

## Mary Ann Spencer

( - 8 Jun 1919)

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*The Washington Post, May 16, 1924, p. 8*

### **\$91,563 Estate Held Without Claimants**

The District of Columbia Supreme court was asked yesterday by the American Security and Trust Company to decide what is to be done with the residue of an estate, amounting to \$91,563, which was intended to be spent on a vault and monument in Arlington National cemetery but cannot be spent for that purpose.

The estate is that of the late Miss Mary Ann Spencer, who died June 8, 1919. The trust company, which was named executor in Miss Spencer's will, has paid the debts and also the legacies amounting to \$4,000 and, according to the terms of the will, is directed to spend the residue on the vault and monument. It was Miss Spencer's request that the bodies of her parents, John and Catherine Spencer, which now rest in the Congressional cemetery, be removed to Arlington and buried with her body as soon as the national cemetery was opened for burial purposes to the general public. Neither Miss Spencer nor her parents was eligible for such a burial as she ordered in her will.

The trust company, which states that it has been unable to find any heirs at law or next of kin of Miss Spencer, suggests to the court that the District of Columbia government is the next lawful claimant of the residue of the estate.

*The Washington Post, June 3, 1928, p. SM2*

### **Study of Freak Wills His Hobby**

**Alvin M. West Collecting Library of Benefactions to Which Wealthy Persons, Charitably Inclined, May Leave Money – Local Woman's Will Provides Over \$100,000 for Tombstone – No Sailors to Occupy "Sailor's Snug Harbor" Which Has Plenty of Money That Can Not Be Diverted To Other Uses**

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One of these odd wills now repose in the archives of the District Probate Court, which has been tied up in litigation for nine years.

It is the will of Mary Ann Spencer, spinster, who died on June 19, 1919, and provided in her will that whatever estate she had left after the payment of her funeral expenses and debts should be used in the building of a tombstone over her grave in the Congressional Cemetery. Miss Spencer for 50 years was an employe in the Treasury Department, and for many decades was a familiar sight on the streets of Washington as she pedaled about on her bicycle, which she used daily until the day of her death.

As an employe of the Government, her highest salary was \$1,400 a year, but by frugal living and economies, she accumulated the tidy fortune of \$140,000. In the later years of her life, her business affairs were looked after by a local trust company, and at the time of her death it is presumed that she had little, if any, idea of the amount of money that would be left by the will, which under the terms stipulated that whatever was left should go into a tombstone for her.

She left over 400 heirs in England and Ireland, which if she had died intestate, would have inherited her fortune. These heirs have for the past nine years sought to break the will, contending that it was not the intent of Miss Spencer to expend any such sum in the erection of a tombstone over her grave.