

Front Views & Profiles

By KAY LORING

Peace Pilgrim

She has been walking over the country—north and south, east and west—since 1953, she said. She talks to individuals along the way, to groups in cities whenever she's asked. She calls herself Peace Pilgrim, and she's walked more than 25,000 miles for peace.

I thought she might be some kind of nut.

"Suppose everyone started walking for peace?" I wondered. "What would happen to the world?"

"Suppose everyone started working for a newspaper, my dear?" she countered gently. "Each person has a calling.

"A pilgrim has a job. I don't ask anyone to walk with me. I want to make people



Peace Pilgrim
[TRIBUNE Staff Photo]

stop and think. To help them find peace within themselves.

She had walked within the last few weeks from Kansas City to St. Louis, then to Champaign and on to Chicago. You would expect her to be disheveled and grimy. She was neat and clean as the proverbial pin. Her eyes were clear and deeply blue in a healthily suntanned face that broke continuously into a disarming smile. Her silver-gray hair was neatly combed and held smoothly back with a rubber band at the nape of her neck.

I judged her to be 60ish, but with a spring and zest in her step and the erect carriage of a 20-year-old. "Yoy aren't tied down by years when you achieve inner peace," she said.

She wears dark blue slacks and shirt, with a short tunic over the shirt turned up at the bottom to make a series of pockets in the manner of a carpenter's apron. Across the front of the tunic is printed "Peace Pilgrim." Across the back "25,000 Miles On Foot For World Peace."

In the pockets are her worldly possessions: a folding toothbrush, a small comb, and a ballpoint pen ["I do a lot of writing"].

She has no home. She travels with no money. No extra clothes. She sleeps in a bed when friends invite her into their homes. That's about three-fourths of the time, she says. The rest of the time she sleeps in bus stations, at truck stops, by the side of the road. She accepts invitations for meals, and doesn't worry if there are none. "I once had 45 days of prayer and fasting so I know how long a person can go," she says cheerfully. "Few of us even begin to explore our real potentials."

As a religious pilgrim, she

is exempt from charges of vagrancy. She belongs to no specific church denomination. She criticizes none. There are usually more invitations to speak than she can accept.

She answers wide-eyed and head-on questions concerning her background.

"I had what the world considered success, then found it meaningless," she will say. "Why use my former name when I never sign legal documents?" Peace Pilgrim is the only name she's used for almost 30 years—there were 15 years of preparation before the almost 15 years of walking, she says. "I learned to give instead of to get."

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She accepts gifts only of essentials, such as a new walking costume [always copied after the original one] when her old one is worn, temporary use of a typewriter or mimeograph machine. "I shall not accept more than I need while others in the world have less than they need," is a promise to herself.

Inner peace for the individual circles out to become the key for world peace. It means the difference, says Peace Pilgrim, between a nuclear war of annihilation and a golden age of peace.

She'll be in Chicago until about May 22. One of her downtown talks will be sponsored by the Theosophical society at 3 p. m. tomorrow, in room 401 of the Creative Arts building, 64 E. Van Buren st. It will be open without charge to the public.