

Anna Laura Trueblood Rush

A Woman for Peace



Nancy Jewel Poer

Edited by the Rush Family

Around the world more than a million booklets called “Steps Toward Inner Peace” are inspiring people in amazingly diverse places. The booklet contains the succinct and practical advice of an extraordinary woman, Peace Pilgrim, who walked penniless across the United States six and a half times to awaken the world to our common humanity and spiritual potential. Her language was so practical, the timeless truths spoken so vibrantly and lived fully with her own spiritual commitment, that people from all religions and walks of life are profoundly moved.

In Africa, a young woman, her family devastated with AIDS, turns the smudged pages of “Steps” looking for hope; in India, a recent medical school graduate reads and ponders; in Finland, a grandfather long struggling with alcohol abuse takes in the practical advice; in Brazil, a Peace Corps member, eager yet full of trepidation, keeps the booklet in a back pocket to help center him; in a prison in Tennessee, a man sighs and turns the pages for the 10th time, reflecting on his life and hoping for a better future; in Japan, a descendant of Hiroshima survivors reads and is galvanized to work for a better world; and in a cramped apartment in Chicago’s inner city, a despairing single mother turns to it for inspiration.

“Steps Toward Inner Peace,” published in 26 languages by the non-profit Friends Of Peace Pilgrim, is sent free to anyone who asks. It passes from hand to hand as people share its timeless wisdom of life. A larger book of Peace Pilgrim’s life, translated into 13 languages, is also given freely to anyone who asks. The books move around the world with the grace of inter-continental migratory butterflies, blessing and giving hope and awaking us to our common humanity. This remarkable woman, Peace Pilgrim, walked, spoke and wrote, spreading her message of peace. When she was gone Ann Trueblood Rush and her husband John devoted their retirement years to continue spreading her message to the world.

A Heritage of Peace

Far from battle during the era of World War I, on January 30, 1917, Ann was the last baby born to the Truebloods in a lovely middle-class home in Kansas City, Mo., the middle of the nation. It was a time of war, but with her would be born a lifelong mission for peace.



Ann is proud of a long Quaker heritage on both sides of her family. Her father, Alva Trueblood, met her mother, Mary Reese, in the Quaker community of Whittier, California. Alva was the cousin of Elton Trueblood, one of the most eloquent and best known Quaker leaders and writers of the 20th century. After they married, Alva took his bride from idyllic Southern California to Pittsburgh, then one of the most polluted industrial cities in America. Mary would always maintain her love of California. They later moved to Kansas City, Mo., where they raised their family. Ann’s father was the chief loan officer for Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company, a name Ann remembers rolling off her tongue with awe and pride as a small girl.

Ann also was proud that her mother was 1/16th Cherokee Indian. Especially in her later years, Ann's high cheekbones, broad brow and warm-hued bronze skin gave her the look of a Native American elder, and she delighted in that fact. Her voice was soft, low and honeyed, yet when excited it revealed a fiery commitment, joy and iron resolve. She got right to the point, especially in letting people know how they could serve the cause of Peace Pilgrim's work. In meeting someone from another country, she would urge them to translate the pamphlet and give it away at home. Many of them did. Any visitor to the Friends of Peace Pilgrim Center was always graciously assured they couldn't possibly leave without taking books for themselves and anyone who might need it. You simply couldn't tell Ann "No."

A Pampered Childhood

Ann's full-given name was Anna Laura Trueblood, "a big mouthful for a child," she declared. She was the youngest of four children and devoted to her mother. She admired and felt close to her oldest sister, Martha, who was 10 years older. Then there was sister, Esther, and her brother, Henry, three years older than Ann. She recalls her mother calling for the children by running their names together: "Martha-Esther-Henry-Anna Laura," her voice rising in volume and an octave on "Laura." Though her mother and father adhered to the basic values of their Quaker faith, they did not live the simple life; they enjoyed the material advantages that went with his career.



Their home in Kansas City was in the well-to-do section of town. Next to the mansion of a millionaire, the Trueblood home was impressive also, three stories high with some 20 rooms. Great green lawns and beautiful elm trees lined the streets in the neighborhood. Ann



remembered, "across the street was a wonderful park with beautiful trees and rolling lawns down to the tennis courts." In winter she, her friends and siblings skied and sledged on the banks. She remembers Mac, the handyman and gardener, who lived in the basement quarters of the house and worked for the family many years. And there was Nellie, the black part-time servant and housekeeper, who was also with them for many years. Ann had two neighborhood chums, Sonny Boy and Molly, and she joyfully remembers playing hide and seek and other childhood games with them.

Because there was no Quaker community in Kansas City, the family attended a Methodist church, which was "pretty

good about peace too,” Ann said. She attended Sunday school regularly. Her public school education made no particular impression; she didn’t have strong feelings about it one way or another. Vacations were often to visit relatives. Ann remembers visiting Elton Trueblood’s family in Iowa once. Most of the family sojourns were to California, however, to her mother’s mother in Whittier. Ann enjoyed a warm relationship with her grandmother.

Ann’s mother, Mary, had been raised on a farm and was a wonderful cook. By the time she was 13, she was a skilled baker of bread and Ann always enjoyed the many treats her mother made for the family. Life was full and comfortable; the holidays festive with stacks of presents under a great Christmas tree. There were big Thanksgiving feasts served on lovely china. The family always had at least one dog and a cat. One time, she remembered, “Our wonderful bull terrier had babies, Buttons, Spuddy and Remus. Sometimes my brother’s friends would come over to get him up in the morning and throw off his covers and there were all the puppies in bed with him.” Ann would always have cats and dogs for her children as well. Her brother, Henry, would often tease Ann as she hung around wide-eyed and listening to whatever he and his buddies were up to. They would often come in and pretend to pay her elaborate obeisance by bowing and chanting, “Sees all, hears all, knows nothing.”



Ann can’t remember a time when she could not swim. She loved the water. Her father golfed at Ivanhoe Country Club and took the children swimming there in a lovely small lake. It was heaven for Ann. As a woman in her 70s, Ann went with the Friends of Peace Pilgrim group on wilderness canoe retreats down Utah’s Green River, a tributary of the Colorado River. Ann cheerfully camped, slept under the stars and canoed. When they stopped for the night, she would say, “Now I’m going to float,” and slip into the river to bob so blissfully that concerned companions needed to retrieve her before she floated too far downstream. “I loved swimming,” she said, “and I taught my little children and grand children to swim at a young age.”

Ann was proud of all her athletic skills, excelling in field hockey and basketball as a young girl and receiving awards in school. In the winter she loved to ice skate, cutting a lovely figure as she gracefully glided over the frozen water. Ann often told how at 60 she won a 10-kilometer running race; at 70 she and husband John hiked to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and back, and at 80 she was swimming a half a mile. (John would then brag that at 80 he too had won a foot race... then he would add, with a twinkle, that he was the only contestant over 80.)

As a young girl of 8 or 9, Ann remembers going for a drive and for the first time, going through the black section of Kansas City. She was shocked at the living conditions she witnessed there, and even more dismayed that their family maid, Nellie, whose big lap and loving arms had held her many times, had to live in such a place. The experience would live deep in her soul and influence her whole life.

Growing Up

After graduating from high school, Ann attended the University of Kansas City for about six months. The university did not hold great interest for her, and at her parents' suggestion she rode with a family friend to New York to visit her sister Martha who was working in Radio City Music Hall. It was a glamorous place, home to the world-famous precision dancers, the Rockettes. Ann's sister was the hostess in a great skyscraper.

A tall, long-legged, willowy brunette with an elegant figure, beautiful smile and clear, brown eyes, Ann stood out in any setting. During lunch one day, a talent scout sent her a message to come to his office to see about being an actress. When he learned that she had no experience, he suggested she join "The Little Theater Movement" at home. It was also in New York that she was encouraged to take up modeling, which she did upon returning to Kansas City, working as a clothing model for local department stores. "It wasn't like now," she said, "when they just slink around...in our time we really strutted around!" (When her modeling was



mentioned in later years, John would always mischievously add that she was "a clothes model.")

Ann did get acting experience in a local theater production, playing the voluptuous maid who captured the male lead's attention. But later, when attending the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, she longed for more serious dramatic roles. Her great uncle was the founder of the university's speech and drama department and that influenced her choice of major. At Ann Arbor, she landed a role as Lady Macbeth and relished the power and drama of the scene where she cried, "Out, damn'd spot!"

Here at the university she had a major spiritual experience. She was just turning 21 and attended a church meeting where Reverend Henry Hitcrane was the speaker. His charismatic presentation was spellbinding. She went back to talk after talk, deeply moved by his pacifist idealism.

Then one day, walking across the campus resplendent with graceful trees, she felt as though she was walking in the treetops. A feeling of love for all creation flooded her soul, leaving her in an altered state. She described a cosmic consciousness pervading her being and a realization of the connectedness of all things. Later, standing by Niagara Falls, she felt such an empathy with the plunging waters that she was tempted to stand under the powerful veils of misting water, as Native Americans had done in the past.

In her college classes Ann had blossomed, realizing the breadth of world literature and philosophy. She eagerly read Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and thrilled to the poetry of Robert Browning. She was deeply moved by the great dramas, music, poetry and all the arts. A romantic idealist, Ann had also watched the movie of Jane Eyre's Wuthering Heights a couple of times. She was fascinated with the characters. In her eighth decade she told us dreamily, "I still remember the young girl (the inseparable companion of the handsome male lead, Heathcliff) declaring her oneness with him in saying, "I am Heathcliff."

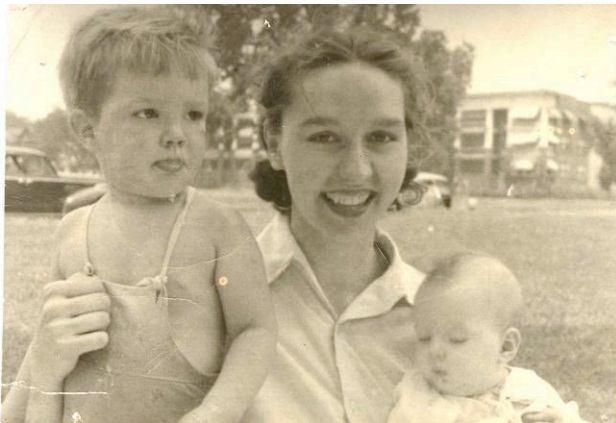
Quickened and inspired by Reverend Hitcrane and his messages of pacifism, she now longed to serve the poor and resolved to make that her mission. Her courses – literature, drama and poetry – no longer held her interest and she dropped out of college, returning home without notice to her family. She describes climbing up the rose trellis to the second story window of her mother's bedroom to awaken her and try to relate her newfound discoveries of awareness to her puzzled parents. She found it was, "most difficult to convey." Her parents were no doubt concerned that their dreamy, idealistic youngest daughter was not focusing on practical life or a college career. But Ann's lifelong mission to bring peace was starting to take root.

Beautiful Music

Then one evening at a friend's house, she was enchanted by a brilliant young pianist named Maurice McDonald. With a soul open and receptive from her recent spiritual experiences, she was transported by his beautiful playing. The strains of Beethoven, Chopin and Strauss lifted her further into the spiritual realms. "I fell for him," she explained, "because his beautiful concerts profoundly affected me." Ann was mesmerized and blinded to the complex individual who lay behind the talent. Her parents, especially her mother, were dubious about the suitability of the young man for their willful daughter. But Ann was unmoved by their concerns. She and Maurice went to the Justice of the Peace and were married; not telling anyone until afterwards. She hoped and dreamed of a life together that would be a fulfillment of his beautiful music.

The reality was a struggle to make a living and two children who came in quick succession. A son, Heathcliff, was born on October 12, 1940. He was a beautiful child who inherited musical talents from his father. Heath was a gifted lad with a flashing grin who loved the violin, practicing many hours a day. He also had a beautiful voice. His sister, Pamela, was born 17 months later, March 3, 1942, three months after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Like her mother before her, Pamela entered life during a World War. Pamela came like a ray of sunshine to Ann. She was a slender, beautiful blond child, with an open, innocent gaze and wonder for nature. A teacher said, "She tripped lightly on the earth." She and Ann had an exceptionally close

relationship.



But burdened with a young family and hindered in developing his career, Maurice felt increasingly trapped. Wartime restrictions on transportation limited his opportunity for travel and concerts. He tried to give music lessons but it was not enough to sustain the family. His explosive temper erupted and he focused his anger on Ann, slapping and hitting her. At first, Ann was stunned. She tried to rationalize that Beethoven too experienced furies and rode tumultuous waves of high-tempered genius.

Laboring to live her pacifist beliefs, she tried to reconcile and forgive. Fortunately, common sense and basic maternal instincts prevailed, and she and Maurice were divorced soon after Pamela's birth. Sadly, Maurice could not raise his parenting skills to the magnificent crescendos of his music, and he disappeared from their lives. Ann saved a recording of his piano playing, hoping the children could hear their father's musical genius, but somewhere along the way, the recording disappeared as well.

With nowhere else to go, Ann moved in with her parents and took stock. Being a divorcee held a stigma in those days, even victims of violence. But Ann was not dismayed. With her spiritual awakening, Ann had moved beyond keeping up appearances for the sake of public opinion. With her mother and family to help care for the children, she felt she had to bring in an income. She took a job in a wartime aircraft factory, one of many women taking formerly men's jobs to help build the war machine. As one of many "Rosie the Riveters," she worked on bombers being rushed to the war. Her job was an ironic one. She riveted the bomb bay doors through which the great rumbling planes released their deadly bombs. This job later haunted her, giving her even more impetus to work for peace.

During this time she went to hear a speech by A.J. Muste, an internationally known spokesman for world peace who was the chief missionary for the Church Peace Mission from 1950-1961. He was later president of the U.S. Fellowship of Reconciliation. He talked about disarmament, which Ann said, "sounded a little strange in those days."

When Ann was 26, her father died, following surgery for prostate cancer. Now there was nothing to keep them in the Midwest. Her mother longed for California and Ann was amenable. So they sold the home and headed west, a first of many trips in her life, which would take her family from Canada to Alabama, from California to New England. Ann said with pride that she drove all the way, with the two small children and their grandmother. With every desert vista, the whirl of the tires passing lonely towns and fence posts lining Route 66, the prayer on her lips was constant: "May I find a man who will be a good father for my children." It was ever-present in her heart and on her mind. Fifty years later one could witness the answer to the prayer as her son, Heath, affectionately called the husband she had found, "Dad" and looked to him with obvious respect and admiration.



Ann's uncle found a house for them and they settled into life in Whittier, in those days a beautiful suburb of Los Angeles, with clear skies, vast fields of orange poppies, the scent of orange blossoms in the air, and a short drive from Ann's beloved ocean.

Seaside Inspiration

Many years later she decided someone should write about Peace Pilgrim for peace magazines, and she took on the task. John left her in a small trailer at an oceanside campground with a writing pad, Peace Pilgrim newsletters and only watermelon to eat for a five-day cleansing fast. Walking, meditating and reading Peace's newsletters as she wrote draft after draft, Ann could not make the incredible woman come alive to her satisfaction. Peace seemed either too exaggerated to believe or too understated. Ann came home from the seaside retreat resolved that Peace Pilgrim's message would need to be told in Peace's own words. Ann concluded that no one could write the story as well as she had already done. It was a realization that would serve well during the hallowed months following Peace's death; five close friends collaborated to do just that...arrange Peace's words into the amazing book that circled the globe with a cosmic message of universal peace.

Meeting Her Life's Companion

Ann met John Rush at a YMCA dance in Whittier. While most young people of the time were swinging to fox trots, jazz and the Charleston, John and Ann both managed to find one of the few places where folk dances were held. John was putting in his civilian public service at a camp nearby during his two years as a conscientious objector. He'd come to the dance with friends from his camp.

He stood in the dance hall that night like a young Jimmy Stewart, with a country guy stance, feet apart, and swath of curly brown hair over his brow, mouth slightly ajar over a stubborn lower lip and chin, and a mischievous twinkle in his big, guileless blue eyes. Ann, though uncommonly beautiful, had given up the cosmetic trappings most women then adopted for allure – plucked eyebrows, high heels, silk stockings, curled hair and carefully applied makeup. John walked Ann back to her house

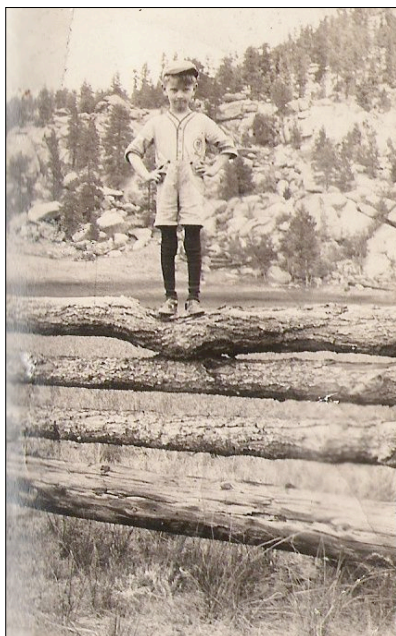


after the dance that evening. In telling the story, Ann allowed that she did tell him on that first meeting that she was a divorcee, but did not mention that she had two children. She said, “But I had been praying and praying for a man who would be a good father to my children!” (John smiled as she told this and remarked, “And I thought I had free will!”) John soon was a regular part of her life.

Here is John’s description of their first meeting: “It was the custom for each boy at the end of the dance to take a girl to her home. I asked a girl but she already had a date. I saw Ann nearby so I asked her. This was one of the most important decisions I ever made. It was the start of a long relationship that continues today, 60 years later. We sat on the front porch talking, sharing and exploring ideas with each other and found we had much in common. This exchange gave me an insight into her character. She told me how she had been inspired in college to devote her life to service. She had wanted to help the Farm Workers in their struggle for justice and had not been able to fulfill this desire. The next morning at the Sunday school in the Quaker Church we agreed on most of the issues considered. There seemed to be a flow of spiritual union between us.”

A Simple Start

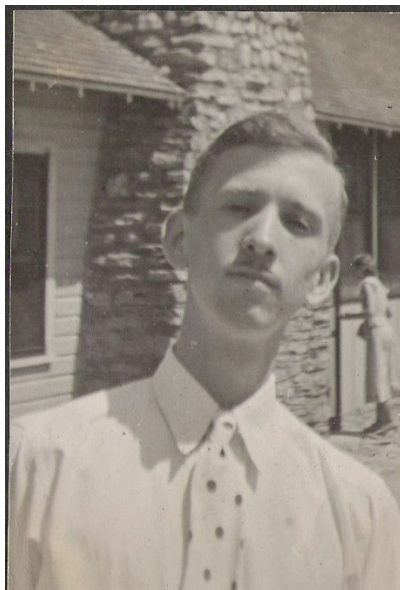
John Miles Rush was born in the middle of the country on a farm near Depew, Oklahoma, on June 11, 1917. He was the youngest of five children with two older sisters and two older brothers: Glen, Orwin, Marjorie and Myrtle. The family descended from a long line of Quakers who adhered to the simple life. They were grass-roots, no-nonsense Americans and bore life with perseverance, wit and faith. The Rush family had its origins in England and the Benjamin Rush who signed the Declaration of Independence was said to be a distant cousin. John’s great-great grandfather Rush owned 108 slaves, which he freed in order to become a Quaker. (The Quakers abolished slavery within their ranks one hundred years before the Civil War).



John’s father was a stalwart believer who staked rental homes as collateral for the building of a Friend’s church – and lost his properties. Recovering with a small farm, he had the land drilled for oil and they hit natural gas instead. The royalties were a godsend to help sustain the family, because he was killed in a car accident when John was only 8. John alternated school years between living on the farm and in town in Wichita where the family rented a house. John enjoyed farm life as a young child, and when he was older, as a senior in high school and through college, he enjoyed working in the public library. He graduated from Friends University in Wichita, as had all his older siblings – both boys and girls – not a common thing for those years. It was a tribute to their work ethic and his widowed mother’s commitment to education. He graduated in business and economics and went to Washington, D.C., working at the Census Bureau and becoming a section chief. He was one of several bright young college graduates who were hired after

excelling on government tests. John and two others started a Young Friends group, which met every Sunday evening at the Florida Avenue Friends Meeting House to discuss issues of the day, listen to guest speakers and enjoy social interaction. They were 20 to 30 young Friends who were very concerned about the possibility of war and who became conscientious objectors when America entered World War II.

Because he refused to take up arms out of principal, John was sent to a conscientious objectors' camp in California, where he did work that was being neglected because of the war. As an adamant pacifist, he would not consider joining the military, even the medical corps, because he believed that would still serve the "killing machine."



John was hardworking, stubborn, principled, kind and often skeptical. But he wasn't cynical and later in life, he had a song or joke for every occasion. Ann couldn't have made a better choice for a husband.

John said his family was shocked that he was considering a relationship with a divorcee – one with two small children to boot – hardly a suitable match for a nice Quaker boy. They felt he had been "taken in" by her beauty and charms. "I was taken by her glamour," he admitted, even though he met her as a "natural" beauty after she had stopped using makeup. In an act of understanding, typical of Ann's openness and concern for others, she wrote a letter to his relatives, explaining that she could understand why they would be worried. Then she described how much she admired John. (Later in life, 86-year-old John quipped: "I wish I could find the letter that said so many good things about me. I'd like to read again what a fine

fellow I am!"). In time Ann won his relatives over.

Ann describes one evening kneeling by her bed, praying and wondering about marrying John. As she was thinking of him with intense concentration, she turned to her 5-year-old son who had just come in. He put his hand on her shoulder and said, "Mom, you look like John!" That was certainly a sign. Neither John nor Ann later remembered him making a formal proposal. "We just knew," they said.

It is a Quaker custom to send a community member to counsel a couple before marriage to see if they are prepared for the responsibility. A Quaker friend who met with Ann and John expressed concern that John had no job and virtually no assets aside from his aging car. Ann and John were also concerned, but not deterred.

They were married at the Orange Grove Friends Meeting House in Pasadena, California, on June 24, 1945, with 5-year-old Heath and 3-year-old Pamela sitting beside them. The wedding was one of Heath's happiest early memories – "Our wedding" he called it, though he was mad when they didn't take him on the honeymoon. Even though Ann's mother knew Quaker customs of prolonged silence during worship, she became impatient with the long quiet during the

ceremony, and with Ann's sister Martha stood up to congratulate the couple. Other attendees persuaded them to wait a little longer. Thus began the union that lasted more than half a century. On their anniversary 60 years later, John still remembered the pledge that resonated so deeply:

*"In the presence of God and before these,
our friends, I take thee, Anna Laura Trueblood,
to be my beloved wife, promising, with divine
assistance, to be unto thee a loving and faithful
husband as long as we both shall live."*

John's black Model A Ford was their honeymoon chariot. It was not new; the last Model A came off the assembly line in 1932. John had bought it from a man who was helping Japanese people liquidate their assets after they were sent to internment camps at the outbreak of war with Japan. Ann, in a rare moment of embarrassment, perhaps for her mother's reputation in the town, asked John to park the car down the street from their house during their courtship. An interesting request from a woman whose daughter Erica would later say never had any clothes except those given her or bought from Goodwill. Years later, neither John nor Ann remembered what she wore on the wedding day; obviously clothing was not a primary factor in their joy.

On the honeymoon – a few days in a cabin in the mountains above Pasadena – Ann remembers that they took numerous books on child rearing. John adopted the children soon after. The filing fees were \$50 each – a large sum in those days – and when John told Heath, the boy was impressed at his great value.



After the honeymoon, they packed and left California to join a Quaker community in Fairhope, Alabama, on the Gulf of Mexico. Not only did they want to try life in the warm south, but John was a firm believer in the wisdom of newly married couples moving away from relatives in the first year. So the old Model A and a Model T trailer were packed for the first of many cross-country adventures.

Ann described herself as "an excellent organizer" and packed the trailer so the food (in those pre-ice chest days) was easily accessible in drawers in the back. Bedding was always piled in the car so someone could sleep. Ann joked that they lived up to "Okie" stereotypes while crossing the country. Heath remembers the adventures, including awakening one morning to find several inches of rainwater in the tent. Heath remembered rolling into a gas station running on fumes; John, remarking drolly, "That's living on faith."

A wheel bearing on their Model T trailer burned out in Needles, California, and there were no Model T bearings in the small desert town. There they were, stranded with two small children. What to do? John decided to go up and down the streets searching for a wrecked Model T in someone's backyard. He found a woman who said her father, who lived near the Colorado River, had some wrecked Model Ts. John removed a bearing with a borrowed wrench and took it to a mechanic in town. Soon they were on their way again.

In Fairhope, Ann taught school part time and John worked as a bookkeeper for a small oil company. Heath and Pam remembered long shallow reaches of the bay, warm water and being stung by jellyfish. Because Ann's time was taken by her school job, they hired a maid to help with family chores. Ann invited the maid, a black woman, to sit down for lunch one day. The woman was taken aback and said respectfully but in no uncertain terms, "It isn't proper." Ann responded, "It's all right to eat together in California." Ann and John knew about segregation, but were shocked by facing it in person – the White's Only signs, the substandard facilities for blacks, the barring of their presence in restaurants. Ann especially was concerned that her children not grow up around a culture of white supremacy and wanted to leave. They decided to move to Tracy, California, to be near some other friends.

The Tracy Years

The community they joined had bought 80 acres near Tracy, east of San Francisco in the San Joaquin Valley, to be subdivided among the members. The soil was rich, water for irrigation was available and each family grew beautiful gardens. The members had made a conscious decision to live "on the wrong side of the tracks," as Ann would say. It was an interracial community with black, Latino and white families.

Until they could build, they rented a house from a Mexican American family. A few months later daughter Erica was born. She was a beautiful child, gentle yet strong, with big lovely eyes and a look of openness and questing trust that was still a part of her bearing when she was in her 50s.

After about a year, the Rushes built a house on their land. They hired a friend named Clarence, a contractor who lived nearby, to build the house. Clarence and his wife were a cheerful couple with warm and friendly ways. They had three daughters and 10-year-old Pamela was inseparable with the girls. John helped with the building while working as a railroad bookkeeper and for the Bureau of Reclamation ("I was always good at arithmetic," he said). They moved into their home before it was completed; it was still unfinished when they moved on.

John planted a big garden. "He was always a great gardener," Ann said. He said that the soil in Tracy was the best he ever worked – topsoil six feet deep, a rich heavy soil that held water in the best way for plants. They always had great produce and Ann spent many hours in the hot kitchen canning fruits and vegetables. In addition to their own gardens, the families would go to the commercial fields after harvest time to salvage leftover tomatoes, almonds and apricots from the rich San Joaquin Valley cornucopia. The family always had ample healthy food.

During these years, Ann was active in Quaker meetings and formed a close friendship with a blind black woman named Katie from the Tracy Quaker Meeting. She and Katie left their families for a week in 1950, traveling by bus to Washington, D.C., to protest the development of the hydrogen bomb. Here Ann again met A.J. Muste, the disarmament



speaker she had heard years before, and they shared a week of praying and fasting and sit-ins at the then-new Pentagon building. They returned home fulfilled that they had done what they could. Ann was 34 years old.

After nearly five years in Tracy, the Rushes started planning to go to Canada with other mostly Quaker families. The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union was intense and McCarthyism was rampant. A friend, John Stevenson, was asked to swear a loyalty oath to get a job driving a school bus. He refused. John Rush was investigated by the FBI for signing a petition for peace. Witch hunts for communists were in full swing nationally. Increasingly, the Rushes found the government policies intolerable, only further galvanizing their determination to leave the militaristic and materialistic society.



Rush Family 1952



Pam and Dimples



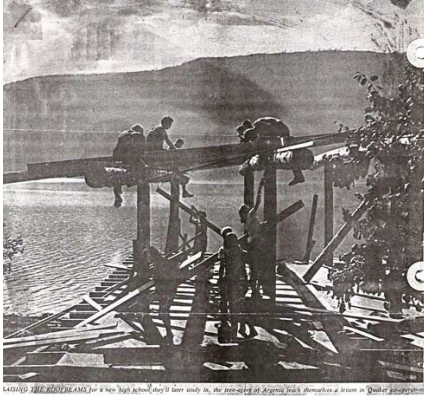
Heath and Gashy



Erica

Declaration for a New Life

The Quaker families – Ann and John, Robert and Ruth Boyd and John and Helen Stevenson – wrote a “Manifesto” of their reasons to seek community in British Columbia. It said in part:



How seven families really got away from it all

“We three families are interested in finding a place where we can work and live as a group which has characteristics similar to those of a group of brothers who decide to farm together.

“We believe an intimate group based on worshipful sharing and the search for truth can more directly achieve the relationships able to supplant the decaying of our society...

“We think that a moral evolution has not kept pace with technological evolution.

To us it appears that Russia and the U. S. are entering a period of Dark Ages, that they will likely engulf the rest of the world in their death throes. But we are not long-run pessimists. We believe that out of the impending chaos will come new light of love and trust, sown by the seeds of martyrs and by children who fortunately always come into the world ‘trailing clouds of glory’we are moving away from grass-roots control of our society to increasing authoritarianism and militarism...this same lopsided culture has wrenched material things away from their necessary relationship to religion and art...men in Russia are slaves to government...we in America have become the slaves of things.... it appears that America is forced to copy Russian and German authoritarianism in its desire to protect its standard of living....

“...one of our primary concerns is the welfare of our children...though we have had real warmth and friendliness (in Tracy)...our goal is the clock-around practice of the presence of God, and creating a good seedbed for normal family life.

“The eight conditions for achieving these goals:

1. Simplicity of living, simplifying possessions. We are appalled by the way we spread ourselves thin in multitudinous wants, building around our lives a cage of activities that smothers the truth we do know. Our family life is distorted by school and neighborhood activities and pressures, as well as away from home jobs. We are seeking to re-center our lives in such a manner that our families will spend more time together in play and work.

2. We want to supplant our materialistic culture with a more normal one in which work, religion, art, play, politics and material possessions are intimately related... We ask, does our job enhance the artistic and physical element of our community? Are we helping to spread the seeds of war? Why are we living at a level unattainable to most of the people of the world? Are we living in a manner to encourage fear and violence in ourselves...and neighbors across the world?

3. *We want to encourage all ages to share in the responsibility for ongoing family community life according to their abilities and the spirit of love, to sing, dance, play for the glory of God. In our work we want to take raw materials, both mental and physical, and reorder or expose them to new forces, which put us directly into the creative process so that our work is also to the glory of God and wellbeing of man.*

4. *We want to promote a sense of responsibility and love that encourages folk to do essential jobs willingly even though it is beyond their fair share. We view marriage as creative partnership basic to family continuity and vitality. We seek individual family home sites, joint farm enterprise and ownership, joint sharing of income on the basis of productive units of work performed and special needs.*

5. *We want family-style Friends meeting... we should have:*

- a) a sense of personal responsibility for ministering to each other*
- b) a period for the development to understand a new level of relatedness*
- c) awareness of the possibility of development*

d) realization that intellectual analysis should frequently be replaced by intuitive thought and prayer

- e) raising of concerns directly with the person involved*
- f) a sense of humor – only thus can we get perspective*
- g) patience and faithfulness to each other*

6. *We want a broader type of relationship involving a neighborhood community. It involves a limited liability and mutual responsibility.*

a) well-defined areas of work relations: farm tool exchange; credit union financing; pooled marketing arrangement; cooperative recreation

b) working relations open to any family willing to accept the regulations adopted by majority vote, however, unanimity will ordinarily be the accepted practice.

7. *We want basic education for our children...if necessary we expect to educate our children at home according to the principles of Gandhi's Basic Education movement...*

8. *We are looking for an opportunity to make a living in a business favorable to the basic education process, i.e. farming, home industry...We want to live where there is a minimum of interference with the continuity of family life.*

"The physical and emotional problems of uprooting ourselves from Tracy and getting settled again can mean years of physical and emotional exhaustion if we act foolishly or assume we can accomplish too much in a given time. We want to 'hope for the best, prepare for the worst, take what comes with faith.'"

The Stevensons and Boyds moved to Canada in 1952. During that winter the Rushes managed the welfare of John's elderly mother. After her death, the Rushes began preparations to join the other families in British Columbia.

The Canada Adventure Begins

In the early summer of 1953, the Rushes once again packed for Canada. This time a 1939 sedan pulled an old Model A trailer. The trailer behind the Chevy carryall was homemade. They stopped in Spokane, Washington, where they picked up a wood cookstove, found at a Goodwill for \$10, along with a hot water tank for it, for \$1 more. They were set for homesteading.



The Argenta Friends Community was founded in 1952, the three Quaker families from Tracy discovering an abandoned silver mining town in the wilderness of British Columbia. They purchased some old buildings and 200 acres for \$10 an acre. The settlement was on the shore of



deep and pristine Kootenay Lake surrounded by towering, majestic mountains. It was the end of the line for the last paddlewheel steamer in British Columbia, the Moyie. This steamer was the lifeline for the community, bringing the mail and ordered supplies once a week. Though there was a long, rough road around the lake to the nearest town, it was sometimes blocked by rock or snow

slides. Community members generally took the trip only two or three times a year.

The Rushes took “the house over from the pack rats,” Ann often said. The owner, who lived in Alberta, allowed them to stay in exchange for keeping range cows away. Their living was very basic. They had an outhouse. There was no electricity at first. Wood provided heat for cooking and heating. The “refrigerator” was a cold running stream in a flume near by. Hot water for dishes, laundry and bathing came from the water-jacketed wood cook stove. Baths were taken once a week in a galvanized washtub in the kitchen. Laundry, though they had a gas-driven washing machine, was a laborious affair, but Ann persevered, and to the end of her housekeeping days insisted on hanging clothes outside rather than use “unnecessary” dryers. Argenta was a world away from Ann’s childhood of luxury.





Boyd Family



Wolfe Family



Stevenson Family



Community Gathering



Wolfe Log Home



Building the Boyd Home

It was high adventure for the dozen or so children in the community. The Rush kids were thrilled with their new life. The Laura Ingalls Wilder books Ann and John read to the family during those years were absolute favorites. And no wonder – they were living the pioneer life just like the books’ characters. In this place of incredible beauty, wild animals still roamed – black, brown and grizzly bears and cougars – though there were no close calls. With a glint of enthusiasm in his eyes, Heath described plunging into the lake in spring and summer, emerging with braced red skin and breathless from the glacier fed water. Or times playing hockey when the ice froze over where a river entered the lake. They saw the river water rushing under the crystal-clear ice. In warmer times, the boys gleefully gathered under the wharf to try to spear huge carp, gray suckers lolling between the float logs, but always failed in their quest.

Heath remembers the thrill of finding a huge fallen cedar log, on his 13th birthday, and riding shivering home on the log sections, or bolts, the men had cut from it. The bolts were taken back to be split into shakes for the roof of a home.

Then there were the cherry trees in Johnson’s Landing, eight miles away. With his mom, sisters and some friends that first summer, Heath took a wheelbarrow and filled it with ripe, juicy fruit for eating and canning. He recalled that winter his mother carefully counting out cherries so each member of the family had an equal taste of summer. Heath told of the harvest when they put giant cabbages into a long ditch with the roots sticking up and covered them with hay. In midwinter they would dig the cabbages out of the frozen ground – with a pick, bar and shovel.

All the “great food” the Rush children had throughout their childhood would be a precious memory of their mother’s commitment to protecting the children’s welfare with nourishing nutrition. Ann

recalled a neighbor who sometimes shot a bear and shared the meat. Once he gave Ann meat from an old bear, something old-timers would know was not good for eating. Ann cooked it very slowly (as the Adelle Davis cookbook advised), and on the second day a horrendous smell saturated the kitchen.

But they did enjoy *good* bear meat. A favorite story told of Erica, as a little girl, visiting relatives in Los Angeles. Her uncle took her to the butcher shop to get meat for supper. Erica was a beautiful child, dressed that day in a dainty, fluffy dress. When the kindly butcher leaned over to ask, “Little girl, what kind of meat do you like best?” she enthusiastically replied, “Bear meat!”

During the Rushes’ years in Argenta, two young people joined the family. Peter, a 15-year-old in love with mountains, was brought



for a visit by his parents and “refused to go home” as Ann said. He was lively, bright, poetic and inspiring. His enthusiasm for mountain climbing was contagious and he and the other youngsters took advantage of the magnificent terrain. Later, a teenage girl from the States who needed a place to live also joined the clan.



A genial English couple also came to live in Argenta. Hugh Elliot delighted everyone when he answered the intra-community phone system, with a cheery “Hugh, heah” (Hugh, here). Hugh said his philosophy was that his grandfather had made money in Argentina, his father had saved it and he was spending it. He bought farm and logging equipment for the community. Later he installed a Pelton wheel to

harness Argenta Creek for electricity. Each family was given a limited amount of electricity to use at any given time. So to use the washing machine something else had to be turned off. It was a challenge to use the maximum amount allowed without setting off the breaker.

Hugh also was a cameraman. Once while climbing with Peter and Pam, Hugh took a magnificent black and white photo of Pam and her dog Dimples near the top of Mt. Willet above Argenta. John and Ann had an enlargement of the picture made and displayed it prominently in all the years that followed.

Pam particularly loved hiking and climbing the majestic mountains in the area. One time she (age 14) and Erica (age 8) packed carefully for an overnight hike and set off before light the next morning, with their dog Dimples, to climb up Mt. Willet. Pam took good care of her little sister, carrying a heavy pack and encouraging Erica all the way up the steep mountain. Erica remembers saying, “Are we half way to the halfway mark yet, Pam?” They spent the night together on top of the ridge with the bright stars seeming so close. All around them was a sea of spectacular, high mountains. The sunset and sunrise were unforgettable. It was a remote, wild area and other community members, when they found out about it, were disapproving of Ann and John for letting their children go by themselves. So Ann and John set out early the next morning to go find their daughters, arriving on the ridge just in time for a delicious, campfire meal Pam was making. Though Pam was not happy at first that their parents had come looking for them, they soon were all enjoying a tasty meal together and a fun trip down the mountain.



The Argenta community was full of extraordinary people – the Rushes, Wolfes, Boyds, Valentines, Stevensons, Elliotts and Pollards, who would become lifelong friends. They were educated, cultured and capable; committed to their faith and living their beliefs. Two people had trained for Protestant ministries; one, also an architect who designed the buildings, left a thriving Congregational church of 2,500 members. There were others with construction and other practical experience. Books were a prominent part of every household. Many had musical abilities. One family had brought many musical instruments and the school boasted a fine orchestra. Heath remembers with delight performing with others from Argenta in Gilbert and Sullivan's "HMS Pinafore" and the "Pirates of Penzance," a production put on by a group across the lake in Kaslo.



The children's education was a primary focus for all the families and after they outgrew the existing one-room school house, the community won a bid from the province to build a bigger school. There was a need for two schools – the high school students stayed in the old building and the grade school students moved into the new building.

By traditional standards, it was an unusual place to come of age, but Heath said he never missed the media and decadence of mainstream culture. He recalls proudly borrowing a double-breasted suit to attend a high school dance with his sweetheart, when visiting friends in Nelson, 90 miles away. He was mortified to be hopelessly out of fashion and completely unable to dance to the music (probably early Elvis Presley, etc.). It was nothing like the monthly folk dances in Argenta.

Erica loved their life in Argenta so much that after they left, she hoped to return so she could attend the Quaker high school later established there. Six years later, they came back for her last two years of high school. John and Ann served as house parents and John as a

teacher, for young people coming to Argenta Friends School from all over the U.S. and Canada. It was a big adjustment for students accustomed to television and city life. But they soon found plenty to enjoy. The first year the Rushes watched over six boys, the second year six girls. Ann had warm memories of the full house of students with all the fun and good-natured teasing, even though it was hard work. She was responsible for preparing all the meals, with a wood stove, primitive refrigeration and no nearby grocery stores. Through it all, Ann enjoyed cooking and community life. Erica learned to weave from one of the community grandmothers and proudly wore a skirt that she had woven for her graduation.

Another graduate of the Argenta Friends School, Julia Warwick, wrote about living in Argenta in a way that could only be a heart-warming fulfillment of the families' hopes for their children. She wrote:

"Surrounded by snowy mountains, working harder than you ever thought possible, you can remember the outside world, but somehow it doesn't seem quite real. What is real is the loving community of friendship that is always there when you need it. People care if you're depressed, everyone cares. And when you're not depressed there is always someone to giggle with, to skip down paths within the starlight screaming nonsense. Craziness is our way of life.

"At the same time you learn that you have to be responsible. Students live in households with staff members and are equally responsible for getting the work done. Living in the country means a lot of work, from wiping up toast crumbs to using a chain saw. One thing you soon realize is that the only structure here is based on people's needs. Living in a community means making sacrifices, of course. People who are into 'drinkin', carousin' and livin' a life of sin' will find that they have to change, for everyone else's peace of mind as well as their own. And people who are self-absorbed and overly introverted have a hard time staying that way. Community overtakes them both.

The whole personal quality leads to absolute flexibility within the Quaker context and lack of role-playing. There are thirty or so people in the school group including staff, students and children. You find yourself getting too close to everyone to relegate others to either inconspicuous basements or pedestals."

The last comments accurately summarize the authenticity one felt in the presence of Ann and John and their family, and no doubt those other lifelong Quaker friends from Argenta. They expressed themselves with simple, straightforward candor.

Destiny Walks In

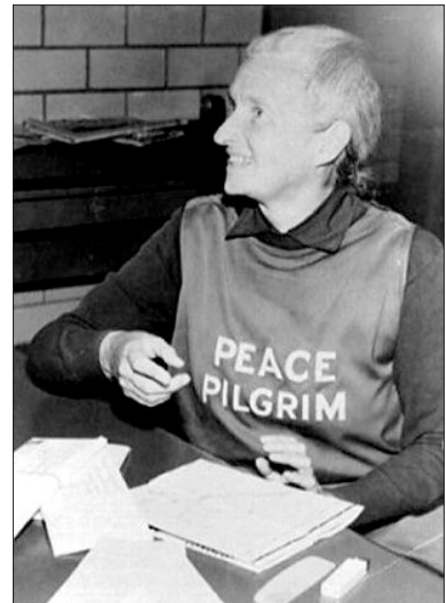
Peace Pilgrim came to Argenta, on her one trek through Canada, to visit a family she had met in Salt Lake City. She spoke to the Quaker group on the shores of Kootenay Lake. Ann was profoundly moved. Here was an extraordinary woman, short, vital and vibrant with wisdom, ideals and joy. Ann wrote:

"I felt very close to her and was thrilled to find someone so dedicated to peace. Here was someone living what we had worked for all these years. We Quaker pacifists were in the same nation-wide peace movement. I tried to convince her to stay a few days, after all, she was a free pilgrim without strict schedules, or so I thought. I was disappointed to learn that she had tightly

scheduled herself on her trek across Canada and could only stay a night.”

They drove her to the ferry and stopped in Kaslo, where Pam, especially taken with Peace, who said she never carried a penny, playfully put a penny in her pocket. Ann spoke of how much fun she had with Peace. It was 1957. Ann was 40 and had just met the person who would change the rest of their lives.

A 24-year friendship began, nearly spanning the 29 years that Peace walked North America, more than six and a half times across, from 1953 to 1981. She stayed with the Rush family eight times during those years in many different parts of the US and Canada. In the early days of her pilgrimage, after a radio speech Peace Pilgrim made, one of the radio employees was so impressed he printed her speech and added maxims from her newsletters, forming the booklet called “Steps Toward Inner Peace.” Peace Pilgrim left a copy with the Rushes during their Whittier days and Ann was so excited by it that she wanted to send it to all her relatives and friends. The Rushes asked if they could print more copies and Peace Pilgrim agreed. It would become an international classic, eventually circling the globe with the sustaining message of life, meaning and peace. Once before one of their many moves, Ann was feeling troubled and wrote to Peace Pilgrim who answered with sterling wisdom. It not only guided her life in that moment but has steadied countless others through crises, “Live in the present, do the things that need to be done, do all the good you can each day, the future will unfold.”



Moving on Again

Though they loved life in Argenta, John and Ann decided to move after four years. It was a struggle to find a long-term way to make a living in the remote area. They had tried many things – logging, construction, farming – but nothing was sufficient for John to support the family. Some found ways and others had financial resources. Argenta was a community of wonderful sharing but the unequal financial situation and lack of job opportunities made it difficult for the Rushes. With youthful idealism and desire to find the best place to raise their family, they continued their quest for a community where “all things were held in common.” A community in Macedonia, Georgia, striving to live as the early Christians, caught their interest and they packed once more and hit the road. To their dismay, however, they arrived in Georgia just as the experimental community was disintegrating. Six weeks later it had disbanded.

The community in Macedonia decided to join the Bruderhof community in New York state. The Bruderhof was an earnest Christian sect with a strong belief system, and the community held all possessions in common. John and Ann visited for a month, but disagreed with some of the group’s tenets. Most importantly, they didn’t agree with the Bruderhof practice of limiting the community to Christians. John and Ann wanted to live where people of all faiths were welcome.

Ann would later say, “Gandhi would not have been allowed to join.” Another concern was birth control, which the Bruderhof opposed and the Rushes believed population issues were major factors in world problems. Another philosophical conflict was that the Bruderhof viewed humanity as basically sinful in nature and in need of transformation through Christianity. John and Ann believed, as Peace Pilgrim did, that people are basically good but immature and misguided. Peace Pilgrim once expressed those views when speaking to a Bruderhof group; she was asked to leave and was not invited back. Needless to say, John and Ann did not find their community home there.

In the following year, the Rushes were basically homeless, going from one place to another searching for the right kind of community. After the disappointment of Macedonia, they went to live in a community called Koinonia, which had a branch in New Jersey. After a few months they felt this also was not the right community for them so they continued searching. At the Woolman Dale Center in Pennsylvania they met others interested in starting a complete sharing community.



The Rush, Booth, Goshos and Eustice families moved to Kansas to start this new community. It was a hard year for the Rushes. Erica, a fifth-grader, went to five different schools as she tagged along with her roaming parents. Heath and Pam stayed longer at the Bruderhof where they lived with other families and went to school. Heath then finished high school at Olney Friends School, a boarding school in Ohio. Pam, joining her family again in Kansas and after going to school there for a year,

finished high school at The Meeting School, a Quaker school in Rindge, New Hampshire. After a little more than a year in Kansas, three of the families decided to move their community to New Hampshire. They called their group “The Community Builders” because they made their living building houses. Peace Pilgrim visited the Rushes both in Kansas and New Hampshire during her cross-country travels.

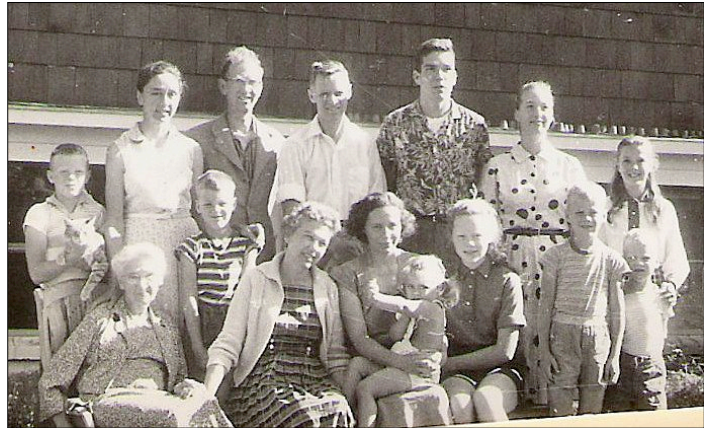


The Community Builders moved from Kansas to New Hampshire because the Booths had property and an unfinished house there, in Canterbury. The Rushes and the Goshos lived for a year in a brick,



Shaker-built house down the road from the Booths while working to finish the house. The Goshos had two girls Erica enjoyed living with. After a year the Goshos moved away and the Rushes moved into the ground floor of the Booth’s house, where the small community continued for three more years.

Those were special times, sharing closely with the Booths and their six young children.



During this time Ann worked at a retirement home and for a while at the Shaker village down the road. She enjoyed becoming better acquainted with these spiritual sisters. Ann was delighted when Sister Margarite showed her how they moved and sang to the song “Simple Gifts.” When Peace Pilgrim visited, she gave a talk to the Shakers. She was well received and greatly loved by the sisters.



The Rushes continued to make many people welcome in their home. Sometimes Erica, now a sensitive and self-conscious teenager would long for her family to be more “normal.” She described embarrassment over her family the day her mother – and three people currently living with them – drove her to school.

One of the houseguests was the red-haired, near-blind man from the Tracy days. One was an 18-year-old African American man whom Heath had befriended during civil rights protests in the South and had brought home to live with his family. The third was a large man who was completely convinced he was Jesus. The entire group was in the car with Ann, dropping off Erica at school, on the way to pick the last apples of the season at an orchard. The thought of being seen with such a carload was too much for Erica, and she asked to be dropped off a few blocks from school. Alas, she left her lunch in the car and they returned to give it to her. She was mortified when “Jesus,” a man with flowing locks and a huge belly, entered the classroom smiling beatifically, with her tiny bag of lunch in his beefy hand.

John later admitted, “We did have some weird people over the years,” and then told about the one who believed St. Francis was temporarily occupying her body and another who later moved to Fiji in order to make contact with space aliens. Ann hastened to add, “But they were the ones

that were not accepted elsewhere.” She would and did accept them. Ann’s beliefs were one and the same with her life deeds, a powerful, gentle and tolerant pacifism.

More Peace Activism

After four years in New Hampshire with the Community Builders, the Rushes moved back to Canada. By this time Heath and Pam were on their own, and Erica wanted to return to her beloved Argenta. Some of the original Argenta crew had started a Quaker high school, and John and Ann could now make a living being house parents and teaching.



During this time in 1964, Ann participated in a peace demonstration, in Sheffield, Alberta, where the United States and Canada were experimenting with biological and chemical weapons. A memo from Argenta Friends Meeting ends with these words: “Ann Rush is moved to express her concern by joining the manifestation which is to take place near Suffield, June 28th. The Meeting feels the depth of this concern and recognizes it as a valid expression for a Friend, and Ann Rush goes to the manifestation with our love.” Ann went to the rally with several of the high school students.

The protest had been organized by the Doukhobors, an activist group of Russian descent. Their history was fascinating. In 1895 their ancestors in Russia had made vows to never make war again and the villagers came together at a bonfire and burned their rifles and weapons. When the Czar began to persecute them, Leo Tolstoy and Quakers paid for them to immigrate to Canada in 1900. Their celebrations were not merely anti-war but pro-life, filled with beauty, dignity and hope. Ann was enthralled to meet them, was taken with their open faces, the orderly farms, the beautiful hand woven shawls the women wore, the bounteous food that was prepared for them and the beautiful songs they sang, all unwritten but passed down through generations. Here are some words to one of the songs:

*“It was in the Caucasus mountains that a great event took place;
Our forefathers burnt their weapons
For us youth, so free and eager
These basic outlooks must we hold
Peace and Toil’s serene, bold banner
With love and forgiveness in every fold...
...Is it really so hard to refuse to do evil?
Is it really impossible to do others no harm?
Is it really impossible to refrain from all falsehood?”*

Once again one becomes aware of Ann’s mystical perception of life as she writes about the event for the Friends newsletter:

“...In minor key they began singing their indescribably, hauntingly, beautiful songs, which wrap you in a web of mystical experience that you would just as soon never come out of. They seem to feel this way too, because they go on and on, but still you wish they would never stop.”

Here Ann would meet A. J. Muste for the third time; he was a principal speaker at the rally. They recalled their times together 13 years before at the week-long fast at the Pentagon. One can imagine how the ideals of the protest echoed in Ann’s heart as the company of 80 cars drove 200 miles to the experimental station. She had enthusiastically signed the document required to participate: “Be firm and endure all day, be humble, be calm, be helpful, be friendly and forgiving, regard opponents with love, kindness and understanding. . . . Respect for the right of others to hold and express whatever views they wish. . . . We will maintain the spirit of goodwill, humility.”

The manifesto to the facility stated: “Let our choice be clear and certain. Peace and good will towards men. We have a right to that choice. We respect the right of others, so that our rights be respected.”

Ann was 47 years old. She was doing exactly what she wanted to do. She wrote: “We were thankful for the day and joyful in our spirits. If we had touched no one else, our own spirits were raised and we were happy to have witnessed to the truth.”

The Family Grows Up

Heath came of age in the '60s, the civil rights movement and the hippie and drug revolution in full swing. He experienced both. Mirroring his parents’ activist views, he attended Central State, a historically black college in Wilberforce, Ohio. He received a scholarship and was one of the few white students. Yet try as he would, he felt out of sync with the other students. He could not understand the nuances of the black dialect, and didn’t take to the music either. “I just didn’t fit in very well at all,” he said. So he spent a great deal of time on the campus of nearby Antioch College.

Nevertheless, when the call for Freedom Riders filtered up from the South in the summer of 1961, Heath answered. Along with three white men and a black woman who was a fellow student, he integrated a “whites only” waiting room at the train station in Jackson, Miss. Arrests soon followed. As they were being transported through the countryside at night, the van stopped and the guards ordered them out to relieve themselves in the woods. They fearfully climbed out with visions of shootings and shallow graves. Fortunately that wasn’t their destiny. Heath, along with 300 other Freedom Riders, spent 40 days in jail at the maximum security Mississippi State Penitentiary in Parchman. He remembers singing a lot, even though it angered the guards, and the cold hard nights after their mattresses were taken away. “We were hot-headed and young,” he recalled.

Inspired by the warmth and dedication of those around him and the obvious need for civil rights for all, Heath got deeply involved in the movement. He met Hoagy Carmichael, the entertainer, who was also protesting and was inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s message of non-violence. On one occasion Heath was present during a dangerous situation in North Carolina

where the black leader was an armed and radical revolutionary. "Our purpose was to help calm the potentially violent situation," Heath said. "It blew up in spite of our efforts." He did meet a young black man and took him back to New Hampshire to live with John and Ann. To this day, Heath has a lasting and deeply felt memory of living with dirt-poor tenant farmers in Tennessee. He admired their qualities of endurance, courage and hope. The farmers were taking great risks to harbor the "northern agitators." Ann was very proud of Heath's involvement in the non-violent civil rights work.

Heath married and with wife Marty and their two young girls joined some of the commune experiments of the '70s. After all, the slogans were similar to those he had grown up with: "Make Peace, Not War," "Community," "Back to the land," etc. Soon he was consumed by it before realizing that many people were using the communes to cover up the debilitating effects of drug use. It was the "worst time, the lowest point in my life," he said later. His wife was led most deeply into the illusions, and abandoned the family. Heath was left with Laura and Joanna, two little girls desperately in need of stability. Ann and John were there.

Heath and Marty were living in Cincinnati when she left. While finishing his master's degree in environmental engineering in Ohio, he sent the girls to live for eight months with John and Ann in Whittier. The grandparents became the kind and sensible elders in their lives. After Heath finished his thesis, he moved to California and eventually had the good fortune to marry Patty, his girls' teacher at their Quaker elementary school. With their combined family of seven they picked up stakes for Washington state. Always mechanically gifted, Heath has worked in the apple industry for most of his adult life. His deeply committed Christianity, has given light and meaning to his many roles, not the least of which is grandfather to 15.

Pam was married in a Quaker meeting in Concord, N.H. Eddie Nash, the black man Heath met in North Carolina, was so excited about the event he worked extra jobs to provide a fancy wedding cake, not the norm at a Quaker wedding. The marriage was short-lived but it produced a beautiful son named Martin. Pam and Martin eventually lived with John and Ann in Whittier, where the Rushes had moved to take care of Ann's mother, making it a household of four generations. Pam and Martin lived with them for 10 years, while Pam attended college. Martin brought joy and grace to the whole family. Pam was a devoted mother, and he became an editor for the Los Angeles Times. In later years Pam, changing her name to Chava, converted to Orthodox Judaism, finding a supportive and sustaining spiritual path. She eventually moved to Jerusalem, Israel.

After graduating from college in Los Angeles with a degree in sociology, Erica fell in love with Albert, a Swiss man whom she met folk dancing. Fortunately for the marriage, they struck a bargain to live part way between their families, in New Hampshire, building with John's help a beautiful Swiss chalet-style home. They had two children, Maya and Peter. Erica was a gifted mother and homemaker who might easily have had a large family. When asked why not have more than two, she said, "My Daddy wouldn't let me," referring humorously to John's strongly held views about world population control.

Erica always had beautiful gardens and developed her weaving to prize-winning excellence in craft fairs and festivals. Erica was at home in the Quaker views of her parents. The parents' zeal

and commitment flowed through Heath, Chava, and Erica, finding different tributaries in the expression of spiritual life.

The Whittier Years

After two years in Canada as house parents for the Argenta Friends School, Ann and John left again, this time to take care of Ann's elderly mother in Whittier. They lived with her for 10 years until her passing at 97. It was a lively household, briefly with Heath's children, and Chava (Pam) and Martin, adding to the mix. Ann and John accepted it all with grace and commitment and enjoyed being with their grandchildren. John worked as a letter carrier for the postal service for 16 years. True to his penchant for musical levity he wrote a song about the joys and challenges of the postman.

THE MODEL LETTER CARRIER

(Sung to the tune of the "Major-General's Song," from Gilbert and Sullivan's "The Pirates of Penzance")

*I'm the very model of the modern letter carrier.
Of all the federal employees none could be merrier.
I deliver mail with a smile and never a frown,
And I never (well hardly ever) let the volume get me down.*

*When I'm on my route I'm where I'm supposed to be.
In spite of invitations I never stop for tea.
If you find my car parked upon a city street
It'll be locked like all the others in the whole mail fleet.*

*I never leave my engine running for that would be a crime.
If my supervisor should catch me that would be a fine.
I always curb my wheels to keep my jeep from running away.
If it should get loose and crash what could I say?*

*I'm very conscientious, I always follow the rules.
Although secretly I wonder if some weren't made by fools.
I don't mean to imply that hiring of fools has oft occurred
It's just that I was desperate to find a rhyming word!*

*So when you see me going about upon my numerous rounds,
You will know I'm well trained to carry those heavy pounds.
Even though dogs may bite me and patrons treat me mean,
A more kind and courteous person the public has seldom seen.*

*by John M. Rush
Whose perfection has come about
because of all those stand-up meetings*



For Ann the flow and needs of her family went on as grandmother and mother, but that did not deter her activism. They lived near Whittier College, a private liberal arts school founded by Quakers, and Ann was an active figure on campus, working for peace. The Vietnam War was growing increasingly unpopular and feelings ran deep on both sides – those who supported the U.S. presence there and those who opposed it vehemently.

Ann was a vocal and outspoken presence at peace rallies often held at the college chapel and also stood behind her words with action. She and John made themselves available to draft resisters seeking asylum in Canada. She was grateful that her mother's home was shielded from the street by large shrubs, providing cover when they counseled young men on how to make connections in Canada. The campus was closed to the police, prompting a neighbor to ask the college chaplain, "Why do you allow this communist, Ann Rush, on campus and not the police?" The chaplain said Ann was the best influence to keep the peace. The Cold War was raging and name-calling was prevalent as people expressed frustration over world events and their inability to make changes. But Ann was absolutely sure of her role.

Ann and John had both come to the conclusion that the greatest thing they could do for world peace was spread Peace Pilgrim's message. They had printed the pamphlet "Steps to Inner Peace," which was beginning its remarkable journey around the world. Near the end of her life, after walking the country for nearly 30 years, Peace Pilgrim stayed in the Los Angeles area for two months, mostly with the Rushes, completing nearly 100 speaking engagements.



A Fulltime Career for Peace

Peace Pilgrim died instantly in a car crash on July 7, 1981. John and Ann were visiting Erica in New Hampshire when they received the news from their grandson, Martin, calling from their home in Whittier. It was so hard to believe. It had always been such a source of comfort to know that Peace was out there somewhere bearing the message of peace to all who would listen. It seemed impossible that she was gone.

Now began a series of events, which in retrospect seem divinely guided. Peace had left the name of a contact person in Pennsylvania, Molly TenBroek, who had sent out Peace's occasional newsletter. Ann happened to have Molly's contact information with her in New Hampshire, and when they reached her, she asked the Rushes to take a list of 6,000 names and addresses Peace had compiled during her pilgrimage. Next they learned that Peace had a sister, Helene Young,

living in New Jersey. She was the mystery person who had forwarded mail for Peace. Fortunately they were in nearby New England, Erica had a truck they could use and they were free to pick up the mailing list names and take them to Helene. Once there they learned that Helene needed help answering letters pouring in from people all over the country. Soon Ann was amazed to find herself writing on behalf of Peace Pilgrim. Ann addressed Peace's far-flung supporters with the first of many letters to come:

"Greetings from Cologne. I am typing next to Helene's vegetable and flower garden where Peace typed her letters when she was visiting her. It is all a bit overwhelming...so much mail.... One outstanding fact emerges, we each feel she is our special friend – she somehow belongs to each of us..."

Richard Polese, a longtime friend of Peace's who had been recently urging her to write a book, planned a memorial in Santa Fe, New Mexico, for close friends and invited Ann and John. Before they went to Santa Fe, John and Ann were able to gather materials such as news articles and church bulletins, which had been archived at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania at Peace's request.

Now in Santa Fe began an amazing collaboration of souls who barely knew each other, to create a Peace Pilgrim book. The timing was perfect for Ann and John. Only months before John had retired from the postal service and he and Ann were free to concentrate on the work. With the retirement pension, they could be independent and live where they chose. As the collaborators came together, Richard described how their tasks fell in place with such ease. He often "had the feeling that Peace Pilgrim was right there with us...."

Each of the five compilers, Andy Zupko, Cheryl Canfield, Richard Polese, Ann and John, later described the "miracle" of their collaboration in the same terms. Coming from diverse backgrounds and bringing strong personalities and confidence in their own capabilities, they were able to relinquish control for a collective vision of what the book should be. Richard said: "A greater spirit prevailed...almost by magic it seemed, or by truly light and strong guidance from Peace herself." In the weeks they worked together, the book came together from her letters and writings in a most amazing way.

When a friend reviewed the first draft, though impressed, she pointed out several redundant passages. Her comments stimulated John and Ann to continue editing. John would later say, "I don't think I ever spent a more enjoyable time in my life than working on that book. Ann and I went over it again and again." John would awaken at night inspired to go over the text to find where each part would best fit. John and Ann were fascinated and inspired throughout the whole process.

Cheryl and Andy had left for a few weeks to visit a relative and when they returned they were at first concerned that the original work had been undone. They soon realized it was a necessary refinement to make the text flow. John laughingly described how someone said he didn't know John had such editorial ability and he said he didn't either. It was, of course, Ann's revelation by the ocean, that the book had to be in Peace's "own words," that guided the primary decision on how to organize the book.

They spent nearly five months to finish and the five knew they had been part of a profound spiritual process. Yet even with that realization, they did not fully know at the time what an important deed they had done for world peace.

Andy Zupko put up \$2,500 for the first printing and Richard, who had publishing experience, had 5,000 books printed in February of 1983. John and Ann, after praying about their next step, agreed to take on the job of mailing the books. They received the blessings of their grateful colleagues. Ann was overjoyed when the first box of books was delivered to their home in Whittier. "I opened the box and the first thing I saw was the photo on the book cover," she said. "I immediately thought, 'Peace Pilgrim is back among us, both walking and speaking, although not in person but still in a manner with which she can reach the lives of thousands.'"

They began with an incredible plan. The books would be given away free. Peace Pilgrim had said that spiritual truths should not be sold, and they made this a hallmark of distributing her words to the world. This bold leap of faith would be blessed with an amazing response from appreciative recipients all over the world. Donations in grateful letters have continued to flow for more than 20 years, making it possible to reprint the book time and again. In all that time they were true to the Quaker saying "as the way opens." A quarterly newsletter helped draw a steady stream of volunteers, grateful to add their help to such a worthwhile universal project. After several years, Ruth Wolfe, a friend from Argenta, wrote to Ann and John:

"I hope you can continue your amazing work together. Your career has had probably more influence for good than any of us Argenta Originals have had – so you should be and I'm sure you are joyous in your heart. We each have given of our talents as best we could – but you two followed your intuition until you truly found your Vocation!! I still find Pilgrim's Steps so simple to understand – but challenging to live. Would that the world could understand. I say, 'We teach what we live! Not what we speak....It's lives lived with love that really teach.'"

John and Ann were always clear about the principles they wanted to live and teach by, and now about the vocation they had chosen. Peace Pilgrim said the important thing was to live the message of peace. They agreed and their actions showed it.

After 18 years in Whittier, Ann and John made the prayerful decision to move to Hemet, a town Southern California's San Jacinto Valley. They had gone to visit for a day but bad weather led them to stay overnight. The next day a real estate agent friend showed them a modest home near a seasonal river, bordering an Indian reservation. They both immediately felt it was the right place to be. In November 1983, they moved in, and opened the Friends of Peace Pilgrim Center.

Trucks would arrive at their tiny two-bedroom home and cases of books would be stacked to the garage ceiling awaiting requests from around the world. Using and expanding Peace Pilgrim's mailing lists, they compiled the newsletter informing people about the work around the world and adding Ann's vignettes about the beauty of nature and everyday events in a simple life. A map of the world on their office wall was filled with pins showing where people were helping distribute the word of Peace. Soon it was too time consuming to keep up with the global mapping, so they stopped adding pins. Letters were carefully read, answered and orders filled,

and always Ann was there with her lovely warm voice answering the phone “Peace Pilgrim Center.” Visitors flowed in and out; volunteers came for weeks or years. Ann never tired of proudly showing the array of books displayed in many languages and eagerly telling of new translations, in such languages as Swahili, Serbo Croatian, Chinese, Hebrew, Arabic, Tamil, Finnish and Gujarati.



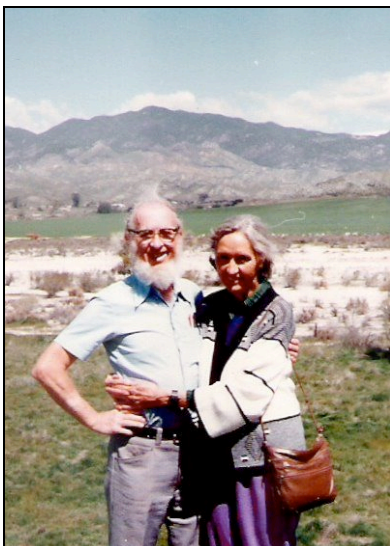
Visitors get the tour



Lunch with Friends



Jeff Blom, Ann, Richard Polese, Gary Guthrie, John



Back Yard in Hemet



A Wall of Translations

I met them through some amazing “coincidences” that seemed commonplace in their special lives and helped in the transition of the Peace Pilgrim Center from Hemet to a beautiful location



in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains. It was on 10 acres, dotted with majestic pines, where visitors and volunteers enjoyed the “Peace Trail” walk with stations to ponder some of Peace’s wisdom. The move was made possible by Kathy Miller who took substantial responsibility for running the Center and



providing the setting. Volunteers continued to visit from around the world. After two years, Ann and John, both 86, needed to move on and did so with grace, moving to New Hampshire to be near their daughter, Erica and her family.

John and Ann, the Elder Years

The dry humor that flowed between them was tangible in knowing looks and affable jokes told over and over again. As Ann took John’s arm, she looked to him to make a decision about whether to wear rubber sandals in the spa. He gallantly took her arm and declared he did have intellectual brilliance. It was John’s 86th birthday as they related the story of their courtship and marriage. Ann suggested we give him a “pat on the head” to acknowledge the birthday and then leaned back and recited Robert Browning’s words for him:

*“Come grow old along with me
The best is yet to be
The last of life for which the first was made.”*



Then she looked bemused and gave a little grin. “Well that may be stretching it a little. But it does give you a chance to find out other characteristics in each other. John, for instance, has become very domesticated.” He responded, “I have been baking bread for 32 years.”

After six decades of marriage, John told of special moments with the same look of warm admiration he no doubt had at the beginning of their courtship. He recited his wedding vow by heart, smiled as he repeated it after all these years and mused that probably couples might be better off if they didn’t expect everything to be so wonderful all the time.

Then he grinned his beatific smile and said, “Well, Ann is a saint. You see everyone needs

problems to overcome to grow spiritually...well, I'm Ann's problem!"

He later added with a note of seriousness that she was farther along the path than he. He said he would often get discouraged but Ann was always positive about the future.

On their 58th wedding anniversary, we asked them how to create a long marriage. John's answer was perfect, "You have to have a purpose, and we had our purpose."

It was a touching experience to be with them as they left the Peace Pilgrim Center for the final time, the large garage barn filled with boxes of books, the rows of videos for mailing, the filing cabinets with letters so carefully and lovingly filed by Ann's hands. They admonished us to be sure to check on things, John holding Ann's arm as she walked with faltering steps and failing eyesight to the car that awaited them. On the table nearby lay packages addressed in John's tight neat printing, on the green label for overseas shipping: two books to Ghana, one to Finland, one to India, fulfilling the requests for that day.



Poem for Ann on her 90th Birthday

Ann, Ann, our dear Ann
Has always worked for the BIG PLAN
Never did your efforts cease
To spread the message of
World Peace.

With your dear partner husband John
Your work for peace went on and on!
At ninety years you both still shine
With goodness, caring, intertwined.

From Peace Pilgrim's inspiration
You've spread the message across the nations.
Cities, prisons, countries, world
The timeless words of Peace unfurled.

Bless you servants of the good.
You both remind us we all could
Live the message, light the way
To a better world, a better day.

John, keep your jokes, Ann, keep your smile.
They're treasures with us all the while.
Like Peace Pilgrim shining from above
To bring this world toward Peace and Love!

Nancy Poer

Thoughts about Ann and John

“It is with gratitude and love that we honor our friend Ann Rush We will always remember the joy of finding her in Hemet and receiving her lovely smile and a box of Peace Pilgrim books to give to friends and another box in Spanish to take to Costa Rica. Thank you Ann. Her devotion will always be in our hearts and her efforts have impacted the world and we are closer to Peace on our Earth because of her and her devoted husband...”

Barbara and Robert Muller (California)

“My son John and I met you at the Peace Pilgrim Ctr. 10 years ago. You were both so gracious and kind. You invited us to a shared luncheon the following day with other special friends of Peace. Ann, when you opened your front door, I remember gasping for I saw that Light of God in your eyes.”

Debbie (Pennsylvania)

“One of Ann’s favorite quotations was one written by Edwin Markin:
It goes like this:

‘He drew a circle that shut me out---
heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But love and I had the wit to win;
We drew a circle and took them in’

This poem symbolizes the Ann I knew---a woman who wanted Peace more than anything else. Ann shut no one out – Her heart was infinite. She realized all life as one Oneness—one home—she saw everyone as members of one human family—But above all – Ann had the wit and wisdom to draw an Infinite Circle that left no one out. Ann has not died – this truly beautiful Spirit has simply gone Home...”

Andy Zupko

“Anna Laura, I just want you to know that you have been one of the most amazingly influential people in my life. Your humility, your strength, your endurance, peace, love, just to name a few, have always brought peace to my heart. The few times we have spent together have shown me that we can overcome and have joy and peace. Thank you soooo much for your work, and all you have done for every soul on this planet. You truly have blessed many.”

Tamra Billen (California)

“All the work you have done over the years to support and spread the work of Peace Pilgrim is so much appreciated. You and John both have my eternal gratitude for sharing Your Light with the world. You have made it a brighter, more loving place for all of us. Thank you!”

Beck Smith (Texas)

“As a dear friend of Peace Pilgrim you have become a dear friend of mine and folks all over the world for compiling her book!”

Dr. Margaret Dwyer (Michigan)

"I never had the good fortune to meet you in person but I know who you are. You're dedicated, loving work and messages continue to reverberate around the universe. You are much appreciated and your work will continue through many more hands of Peace. Thank you with love."

Kamala (Washington)

"Your untiring work and devotion to Peace and for peace, is an ongoing inspiration to all of us."

Cheryl Canfield (California)

"You have been such an inspiration to me personally and to all those who were introduced to Peace Pilgrim through your enthusiastic voice on the opposite end of their phone calls."

Bruce Nichols (Connecticut)

"You've done a wondrous miraculous work with your lives!! Thank You! We have distributed many pamphlets, books, and tapes. Love the video, which always touches those who watch it. All thanks to your dedication, vision and love! Yes, there are still remarkable beings on our planet and you two head the list!"

Jack and Eulaua (Honolulu)

"Thanks to your dedication, Peace's message is being heard around the world. Perhaps it's time to rest."

Mary and Art Hoag (Idaho)

"...THANK YOU to you and to John for delivering Peace Pilgrim's message to so many people. Since ordering her book and videos, her story has changed my life in many positive ways. Your work will forever be appreciated!"

Corinne Zupko (New Jersey)

"With heartfelt thanks for all you have done to educate the world - to share Peace Pilgrim with all of us – and to pursue your own inner peace. You inspire us."

Rev. Radicchi (California)

"Your Life Matters. Had it not been for you, people like me, whom you've never met, would never have known the full meaning of the life of a remarkable inspiring woman. Without you her ministry would have faded into obscurity, lost to the curious, forgotten by a world that has drifted far from her message of peace."

Judy Hagerman (Colorado)

"God bless you for all you have done for so many years to keep the work of Peace Pilgrim going. I was pleased when a friend who is a student at Clark University in Worcester, Mass told me they studied about Peace Pilgrim in their peace studies class."

Ruth Anne Paul (Oregon)

"I'm ever grateful for all both of you have done to keep Peace's message alive and happy to see that you have inspired others to follow in your footsteps."

Helene Young (New Jersey)

“I want to thank you for all your wonderful work at the Peace Pilgrim Center –it was you who sent me the materials which I came to distribute to my career counseling clients...and still do to those who are interested in peace and justice work. The work you did reached many hungry and thirsty souls searching for life’s meaning for them...”

Rosemary Barshart

“Most of us, myself included, have aspirations for peace. You have acted for peace. Your convictions are to be admired.”

Bill Jarreh (North Carolina)

“...I wanted to thank you so much for being a repository of Peace. How beautiful you are. How uplifting a message you sent out to the universe those many years. May you now both be embraced by the life, dedication, and peace, which you exemplify.”

Mary Frederich (New York)

“I enjoyed all of our times together...I am deeply grateful for what you both have done to the many, many Friends of Peace Pilgrim. You both are Peace personified in loving souls.”

Phyllis (California)

“Thank you so much for all the work you did on behalf of Peace Pilgrim’s message. Thanks to you I became familiar with her wonderful philosophy.”

Annette Grubb (Michigan)

“I feel such gratitude toward those whose loving, peaceful energy has tended the garden prepared by our beloved Peace Pilgrim. Now that nature has slowed your doing, that your radiant Being may fill the Universe with the peace of your every prayer and breath, know how much you are loved and supported on your journey.”

Jeanne Knecht (Connecticut)

“You are both an inspiration and guiding lights in a much-needed world. Even now at your Health Care Facility. You continue in your simple way to quietly carry on the work of Peace. You have and are touching many lives. From the depths of my heart...Thank you.”

Margaret (Texas)

“As stewards of the peace message, you have certainly held the torch high!”

Julie Giessler (New York)

“I appreciate all your energy in getting the word of Peace Pilgrim to people ...know how many lives you have touched in a loving way.”

Audrey Dittberner (New Mexico)

“Dear Ann, you have given and shared so much in so many ways. You have enriched my life - and those of so many other people. You rest in peace in my heart. There’s a smile there, too – for I easily recall your smile and your sense of humor looking out at the world.”

Richard Polese (New Mexico)