

L.A. Times

8 JAN 1955

WOMAN PLODS OVER NATION FOR PEACE

Pilgrim Hikes and Prays as She Travels Without Money to Spread Spiritual Ideas

BY DAN L. THRAPP, Times Religion Editor

Why a Peace Pilgrim—or even a peace pilgrimage? She explains it this way:

"I believe that if my country would reach the spiritual level, it would assure peace in our time.

"But if world disarmament—and peace, which would follow—does not come about in my time, world chaos will result and there will be only remnants of people remaining to pick up the pieces."

5000-Mile Hike

That was in the back of her mind when she set out on her first 5000-mile hike on Jan. 1, 1953. Now she is starting the second lap — and it's still there.

Peace Pilgrim had three goals in view when she started her journey, the one that took her coast to coast and border to border (she tried to get into Canada, but, carrying no money, she didn't strike the Canadian immigration authorities as being "self-supporting.")

More church news on Page 22, Part II.

"I prayed for real peace in Korea, establishment of a Peace Department in the President's Cabinet, and world disarmament and reconstruction," she said. She hasn't lost hope that all of these will come about.

Power Unknown

"No one," she avers, "really knows the full power of prayer.

"But if what I'm doing inspires others to do something toward these goals on their own part and, secondly, to examine themselves, I feel it has been worth-while."

How does one change from a settled, respectable, graying lady of upper middle age into a no-less respectable "wanderer on the face of the earth," as Peace Pilgrim describes herself? She won't—or can't—reveal all of the details, and won't discuss her personal history or tell her true name, but some facts come out in conversation.

Born on Farm

She was born on a New Jersey farm 50 or more years ago and still uses Cologne, N.J., where her relatives live, as a mailing address. She divides her life into three parts.

"I was interested in the stage, at first," she said, "and the second part of my life was a personal period. When that came to an end I began to devote myself to helping others, in a quite modest manner, at first. I worked for the Friends for 15 years, mostly office work."

But she grew increasingly dissatisfied with her life, and one evening, she said, grew so restless that she wandered most of the night through a New Jersey woodland. At length she came to a moonlit glade and prayed.

Attains Peace

"Please use me! I prayed to God, and a great peace came over me," she said. "I went home and slept." She later engaged in a 45-day fast.

Since then she has depended on what she describes as an "inner guidance," that comes to her most clearly in the half-asleep, half-awake period at dawn or dusk. It was this "inner guidance," she said, that told her to undertake her "pilgrimages."

"I used the last money I had for this tunic," Peace Pilgrim said, referring to the

deep blue surplice with its white lettering telling her chosen name and mission. "I felt self-conscious at first, but then realized why I had to wear it."

Starts New Trek

She claims to have conversed with thousands during her walking, hitchhiking tours through the States. She embarked this week on a new one during which she said she would walk "at least 100 miles" in each State, and hitchhike between them.

She carries no money or supplies beyond a comb and folding toothbrush, and depends upon the Almighty for food, shelter and a place to rest each night.

"I have never lacked for anything," she said.

She urges others to seek with her the "peace within."

Finds Energy

"Everyone can work for peace, by working to make himself at peace within," she said. A small woman with a hiker's stride, she has found the energy to wear out seven pairs of walking shoes, but her light blue, luminous eyes tell one that her pilgrimage has just begun.

"When I started out, I thought this might entail some hardships," she said. "But I determined to live at 'need level'—that is, I didn't want more than I need when so many have less than they need.

"Instead of hardship, I found a wonderful sense of peace and joy and uplift and a conviction that unnecessary possessions are only unnecessary burdens."

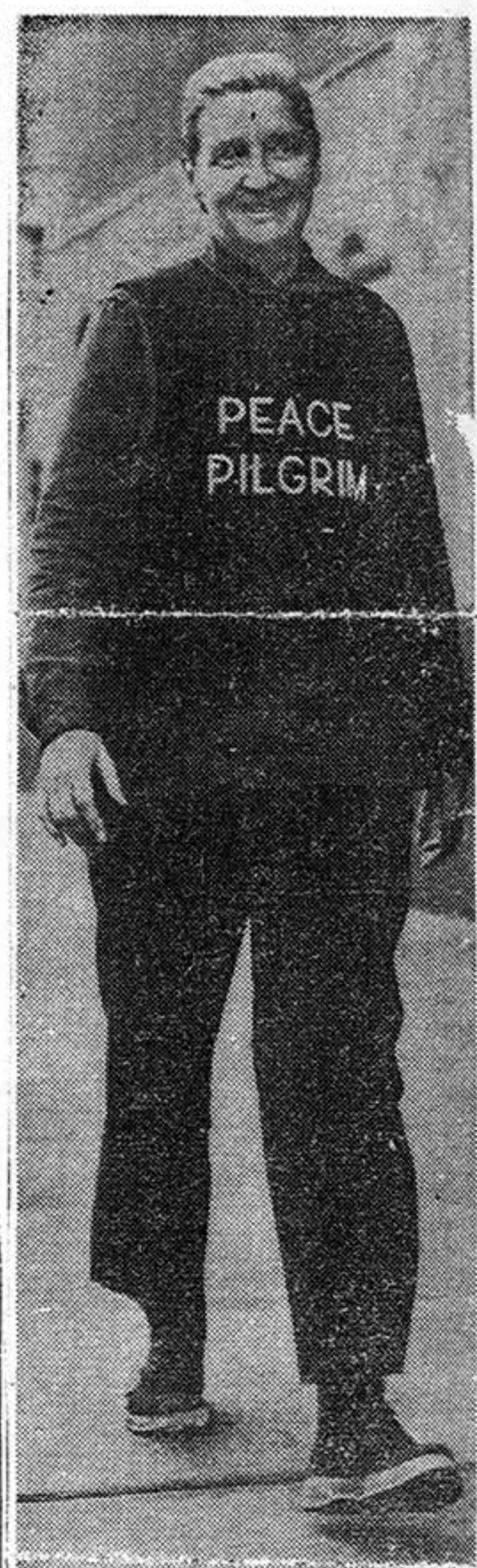
She said that she found it necessary to "grant four relinquishments," self-will, a feeling of separateness from God and from other people, a sense of attachment to material possessions, and a "negative outlook."

Spiritual Level

She found nothing but interest, assistance and encouragement from the people she has met, and she is convinced that nations, like people, can exist "on a spiritual level" and that only in that way can real peace come.

"Most of us live at the human level, returning evil for evil, good for good," she said, "while we should live on the spiritual level, returning good for good and good for evil. Almost nobody will return evil for good. I believe that no nation would, either."

She thought it not a bit unusual, only typical of her recent experience, when a policeman accosted her at the Rose Bowl at Pasadena the other day and, instead of admonishing her, said: "We need



ENDLESS HIKE — Peace Pilgrim visits Los Angeles on her endless journey of preaching and praying. Times photo