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Lecturer Has Magic Carpet

College Women "Take"

A Colorful Journey

CPYRGHT

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In the first place, it's a neat trick if you can pack some 200 women on a magic carpet and still find a seat for yourself!

Not only did H. William DeLong do just that, he took members of the College Women's club and their guests along the spice trails of the Near East—the old trails used by camel caravans as far back as 2,000 years before the birth of Christ.

He took the women on a strange and colorful journey to all the old cities . . . back in time.

It was a dramatic tour, filled with DeLong's people and what they wore — and what they still wear. He talked, the scene came alive as he modeled and then displayed dozens of costumes on screens — rich silks, heavily embroidered and women hangings, costumes of camel drivers, sheiks, kings.

By the end of his talk the entire stage was filled with Far East fabrics and fashions, all accounted for, all with a fascinating story.

What the women didn't know is that DeLong arrived from New York by bus. Carrying two average-size suitcases. No truck, no van. He and his one-man show are one. The man and the suitcases!

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BUT THERE ARE many things he doesn't tell, except at luncheon. And since he is becoming known as "the sweetheart of clubwomen" on this, his third tour around the country, he can be coaxed to tell many secrets.

Such as how does he know so much? How did a man who has served as military attache, been a diplomat, a member of CIA, CID, CIC and other intelligence agencies, end, up talking about fashions?

It's a long story and an interesting one.

DeLong's last diplomatic post was in Russia. In Warsaw, Poland, under Stalin's rule, he took ill with hepatitis. For six months he was hospitalized as "the property" of a Communist hospital. All he can say is that when he finally was recovered from the Russians and sent to Walter Reed hospital he weighed 63 pounds!

"That was in 1955," he says. "I had been in the diplomatic service for 15 years. My work had been of a secret nature. I had been in 62 countries. But it was of no value to a man coming back to the States. It was of no value to big business!"

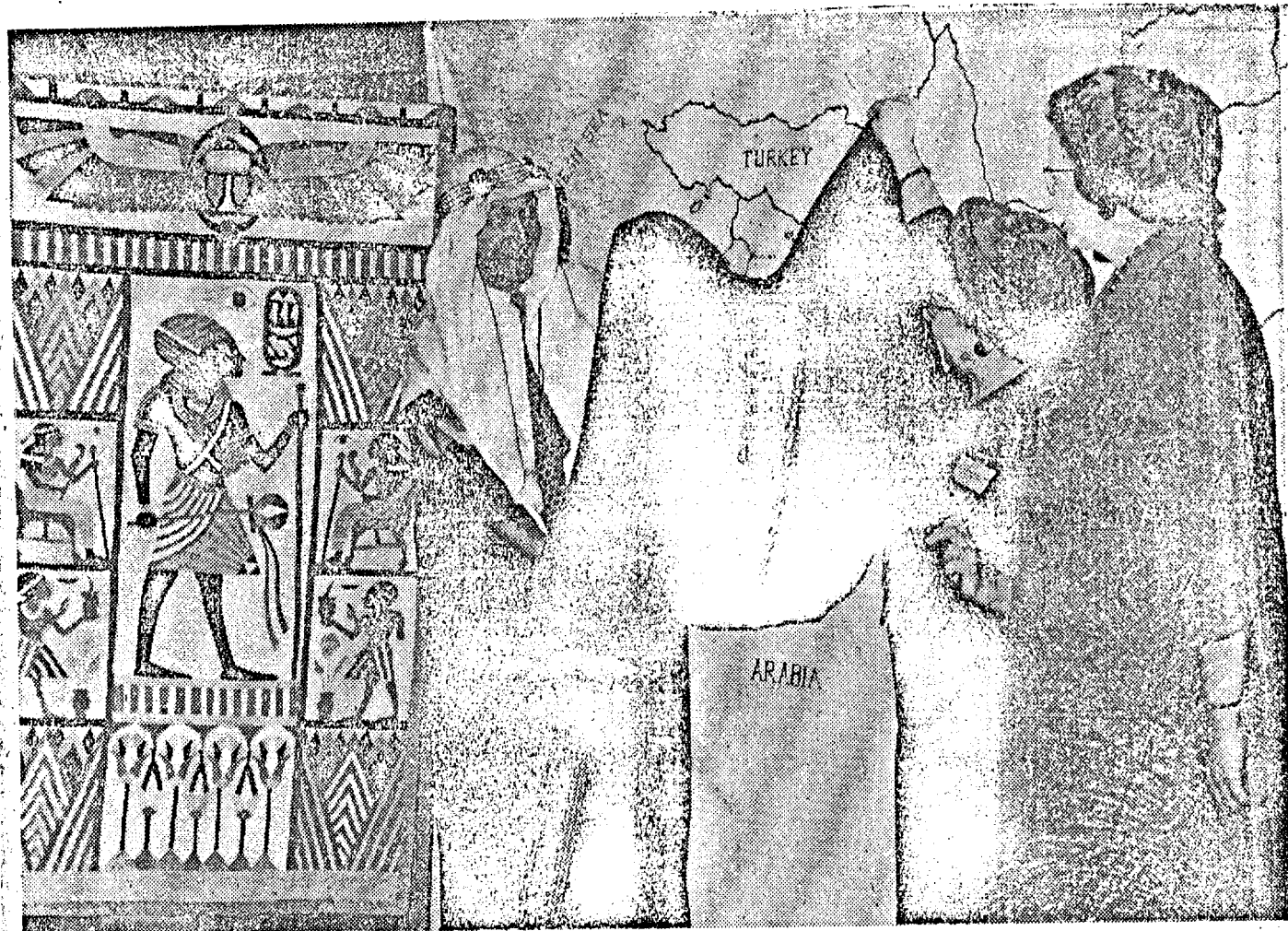
He went back to his hometown, Reading, Pa. (He still has a home there, although he lives in Jamaica Estates, Long Island, N.Y.) He saw an ad in the paper for a linguist to learn the funeral business!

"So I went to Northwestern university to learn it," he recalls. "Then worked for 18 months. It was painfully dull, with very little need for foreign languages! So I hooked up with a casket firm.

"I made deals with funeral directors. If they'd buy a casket, I'd speak to their club—Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis . . . I sold many, many caskets.

"Then I set up my own casket firm and have it to this day. But my avocation has turned into my vocation because finally the wives began to want me for their clubs. One thing led to another. Now I have five talks, including one on the Pennsylvania Dutch (which I am), one on men's hats, and just recently I pre-

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PRIOR TO lecture to College Women's club yesterday in Rike's Empire room, Bill DeLong shows "uninhabited" pantaloons from Jordan to Mrs. W. Fay Aller

and Mrs. Paul Dittrick (right). He's wearing Bedouin robe and headdress. Wall hanging at left is from King Tut's tomb. (Staff Photo by Al Wilson)

miered at Town hall in New York with a new talk about fabrics and fashions.

"In it I use 300 yards of

fabrics. I'm going to do for the clubwomen what Ziegfeld did for showgirls!

"But I do try to present

something new. I try to give color, culture and entertainment."

Another thing he does — he

proves that life can be fun, for no reason at all.

As the Pennsylvania Dutch say, "Just for so!"