

# COURTNEY ROAD SERVICE STATION

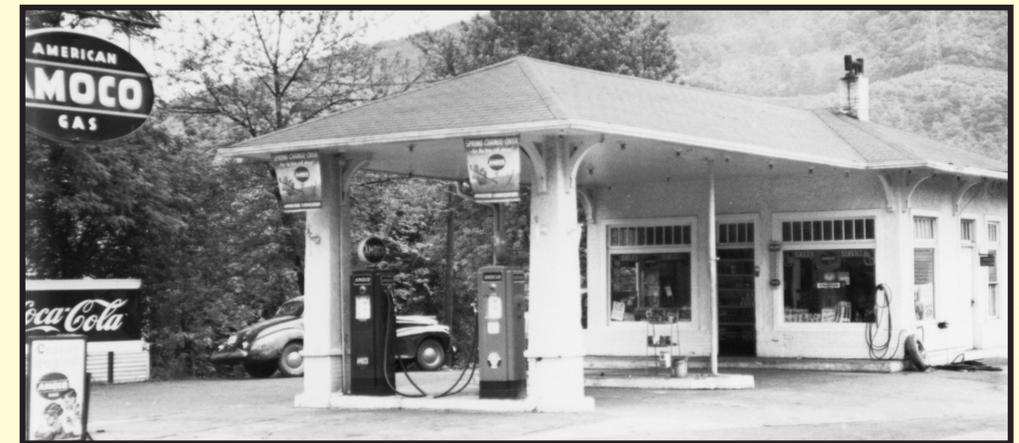
## *The Birth of Modern Automotive Services*



Before there were gas stations, motorists would get a drum of fuel from an industrial depot, bring it home, and store it. Soon after, consumers got their gasoline at the blacksmith shops and hardware and grocery stores. Still others received gasoline from horse drawn tanks that made house calls.

In the early 1900s, gas producers standardized their station designs to better package the image of their petroleum products. The “House with Canopy” design of the Henrico County gas station originated in 1916 with the prefabricated prototype by Standard Oil of Ohio. Eventually stations like the Courtney Road Service Station with the brick square shape with metal roof and brick piers became a very popular design in the mid-1920s.

The 1920s were the boom years for the construction of gas stations across the nation. The need for stations was due to an increase of cars, improved roads and a decrease in the cost of gasoline. In 1921, there were 12,000 stations operating and by 1929, there were 143,000. In 1919, 47 percent of the gasoline was sold by grocery stores, general stores and hardware stores; by 1929, gas and filling stations sold 91.7 percent of the gasoline produced.



The “House with Canopy” design gas station was popularized in the mid-1920s, as shown in this Amoco station in Alleghany County, Virginia. Below left, a typical station interior of the period.

Photos: The Library of Virginia

The first known owner of the gas station property was the Peterson family in 1886. Next, the Leake and Beveridge families kept the property from 1900 until 1907. A group of families were next to own the property. By 1938, the Barlow family owned the gas station and all the surrounding acreage.

There are no records of the station operations until the summer of 1940 when it was listed in the Richmond and Vicinity Telephone Directory as a Texaco Station. It was called the Friendly Service Station and was owned by the Barlow family. The station closed in the 1960s.

The Wiltshire family operated the station for most of the years the Barlow family owned it. One local resident remembers his family stopping their Model T Ford for gas on the way to Virginia Randolph School along Mountain Road. The family had a running tab for services and paid it at the end of each month.