

Devotees of life slow pace imperceptibly

By **FRAN JONES**
of The Oregonian staff

When Second Baptist Church (now Immanuel Baptist Church) organized 73 years ago, there were 37 members — 13 of whom were teen-agers. One of those teen-agers is the only living founding member of the church.

J. Adam Hoelzer will celebrate his 92nd birthday next May and three quarters of a century of devoted service to the church.

He has served as deacon, Sunday School superintendent and choir director. While his active participation wanes, he still pitches in as song leader for special occasions.

Before the church changed its name in 1933 and began conducting services in English, strains of "Kleine Tropflein Wasser" (Small drops of water) and "Gott ist die Liebe" (God is the love) filled the church in the original German.

Uncle Adam, as Hoelzer is called throughout the neighborhood, was born in Norka, Russia. His family had immigrated to Russia from Germany. But relatives in America beckoned.

He doesn't remember much about the trip except that it took 11 days by freighter and he didn't get seasick as most of the passengers did.

After a brief stay in the midwest, Hoelzer and his family came to Portland in 1895 by train hoping it would

improve his father's health. He remembers scrunching down to appear smaller so he could ride free. "But," he laughed, "en route the conductor sized me up and I had to pay half fare."

Adam met his Jenny (Aunt Jenny) in the church choir. "He was a tenor and I was an alto, so we'd sing duets." They celebrated the 65th year of that lifesong June 8 — in church, of course. Neither has ever missed a Sunday unless they were ill or out of town.

Jenny came to Portland from South Dakota in 1890, at age 6, when her father accepted the pastorate of Trinity Baptist Church. She was the youngest of nine children whom her mother and father supported on his salary of \$500 a year.

The 20th century was still an infant when her father retired on a pension of \$12 a month. Jenny studied days, nights and in private school to obtain a teaching certificate. She taught school for eight years in Tualatin, Skunk Hollow and Kelso, Wash. "Then I met Adam and I didn't have to do it anymore."

The ex-schoolteacher thinks there should be more emphasis placed on the basics of education. "Why, when our legislators sign their names, you can't even read them."

The hand she extends in welcome is firm and steady. One can believe it still flows with the Spencerian handwriting she taught to 40 stu-

dents (grades 1-9) in a one-room schoolhouse.

Jenny moved from Trinity Baptist across the river to Second Baptist and became as involved as her husband. She served as church clerk and women's president. She taught Sunday School for 60 years and still pinch-hits occasionally.

Adam and Jenny look forward to visits from 9 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren. Their daughter is gone, but their son, now retired, still comes over with the cookie box hoping his mother will fill it. She does.

Jenny and Adam do all their own housework, cooking and caring for themselves. And, although they've given up caring for their yard and garden, they still putter around in it to keep their hand in.

Jenny deplores laziness and hates to admit that maybe she's slowing down a little. "In the last 10 years I've learned to sweep things under the rug. After you get to a certain age, you don't get as much done," she explained. Her house shines with loving care.

"I've never heard my husband say one bad (swear) word," Jenny said. "We still love each other. We've never had a real fight. If one was brewing, Adam just disappeared."

Hoelzer's eyes twinkled as he remarked, "I've always enjoyed fresh air."

They laughingly attribute

their good marriage to the fact that two ministers performed the wedding ceremony. One was Jenny's brother.

They don't get around as much any more. Adam stopped driving a couple of years ago when his hearing began to fail him.

"We read a lot and watch some television. We like the Waltons and Little House on the Prairie. We are enjoying life so much now that we have more time together," Jenny said.



MR. AND MRS. J. ADAM (JENNY) HOELZER