

**Letter written in 1879**  
**from Priscilla Clark, Leaksville, N.C. to**  
**Mr. W. B. Sims, Clover Depot, Halifax County, Virginia**

Oak Grove  
May 13th 1879

Dear William,

Your letter to Travis came last Friday, and as he is not at home I will just forward your letter to him.

He is out on the survey of the Dan. Capt Evans who is the head man of the party came by here on the 4th and as he needed another man he offered the place to Travis, and he took it.

He left the plantation in charge of Father when he is here, and when Father is away I have to boss things.

Just imagine me "running" a plantation.

Liley returned about two weeks ago, she seems to have enjoyed her trip so much. I think she is so pleasant and charming.

Charlie is twelve years old today. The Clark family are progressing in age certainly. We were so sorry that you did not come by on your way home. Nannie regretted very much not seeing you, she wanted to know why you did not stop to see her on your way up here.

She came up last week while Father was gone and spent a day and a night with me. I enjoyed her visit very much indeed.

I think that Nannie Nax is just lovely.

I see right much of her. I know that you will agree with what whatever nice I can say about her.

She and Travis are quite devoted to each other.

Out young neighbor Sharp, who we all thought was so quiet has come out wonderfully. He has proved to be quite a ladies man. His uncle has given him a lovely top buggy and pair of pleasure horses, of course that buggy takes the eyes of all of the girls. We have not heard or seen anything of the saura town people for two weeks.

Cousin Jim was right much complaining when I last heard anything from over there, but I suppose he has gotten well as I would have heard if he was still sick.

Please excuse the way in which this letter is written, but I am so tired that I do not know what to do.

I have not retired any night for the last week until twelve and I have to get up every morning at four. One night I was up until two and I have ridden horse back every day since Travis has been gone, so you may well imagine how I feel.

Father is busy trying to set out his sweet potatoes. We had a delightful rain last night. I expect that you are ahead of Travis in farming.

Give my best love to Uncle William, Aunt Sallie, cousin Eliza, John & Birdie, also to all inquiring friends.

Hoping that you will excuse this miserable letter.

I am your affectionate cousin Priscilla.

I expect that you  
are ahead of Travis  
in farming.  
Give my best love  
to Uncle William,  
Aunt Sally, cousins  
Eliza, John, & Bridget,  
also to all inquiring  
friends.  
I hope that you  
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The 1/18/79.  
John Priscilla.

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Continued at the top/side of page 1:

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1879

5-16-4

Leased  
May 15



Mr. W. B. Sims.  
Clover Depot.  
Halifax County.  
Virginia.

***I have not done extensive research on these families, but here are a few genealogical notes:***

The recipient of the letter, **Mr. W. B. Sims**, was **William Bailey Sims, Sr.** (1856-1927), son of **William Howson Sims** and **Sallie Jones Wilson Sims**, of Clover, Halifax County, Virginia.

The author of the letter was his cousin, **Priscilla Sims Clark** (1860-1949) who later married **George Edward Lemmon**. Priscilla was the daughter of **Rev. John Thomas Clark** (1809-1886) and 2nd wife **Mary Anne Wilson**. The **Rev. Clark** was the son of **John Clark** and **Priscilla Sims** (hence the Sims relationship although I am not certain how they are related).

**Rev. John T. Clark** moved with his family about 1877 to Rockingham County, North Carolina, when he took charge of the Episcopal church in Leaksville (Church of the Epiphany). His plantation was about a half mile from the Dan River near Leaksville (present-day Eden). He later took charge of the Reidsville church as well. He resigned from both churches in 1886 when his health declined and moved to Salisbury, NC to live with his son. He died in Salisbury later that year. It is said that he is buried at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Clover, Virginia.

William H. Sims	40	M	Planter	\$7,000	128,270
Sallie J. Sims	37	F	Housekeeper		
Elizabeth B. Sims	14	F			
Maria C. Sims	11	F			
John Sims	9	M			
William B. Sims	4	M			
Aimee H. Power	23	F	Teacher		

Some children of William H. Sims:

Elizabeth B. Sims (b.c.1846)  
 Maria C. Sims (b.c.1849)  
 John Sims (b.c.1851)  
 William B. Sims (1856-1927)

I found it interesting that on the 1860 Census in Halifax County, Virginia, William H. Sims was listed as a Planter with real estate valued at \$57,000 and personal property valued at \$128,270, which was a considerable fortune at the time! But by the 1870 Census (after the Civil War) his wealth had been reduced to \$50,000/\$5000, which was still very impressive.

John T. Clark	50	M	Episcopal Minister	\$75,000	133,300
Mary A. Clark	35	F	Housekeeper		
George W. Clark	8	M			
William W. Clark	5	M			
Edward T. Clark	3	M			
Priscilla S. Clark	1/2	F			

Some children of Rev. John T. Clark:

John H. Clark (b.c.1836)  
 Elizabeth A. Clark (b.c.1838)  
 Henry E. Clark (b.c.1839)  
 George W. Clark (b.c.1852)  
 Rev. William Meade Clark (b.1855)  
 Edward Travis Clark (1857-1898)  
 Priscilla Sims Clark (1860-1949)  
 Charles Clark (b. May 13, 1867)

Also on the 1860 Census in Halifax County, Virginia, Rev. John T. Clark was listed with real estate valued at \$75,000 and personal property valued at \$133,300. Not bad for a minister! One source stated that for many years he was the only P. E. Clergyman (without any pay) in Halifax, Charlotte, Mecklenburg and Campbell Counties, Virginia.

Some of the other people mentioned in the letter: Capt. Evans, Liley, Charlie (Charles Clark born 1867), Nannie Nax (possibly Nannie Brodnax), neighbor Sharp and his uncle (believed to be Clements "Clem" Clarke Sharp (1856-1928 and his uncle Col. Thomas Robinson Sharp), Cousin Jim, Uncle William, Aunt Sallie, Cousins Eliza, John and Birdie.

## Some clippings about Rev. John T. Clark

A MINE OF WEALTH DISCOVERED ON DAN RIVER.—We have on our table some specimens of coal which were handed us by the Rev. John T. Clark, of Mt. Laurel, Halifax county, in this State. These specimens were taken from a solid vein of the ore about three feet thick, at the depth of three or four feet below the earth's surface, on a farm belonging to Mr. Clark, in Rockingham county, N. C., a short distance from Leaksville, and within one-half mile of Dan River. In opening this vein Mr. Clark was assisted by Dr. J. G. Brodnax, a gentleman well known in this border country. A test was made in burning some of the coal at the factory of J. Turner Morehead, Leaksville, and with the most satisfactory results.—*Danville Border Express.*

*The People's Press,*  
Winston-Salem, NC  
16 Nov 1876

A party of capitalists have combined to make a preliminary investigation to satisfy themselves as to the true extent and value of the coal beds recently discovered on the lands of Rev John T Clark, in Rockingham county, N C, and will commence operations as soon as the state of the weather will permit.

*Daily Charlotte Observer*  
Charlotte, NC  
17 Jan 1877

Rev. John T. Clark, rector of the Episcopal church, has resigned his charge at Reidsville.

*The Western Sentinel*  
Winston-Salem, NC  
1 Apr 1886

### **A Remarkable Man.**

In speaking of the death of Rev. John T. Clark, the Episcopal minister who died very suddenly in Salisbury Monday, the *Danville Register* says: "He entered the ministry early in life and devoted his time and talent to the church in Halifax county until the close of the war, when he was called to Leaksville, N. C., and thence to Martinsville, Va. Not long ago he went to Salisbury and remained there till his death. Mr. Clark was at one time a man of large means, and there was no man more liberal than he. Indeed he literally gave his property away until it was all gone. He built a large church in Halifax county for the colored people and at one time tried to establish a little colony of colored people on his plantation. He used to say that it was hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven, and seemed not a bit grieved when his wealth was all gone. His life was full of good deeds, and he has gone to the reward of the righteous."

*The Charlotte Observer*  
Charlotte, NC  
28 Oct 1886