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JOHN R. MONTGOMERY

teams met in a series of games, I can recall one night when the Shawnee team came to New Lexington on a "special" and the armory was so full of local fans that the Shawnee fans could not get inside. They broke down the doors and forced their way in, but the crowd was so large, there was no room to play. The game was canceled. At that time, Don Hamilton, a former Notre Dame athlete, was the referee. I do not think any of the Shawnee players of that day are among the living, and the only one of the New Lexington Independents now living is Frank "Jickie" Diamond, a former New Lexington barber.

Some of the good Columbus teams coming to New Lexington to play were the Bates Pirates, Columbus Roisters, Seiller's Independents, Mendel Tailors, Morrey Jewelers, Columbus Panhandles and the Korn Hatters.

One of the most popular Columbus basketball players of those days was Hank Gowdy, later a big league baseball star, who always gave our 6-foot, eight-inch center, "Battle" Poling, a real workout. Others on this New Lexington team were "Rusty" Porter, Dwight King, Tom Bell, and Floyd Wolfe, who was later mayor of New Lexington. Bob and Robin Bell, OSU football players, were younger brothers of Tom Bell.

As a bus driver I knew many of these basketball players, as well as a great number of traveling salesmen, actors, entertainers, politicians and others who visited New Lexington, since most of them "rode the bus" and fervently hoped we would reach the top of the two hills between the railroad station and the Main St. hotels, the opera house or our National Guard armory.

We always did, and, even though the 14-seat bus strained a little with the climbing of the two hills, it surely did beat walking on a day when the temperature was 100°, or when it was 15° below zero with a foot of snow on the ground. In fact, our bus was a "must," and where today could you find such a bargain as 15 cents one way, 25 cents for the round trip?

I am sure many readers of this story of New Lexington and Perry County have heard of the cold winters in Perry County. I can recall one cold night in February 1918 when, it is said, the thermometer stood at 32° below zero at Milligan's Bend, a small settlement south of Crooksville. On this night, the 8:12 p.m. Pennsylvania train from Lancaster was several hours late arriving in New Lexington, and when it did arrive, the bus had frozen up and would not run.

I was called out of bed to come to the railroad station at midnight to pick up the passengers, who were all huddled around the big pot-bellied stove in the depot waiting room, to deliver them to their respective homes. Upon being questioned regarding the No. 1 bus freezing up, the driver said he guessed he had made a mistake, as he had drunk the alcohol that should have been put in the radiator.

Just another cold night, one of many, that New Lexington and Perry County old-timers may recall in the early 1900s when they traveled by train