

THE LIMA NEWS

FRIDAY, MAY 19, 1972

Pilgrim In 20th Year Walking For Cause Of Peace

By BEVERLY MASSIE
News Staff Writer

BLUFFTON — "Every ounce counts," is the slogan of the Peace Pilgrim, a middle-aged woman who has walked over 25,000 miles for peace and carries all her possessions in a pocketed tunic.

In her fifth pilgrimage route across the country, the Pilgrim is making a return visit to Bluffton after a short visit four years ago. She covers all 48 states in each pilgrimage and plans to complete this round in four years.

The Pilgrim speaks to church groups, college classes and professional organizations along her route which is planned by invitation. She reports she is "all booked up until 1977."

Her original theme was that he would walk 25,000 miles for peace. She has completed that goal, but continues her trek because her vow is: "I shall remain a wanderer until mankind has learned the way of peace, walking until I am given shelter and fasting until I am given food."

The Peace Pilgrim has been walking for 19 years. She chooses to remain anonymous. Her first trek began Jan. 1, 1953, beginning at Los Angeles and ending at New York City.

The first pilgrimage came after 15 years of inner preparation, the Pilgrim reported.

"Thirty-five years ago, my life was full of money and things," the Pilgrim says. "After years of unhappiness and bad health, I suddenly decided that my life needed a drastic change. I adopted the philosophy of giving what I could instead of getting what I could. Since then I have been in good health, not a cold or headache, and have been the happiest person alive.

"Even before this drastic turning point in my life, I was serious about a cause for world peace," the Pilgrim states. "But once I had found inner peace, I knew that my future goal would be to promote individual peace as well as world peace.

"My life awakening came when I was willing to abandon my self-centered nature, and adopt a God-centered nature," the Pilgrim says. "Most persons reach a level of physical, mental and emotional maturity, but never obtain that spiritual awakening."

In her talks to groups all over the country, the Peace Pilgrim discusses three ways to work for peace: (1) promoting world peace through world law; (2) providing a better example for little children, such as more

constructive literature and educational playthings (3) inspiring people to find inner peace from which world peace could result.

When the Peace Pilgrim began her trek almost 20 years ago, many persons thought she was crazy. "My hair had already turned silver-gray," she says, "and they thought it was just momentary insanity." But the Pilgrim has continued despite her detractors.

When asked her age, the Pilgrim responds that she is "ageless." "I live on spiritual energy which is endless," the Pilgrim says.

Since she has completed the original goal of 25,000 miles, and also since persons legally may not walk along freeways and superhighways, a lot of her cross-country traveling is completed with the help of passing motorists.

One interesting experience was her involvement in a snowstorm. The Pilgrim says she was nowhere near a city, town or even a lone house in the country when a sudden snowstorm caught her stranded without shelter. She decided to keep walking just to keep warm. She remembers plodding along with her ice-laden feet getting heavier all the time, and then finally having no feeling in her body at all from the cold.

The Pilgrim, a believer in communication with persons already in after-life said she saw several people in the distance. She believes this was not a "mirage" due to her desperate condition. One person of the group began walking toward her and at a closer distance proved to be a relative who had "crossed over," she says.

"I knew that at that moment I was crossing over also," the Peace Pilgrim says. "I remember running to my relative's side and embracing her, but she told me to go back. I stopped right there, the dream vanished and I had run into a fence."

The Pilgrim relates that near the fence, she found a bridge. She crawled under the structure, crawled into a large empty cardboard box filled with wrapping paper and spent the rest of the cold night there. She recalls waking up in the night in pain due to a "thawing out."

"The freezing experience was painful because you can't feel it, but thawing out is something else," the Pilgrim says. She survived without any ill-effects.

The Peace Pilgrim plans to leave Bluffton around 9:30 a.m. Saturday. She will head for Findlay where she has a speaking engagement in the Salem-Cass United Methodist Church Sunday morning.



PEACE PILGRIM
...Remains Wanderer