

Slain Vet's Wife Rebuffed

Illegal Marriage Costs Loss of Claim to Estate

PHILADELPHIA

Accused of committing a fraud upon the Register of Wills, Mrs. Lucille K. Serrell of 3825 N. 18th St. was flatly denied a claim in her husband's estate last week.

An appeal for her claim was refused on the grounds that her marriage to George K. Serrell, a veteran, was illegal, since she was not totally divorced from her first husband.

Serrell was killed on Feb. 14, 1948, by a Norfolk and Western Railway Company deputy at Charles Town, W. Va., in an argument over the payment of fare.

Background Investigated

The victim and his wife were en route to Pearisburg, Va., but were taken off the train at Shenandoah Junction when they refused to pay some additional fare.

Mrs. Serrell's subsequent suit against the railroad led to its investigation and discovery that she had not received an absolute divorce from Sterling R. Stewart when she married Serrell in November, 1943.

Records were produced showing that she married Stewart in July, 1937, but that the divorce she received in February, 1942, did not give her the right to remarry.

Court Letters Revoked

Later records showed that she had used her maiden name, Lucille Palmer, and said that she had never been married when she and Serrell applied for a license.

Letters of administration for his estate were granted to Mrs. Serrell in March, 1948, but were revoked in February, 1949.

The final opinion upholding the revocation was handed down by Orphans' Court Judges Charles Sinkler, Robert V. Bolger, Grover C. Ladner and David G. Hunter.

Parents Join Railroad

Serrell's parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Serrell Sr. of Pearisburg, joined with the railroad in its petition to have the letters revoked.

The deputy who killed Serrell was later tried and acquitted. It was not indicated what, if any, settlement would be reached between the railroad and Serrell's parents.