

# ALBURTIS PARK - COUNTRY MUSIC

## Weekly Free Summer Performances Since 1925 for the Preservation of Live Entertainment

*Longest Running Show in the USA  
(old as the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville)*

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Following the eastern edge of the Appalachian Mountains of Eastern Pennsylvania, lies historic Lehigh County. Here from the side of South Mountain, a visitor can see the entire valley and, on the near northern horizon, a broad vista of the Blue Ridge Mountain chain ranging from below Hawk Mountain and north to the Delaware Water gap. In 1757 the Hochstetler farm rested just across from here like an oasis of orchards and fields in that distant Blue Ridge's shadow. For decades they remained peaceful neighbors of the Delaware Lenape Indians but in that year this family was massacred; the first of many victims of a long-brewing conflict that today we call the French and Indian war.

By 1850 this area was still mostly scrub oak, along with a few scattered farms. A stone dwelling was erected by John Blank and it became the first hotel in a tract of land that would eventually become Alburdis. Construction of the Philadelphia and Reading Railway was completed in 1858 along with a railroad station that lay across the tracks from his hotel. Having a hotel and now a train station, the area needed a name and came to be called 'Alburdis' after Edward K. Alburdis, a civil engineer who directed the construction of the railroad.

The famous Lock Ridge Iron Works is situated nearby and so Alburdis was busy during the Civil War. At the war's end in 1865, returning veterans brought fiddles, guitars, fifes, drums, and bones to play songs, first heard around wartime encampments, to the welcoming grounds of the hotel and train station. On June 4, 1917, the



Alburdis Council voted to purchase a used Motor Chemical Apparatus for their fire company for \$1,645 from the Ideal Motor Car Company. The words "Alburdis No. 1" were painted on it in large letters on both sides of the body and the Alburdis Fire Company was born.

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The residents who began playing their ‘country’ tunes at the fire station called themselves the ‘Alburtis Band’. In 1925 they built a ‘new’ bandshell on Alburtis Fire Company #1’s property. Today Alburtis still has but one fire company and summer country music continues to be heard every year in this same bandshell.

Many early country legends began their careers in this bandshell. The ‘King of Country Music’, **Roy Acuff**, was one of our early bandshell performers and his signature from those early years can still be found scrolled on the structure’s inside wall.

Shows in the 1925 Band Shell continued through the Depression and the Second World War as well as in following times of peace and prosperity. In the past we’ve hosted many great performers who came to play here, many of them without charge:

<i>Roy Acuff</i>	<i>Gene Autry</i>	<i>Earl Keller</i>	<i>Meryl Becker,</i>
<i>Roy Rogers</i>	<i>Chief Halftown</i>	<i>Grandpa Jones</i>	<i>Pop Joe</i>
<i>Dale Evans</i>	<i>Darryl Wade Worley</i>	<i>Fran Allum</i>	<i>Crazy Willy</i>
<i>Sally Star</i>	<i>Rex Trailer</i>	<i>Little Jiggers</i>	<i>Cressman Family</i>
<i>Tex Ritter</i>			

Some call our style “Old School Country” yet, through all these years, **Alburtis Park** has kept its tradition of providing free country music as the world around it saw fads such as the Big Bands, Rock, Disco, and Pop Music fall off into obscurity. Today, Alburtis Park Country Music continues to host the heart music of America; the kind we used to hear and see in Nashville. Timeless tunes that even today are remembered and loved.

With FREE admission and parking, the **Park** is supported by its members, volunteers, and patrons, through donations and fundraisers.

However, modern-day Country Music is big business and Alburtis Park seldom sees the ‘big’ names in Country anymore ... we can’t afford them. Yet, we do still host fantastic shows and provide a stage for a wealth of local and regional talent every weekend during the summer. Some of these talents will go on to even greater fame.

Historic Alburtis Park is a great place to start or advance your career. We draw in fans from across New Jersey and Eastern Pennsylvania and many bands have started here over the years only to outgrow our ‘classic country’ and go on to greater careers.

Stop by this summer. There’s more than just free, fantastic country music. Our bands include old favorites as well as new, up-and-coming stars of the future. We always have free parking. Try your luck and skill at our Cash BINGO hall. Dine on the best Pennsylvania Dutch country food fare. Have a beer with our fire department members. This is quality entertainment without ‘big city’ stress in a beautiful, friendly outdoor venue.

... and who knows. Maybe you’ll see some great and popular ‘*big-name*’ stop by to say hello and sing a song or two in memory of the great old Alburtis Park stage that helped them early in their career.