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Peace Pilgrim Walks Thousands Of Miles in Interest of Mission

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By ADDISON R. BRAGG

It's a matter of conjecture whether or not there exists in this workaday world a person with a truly "magnificent obsession."

After talking for a while with Peace Pilgrim, however, you have the feeling she comes close to the description.

That's her name — Peace Pilgrim — and no amount of questioning, coaxing, wheedling or cajoling can wring other identifying label from her.

"Why must a name be so important," asks the wiry sun-browned woman who in the last six years has walked thousands of miles in the cause of peace, "when the mission is the really important thing?"

Peace Pilgrim arrived in Billings late Tuesday and plans to spend two days visiting friends she made on a trip here four years ago.

Letters Waiting

Wearing blue slacks, gray rubber-soled canvas shoes and a tunic-like blouse lettered with her name and mission the grey-haired "pilgrim for peace" skimmed rapidly through the hundred or more letters which awaited her arrival in the Billings post office.

They came from Canada, from California, Florida, Ohio, Oregon and a dozen more states. The return addresses named manufac-

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Walked Since 1953

It is apparent on first meeting this woman who, since January 1953, has walked — step after step, 25,000 miles in the cause and interest of peace — that she is educated and cultured.

Her hands are delicate, the nails well kept and are expressive without being prominent. The accent is New England — or eastern, at least — and she wears her hair combed straight back.

Out of her "walking kit" it isn't hard to imagine her trim, meticulous and businesslike behind a Madison Avenue desk or on an Ivy League college faculty.

Meals come to her when they are offered and a room for the night only when it is given.

This is in keeping with the vow she took six years ago "to fast until given food and to walk until given shelter."

She travels without a penny in her pocket.

On 1,000 Mile Pilgrimage

Peace Pilgrim is on a 1,000-mile pilgrimage of the northwest which she began in May. The Montana part of her journey ended earlier this week in Helena where she arrived after walking from Spokane.

Her next walk will be from Idaho Falls to Salt Lake City. She plans to start it on leaving Billings Friday.

Laughing, Peace Pilgrim—who will speak at a public meeting at 8 p.m. Thursday in the First Baptist Church — said she's coming to be "as much of a talker as I am a walker."

About one-third of her time, she said, is now devoted to lecturing, one-third to walking and a third to replying to her voluminous mail.

"I answer letters," she said, "and I try to continue the correspondence until the person writing me has achieved the peace he or she seems to be searching for."

The proposed Eisenhower-Khrushchev exchange of visits is an important step toward peace among nations, says Peace Pilgrim.

More The Better

"The more exchanges of visits we have, the better," she said. The world could use many

more "friendly people-to-people and person-to-person contacts," she added.

Also on the subject of world peace, the Billings visitor outlined what she considers two important steps to be taken.

"Most people," she said, "who talk of peace speak of it as something in the distant future. I feel two things should be done immediately."

These, she said, would be the establishment of a "world language" to be taught as a second language in every nation.

Such a means of universal communication, she said, would do much to dispel misunderstanding.

The second would be establishing a "Department of Peace" within the U.S. cabinet which would do extensive research on peaceful means of solving nuclear age problems.

"I would like to see our country pioneer in this, she said.

'Likenesses Greater'

"You know," she said, "when we get to know each other someday we will discover our likenesses are greater than our differences, no matter how great those differences seem to be."

Peace Pilgrim, a woman who traded identity for a mission and home somewhere for a cause

that, to some practical people, seems lost from the beginning, will continue her walk next week.

She may go hungry and she may spend a night under the sky—but, to her, the important thing is that people will have seen her and spoken with her.

And will, perhaps, come to look upon peace as more than an abstract dream.

And some, surely, will recall the verse that begins, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the footsteps of the messengers of peace."

CHECKS MAIL — Peace Pilgrim, who arrived in Billings Wednesday to renew acquaintances made during a stop here four years ago, sifts through a backlog of mail which was sent to the Billings Post Office.

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turers, newspapers, radio stations, churches, private citizens and at least one embassy in Washington, D.C.

Most were forwarded here from Cologne, N.J., which is the closest you can get to a home ad-

dress for her.

And all, she said, are answered.

Her mission as she defines it is to help bring "peace within and peace without."

She is as avid a worker for restoring peace to a troubled mind as she is for achieving peace among nations.

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