

WALKED 17,900 MILES

Peace Pilgrim Tries To Destroy Hatred

BY VERNON FEWELL

Chronicle Staff

If you bump into a curious little old lady in blue slacks and jacket this week chatting with a rapt queue of bystanders on a downtown corner, don't stop to laugh.

You may stay to listen.

It all sounds mysterious. But that's the way with "Peace Pilgrim" and her simple crusade for world peace.

Hard to Describe

There's little you could say to describe her—about 5'5" tall and 120 pounds, age anywhere from 40 to 70.

Sharp, deep-set grey eyes dart from aquiline features, bronzed from long exposure to sun and wind—but oddly smooth and unwrinkled.

She admits to no given

name, no permanent address, no family ties, no organizational connections.

She calls the facts of her life "unimportant biographical data—only a distraction from the message I carry."

"Twenty-three years ago," she explained, "I first realized an inner peace with myself.

"I discovered what I really wanted, and a boundless energy came over me.

"Since then I've dedicated myself to helping others achieve that peace and ultimately to destroy fear and hatred, the manifestation of inner turmoil—in men and in nations."

Walked 17,900 Miles

She says she's walked 17,900 miles in eight years.

So deceptively simple is her credo, you keep waiting for the catch. It doesn't come.

"People think it's strange I've vowed to walk 25,000 miles to advance such a nebulous idea," she smiles.

"To me it's a pilgrimage—the traditional journey on foot and on faith.

Wants Supplied

"I never ask anything of anyone. Whatever is needful is given. Perhaps not three meals a day and a fine bed, but I have no need for them. My simple wants have been supplied," she said.

A vegetarian, she claims she's eaten "not fish nor fowl for 18 years."

"My diet isn't important. I'm at peace with myself and it's given me wonderful health for 23 years.

Plumping for her goal has carried her into the "48 states," Mexico and Canada since she set out from Los Angeles in 1953.

Heading West

She strolled into Houston from Baytown Tuesday and was given overnight shelter by Mr. and Mrs. Walter Whitson, 2336 N. Boulevard.

"I'll be here a week," she



Chronicle Photo

A NAMELESS WOMAN WITH A MISSION "Peace Pilgrim" Brings Crusade to Houston

said Thursday, "then I'm off to the West.

"I'm walking 1000 miles in Texas this winter and I've been from Ft. Worth to Dallas, San Antonio, Brownsville, Corpus Christi, Beaumont and back to Houston," she said without a trace of exhaustion.

During the next week she'll talk at the Wheeler St. Y.M.C.A. to several church groups.

Her story's so improbable you wonder if she's real. Even so, in a wistful way, you hope she makes it.