

'Peace Pilgrim' Walks through Vinton



Vinton News

Hiking down to the corner market for a loaf of bread may be a trip many of us might not be over enthusiastic about, but it could be worse. How about trekking a distance equivalent to the circumference of the globe—25,000 miles?

No thanks, you say? Well a little silver-haired woman who passed through Vinton today has planned to walk that far—and then some.

There's no mistaking the woman. She's dressed all in blue from her crepe-soled canvas shoes to her head scarf. Her outfit consists of her shoes, slacks, a sweat

shirt and a faded tunic with the words "PEACE PILGRIM" on it, except the clothes on her back and the literature she carries in the pockets sewn all around the hem of her tunic. Promoting world peace through prayer and personal contact with the many persons in the U.S. is her aim, she stated.

Peace Pilgrim has walked at least 18,000 miles in her mission. "I began this pilgrimage in 1953, long after the hair on my head had turned to silver."

Where is her home? She said "I have no home or possessions except the clothing I wear. And they were given to me. I shall remain a wanderer until mankind has learned the way of peace, walking until I am given shelter and fasting until I am given food."

She declared she is penniless and accepts food and lodging only wherever she stops. She has slept by the sides of roads and in parks when no one offered to take her in, but the last time she was forced to sleep out in the open was last June.

Her travels began in Los Angeles and she plans to end her walk in Washington D. C. During the pilgrimage, she has criss-crossed the nation. This is her second trip through Iowa.

Highway traffic is no problem for her. She walks facing oncoming vehicles. Sometimes she reads as she walks. "I've developed a sort of sixth sense about traffic."

She has planned to spend the entire month hiking through Iowa. Thursday night she was picked up near the Van Horne corner south of Vinton on U. S. 218 by members of a Cedar Rapids church. She spoke to the congregation and spent the night in Cedar Rapids. Early this morning she was returned to the spot where she stopped and resumed the march. She said she planned to be near the junction of U. S. 218 and Iowa 8 tonight where she will be picked up again for another speaking engagement.

Her schedule calls for a weekend stopover in Traer for another visit with a church group. Then she will walk to Waterloo where she will pick up her mail, forwarded from her mailing address: Cologne, N. J.

Her average daily walking distance runs in the neighborhood of 25 miles, she said. The crepe soles of her shoes generally last approximately 1,500 miles before they wear out.

"This mission is my way of life," she said, "I feel it's like a doctor's calling. I vowed to do all one individual could do to promote peace through prayer and personal contacts."

She adopted the name of "Peace Pilgrim" to emphasize the importance of her mission and not the importance of the individual. She would not give her true name.

on a world-wide level with United Nations becoming a world government, she said.

After her brief stop to talk, pilgrim waved and resumed her walk with the long and vigorous strides of a 25-year-old.