

SM-393  
Samuel Bernard Burch house  
Mechanicsville  
Private

circa 1914

Local carpenter James S. Burroughs built this two-and-a-half story, three-bay frame structure which is situated on a rise overlooking the village of Mechanicsville. Unique in the village is the site's dramatically terraced front lawn. The hipped roof of this house is pierced by three dormer windows and a front porch once wrapped around its first floor from the west to the east elevations. Although the structure's original lapboard siding has been covered over by artificial siding and its front porch has been partially enclosed, the essential form and detailing of this early twentieth century house is not significantly changed.

SM-393, Samuel Bernard Burch house  
St. Mary's County  
Maryland Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan Data

Historic Context

Geographic Organization: Western Shore

Chronological/Developmental Period: Industrial/Urban Dominance, 1870-1930

Historic Period Theme: Architecture

Resource Type

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Village

Historic Function and Use: Private Residence

Known Design Source: Unknown

Maryland Historical Trust  
State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. SM-393

Magi No.

DOE \_\_\_yes \_\_\_no

**1. Name** (indicate preferred name)

historic Samuel Bernard Burch House

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number North side of Old route 5 \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town Mechanicsville \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ congressional district 5

state Maryland \_\_\_\_\_ county St. Mary's

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property** (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name S. Bernard Burch, Jr.

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone no.: 301-884-3403

city, town Mechanicsville \_\_\_\_\_ state and zip code MD 20659

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Mary's Clerk of Court \_\_\_\_\_ liber CBG 40

street & number St. Mary's County Courthouse \_\_\_\_\_ folio 258

city, town Leonardtown \_\_\_\_\_ state MD

**6. Representation in Existing** Historical Surveys

title \_\_\_\_\_

date \_\_\_\_\_ federal \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ county \_\_\_\_\_ local

depository for survey records \_\_\_\_\_

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Description

Survey No. SM-393

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved	date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Contributing Resource Count: 6

The Samuel Bernard Burch house is located on the north side of Old Route 5 in Mechanicsville, Maryland. This substantial structure faces south and has a hipped roof. The house is situated on a rise overlooking the village and has a steeply terraced front lawn.

Built around 1914, this two-and-a-half story, center hall frame building is sheathed in vinyl siding. The roof is covered with pressed tin shingles and the foundation consists of masonry piers infilled with cinderblocks. Interior brick chimneys sprout from the roofs of the east and west dormer windows.

The south (main) facade has a partially glazed entrance door with a single light transom as its central bay. To the west of the door is a three-sided bay lit by two-over-two sash windows. To the east of the door is one two-over-two sash window with black louvered shutters. A porch with a cement pad floor and square post supports wraps across the front of the house to the west elevation. The roofline of the porch is broken by a cross gable placed above the entrance door. Originally, this porch wrapped around to the east side of the house as well. That eastern section of the porch has been enclosed and is lit on the south side by one two-over-two sash window with black louvered shutters. The second floor of the house is lit by three two-over-two sash windows with black louvered shutters. The attic story is pierced by a pyramidal roofed dormer window lit by two small two-over-two sash windows.

The east elevation of the main block is lit by one two-over-two sash window on the first floor as the northern most bay. To the south is the porch enclosure which projects to the east of the house and is lit by one six-over-six sash window on the east side and pierced by a modern door on the north side. The second floor of the main block is lit by two two-over-two sash windows. The attic story consists of a pyramidal roofed dormer window lit by two small two-over-two sash windows. To the north of the main block is a two-story, shed roof addition lit on the first floor by two two-over-two sash windows. The second floor of this addition is blind.

The north elevation consists of a two-story shed roof addition to the east and a two-story gable roof addition to the west. The shed roof structure is pierced on the first floor by a five-panel door and three two-over-two sash windows. The second floor is lit by two two-over-two sash windows. The gable roof addition is lit by one small two-over-two sash window on the first floor. The second floor is blind.

The west elevation is lit on the first floor by three two-over-two sash windows with black, louvered shutters. The second floor is lit by three shutterless two-over-two

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates**      Unknown      **Builder/Architect**      James Burroughs

check: Applicable Criteria:  A  B  C  D  
 and/or  
 Applicable Exception:  A  B  C  D  E  F  G  
 Level of Significance:  national  state  local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The scale and prominent position of the Burch house stands out in Mechanicsville. Unique in the village is the site's dramatically terraced front lawn. Although the structure's original siding has been covered over by artificial siding and the porch has been partially enclosed, the essential form and detailing of this early twentieth century house has not changed significantly over the years and contributes to the historic character of Mechanicsville.

This house was built around 1914 after Samuel Bernard Burch purchased the unimproved lot from Lillian C. and W. Riggs Macgill for \$350 in 1912. According to S. Bernard Burch Jr., local carpenter James Burroughs built this house. Mr. Burch feels that the terracing in the front yard was completed at a later date, possibly in the 1920s.

Prior to forming the Burch Oil Company with Thadeus Burch and Joe Burch in 1928, Samuel Bernard Burch made his living from farming and sawmilling. Burch tended the family farm in Charlotte Hall as well as some limited acreage on his Mechanicsville property. Like many families at this time, he planted fruit trees, and a winter and summer garden at his home in Mechanicsville for family consumption. His sawmilling took place at tracts of timber that he purchased in the northern section of St. Mary's County and in Charles County, particularly in the Zekiah Swamp area. Burch also had a steam-powered threshing machine that he transported from farm to farm as needed.

In 1928, Burch purchased a franchise of Gulf Refining Company with Thadeus and Joe Burch and established Burch Oil Company at the Oaks, a crossroads to the north of Mechanicsville. There, they built a thirty by sixty foot warehouse and installed two large storage tanks. Burch Oil Company still serves St. Mary's County today.



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St. Mary's  
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sash windows. The attic story consists of a pyramidal roof dormer with two small two-over-two sash windows. The foundation of this elevation is pierced by two single pane windows which light the house's partial basement.

At one time all rooms in the Burch house had ceilings of decorative pressed tin. One of these ceilings survives in the rear east room of the house consisting of square panels with an egg and dart border. Other early twentieth century detailing which survives on the interior includes four panel doors and door moldings with corner blocks. On the north side of the house, within the two-story shed roof addition, is a wall sheathed with lapped boards. These boards were probably the house's original exterior sheathing material.

There are seven outbuildings on the property. Next to the house stands a molded concrete block building with a tin gable roof built in the 1940s, formerly the pump house, and a board and batten, tin roof structure which served as the smoke house. There are two board and batten garages with tin roofs built sometime before 1922, and a frame building with a gable roof of corrugated tin which once served as a chicken house. A modern gambrel roof barn and a tractor shed also stand on the property.

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TO: Louise B. Kronlund and Benjamin Kronlund, her husband.

FROM: Mary R. Fowler.

RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber CBG 40, folio 258.

DATE: September 30, 1952.

NOTES: Transfer of four tracts known as "S. Bernard Burch Home Place in Mechanicsville." This is Tract III, "located opposite land formerly owned by George H. Long" and about two acres.

TO: Mary R. Fowler

FROM: S. Bernard Burch, Jr. and Ellen Burch, his wife; F. Elliott Burch and Elizabeth B. Burch, his wife; Margaret B. Stephens and William A. Stephens, her husband; Louise B. Kronlund and Benjamin Kronlund, her husband. All are heirs of S. Bernard Burch and Lucy A. Burch, deceased.

RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber CBG 40, folio 248.

DATE: August 30, 1952.

NOTES: Both S. Bernard Burch and Lucy A. Burch, his wife, died intestate. S. Bernard Burch died on May 16, 1944, see case #1508, Estate Docket ACM 1/157. No date of death in recorded for Lucy A. Burch, see case #1809, Estate Docket ACM 1/307.

TO: S. Bernard Burch

FROM: Lillian C. Macgill and W. Riggs Macgill, her husband.

RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber EBA 10, folio 133.

DATE: April 2, 1912.

NOTES: Transfer of "all that lot opposite the residence of George H. Long" being about two acres. Price: \$350.

TO: Lillian C. Macgill, wife of William Riggs Macgill.

FROM: Lydia A. Tennison and Walter F. Tennison, her husband.

RECORD: St. Mary's County Land Record, Liber EBA 10, folio 78.

DATE: December 2, 1911.

NOTES: Transfer of two acres "opposite residence of George H. Long" which Lydia Tennison, then Lydia Copsey, received from the estate of George T. Burroughs.  
Price: \$300

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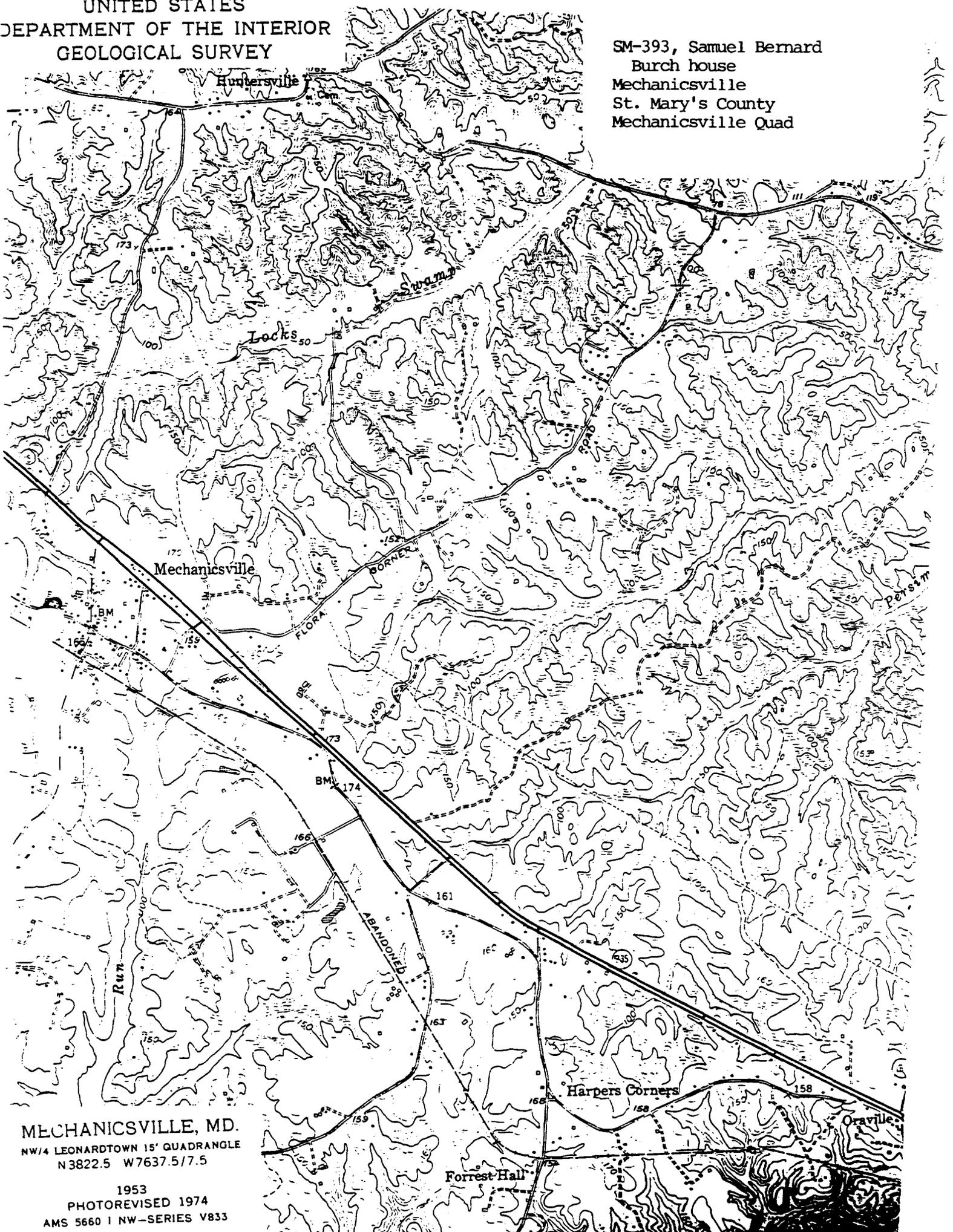
Verbal boundary description and justification:

"The tract opposite the land formerly owned by Geo. H. Long in the village of Mechanicsville, and bounded as follows: On the north by the lot formerly owned by J. Wilson Adams, on the east by the property formerly owned by Mrs. H. C. Adams, on the south by the state road, and on the west by the property of S. Bernard Burch, containing approximately two acres of land."

St. Mary's County Land Records, Liber CBG 40, folio 258.

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

SM-393, Samuel Bernard  
Burch house  
Mechanicsville  
St. Mary's County  
Mechanicsville Quad



MECHANICSVILLE, MD.  
NW/4 LEONARDTOWN 15' QUADRANGLE  
N3822.5 W7637.5/7.5

1953  
PHOTOREVISED 1974  
AMS 5660 I NW-SERIES V833







