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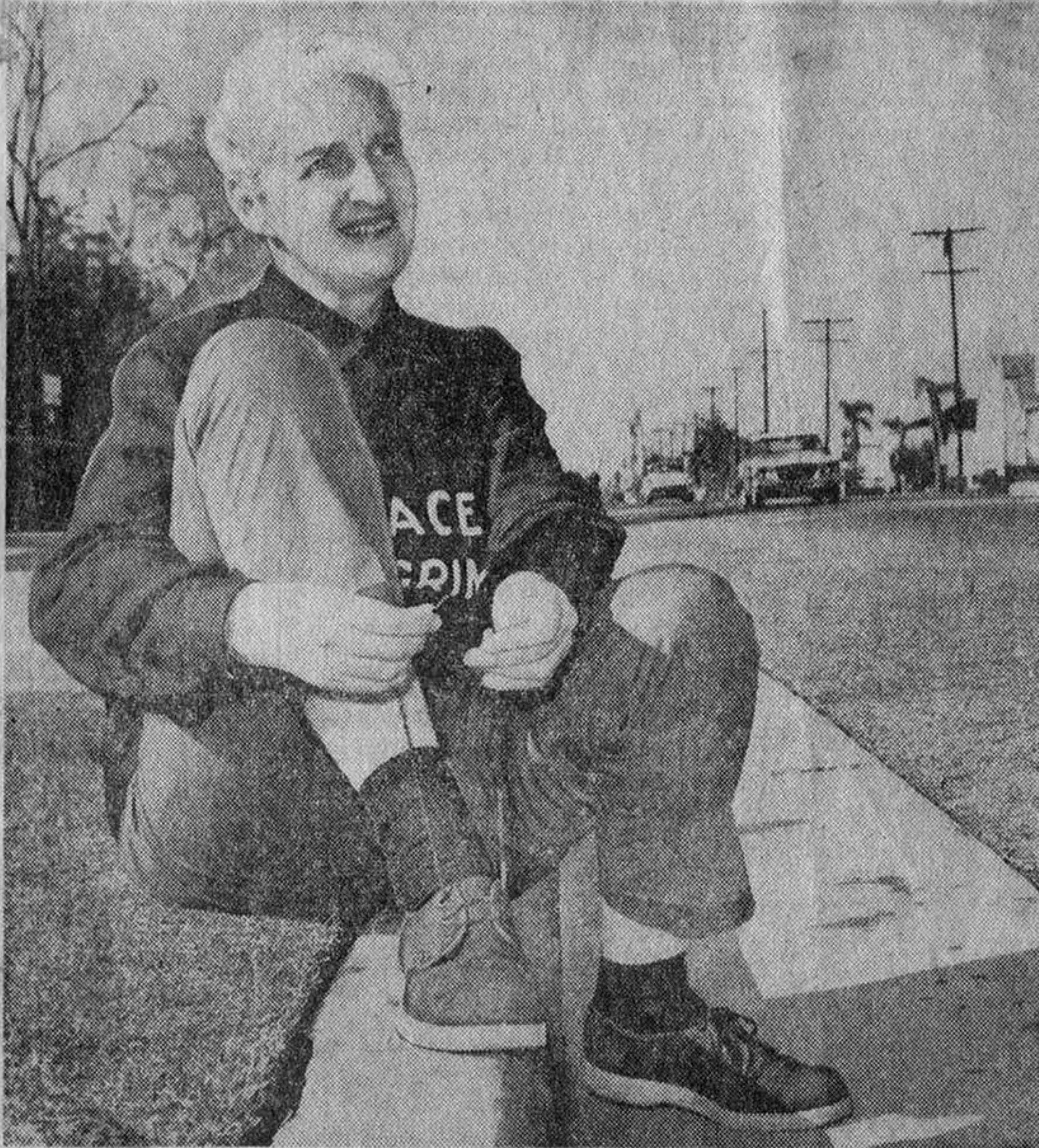
Los Angeles
Times

EDITORIALS
METROPOLITAN

Times Mirror Square, Los Angeles, Calif. 90053 625-2345

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FRIDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 31, 1965 • 2†



Woman Walks 25,000 Miles in 13 Years to Urge Peace

BY DOROTHY TOWNSEND

Times Staff Writer

The gray-haired woman who calls herself Peace Pilgrim said she has walked more than 25,000 miles without ever buying a corn plaster.

She gets 1,500 miles to the pair of shoes but only because they are children's shoes and "they wear longer."

She has slept under bridges in snowstorms, in bus stations and by the side of the road on her "pilgrimages."

She has been picked up for vagrancy a number of times but this doesn't daunt her because she walks, she explained Thursday, for peace.

It is a very elusive target, she admitted, and may keep her walking the rest of her life.

Back in Los Angeles, where she started in 1953, Peace Pilgrim ("I feel that is really my name now") spoke optimistically of her self-imposed mission.

"In three pilgrimages I have talked to many, many people," she said.

One she talked to in Washington, D.C., turned out to be a Presidential aide.

She walks until she is given shelter and fasts until she is given food.

The first of her three pilgrimages was launched 13 years ago at a New Year's Tournament of Roses parade. Peace Pilgrim stepped in front of the marchers and walked ahead of the parade its entire route. When the parade was over she kept on walking.

With all her worldly possessions on her—"a comb, a folding toothbrush and a ballpoint pen"—she zigzagged across the country with her message of peace printed on the navy blue jersey she wears.

Since then she has visited the capitals of 48 states, plus those of Mexico and Canada. On her third pilgrimage she walked into and out of every U.S. city of more than 25,000 population, she said.

Now her reputation precedes her and she has speaking engagements lined up. The first locally is Sunday at 2:30 p.m. in the Pasadena Science of Mind Church.

She walked into Los Angeles but while here she will go from one speaking engagement to the next by car.

"It's got to the point where you can hardly walk on freeways anymore," she said.

Peace Pilgrim prefers children's shoes because they last longer.

Times photo