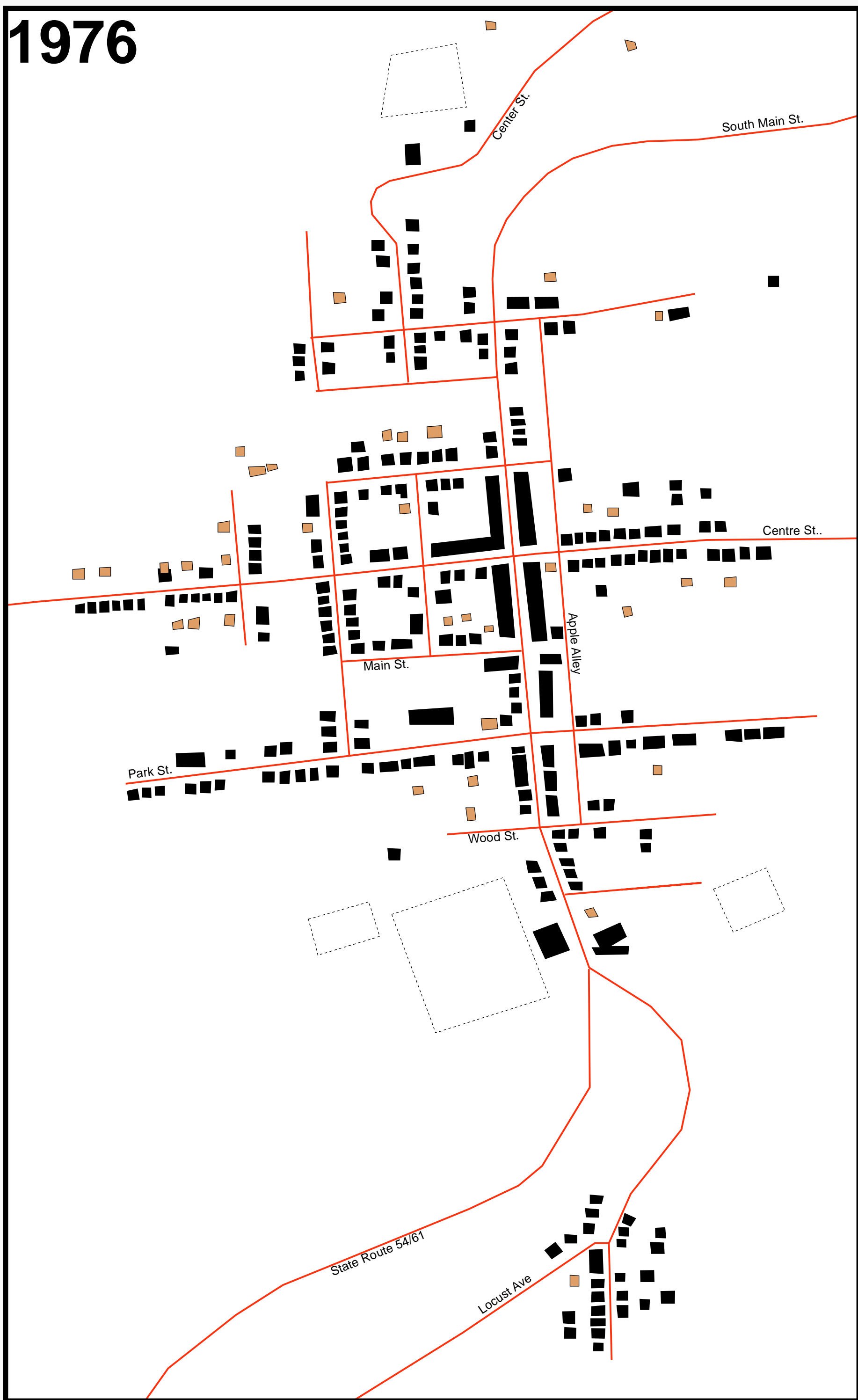
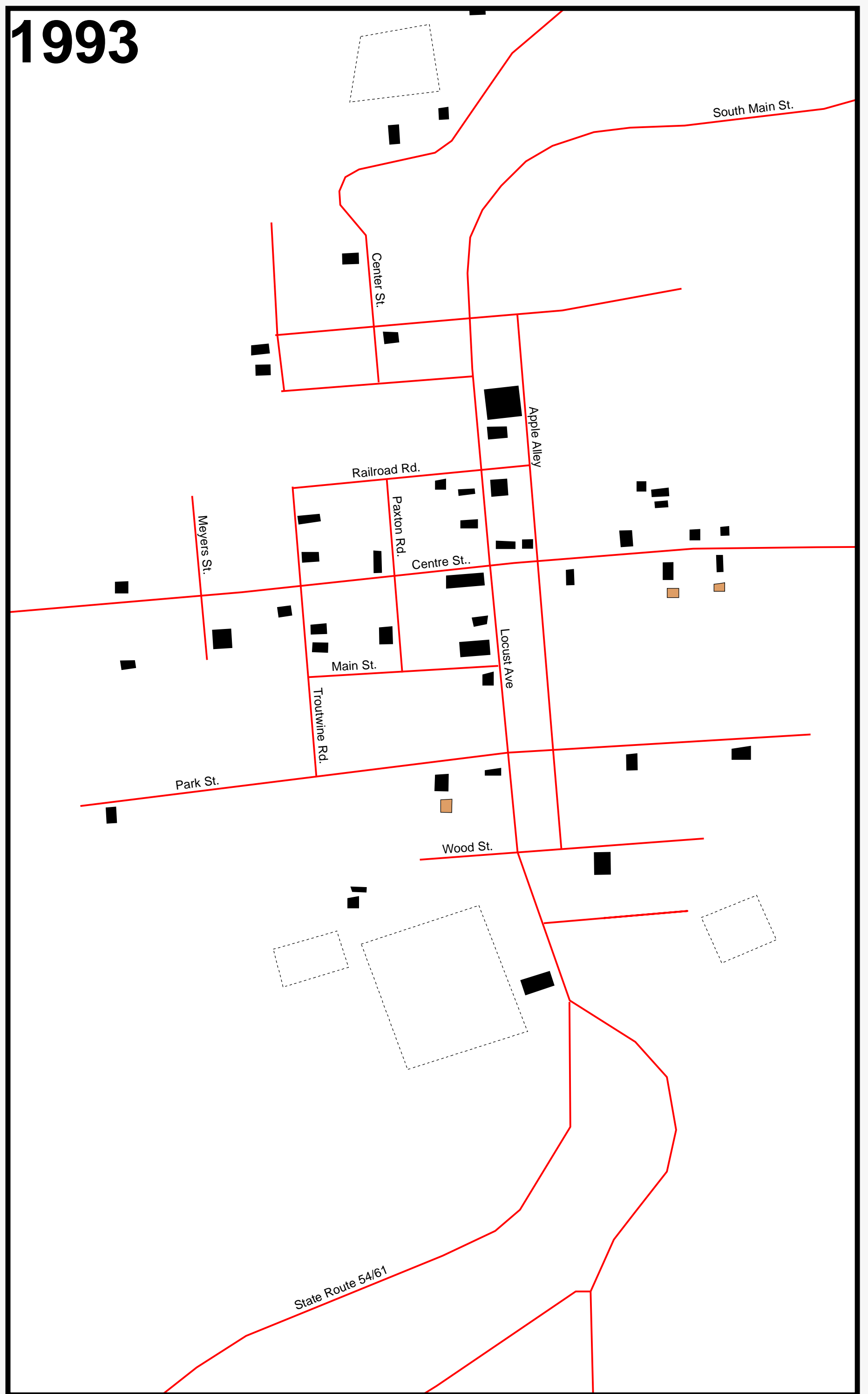


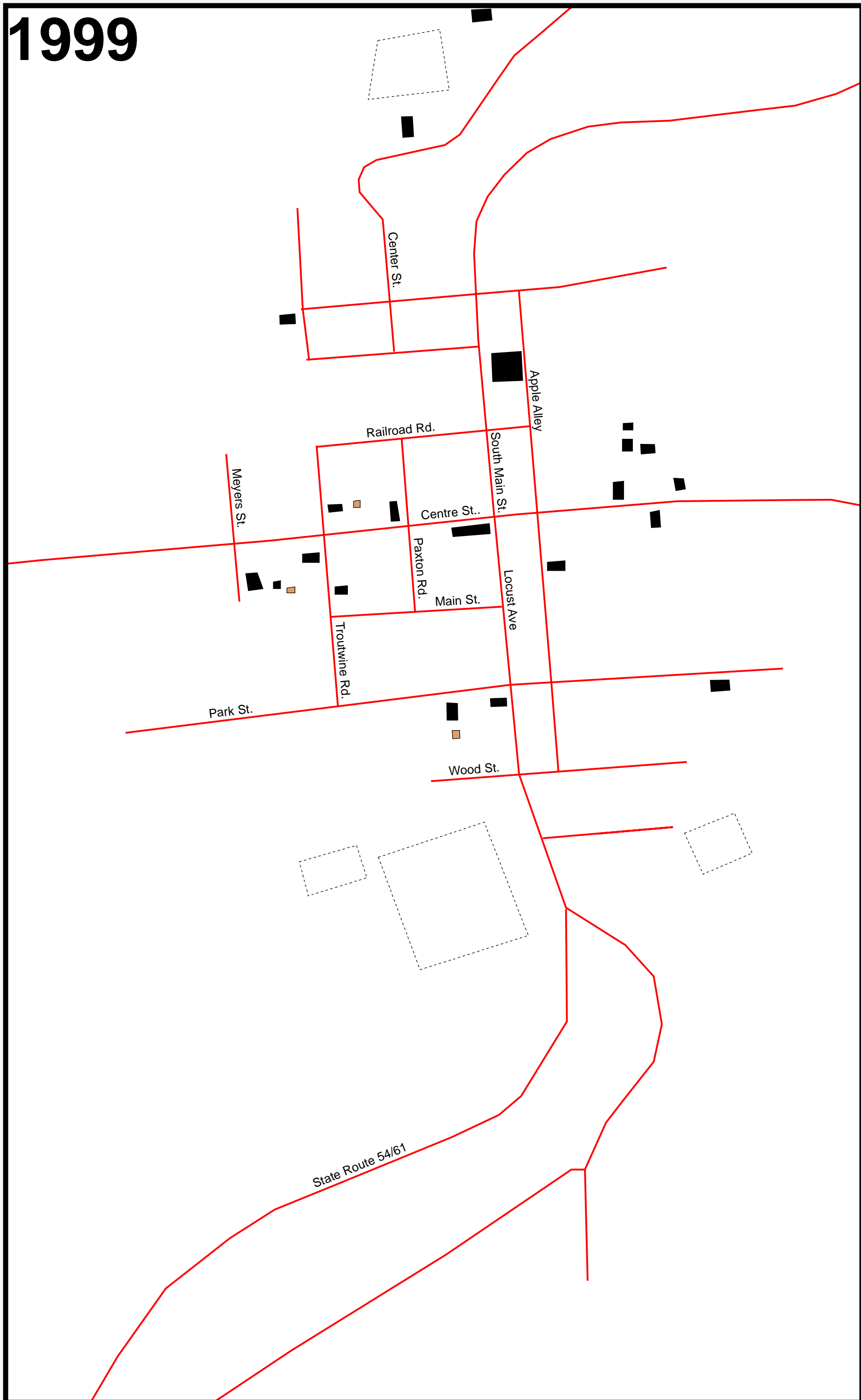
1976



1993

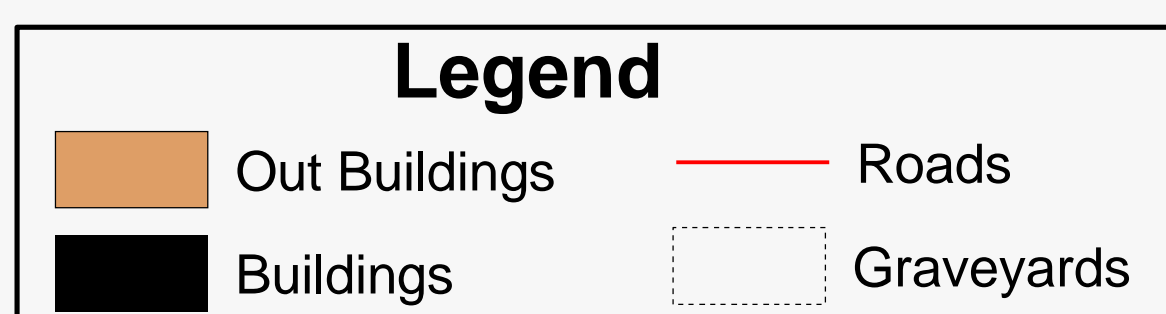


1999

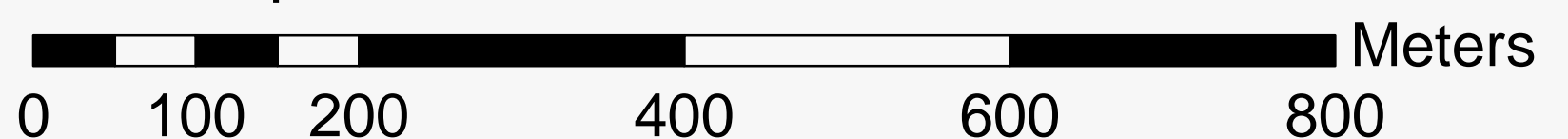


# Centralia, PA: The Death of a Town

During the month of May, 1962, a fire started on the fringes of a small mining town in Eastern Pennsylvania. The exact cause of the fire is unknown, but it is speculated that the fire was started to clear the new town dump of debris. When the fire continued to burn, firefighters were called to the scene. Upon inspection, a hole was found in the ground that led to a large coal seam lying under the town; the fire had spread to the coal. Efforts to put out the fire started in the 1960's and continued throughout the 70's and 80's. Yet, the fire continued to spread and every step taken to stop it fell short because the resources needed to complete the job were never fully allocated. Then, on February 14, 1981, the ground collapsed under Todd Domboski. The boy clung to roots above a 50 foot subsidence below which, the flames of the fire burned. Tom was pulled to safety by his cousin, but this event was the catalyst that spelled the end for Centralia. It was at this point that the residents of Centralia decided to hold a referendum proposing that the State of Pennsylvania buyout those houses affected by the fire. The measure passed by a 2-1 margin and the biggest wave of residents began leaving Centralia during 1983 and 1984. While most of the residents left Centralia during these years, some residents hung onto their houses and their past. The residents that have stayed in Centralia after 1984 do not officially own their homes; they are in fact squatting on Pennsylvania State property. Slowly, Centralia is disappearing. As residents move out, their houses are demolished to prevent further occupation. Before long, the town will cease to exist, but the fire that caused its demise will continue to burn for the next 1,000 years.



1 inch equals 0.069815 miles



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Data Sources: <http://www.pasda.psu.edu/> and <http://www.columbiapa.org/county/>