

World Peace Is Near, Walking Pilgrim Says

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Her home is America's roads. Her livelihood, talking of peace. Her goal, to see world peace.

She has pursued her goal in 48 states, Canada, and Mexico. And Peace Pilgrim — her self-chosen name — is still in hot pursuit of a peace which she says "is just on the brink, for the first time in history."

PEACE BROUGHT her ambition to Salem this week for the fifth time.

Her pilgrimage had its beginning in the Jan. 1, 1953, Tournament of Roses parade in Los Angeles where she walked along the crowd-lined curbs, talking of world, national and innerpeace.

Her effort — which she says started as a one-to-one thing — soon found her traveling miles of America's roadways. She says she totaled 25,000 miles in the first three pilgrimages but now only keeps track of her appointments and philosophy.

SHE HAS WHAT one might call "phrasilosophy" — her

philosophy is expressed in tidy phrases.

She claims she is plugged into universal energy, "on which I walk and it never runs out."

In her pilgrimages, she tries to convince people of the need for optimism and peacefulness. "If you want peace, you have to be peaceful," she asserts. She also expresses her own ideal: "Have as your objective the resolving of the conflict — not the gaining of an advantage." The silver-haired miss originally wrote it for a friend but since it has become a widely-published creed.

Her accomplishment, she feels, is that of inspiring people to do something for peace in their own way.

WHEN TRAVELING, she relies on the charity of people. However, when no one invites her for the night, she sleeps wherever possible. "Wherever" has included the front seat of a fire engine, a city hall conference table, a cardboard box under a railroad trestle and even jail.

And she doesn't mind the loneliness of the road. "I don't know what it is to be lonely," claims "completely healthy" Pilgrim.

This "citizen of the world member of the world family" is optimistic and has seen great change in attitudes toward peace. "When I started, I was a voice crying in the wilderness. Now I'm on top of the mountain."

SHE IS EVEN more excited about what the near future holds. The Pilgrim — who reveals no other name, age, or residence — feels that, because the U.S. is the most powerful nation in the world, if the U.S. continues seeking peace, other countries will follow. "I want to make my country a shining example," she says, blue eyes dancing.

"The crises of the time are pushing us to it," she says. "That brings us to the brink of peace, world peace, for the first time in history."

And she appears happy to be a part of it — "a making of a good future," she calls it.



PEACE PILGRIM
(Statesman photo)