



# *Peace Pilgrim*

HER LIFE AND WORK  
IN HER OWN WORDS

*Compiled by some of her friends.*

A N   O C E A N   T R E E   B O O K

Santa Fe, New Mexico • 1983

*Also by Peace Pilgrim —*

Steps Toward Inner Peace:

Suggested Uses of Harmonious Principles for Human Living

*This little booklet is available free of charge, as it has been for many years, by writing Cologne, New Jersey, the forwarding address Peace used throughout her pilgrimage. A cassette tape made from some of her talks is also now available. Address inquiries to:*

Friends of Peace Pilgrim

Cologne, New Jersey 08213

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# *Peace Pilgrim*

*Lovingly dedicated to all seekers.*

This book was put together by 5 of Peace Pilgrim's friends. Our time has been given freely as she gave her time to us. The printing and mailing is being paid for by Peace Pilgrim's friends throughout the country who want her message of peace to continue reaching people.

It is free to any who want it. If anyone after reading this book feels inspired to pass the gift on by making a contribution, it will be used for reprinting. Please let us know if you want more books.

Friends of Peace Pilgrim,  
43480 Cedar Avenue, Hemet, CA 92343

## Introduction

PEACE PILGRIM had an impact on people as she walked joyfully across the country that will never be adequately expressed. She awakened and inspired many thousands during her twenty-eight year pilgrimage for peace. Those she touched in a personal way carry very special memories — talking, laughing, walking together; listening to pilgrimage stories over the dinner table or while driving her to a speaking engagement; waving goodbyes as she quickly departed for her next destination.

From 1953 until 1981 this silver-haired woman, with cheerful obedience to her calling, was a server in the world. As she approached each country hamlet or sprawling city she carried to all she met a message of peace expressed so simply: When enough of us find *inner peace*, our institutions will become more peaceful and there will be no more occasion for war.

Following her death in 1981, a number of her friends from throughout the country gathered in Santa Fe, New Mexico, to remember her and share our experiences of her. A small group stayed on to work on the book project, an idea which had been in our hearts individually for some time. We have attempted in this book to present Peace Pilgrim's extraordinary life and teachings in their purest form — her own words. They were assembled from her little booklet, *Steps Toward Inner Peace*, her nineteen *Peace Pilgrim's Progress* newsletters, private conversations, excerpts from her correspondence and talks taped by many individuals over the years. Other valuable resources were the thousands of newspaper articles and other printed material in the Peace Pilgrim Collection of the Swarthmore College Peace Library.

Although the words are her own, this book was not written by her as an autobiography. Some material was transcribed verbatim from tapes, which gives certain passages a spoken rather than a written quality. We wish she had written her own book. People often asked if she would write her own story, and more than once

she answered, "I have really written enough material for a book — it's just not in book form."

Putting it into book form has been our job.

Though her basic message never changed, variety of detail and experience color each of her communications. You may find several of her concise statements of principles or aphorisms repeated, but usually in a new context.



The simple yet profound message of Peace Pilgrim's life and words is urgently needed in humankind's search for peace. She has given us renewed hope in the future of this world — hope that enough might gain inner peace to make world peace possible. She has given us an example of a person who *lived* in inner peace and was filled with a boundless energy that grew rather than diminished with age.

Robert Steele wrote in the Indian journal *Gandhi Marg*: "Peace Pilgrim speaks with astonishing authority and confidence; she reminds one of the spokesmen of God of biblical times. However, her utterances do not sound like a fanatic or dogmatist. Instead, they sound like a deeply sincere and devoted human being who has been linked to a wise and ineffable vision..."

Known from coast to coast simply as Peace Pilgrim, it was her wish to stress "the message and not the messenger." She never told details of her life that she considered unimportant, such as her original name, age, and birthplace. Since this book is about her pilgrimage in her own words, we have decided not to include these specifics, which can be found elsewhere.

"I never want people to remember me except in connection with peace," she said. To those of us who knew her well and saw her over a number of years she will always remain the serene, warm-hearted Peace Pilgrim — full of humor, vitality and the joy of living.

Born on a small farm in the East in the early part of this century, she grew from modest roots and, like many people, gradually acquired money and things. When she realized this self-centered life had become meaningless, and worldly goods burdens to her rather than blessings, she walked all one night through the

woods until she felt "a complete willingness, without any reservations, to give my life to God and to service."

She gradually and methodically adopted a life of voluntary simplicity. She began what was to be a fifteen-year period of preparation, not knowing just what it was she was preparing for. She did volunteer work for peace groups and also worked with people who had physical, emotional and mental problems.

During this 'preparation period' and in the midst of many spiritual hills and valleys, she found inner peace — and her calling.

Her pilgrimage for peace began on the morning of January 1, 1953. She vowed "to remain a wanderer until mankind has learned the way of peace." Peace Pilgrim walked alone and penniless and with no organizational backing. She walked "as a prayer" and as a chance to inspire others to pray and work for peace. She wore navy blue shirt and slacks, and a short tunic with pockets all around the bottom in which she carried her only worldly possessions: a comb, a folding toothbrush, a ballpoint pen, copies of her message and her current correspondence.

After walking 25,000 miles, which took until 1964, she stopped counting miles and speaking became her first priority, although she continued to walk daily. Her increasing speaking schedule made it necessary for her to begin to accept rides often.

Peace Pilgrim talked with thousands of people throughout the McCarthy era, the Korean war, the Vietnam war and since. She met with people on city streets and dusty roads, in ghettos, suburbs, deserts and truckstops. She was interviewed by all national radio and TV networks, as well as on hundreds of local stations across the country. Newspaper reporters in countless towns and cities large and small wrote about her. She would seek them out, if they didn't find her first, to let people hear about her message. She talked to university classes in psychology, political science, philosophy and sociology, to high school assemblies, civic clubs, and spoke from the pulpits of a variety of churches.

As the years went by, her contagious zest, ready wit and simple wisdom widened her appeal, and audiences responded more and more frequently with warm and spontaneous laughter and thoughtful questions.

And all of these years when many of us were increasingly afraid



to go out on our streets, she walked through 'dangerous' parts of cities and slept beside the road, on beaches and in bus stations, when no bed was offered. Through the years strangers became friends, inviting her into their homes and arranging speaking engagements, often a year or more in advance.

Peace Pilgrim believed we had entered a crisis period in human history, "walking the brink between a nuclear war of annihilation and a golden age of peace." She felt it was her calling to arouse people from apathy and get them thinking and actively working for peace. And always she encouraged people to seek the real source of peace within, and to use the ways of peace in their relations with others.



At the time of her death Peace Pilgrim was crossing the country for the seventh time. She had walked through all fifty states, and had also visited the ten provinces in Canada and parts of Mexico. In 1976 a man flew her to Alaska and Hawaii to meet his children, walk, speak in churches, and talk with the media. In 1979 and 1980 she returned to those states, taking with her small groups of people who wished to learn more about her lifestyle. She had plans for return trips to Alaska and Hawaii in 1984 and was giving thought to inviting others to join her on 'inspirational tours' through several states in the years that were to come.

She made what she liked to call "the glorious transition to a freer life" on July 7, 1981 near Knox, Indiana. She died instantly in a head-on collision as she was being driven to a speaking engagement. Her many friends throughout the country were stunned. Somehow, we never imagined Peace would be called to leave this earth life so soon. Yet, one friend wrote, "I feel sure the immediacy of the transition, with no cessation of her activity until it occurred, was as she would have wished it."

In her last newspaper interview she spoke of being in radiant health. She was planning her itinerary beyond the current pilgrimage route and had speaking engagements through 1984. Ted Hayes of WKVI radio in Knox in an interview with her taped on July 6 remarked, "You seem to be a most happy woman." She replied, "I certainly *am* a happy person. How could one know God and not be joyous?"

Messages from friends who hear of her passing continue to be received at the little Cologne, New Jersey post office from which her mail was always forwarded. The letters are touching: "My Dear Peace, I have just now heard of your death from this earthly body . . . If this is not so, please write back." Another wrote, "I know you are one with God . . . I see you in the Universe . . ."

An editor who had interviewed her in the 1960s and became a good friend wrote, "...cycles of prayer go on in my heart, telling her of my appreciation for her teaching and impact and influence on my life, wishing her well on her journey . . ."

A friend in Massachusetts wrote, "It was a great shock, to say the least, as well as a great loss for our little planet! My heart is full at this time for I, like thousands of other people, loved Peace so much! But at the same time I feel her presence will always be among us through her beautiful teachings and the life she exemplified . . ."

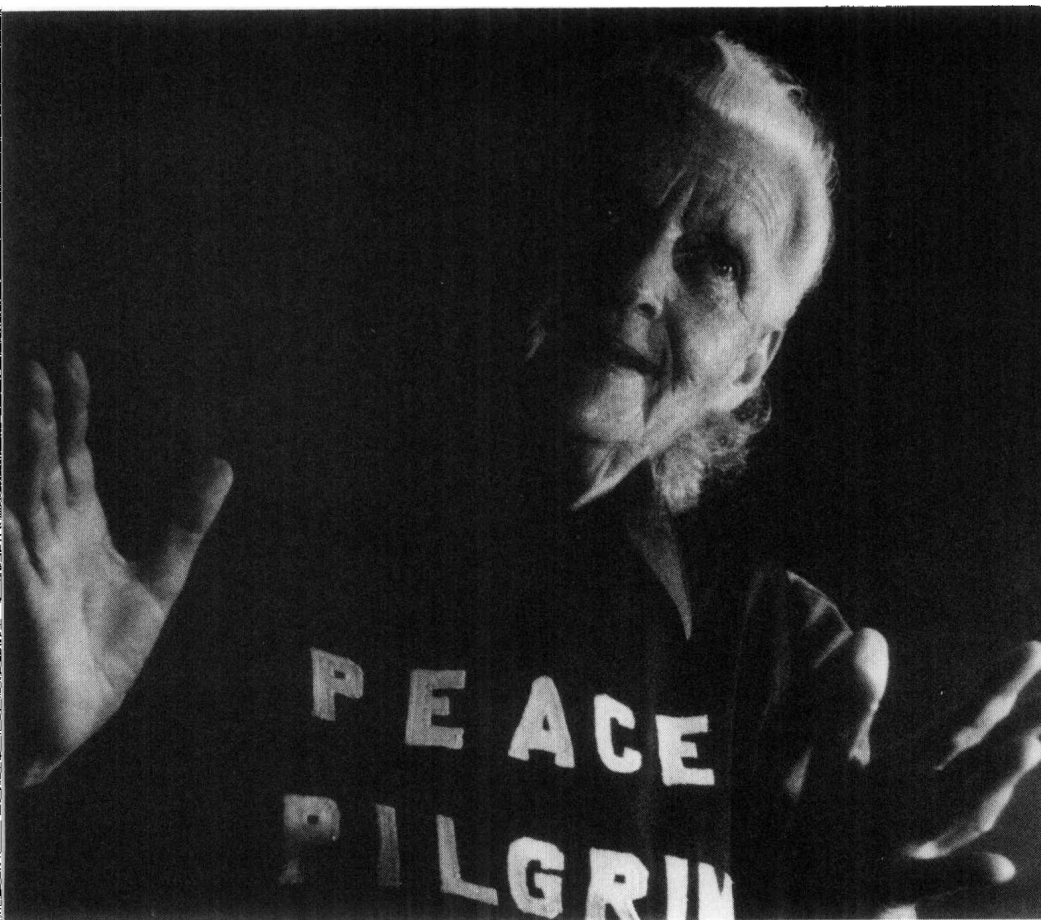
Many have written hoping that a book would be put together to help spread her special message of peace and love. A few others have said that they are thinking of writing articles or longer works about her. We hope this book will be a valuable resource for these and future writers, as well as an inspiration and encouragement to those who never had the good fortune to meet her.

One who captured her spirit wrote, "The seeds of peace have been scattered well. It is the duty of all who were touched by her to begin the harvest."

It is our hope that her words and spirit will continue to inspire. And we join with you in a circle of love, with all others who knew her and were touched by her . . .

*Free of earth, as free as air,  
Now you travel everywhere.*

—Five of Peace's many friends  
Santa Fe, New Mexico  
March 31, 1982



*photograph by Carla Anette*

*I am a pilgrim, a wanderer. 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.*

—Peace Pilgrim

## Introducing Peace Pilgrim

*YOU MAY SEE HER walking through your town or along the highway — a silver-haired woman dressed in navy blue slacks and shirt, and a short tunic with pockets all around the bottom in which she carries her only worldly possessions. It says "PEACE PILGRIM" in white letters on the front of the tunic and "25,000 Miles On Foot for Peace" on the back. She has walked the 25,000 miles. However, she continues to walk, for 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." She walks without a penny in her pockets and she is not affiliated with any organization. She walks as a prayer and as a chance to inspire others to pray and work with her for peace. She speaks to individuals along the way, to gatherings such as church groups or college groups, through newspapers, magazines, radio, television — relating interesting and meaningful experiences, discussing peace within and without. She feels we have learned that war is not the way to peace — that security does not lie in stockpiles of bombs. She points out that this is a crisis period in human history, and that we who live in the world today must choose between a nuclear war of annihilation and a golden age of peace. Although she does not ask to see results, thousands of letters testify that her journey has not been in vain — saying, in effect, "Since talking with you I've decided that I should be doing something for peace also."*

(This message was printed on a brief leaflet, a few copies of which Peace Pilgrim carried in her tunic in order to introduce herself.)

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*Peace Pilgrim*





## CHAPTER 1:

# Growing Up

I HAD A VERY FAVORABLE BEGINNING, although many of you might not think so. I was born poor on a small farm on the outskirts of a small town, and I'm thankful for that. I was happy in my childhood. I had a woods to play in and a creek to swim in and room to grow. I wish that every child could have growing space because I think children are a little like plants. If they grow too close together they become thin and sickly and never obtain maximum growth. We need room to grow.

We begin to prepare for the work that we have to do and customarily we have no idea what we are preparing for. So as a child I had no idea what I was preparing for. And yet, of course, I was in many respects preparing. I was preparing for the pilgrimage when I chose my rule of 'first things first' and began to set priorities in my life. It led to a very orderly life and it taught me self discipline — a very valuable lesson, without which I could never have walked a pilgrimage. I carried it right into my adult life.

I received no formal religious training as a child. (It would be less that I would have to undo from my mind later on!) My first view inside a church was when I was twelve years old and I looked through the doorway of a Catholic church to watch janitors clean the cathedral. When I was sixteen I entered a church for the first time to attend a wedding.

When I was a senior in high school I began to make my search