



(Photo by Jim Burton)

# Peace Pilgrim's Progress

## NUMBER TEN

Peace Pilgrim, Cologne, N. J.

## ARIZONA

I began by visiting the Grand Canyon. I saw it in various moods - in bright sunshine, in the fading light of sunset, under a full moon, at sunrise. I could give you its dimensions - an average of eight miles across and one mile deep - but that would not make you understand its grandeur. I could tell you about its colors - its blendings of yellows and reds and grays - I could speak of its unique rock formations - but that would not make you know its beauty. The Grand Canyon cannot be described or even pictured it must be experienced. I started my walk in the region of the Painted Desert - remembering the occasion when I saw its colors mingled with the colors of the sunset. I started my walk in the region of the Petrified Forest - noticing a large fence built of petrified wood, and finding pieces of petrified wood along the highway. I walked west to Flagstaff, which is nestled among pinon pines at the foot of Arizona's highest mountain. Then I turned south and walked down, down, down into beautiful Oak Creek Canyon, where the stream flowed swift and clear among the rocks, and the oaks and walnuts and wild grape vines were turning to gold, and the intricately carved canyon walls were colored with magnificent yellows and reds and dotted with evergreens. Then up, up, up I walked over Mingus Mountain and into scenic Prescott. Next came a good stay in Phoenix, Arizona's capital. Then I walked through Globe and Safford to Douglas - and then through Bisbee and Tombstone, where some interesting chapters of Arizona's history were written. When I came into Tucson a group joined me in a Peace Walk - a fine wind-up to my wonderful walk in Arizona.

## NEW MEXICO

New Mexico has a sunbaked bleached look. There is much color - yellows and even reds - but it is bleached color. The soil looks bleached, the dry grass looks bleached, the cottonwood trees look bleached. I noticed this as I walked up the Rio Grande from Las Cruces to Truth or Consequences. I noticed it a bit less as I walked from Clovis to Fort Sumner, for this formerly drought-stricken farming area had had some rainfall. I noticed it many times as I walked from Santa Fe to Albuquerque, and then on to Gallup through an interesting lava flow. Here was a bleached-looking dog and there was a bleached-looking horse to harmonize with the landscape, but yonder in vivid contrast was a bright bluebird. New Mexico has a high look. There are many massive towering mountains, and the unique capital, Santa Fe, is 7,000 feet high. New Mexico has a picturesque look. There are many artistic adobe buildings, and there is a great deal of Indian art. Santa Fe is an artists' colony. Albuquerque, the largest city, reflects this picturesqueness in spite of the fact that it is growing like a mushroom. Gallup is very Indian and very interesting. New Mexico has an old look. There is much old Spanish influence. Coronado was there in 1540 - and of course there were Indians living there long before that. Socorro's original mission is no longer standing, but it is said to have been built in 1585. Part of Santa Fe's mission built in 1610 is still there. Besides good visits with old friends in familiar towns like Santa Fe and Albuquerque and Gallup, I had good visits in college towns like Las Cruces and Portales and Socorro, and good first visits in towns like Carlsbad and Roswell and Farmington. When I reached Albuquerque spring flowers were blooming in the gardens, and I reached Farmington before the frost and saw the apple orchards in full blossom. In the field of peace among groups New Mexico sets a good example, for many groups live together there quite harmoniously and apparently all groups have equal opportunities.

## **SHADE**

When the temperature is high and the sun is hot there is nothing so welcome as shade. There is a special coolness about the shade of a tree, but unless it is a big tree some shifting is required to stay in the shade. Clouds provide shade as they drift across the sun. A rock provides what I call deep shade - so does a bank early in the morning or late in the afternoon. Sometimes even the shade of a bush is appreciated - or the shade of a haystack. Man-made things provide shade, too. Buildings, of course, and even signs which disfigure the landscape do provide shade. So do bridges provide shade - as well as shelter from the rain. Then you can wear a hat or carry an umbrella. I do neither, but I sometimes use a piece of cardboard for a sunshade. Water is also something you think of in hot weather, but I have discovered that if I eat nothing but fruit until my day's walk is over I do not get so thirsty. Our physical needs are so simple - warmth when it is cold, sometimes shelter from the elements, pure air to breathe, pure cool water to drink, the simplest food when you are hungry, sleep at the end of the day - and when the temperature is high and the sun is hot there is nothing so welcome as shade.

## **THE INDIANS**

I have always loved the Indians, and felt that living close to nature they lived close to God, but it has not been easy to get to know them. Between Globe and Safford I was happy to find myself walking through the land of the Apaches, who looked to me to be round-faced Indians. I saw the women wearing colorful "camp dresses" - full skirts with loose blouses over them - while the men wore bright shirts and levis. Some of the older folks lived in round "wickiups" covered with grass, with a mesquite-wood fire in the middle of the room and a smoke-vent at the top - which I was told are very practical habitations. The Apaches are governed by a Tribal Council which is seeking to preserve the best things in their culture and to adopt the best things in ours. I did not get to visit Hopi-land, but I did meet some Hopis. They are Pueblo Indians - in other words, they live in villages. I am particularly interested in them because they are called the Peaceful People and have never fought a war. In New Mexico I walked through the huge Navajo Reservation which contains 16,000,000 acres, and of course the Navajo Tribe is the largest in the United States. The Navajos look very colorful. The full skirts worn by the women and the belted blouses worn by both the men and the women are often made of bright colored velvet. They wear a lot of the silver and turquoise jewelry for which they are known, but the lovely hand-woven rugs for which they are known are becoming scarcer. The Navajo Tribe has its own government, police force and schools - even a college. Gallup, sometimes referred to as the Indian Capital, although it is outside the reservation, is always crowded with Navajos - and in August when the Inter-Tribal Ceremonies are held there it is crowded with other Indians also. The Indian Reservations, which sometimes cross our state lines, are really separate countries with different cultures within our country and our culture.

## **THE DESERT**

The desert is vast and wonderful. It is not monotonous, it is ever changing. There are desert mountains and desert valleys. Here at an altitude of 5,000 feet is a desert mesa - there below sea level is a desert basin. Very rarely there are spots where white or yellow sand drifts into dunes. Most of the desert is covered with hard and spiny vegetation and inhabited by a variety of creatures. The creatures are not very much in evidence, except the birds. Occasionally a long-eared jack rabbit dashes across the road, sometimes coyotes howl at night, the many gopher holes show that there must be many gophers. There are stories of rattlers, but they stay out of sight, and I have seen gila monsters only in zoos. There are colorful lizards and horned toads, and a few small squirrels and chipmunks, and in some places armadillos. To the north in the grasslands I saw deer and antelope and on one occasion small wild horses. When we think of the desert we think of cactus, and there is a great deal of it in some places. The prickly pear cactus is sometimes purplish in color, and its fruit is edible as is the fruit of most

cactus. We are told that the barrel cactus provided enough water to save the lives of thirsty pioneers, and now its pulp is used for cactus candy. Cholla is sometimes called jumping cactus, and its artistic skeleton is used to make art objects. The giant of them all is the saguaro cactus, which sometimes attains a height of 50 feet and whose stem is so thick that birds hollow it out and build nests in it. Cactus is not by any means the only desert vegetation. There are cottonwood trees in the arroyos, which pale trunks have a ghostly appearance, whose seeds cover the ground with a cotton-like blanket and whose leaves turn bright yellow in the autumn. There are tumbleweeds, which break loose from their moorings and go rolling with the desert winds to scatter their seeds. There are mesquite bushes, which bear edible beans. Creosote bush, commonly called greasewood, has tiny yellow star-like flowers and contains a resinous substance that makes it burn easily. Ocotillos have thorny stems covered with small round leaves and tipped with scarlet blossoms. Silvery sage has a lovely aromatic odor and is pleasant to walk through. Yuccas, commonly called Spanish bayonet or devil's needle and thread, have waxy blooms. A member of the Yucca family, the Joshua tree, sometimes attains a height of 35 feet. The century plant usually matures in 10 to 20 years, then it sends up a blossom on a stem about 20 feet high, after which it dies. I have only described the more common desert plants, and I would not attempt to describe the desert flowers which bloom in such great profusion after the rainy season. Sometimes when the sun rises or sets on the desert the entire landscape reflects its glory. The whole sky is alight, and the mountains all around are bathed in shades of rose and violet that defy description. And those who are sensitive to lovely things of another dimension will find them in the peace and harmony of the desert.