

# Woman Makes Cross-Country Hike To Arouse World Peace Interest

By DON PINKSTON

Walking across the country in the interests of peace is hard on the feet but an easy way to make friends, says the Peace Pilgrim.

Anonymous Miss Peace Pilgrim—a graying woman of slight build—her age as anonymous as her name—reached El Paso Sunday, 1,000 miles and two pairs of shoes away from Los Angeles, where she began her one-woman "peace march" in Washington last Jan. 1.

In The Times newsroom Sunday night she was greeted by a friend, attractive Mrs. Betty Fleissner of El Paso, who pressed \$5 on her with the admonition:

"Now, you go right out and eat a good steak."

"It's been like that all the way," said Miss Peace Pilgrim, smoothing down her wrinkled blue jumper bearing the words of her mission, "Walking for Peace," in fluorescent lettering, front and back.

"Almost everyone I talk to seems vitally interested in peace. There was a time when the subject of peace was a controversial issue, but not any more. Today people agree that peace is the world's No. 1 problem—and they want to do something about it.

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"I find the best reception from ministers — or maybe from GIs. When I passed one army camp the boys came out by hundreds to talk to me and to cheer me. Those boys know what peace means."

Miss Peace Pilgrim's objectives are the White House in Washington and the U. N., in New York. She intends to urge President Eisenhower to establish a Department of Peace in his cabinet, and in New York she will plead with the United Nations.

Walking all the way, carrying no food—or water, even in desert areas—Miss Peace Pilgrim said she was making her coast-to-coast hike on "faith," accepting gifts of money for wood and free lodging where they were offered and turning over any large donations to associates who mail out a newsletter concern-

ing her crusade to foreign countries and people in U. S.

"I have faith that people will stop and give me food and water," she said.

It was through such a chance meeting that Mrs. Fleissner became a friend of Miss Peace Pilgrim. Mrs. Fleissner and her husband Conrad, operator of Crown Engineering Co., stopped on an Arizona roadside to talk with the walking woman.

"We saw her on television," explained Mrs. Fleissner. "I think anyone who is working for peace in the world needs all the encouragement possible." The El Paso woman said she lost a close relative in World War II.

Miss Peace Pilgrim refuses to reveal her actual identity, beyond saying that for years she worked with the American Friends Society in Philadelphia and maintains a mailing address in nearby Cologne, N. J.

Her reticence concerning her age does not spring from the usual feminine reason, she insists, but from her determination to keep "everything personal" out of her

project for peace.

"I have no home—only a forwarding address," she says.

Miss Peace Pilgrim will spend four days in El Paso, stopping nights with four friends, after which she will continue to Dallas, then turning north toward Kansas City and St. Louis.

It will be a long hike to Washington and New York, but Miss Peace Pilgrim says the distance—or shoe leather—doesn't worry her.

"When I got into Tucson I'd worn out my first pair of shoes," she said. "But there in general delivery was an anonymous \$10, earmarked 'for clothing.'"

She doesn't expect to walk out of El Paso with the male friend who accompanied her from Deming, N. M.

In Deming she encountered a hiker who, she said, is a member of the Batona Hiking Club of Philadelphia.

"I used to belong to the same organization," she said.

"But when we reached El Paso he said his feet were hurting him. I guess he's not walking on faith."