

## *First by Stage*

### *By Mal Anderson*

Try to imagine how life was in the second half of the 1800s. Electricity was only recently developed, we had bicycles but no motorcycles. Some dirt or gravel roads existed but were nowhere near what we “enjoy” today. To go anywhere, you had to hitch up a wagon or ride a horse to get there or you could always walk. While hitching up a horse and maybe a wagon was common among our forefathers and usually an everyday chore, travel from Bridgeboro to Riverside became a lot easier about 1873.

Sometime just before 1870, a family named Elliott moved from Massachusetts to settle in Delanco. Isaachar J. and Sarepta Bates Elliott were farmers. They lived quietly among the other residents and had raised two sons, Oscar (b. 1841) and Albert (b.1850). The two boys moved along with their parents and lived at home. Sarepta Elliott died in 1871 only a few years after moving from Massachusetts. The family was broken however by this time the boys were young men. Oscar married soon after 1870 just before his mother passed away and worked in a machine shop until at least 1880. He and his family then moved to Riverside where he worked as a carpenter. Albert on the other hand moved to Main Street in Bridgeboro after the death of his mother and saw a need to start a jitney service that would convey people and merchandise from one town to another. This Jitney Service or Stage Coach Line began sometime around 1873, probably soon after Albert moved to Bridgeboro. During his time in Delanco and later in Bridgeboro, he was courting a woman from Delanco who was to become his wife. Albert married Kate McClure on March 18, 1874 and began to raise his family.

In the beginning, Albert started his route from the hometown Bridgeboro Post Office. During those early days when Mr. Elliott started his service, the Post Office was located at Main Street and Route 25 in Johnson’s Store. Postmaster George Baxter Johnson would ship any late day mail from the previous day or early morning mail on one of Albert’s early trips to the Riverside Train Station. On the way to drop off his passengers in between stops or at the train, he would drop the mail at the Riverside Post Office which was then located close to what became Riverside Fire Company’s early firehouse and then later the First National Bank. On his return trip to Bridgeboro, he would carry the new days’ mail there too.

Albert’s business thrived and as the years ticked by, Mr. Elliott continued his great service hauling people and merchandise or whatever he could to make money. He and Kate were raising three children. Elwood (1879) came first followed by a girl, Vernie (1881), and then another son, Sumner (1890). Albert continued the stage service and prospered until sometime in late 1902. In a Trenton Evening Times newspaper on

January 20, 1903, a small blurb advertised that Albert Elliott had sold his business. The new “Stage Line” operator was Mr. David McConnell, a neighbor of Albert’s. Albert must have found a calling back to his farming roots and that was how he worked until his passing in Bridgeboro on April 15, 1922 at age 72. He is buried in Monument Cemetery in Edgewater Park with his wife Kate, his parents, son Sumner and other relatives.

It may have been a sad day when Albert Elliott gave up his Stage Line but who knows what was really going on with his thinking. He lived almost 20 years after the sale and it may have been the happiest time in his life. He most likely was able to give the new operator, Mr. David McConnell insight to making the business a continued success.



Albert Elliott (third from left); Holmes D. Ely, PA Railroad Employee Superintendent (third from right); Harry H. Rittenhouse (second from right) at contract signing (in young boy’s hands in middle).

David McConnell was born in Burlington, New Jersey, on the 23rd of December 1881. He worked as a farm laborer for many of the beginning years of his life. Remember that many young men only had the minimal amount of formal schooling and stopped attending to seek employment to assist in providing for the family. Anyway, David relocated to Bridgeboro. It is thought that David moved to Bridgeboro just after 1900. The reason is not known as to “why” he moved there however it is known that upon meeting his future wife Anna M. (Mason) Peacock, a widowed Medford, New Jersey,

resident, he did come to live in Bridgeboro with her and her two children Charles and Mary.

In 1903, David literally took over the reins to continue the tradition started by Albert Elliott of delivering passengers and mail to and from Bridgeboro and Riverside on a regular daily schedule. Tiring of the everyday grind of attending to the needs of his horses, Mr. McConnell decided that it was time to modernize. During his time of ownership, he had seen the advent of the “horseless carriage”. As they became more and more numerous, he realized that they were here to stay. By 1915 he knew he had waited long enough and with his meager savings realized from the business, he bought a 10 passenger Ford bus from the Lester S. Fortnum Agency.

World War 1 began on July 28, 1914, and by then there was talk that the United States may have to be involved to give our allies, especially Great Britain, support to overcome the transgressions of the “Central Powers”. David McConnell knew that he was a prime candidate to be inducted into the service considering that he was 34 at the war’s beginning. He continued his Express Service all the while knowing that he may get called to duty. He later joined the Army Engineers and was away from the bus business. During his time away, his step-daughter, Mary Peacock drove the bus. Mary had driven the bus previously as an aide to her step-father so she knew how to handle things. When Mr. McConnell returned to civilian life, he came to the conclusion that he had lost his interest in running the bus line. While Mary continued to drive the bus route, David got a job working for the State Highway Department.



David McConnell with his Stage/Livery. He was the second owner of the “Line”



In 1919, Mr. McConnell decided that he had enough. His neighbor to his right, two doors away, was a family named Kauderer. The Kauderers had emigrated to the United State in early 1892 and settled in Philadelphia. There were a large amount of German immigrants living in the Riverside area so as the word got around that this was a decent place to live outside of the hustle and bustle of city life, the Kauderers decided to move there around 1895. Mr. and Mrs. Kauderer had seven children and their third son, Charles was looking for a job. Mr. Kauderer had a successful butchering business but Charles may not have fit in with his father's calling.

That neighbor was 19 year old Charles Frederick Kauderer. Charles was born in Bridgeboro on September 4, 1900, and was raised at home by his parents along with his six siblings. His father, William F. Kauderer, had established a respected butchering business adjoining but separate from the family home. As his father had a "family" business, Charles most likely had to help in the business along with his brothers when they were old enough. Through research, it was found that at about 18 years old, Charles was working as a printer but it could not be determined where although he still lived at home. When David McConnell decided to give up the bus line in 1919, Charles was in a good position to step in and assume ownership. There may have been some financial help from his father, however that is only speculation. Being 19 years old and taking over a business, it can only be thought that there was some help from the family.



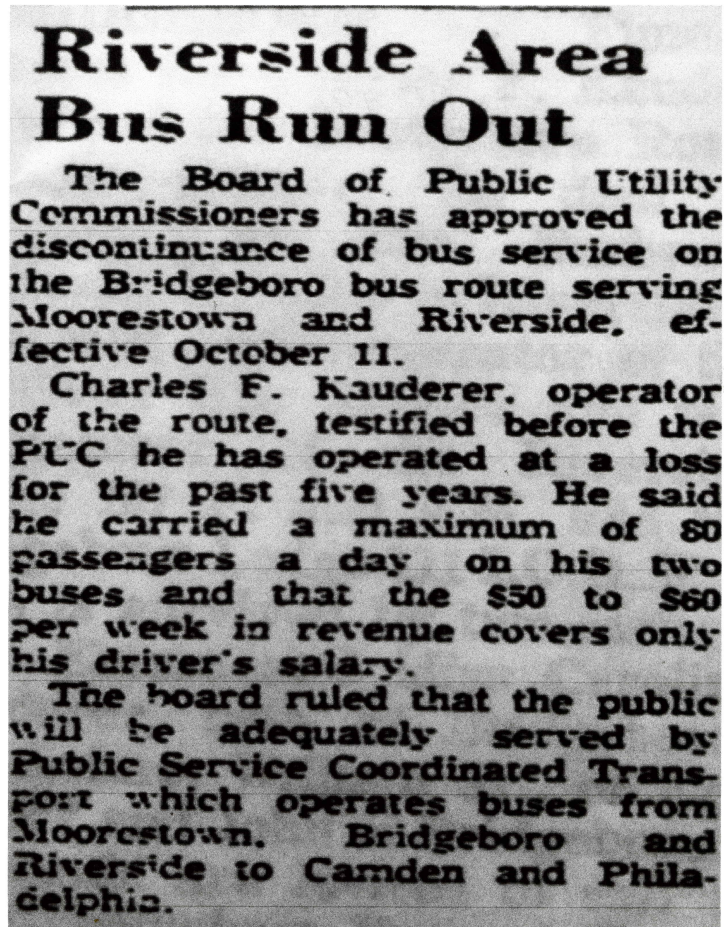
Charles Kauderer

Charles ran the bus line with determination and expanded it whenever he could. One way fares were five cents within Riverside and seven cents to Bridgeboro. Early in his ownership, he expanded the line to run through Bridgeboro to downtown Moorestown. In the 1930s, he contracted with Delran Schools to transport children from opposite ends of town to attend classes. High School aged children were bused either to Palmyra, Moorestown, or later to Riverside depending on the sending agreement. Kauderer also began a "Charter Service" which catered to traveling public groups. "Charter Service" to Philadelphia was a popular destination as was Washington, DC, New York City, and the Jersey Shore.

On July 18, 1946, Charles petitioned the Public Utility Commission to extend his line on a seasonal basis northeast, along Route 25 (130) to Olympia Lakes in Willingboro Township. Approval by the P.U.C. granted him an additional fare of five cents to the base charge to ride depending where you boarded the bus.

This service continued for some years during the “bathing” months as Charles described in his P.U.C. request petition. His service provided a great convenience for

anyone who did not drive or did not want to drive from town to town. Charles dutifully kept to his obligation, however about 1957, the bus route became non-profitable. He did what he could to keep the line running with hopes that it would turn a profit but that was not to be. After five years of “The Line” losing money, he again petitioned the P.U.C. but this time it was to request its discontinuance. An official hearing was held on September 6, 1962. Charles was represented by local lawyer, Daniel Lichtenthal, and his request was granted. The P.U.C. ordered his service discontinued within 15 days of his hearing. Charles was able to continue his Charter Service to the public and Contractual Service with Delran Schools and did so for the next couple of years.



Charles passed away just at the end of his school year busing contract in 1965. He died on June 26, 1965, in Zurbrugg Memorial Hospital, a Saturday. His services were held at the Cunningham Funeral Home (Chadwick's) on Webster Street in Riverside. He is buried with his parents and siblings at the Odd Fellows Cemetery in Burlington.

His days have long passed but his service will be remembered by man of us.