

BENTON FILLING STATION, RESIDENCE  
33 East Taunton Road  
Berlin Vicinity  
Camden County  
New Jersey

HABS No. NJ-1232-A

HABS  
NJ  
4-BERL.V,  
1A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
Northeast Area Office  
National Park Service  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
BENTON FILLING STATION, RESIDENCE

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Location: 33 East Taunton Road, Berlin vicinity, Camden County, New Jersey

USGS Clementon, NJ Quadrangle  
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:  
18.452890.4403150

Significance: This residence is a modified Bungalow-style building commonly found throughout southern New Jersey. This residence is one of three buildings comprising the Benton Filling Station Complex, and displays a local level of significance in relation to the automobile's widespread effects upon the nation's environment, culture, and society. The Benton Filling Station Complex is an early vernacular example of American gas station architecture.

Description: The residence associated with the complex is a rectangular plan, single-story, Bungalow-style building with subsequent additions. The overall dimensions of the building are approximately 24'-0" x 42'-0", exclusive of an approximately 6'-0" x 20'-0" addition extending from the main block's south elevation, a 22'-0" x 7'-6" enclosed porch located across the east facade, and a 9'-0" x 2'-6" bay addition (accommodating two adjacent bedroom closets) located along the north facade. A concrete slab extends from the west side of the south addition to the rear of the main block and is partially sheltered by a wood arbor.

The building is of wood-frame construction covered with drop siding. The dwelling's main rectangular block includes a full basement with concrete block foundation walls. An exterior bulkhead entrance is located on the building's north side. The building has a front facing gable roof covered with asphalt shingles and includes two shed-roofed dormers located near the west (rear) end of the building. Each dormer, as well as the building's east (front) facing gable end, are covered with aluminum siding. A concrete-covered ridge chimney is located immediately east of the dormers. The building's south side addition has an asphalt shingled shed roof tied back to the main block's south roof slope. The main block's gabled roof includes exposed rafter ends supporting wide eaves. The building's east porch has a half-hipped roof covered with asphalt shingles. Porch walls are predominantly glazed, and consist of paired fifteen-light wood doors flanked by groupings of three, ten-light, fixed wood sash on the east facade. The porch's north and south side walls consist of paired, ten-light, wood sash.

Window openings throughout the dwelling are rectangular and include one-over-one, double-hung wood sash with plain wood surrounds, sills, and drip moldings. A large percentage of window openings are currently covered with plywood panels. Entrances are located in the east and west walls of the south addition and on the south side of the main block as well as the paired doors located in east wall of the porch. Exterior doors consist of vertical paneled wood doors with eight lights above and unpaneled fifteen-light doors set in simple wood frames.

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The building's interior is divided into a main living floor, a full unfinished basement, and an unfinished attic space. The primary living space is divided into three bedrooms located along the north side of the dwelling, a living room, a family room that extends into the south side addition, a dining room, a narrow kitchen located along the building's west end wall, and a bathroom located north of the dining room between two of the bedrooms. Stair passages leading to the basement and the attic divide the kitchen from the dining room. Interior finishes include plaster walls with wood baseboards. Ceilings consist of acoustical drop panels. Door and window frames include simple wood surrounds.

History: Wright C. Benton hired a local contractor to build this house in 1921. Benton began operation of a gasoline filling station in front of his residence on Taunton Road ca. 1931. His opening of the filling station appeared to coincide with the completion of NJ Route S-41 (currently NJ Route 73), which ran adjacent to Taunton Road. Benton expanded his filling station operation during the mid 1930s when he moved a ca. 1885 railroad ticket agent's building (HABS No. NJ-1232-C) to the site. Benton moved another building to the site ca. 1941. This latter building Benton had constructed ca. 1922 as a gasoline filling station (HABS No. NJ-1232B) on the White Horse Pike. Benton continued to operate the filling station until his death in 1962. Harvey Burkhart, Benton's son-in-law, then assumed operations of the station. The station closed in the early 1970s. Since its closing the residence and other buildings comprising the complex have been vacated and have fallen into a state of disrepair.

Sources: Benton, Carville "Buck". Telephone interview with Glenn Ceponis, June 8 and 29, 1994.  
Camden County Land Records. Camden County Courthouse, Camden, New Jersey.  
Camden County Will Books. Wright C. Benton. Camden County Courthouse, Camden, New Jersey.  
New Jersey State Highway Department. *Annual Report*, 1931. On file at the New Jersey State Library, Trenton, New Jersey.

Historian: Glenn A. Ceponis  
KFS Cultural Resource Group  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
September 1996

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