

He Remembered His Native Petersburg... With a Library

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Petersburg, a picturesque little town stretched along the Ohio River on Boone County's western edge, is a hamlet of distinctions.

It was the first settlement (1789) in Boone County, being known as Tanner's Station, until the change to Petersburg in 1818.

AND IT BOASTS the only public library in Boone County.

Tiny Petersburg is home for some 400 persons.

This compares with over 15,000 in Florence—another Boone City which is without a public library.

How did it come about?

It all goes back to E. Y. Chapin, a Petersburg boy who made good.

YOUNG CHAPIN left Petersburg in the 1880s to study law in Congressman John G. Carlisle's Covington office.

Then in the 1890s he went to Tennessee and there began amassing a fortune as bank president and head of a furniture factory, hosiery mill and stove works.

But he never forgot the little Boone County town where he was born.

WHY DID he decide the



• STAFF PHOTO BY CHARLES E. SCRIPPS JR.

Mrs. Justin Dolph is librarian for Boone County's only public library—at rear of Petersburg Christian Church.

tiny community should have a library?

"He was a bookworm," says pleasant, silver-haired Mrs. Justin (Oleva) Dolph, librarian since it opened in 1949.

"He loved to read and thought everyone else did, too."

And Chapin also tried his hand at writing. One of the books in the library is his own, "Harvesting Green Fields."

THE LIBRARY is in a specially built brick room—12x22 feet—attached to the rear of the stately old

white brick Petersburg Christian Church.

It's associated with the church, but remains a public library, Mrs. Dolph points out.

Its board of trustees are the same as that of the church.

BUT IT IS financed by an endowment supplied from rentals of the Loder Estate apartments in Petersburg and other rental property in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Most of those served by the library are school children of Petersburg and the

surrounding countryside.

But the adults come too. "It's been wonderful for me," said Mrs. Sarah Hensley, 70, a widow and former Petersburg bank cashier.

SHE WAS checking out a copy of "Airport."

"I like to take my chair out on the riverbank in summer, sit and read and watch the boats go by," she said.

The library has approximately 7000 volumes. It is open only two days a week—from 3 to 5 Tuesdays and 6 to 8 p.m. Fridays.