

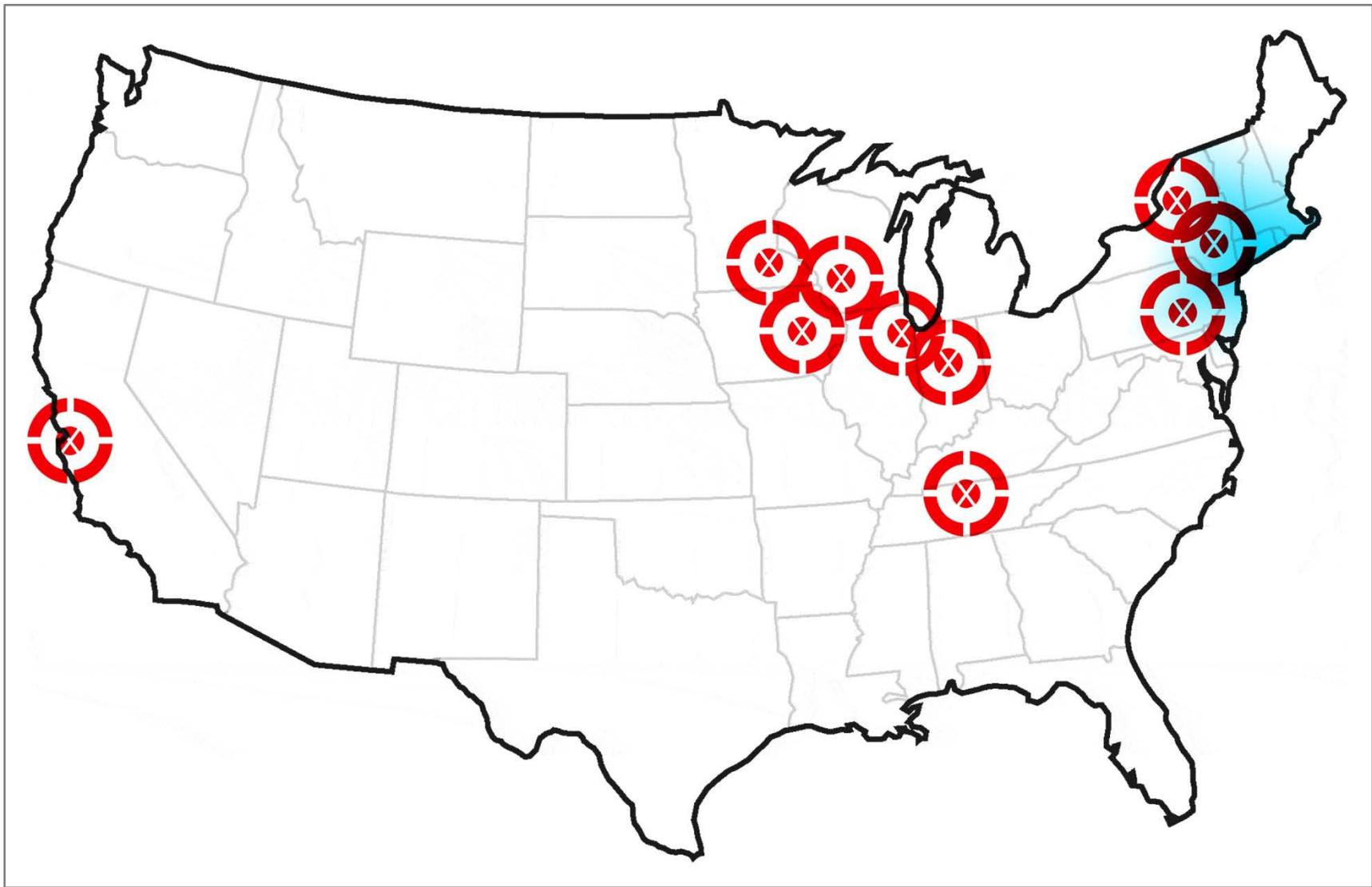
# The Spread of Collegiate Cross Country in America



**1850 - 1881**



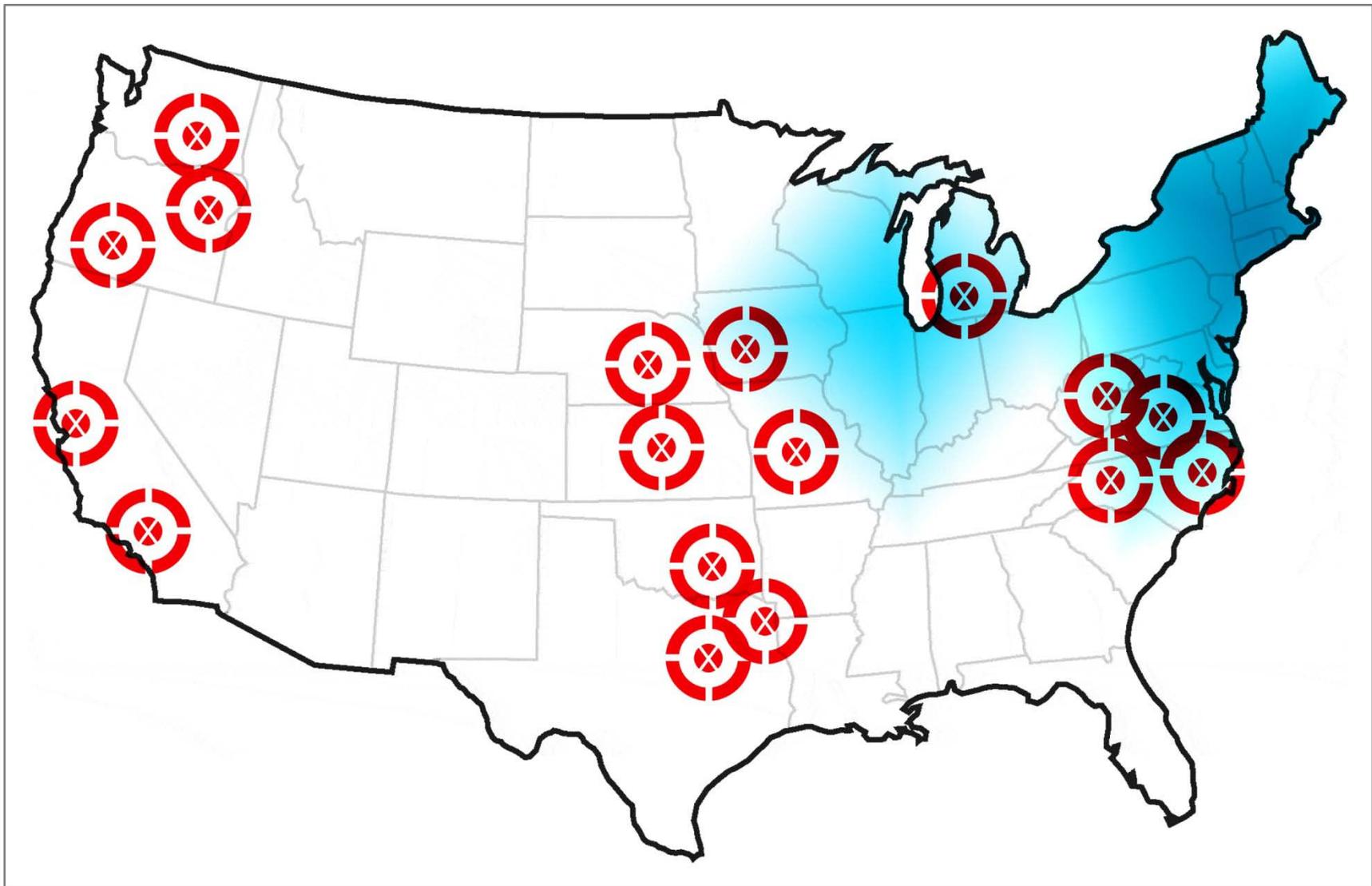
As early as 1860, the imported Rugby game of hare and hounds, or paper chasing, was the "rage" at Andover Theological Seminary in Massachusetts. Yale students tried the English game of hare and hounds in 1870, but it appeared to have died almost as soon as it was introduced. Harvard experimented with the sport of hare and hounds in 1876, just one week before the inaugural Thanksgiving Day championship football game. Whether it was because of angered land owners or exhausted runners, there appeared to be no more chases for three years, until the Harvard Athletic Association sponsored another race. Later in the decade Harvard's popular football captain, Robert Bacon, may have given the sport a new boost when he participated in a ten-mile paper chase which included about forty hounds and two hares. Members of the Princeton University senior class inaugurated the "Princeton Hare and Hounds Club" in the fall of 1880. In the spring of 1881 they challenged Columbia University to a 12-mile run, which Columbia declined to participate in. Also in 1881, Harvard University initiated a formal paper-chasing club, which was introduced by Charles Brandt, a future captain of the New York Hare and Hounds Club.



# 1910



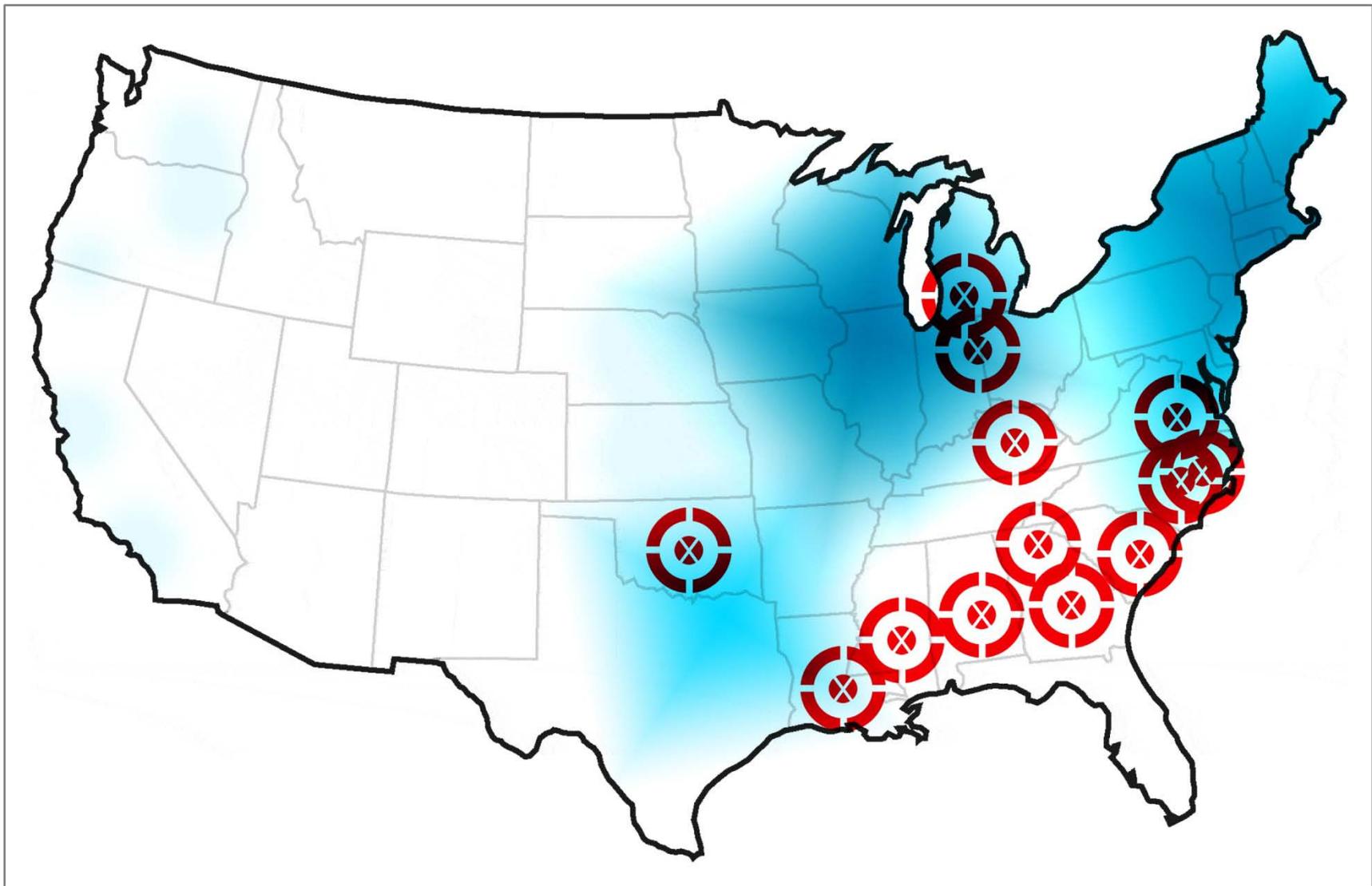
Winter of 1890: Pennsylvania University beat Cornell in the first intercollegiate cross-country race, while by 1895 Stanford University lists the occasional meeting for campus cross-country runs or hare-and-hound chases in their on-campus publication "The Sequoia". In April 1899 Pennsylvania, Yale, Cornell, Princeton and Columbia form the Intercollegiate Cross Country Association of Amateur Athletics of America. The first championship was held November 18, 1899 at Morris Park in New York. J.F. Cregan of Princeton was the inaugural champion, with Cornell taking the team title. Subsequent championships were held annually until the IC4A took over governance in 1908. In November 1904 A.G. Spalding hosts the inaugural championship for the Western Intercollegiate Cross Country Association. Wisconsin, Nebraska, Purdue, Iowa, Indiana, DePauw, Lake Forest, Northwestern and the University of Chicago are invited. Varsity cross country competition among Harvard, Princeton and Yale began in early 1907, and the schools held their first triangular meet in 1922. First Annual Big 10 Conference Cross Country Championship occurs in 1908. Hosted by the University of Chicago, Nebraska beats Purdue, 41 points to 51 points. Five teams compete.



# 1920



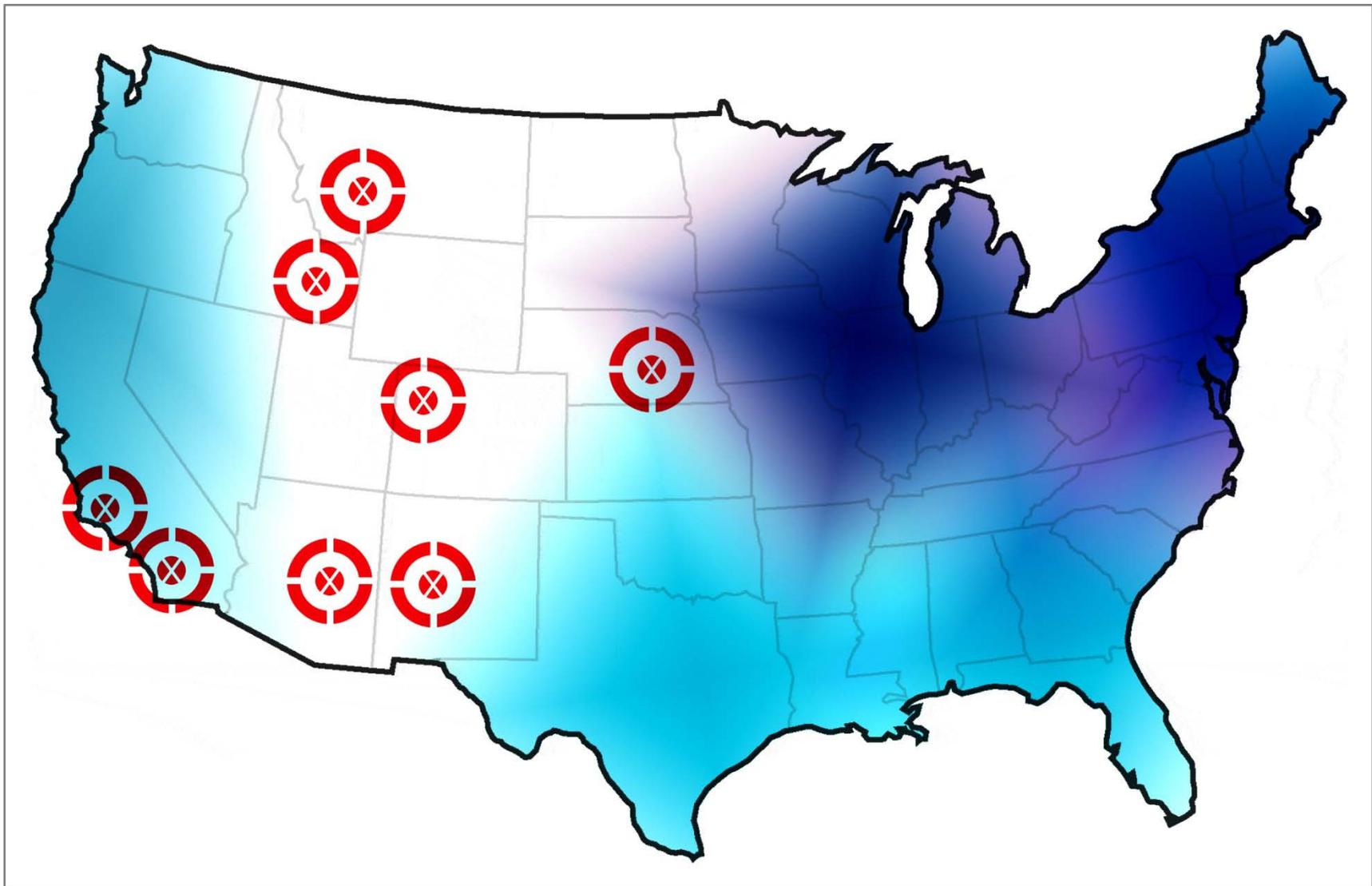
In 1911 the Missouri Valley Conference hosts their inaugural championship, held at the University of Kansas in Lawrence. As early as 1913, reference is made to the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association sponsoring an annual cross-country run. University of Virginia is mentioned as winning the event in 1913. Washington and Lee, Virginia Tech and Richmond College are also listed as participating. In 1917 the Michigan Interstate Collegiate Cross Country is held (in 1888 the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association, or MIAA had been formed, all with Michigan colleges. Albion, Olivet, Hillsdale, and Michigan Agricultural were members). November 1916 Stanford University is officially invited to join the Pacific Coast Conference. The University of Washington, University of Oregon, and Oregon Agricultural College (Oregon State), and the University of California, were already affiliate members. In addition, Stanford defeated the University of California in a cross-country dual meet, led by A. F. Wilson. On November 25, 1920 the first Southwest Conference Cross Country Championship is held, with the University of Texas Longhorns as champions. Jeff Neely, Texas, is individual winner. The Southwest Athletic Conference was organized in 1914. Charter members included the University of Texas, Texas A&M University, Baylor University, the University of Arkansas, the University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma A&M (now Oklahoma State) University, Southwestern University of Georgetown and Rice University.



# 1940



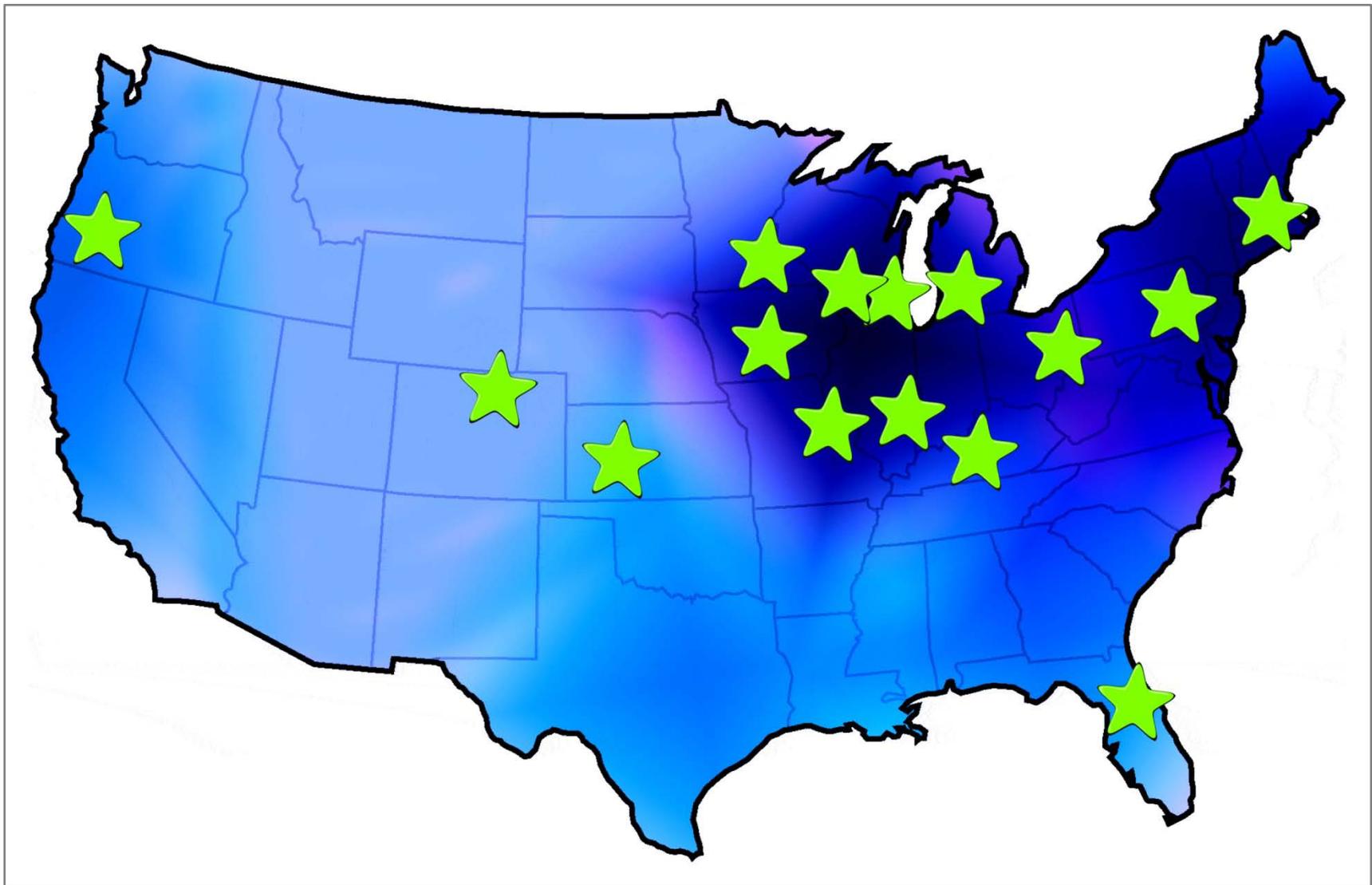
In 1926, Michigan State director of athletics, Ralph H. Young, along with Knute Rockne of Notre Dame and Conrad M. Jennings of Marquette, rounded the Central Collegiate Conference into form to promote cross-country among mid-western colleges. Michigan State won the inaugural Central Collegiate Conference Cross Country Championship in 1926, with four teams present: Michigan State, Notre Dame, Marquette, and Butler. Two years later, in 1928, the first Southern Conference Cross Country Championship is held. North Carolina (30 points) beats Virginia Tech (79 points) for the inaugural team title. Auburn, Georgia, Georgia Tech and Clemson also take part. Five years later, after the SEC is established, the first SEC Cross-Country Championship is held. Georgia Tech wins the inaugural meet, and the next five in a row. In 1937, the inaugural Oklahoma State "Cowboy Jamboree", the nation's oldest consecutive collegiate cross country invitational is held. Started by coach Ralph Higgins in his second year of coaching (when the university was known as the Oklahoma Territorial Agricultural and Mechanical College), it has become one of the nation's largest cross country invitationals. And on November 21, 1938, Michigan State hosts the inaugural NCAA Cross Country Championship. Six teams compete. Team champion was Indiana University and individual winner was Gregory Rice from the University of Notre Dame.



# 1963



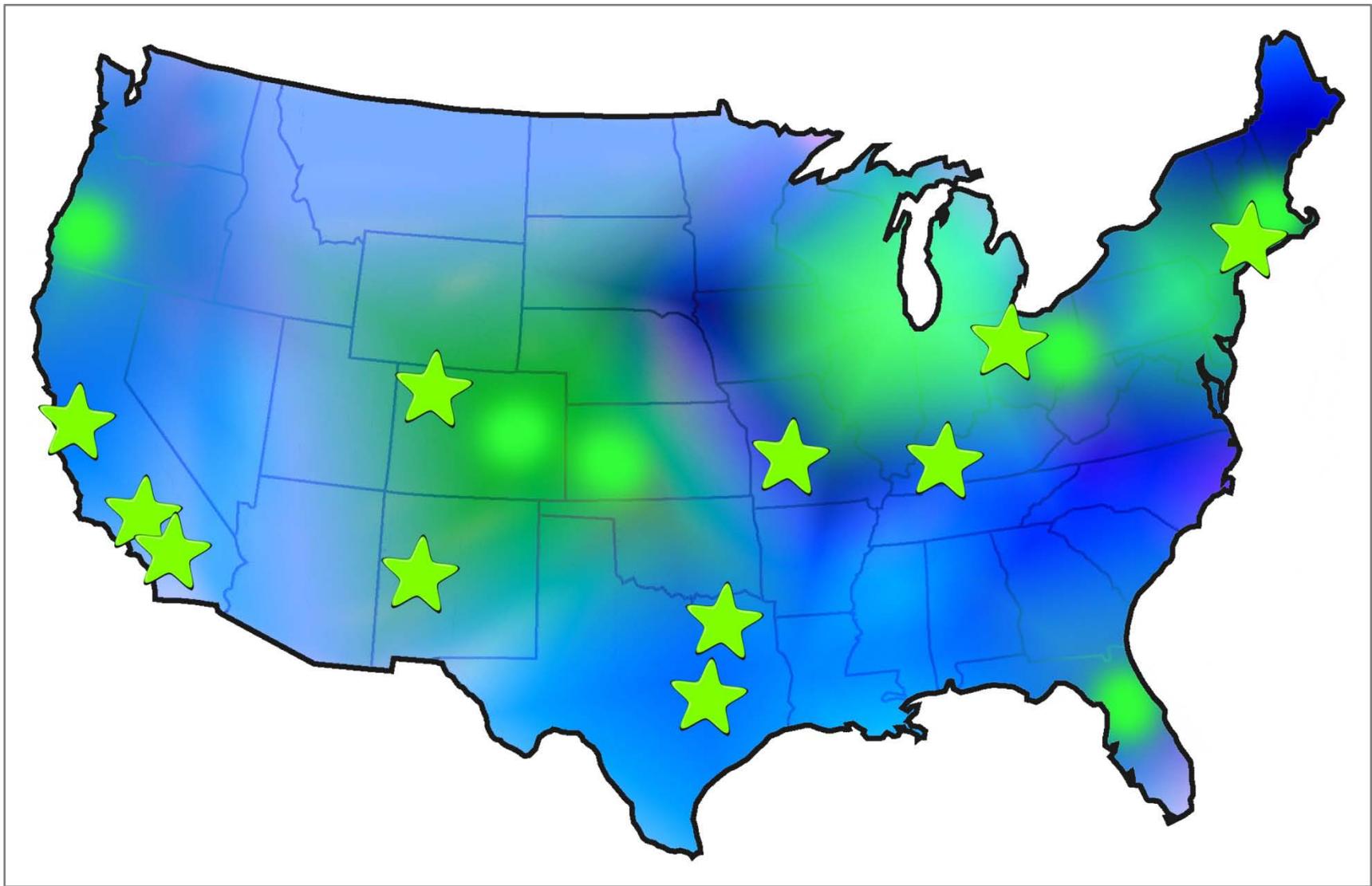
On December 18, 1943, at the inaugural San Diego State College Cross Country Invitational (soon to be called "The Aztec Invitational"), Ray Sears, former Butler university track star, won the open division event. Steve Flood of San Diego State college, which won team honors, placed second. This first meet, which only included men's teams, was held on the San Diego State campus. As the campus grew, SDSU's home cross country course was moved to Balboa Park. Hilmer Lodge was hired at the newly built Mt. San Antonio College in 1947 as the cross country coach. In October 1948, Mt. SAC initiated the first major Cross Country Invitational in Southern California. In its first running, the meet attracted ten high schools and nine community colleges with a total of 148 runners competing in two prep divisions and one Varsity Junior College race. The course was located in what is now the West Campus area and included the western farm area of the present campus. University of Colorado initiated their first cross country team in 1950. The University of Arizona first recognized cross country as a varsity sport in 1958, and joined the Western Athletic Conference in 1962. In November 1956, the inaugural NAIA Cross-Country Championship was held in Omaha, Nebraska. Ray Mation from Redlands, California was the first individual champion. In November 1958 the NCAA featured two National Cross-Country Championships for the first time. One was the University Division, which was only open to teams qualifying as "Division I" institutions (based on enrollment, minimum athletic offering, and varsity participation) – and the College Division, which was open to NCAA member schools who did not fall into Division I criteria. In 1962 the University of New Mexico began their cross country program, while a year later, the University of Montana hosted the inaugural Big Sky Conference cross country championship.



1975



At the first Women's Collegiate Cross Country Championship, sponsored by the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women, in November 1975, 19 schools from across the nation took part. These schools included Iowa State, Penn State, Michigan State, Oregon, Florida, Kansas State, Wisconsin, Colorado State, Massachusetts, Kentucky, Minnesota and Ohio State among others. Peg Neppel from Iowa State was the first individual national champion. Also of note, in 1973 the NCAA instituted regional qualifying standards for the cross-country national championship. In addition, they also further divided the number of colleges up into three divisions: I, II and III, based on enrollment and varsity athletic participation. At the start of NCAA Divisions (I, II, and III) in 1973, the individual winners of the NCAA III and NCAA II (plus a few additional runners in the early years) were invited to compete in the NCAA I meet on Monday – just two days after winning their own division meet on Saturday. The NCAA Cross Handbook carried this text: "It has been established for the 1973 Cross Country Championships that the first five finishers in Divisions II and III will be allowed to compete in the Division I Championships. In 1974 and in subsequent years, the numbers shall be six from Division II and four from Division III. The individual finishers will be able to earn medals, but their finishes won't be counted in team point totals." This made for some very difficult racing challenges for certain athletes in the NCAA subdivisions.



1976



By 1976, four more schools took part in the Women's Collegiate Cross Country Championship, sponsored by the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women. Teams from locations such as UCLA, Texas, Kansas State and Cal State Northridge helped diversify the field and added a greater range of talent from across the United States. Within five years time nearly every collegiate athletics program would support both men's and women's competition. And slowly, as acceptance grew with the sport, qualifications for the national championship would change. The NCAA would assume control of the AIAW women's meet, merging it with the male NCAA Cross Country Championship in 1981. The distance for female competitors would grow from 5 kilometers to 6 in the year 2000, and competition would steadily become more demanding. On both the men's and women's sides, international talent, combined with more dedicated training and nutrition in the U.S. produced faster times consistently through the present day.