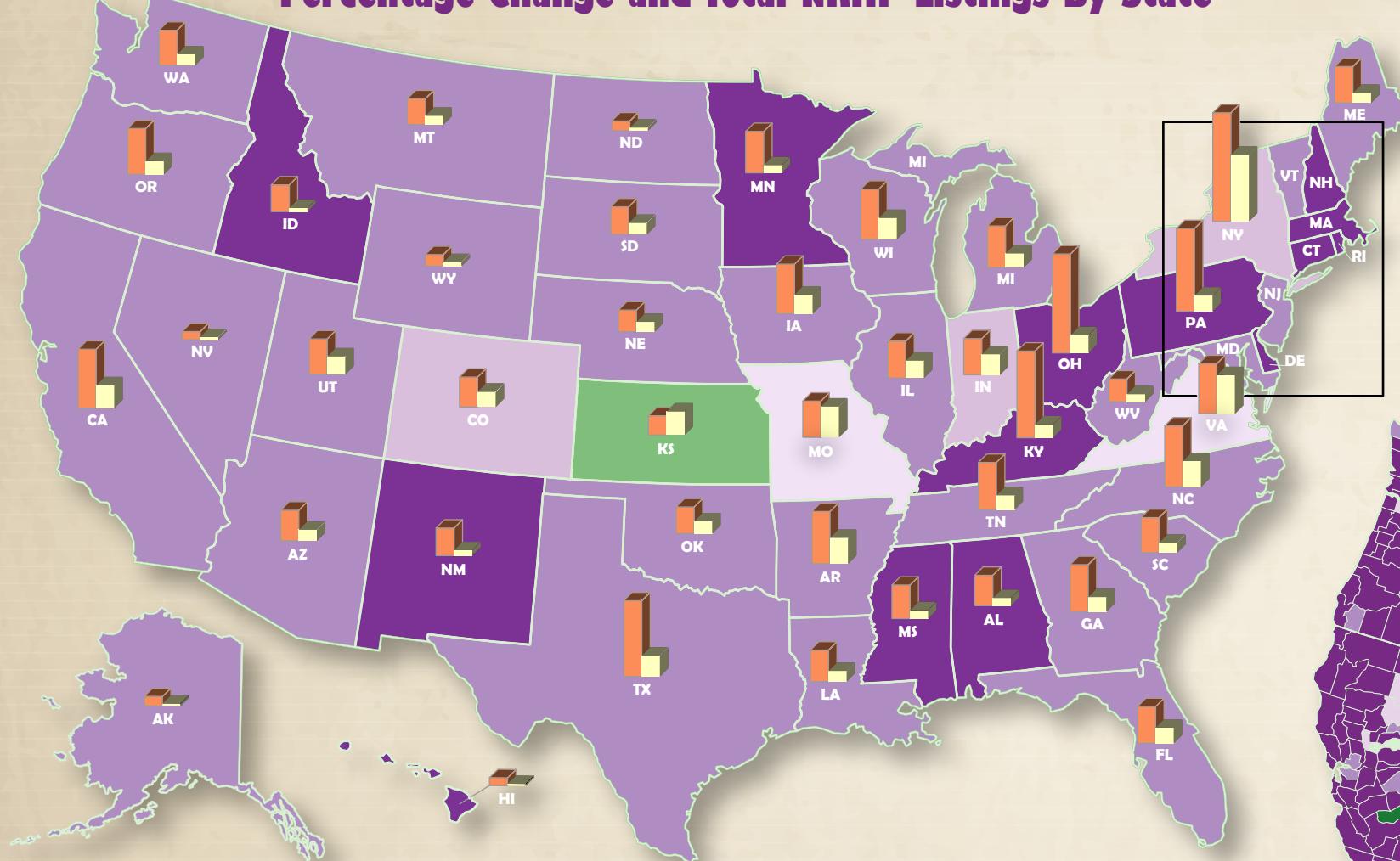


# Who Cares About History?

## **Changes in National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Listings in the United States Between the Late 20th Century (1970-1999) & the Early 21st Century (2000-2020).**

## Why Such a Significant Decline in Some Areas While an Increase in Others?

## Percentage Change and Total NRHP Listings By State

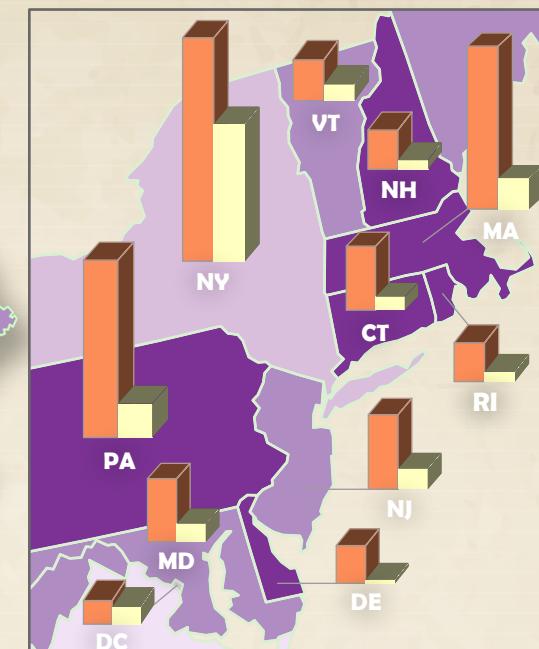
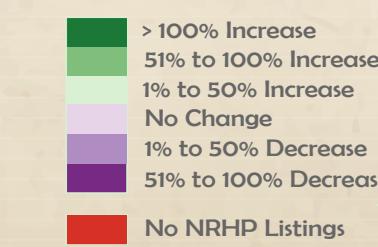
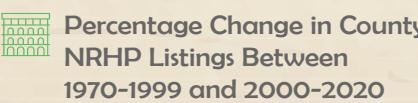


## Data Analysis and Expectations

NRHP data was analyzed by decade to observe any trends or changes in the number of listings throughout the United States. Based on the analysis, the turn of the 21st century was chosen as the break to calculate the percentage change in listings from 1970-1999 and 2000-2020. By the year 2000, knowledge of the NRHP had more than 30 years to disseminate to every locality, and therefore, a general stabilization was expected rather than a 60 percent overall decline.

# The 20th Century Rise and Fall in Listings

According to Donovan Rypkema (1994), the rise in NRHP listings during the 1970s and 1980s was primarily due to economic benefits like rehabilitation tax credits for property owners. Many people sought NRHP status for their properties without understanding what stipulations accompanied the federal benefits. NRHP listing does not automatically impose restrictions on an owner unless they take federal funds, including tax breaks. If federal money is accepted by an owner, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act takes effect, which does restrict how an owner can alter their property. Generally, materials used during rehabilitation and layout need to be consistent with the historic appearance of the property. For example, an owner may have to replace a roof with wood shake shingles rather than modern composite shingles. Oftentimes the expense of a historic rehabilitation is more than the benefits received. Many people misunderstood the regulations, and by the 1990s, this misunderstanding resulted in a widespread belief that NRHP listing automatically meant restrictions. Some people even mistakenly believed that NRHP listing meant a property had to be open to the public.



# NRHP Criteria

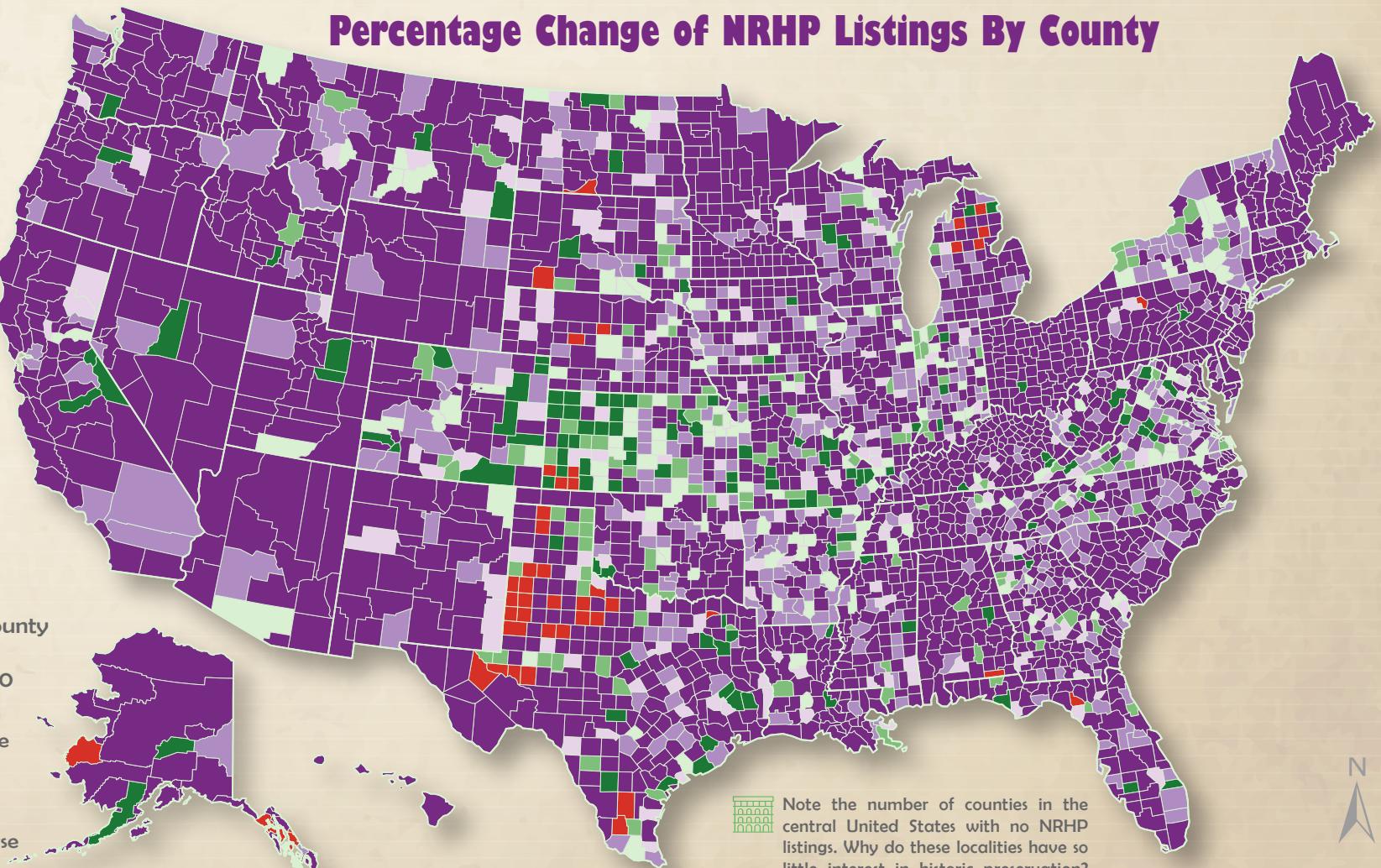
NRHP eligibility determinations require an assessment of historic / prehistoric resources in relation to relevant historic contexts through criteria set forth in 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 60. The criteria (36 CFR § 60.4) are used to evaluate resources when complying with the NHPA. Those criteria state that eligible resources comprise "districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association," and any of the following criteria:

- A.** that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history,
  - B.** that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past,
  - C.** that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic value, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction,
  - D.** that has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

## Additional Considerations

In addition to the above criteria, Historical / Cultural Resources eligible for listing must also be at least 50 years old, and have significance under a historical theme such as Economic Development of the Early 20th Century. A resource can also qualify for listing if it is the first or last of its kind, or is unique like the architecture in Science Hall at the University of Wisconsin - Madison.

## Percentage Change of NRHP Listings By County



 Note the number of counties in the central United States with no NRHP listings. Why do these localities have so little interest in historic preservation?

0 125 250 Miles