Pilgrim for Peace
Now Finds Herself
On 'Popular Side'

By SUSAN SCHWARTZ

Peace Pilgrim is back — more optimistic than on her
last cross-America hike to
Seattle three years ago.

"I used to feel like a voice
in the wilderness, now I'm
on the popular side," she
told a circle of silver-haired
women at the Des Moines
United Methodist Church.

"CONGRESSMEN are
changing to peace positions.
There's a spiritual awaken-
ing. There's a young people's
rebellion — violence is just
an infinitesimal part of it.
It's a rebellion against war,
against prejudice, against
hypocrisy, against material-
ism.

"Let me tell you, I have
trouble staying a penniless
pilgrim." The solidly built,
silver-haired woman has
"25,000 Miles on Foot for
World Peace" lettered on
the back of her blue tunic.
Her voice is rich and strong; she
cups, steeps and points her
hands as she talks.

"Once you try to get rid of
material stuff, they pour it
on you."

Peace politely refused to
give her real name, age or
much of her background.
She said she is from a small
town and has no near rela-
tives.

SHE BEGAN living a sim-
ple life with few possessions
31 years ago and "I haven't
had a cold or headache
since," she said. "I'm the
most secure person I know
and I feel very rich."

She began her walks for
peace 15 years ago, she said,
after she suddenly had a
mental picture of her blue-
slacks, blue-tunic costume
and the Los Angeles-New
York route she should fol-
low.

"Religious people would
say it was a calling from
God," she said. "Non-relig-
ious people would say it was
my subconscious. A thing like
that you interpret."

The first pilgrimage was
hardest, she said.

"I faced death in a snow-
storm, I was attacked by a
maniacle teen-age boy, I saw
the inside of a prison when
they questioned me to find
out if I was a vagrant.

"I'm very well taken care
of now. About three quarters
of the time I sleep in a bed. I
seldom skip more than three
or four meals."

NOW AND THEN she still
sleeps with leaves or news-
papers for cover or washes
her only set of clothes in a
stream, she said. Her only
possessions are a comb, pen
and folding toothbrush, she
said.

This is her fifth walk
around the United States,
she said. Between the first
three, she took a year off for
speaking dates.

"But with this terrible war
in Vietnam I didn't stop at
all between the fourth and
fifth pilgrimages," she said.

She calls for more arms-
reduction pacts, a world lan-
guage, more efforts like the
Peace Corps and "realistic
research" for peace.

SHE ALSO calls for peace-
ful, creative toys for chil-
dren and for housewives to
"take it out on the vacuum
cleaner or bake a batch of
cookies" when they want to
gossip or say something
mean.

She plans to walk into
Seattle tomorrow. She will
speak at Fellowship Hall of
the University Congrega-
tional Church at 10 a. m. Sun-
day, she said.