Delta Lane was swallowed up by the Buckeye Ordnance Plant complex, which later became the Allied Chemical Plant, and is today the location of the Ethanol Plant. Later, Fulton's Lane was renamed Delta Lane and relocated there. Another official name change was approved by the county commissioners about 20 years ago when Possum Hollow Road became Wildwood Drive.

INDUSTRY ARRIVES IN 1941

Purchase of 500 acres of land between then U.S. 52 and Solida Creek from the northwestern area of the village down through the Delta farming community began in 1941 before Pearl Harbor was bombed. The Buckeye Ordnance Works Plant was built the following year to make hydrogen ammonia for military explosives. At the end of the war, Allied Chemical Corp. purchased the plant and converted it to production of chemical fertilizer ingredients using nitrogen and ammonia for peacetime uses. Under several division names, such as "Nitrogen" and "Agricultural," the plant continued as a major employer of the valley until a drastic cutback in 1968 reduced the once 1350-employee complex to an approximately 200-man operation. Eleven years later Allied sold the plant to Ashland Oil, Inc. which, through a partnership, developed the ethanol processing plant that now makes alcohol from corn for use as a gasoline additive under the corporate name of South Point Ethanol.

SOUTH POINT ETHANOL

Purchase of the abandoned Allied Chemical Plant in 1979 by Ashland Oil, Inc. resulted in the formation of a partnership in 1980 by Ashland Oil with three other parties for production of alcohol fuel from corn.

Ashland Ethanol, Inc., a subsidiary of Ashland Oil, as a 50 per cent partner, brought to the partnership years of success in the petroleum business including refining, transportation and marketing. Ohio Farm Bureau Synfuels Investment Company (20 per cent) is a subsidiary of Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, Inc., which contributes expertise in agriculture and government relations.

Publicker Gasohol, Inc. (15 per cent) is a subsidiary of UGI, Inc., which provides extensive synfuels research and carbon dioxide gas marketing know-how.

Plant renovation prompted removal of many of the old production buildings and conversion of the old power house and storage tanks for production of ethanol as a gasoline additive. The site became the nation's first full-scale, coal-fired ethanol plant based on dry milling of corn. It is designed to annually produce 60 million gallons of ethanol and 220,000 tons of distillers dried grains with solubles.

The process requires 24 million bushels of corn and 180,000 tons of coal per year. The plant expects to recover and sell carbon dioxide gas, a by-product, for use in the carbonization of soft drinks. The manufacturing process at South Point is capable of producing 200,000 tons of carbon dioxide gas annually.

South Point Ethanol has 205 full-time employees. Lauren L. Hill is general manager. Although the concept of alcohol as an automotive fuel dates back to Henry Ford's hey-day, serious consideration of mass production of such fuels didn't emerge until the Arab oil embargo of 1973 and the Iranian political revolution.