

Fact Sheet: Henry Sims

Pensioner Details
<i>Pensioner name:</i> Henry Sims
<i>Person ID:</i> DV1017
<i>Your name:</i> Anonymous
<i>U3A group:</i> South-West
Part One: Birth and Family
1: When and where was your pensioner born?
Henry (John) Sims was born on 31st July 1845 in St Pancras, London to Edward and Margaret Sims. (Ref 1)
2: Who were your pensioners' parents? Record any details you can find out about them here (e.g. occupation, religious affiliation, whether they could read or write)
<p>One possible marriage of parents of the target postman is Edward Sims to Margaret Price 8 Nov 1835 at Old Church, St. Pancras. This is the only one that fits the detail as known. (Ref 2)</p> <p>1841 Census for St Andrew Holborn (Above the Bars) has an Edward Sims (30) married to Margaret Sims (32) living in Pools Buildings, St James', Holborn. He was recorded as a clerk. He was born in London and she was Irish. Living with them was Edward Sims (5) and Albert Sims (2) together with John Norris (75) Independent means and Charles Hosier (21) a shopman. (Ref 14)</p> <p>People with the names of Edward Sims and Margaret had three sons. Parish records have a Henry Sims born on the correct date, but in all subsequent documents his middle name 'John' is not used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomas George Sims b. 6 Sept 1840, baptised 4 Oct 1840 St. Andrews, Holborn • William George Sims b 17 Jan 1842, baptised 13 Feb 1842, St Pancras Old Church. • Henry John Sims b 31 July 1845, baptised 17 August 1845, St Pancras Old Church (Ref 3) <p>These children of Edward and Margaret Sims would seem to be straightforward, but in later census returns there are nieces and nephews of Henry living with Henry and Alice. Their fathers were called George James Sims and Walter Sims, and not Thomas George or William George. The census return above, however straightforward must necessarily fail in consequence. The only option is to split off Henry (John) Sims off from Thomas George and William George Sims as being a separate family with Henry as an only child and this is what I have as my preferred option. Most of the data is in index form only and without funding to obtain birth certificates it is probably impossible make a final decision as to which version is correct.</p> <p>Sims is a common surname and there are a number of Sims families in St. Martin's parish area. There is a death for an Edward Sims who was 23 when he was buried on 26 Jan 1845 at St. Martin in the Fields, Camden Town. His address was Upper Ashby Street,</p>

Clerkenwell. If this is Henry's father, then Henry would have been a posthumous child. In the 1851 census the only Margaret Sims was 45, a laundress. She was living with her only child, Henry (6) in 1 George Yard or Drury Yard, Drury Lane. She had been born in Ireland. There is a death registration for Q2 1851 for St. Pancras. Whilst Sims is a common name, Margaret Sims is not. This may be Henry's mother.

3: Did your pensioner have any siblings? What were their names, and how old were they in relation to your pensioner? Use this space to record anything else you have found out about them (e.g. occupation)

No siblings have been found with certainty. The father and mother had both died before Henry was 7. Henry's father had at least two brothers. (See below)

I cannot find an entry for Margaret Sims in the 1861 census and the Henry Sims' entries do not seem to fit. There are two entries for a Henry Sims in the Poor Law Schools, firstly in Edmonton where Henry, Age 7 was admitted under the Common Fund. Secondly for the Central London District Schools in St. Martins. He was admitted only for a short time in 11 April 1855. The facilities at the Poor Law Schools are very well documented in the website below. (Ref 3) <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/CentralLondonSD/>

The conditions in the St. Martins workhouse at that time were deplorable, but children did reside there for a time. (Ref 4)

It would have been convenient if Henry had been sent to Reeds School, Cobham; then known as the London Orphan Asylum. Their admissions are well documented, and whilst there are Sims children recorded as attending, there is no Henry. (Ref 5)

Part Two: Marriage and children

1: Did your pensioner marry? What was their spouse's name, and when and where did they marry them? Use this space to record any extra details you can find out about their spouse (e.g. when/where they were born, their occupation)

Henry married an Alice Annie Jessie Sims nee Stephens (?). (Marriage 1883 Q1 Southampton 2c 63) She had been born in about 1856 in Southampton, Hants according to subsequent census returns; however, there is also a marriage recorded on 7 Mar 1886 between a Henry Sims, a clerk of 37 Manor Street, Clapham, London, the son of William Sims a brewer and Alice Annie Jessie Randall, a spinster also of 37 Manor Street, Clapham. Her father, Edward John Randall was a publican. Whilst this is attractive, it is clear that the wife of Henry Sims was born in Southampton and there is no indication that Alice Annie Jessie Randall was anything other than a Londoner. (Ref 6). It also changes Henry Sims father's name making the whole story heretofore erroneous.

It is not possible to be certain about the marriage and ancestry of Alice Sims since we are not certain about her maiden name but two entries for Southampton at this time are recorded. Annie Alice Stephens, registered birth Q2 1856 2c 209 with her christened on Mar 4 1857. Father John and mother Annie Stephens. (Ref 7)

2: Did your pensioner have any children? What were their names, and when they were born? Use this space to record any extra details you can find out about them (e.g. occupation, where they lived later in life)

No children

Part Three: Work

1: What occupation was your pensioner recorded as doing in census years? Please make sure to state clearly which year you are referring to

Henry was christened in Old Church, St. Pancras 17/08/1845.

PO Appointment books. Messenger, Totnes to Marldon 20 Sept 1853. Unlikely - Henry would only have been 8 years old.

1861 and 1871 Census have many Henry Sims entries, but none can be attributed to the Henry Sims in question with any certainty.

1881 census Living at 9 Townley, Street, Ramsgate. He and his wife, Alice Annie Jessie Sims (26) living as lodgers. The house was occupied by William Augustus Huskins,(50) tailor and his wife Eliza (47). Another lodger was Frances Bowellen (47) a plumber. Henry was a clerk in the Post Office, London. Alice is recorded as having been born in Southampton. (Ref 8)

It will be noticed that Alice and Henry were living as husband and wife in 1881, when the only record of a suitable marriage was not until 1883. This is not out of the question, but has not been resolved satisfactorily.

2: What occupations were people living with your pensioner (e.g. spouse, children, boarders) doing in the census years? Please make sure to state clearly which year you are referring to

1891 Census Henry (46) and Alice Sims (34) living with them was Elizabeth A Sims (Niece 8, born in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.) They were living at 7 Linden Terrace, Pontefract, Tanshelf, Yorks. (Ref 9)

Elizabeth Alice Sims was the daughter of George James Sims who married Elizabeth Emma Smith in Camberwell, London on 2 Oct 1881. (Ref 9)

Their daughter was born in Sandhurst, Sandridge, Victoria. George James Sims was a commercial clerk, according to her wedding certificate where she married Harold Herbert Aldridge (21) an accountant on 28 Sept 1903. (Ref 10) Her father died in Port Melbourne in 1886. Sandhurst is an area of Melbourne now called Port Melbourne. Incidentally, her maternal grandfather Augustus William Smith was a letter carrier. Why, at the age of 8, she was staying with her Aunt and Uncle in Yorkshire is open to speculation.)

There is unsupported evidence from a family site on Ancestry, that Elizabeth Emma Sims nee Smith had been born in Australia in about 1862. An Elizabeth Emma Sims certainly travelled on the Carlisle Castle from London to Melbourne to arrive on 19 November 1882. If she and George James left London immediately after their wedding it would be possible to do that and perfectly possible for their daughter to be born in 1883.

The family page on Ancestry gives a death date for Elizabeth Emma of 24 May 1931, but there is no supporting evidence even whether the death took place in England or Australia. All that can be said with certainty is that she was not a witness at her daughter's marriage in 1903 and Ancestry and FreeBMD do not provide a certain death registration anywhere in the UK.

1901 Census

- Henry Sims Married Head 56; Postmaster, Post Office Ilfracombe, Employer
- Wife - Alice 45 born Southampton
- Niece - Alice 14 b. Rotherhythe, London
- Nephew, William 12 b. Rotherhythe
- Domestic Servant Emily Turner 21 b. Pontefract

Residence. Kelly Directory 1902 has him residing at 74 St. Brannock Road, Ilfracombe. This would have been a road of substantial houses that had only recently been built in the 1890s. His was a 4-bed semi-detached. (N.B. Kelly's took time to produce. He would have retired by the date of publishing) (Ref 11)

North Devon Journal. Thursday 18th July 1901: *"Mr Sims, the Postmaster of Ilfracombe has resigned his position on account of continued ill health"*

It will be noted that Henry and Alice had their nephew and niece, Alice and William living with them on the night of the 1901 census. There is a Walter Sims (35) and his wife, Elizabeth (38) living at 13 Prospect Place, Rotherhythe in London in the 1891 census. They had a 5 year old son Walter Henry Sims, and a Daughter Alice Elizabeth (4) and a son, William George (2).

In the 1901 Census there is a Walter Sims (44), a Refreshment Contractor's Porter married to a Sophia C Sims, at 8 Durban Road with a son Walter H Sims (15), an errand boy. There is also a step-daughter Henrietta there (18) who was tie packer. Jessie Shean (15) a domestic servant, Cornelious Shean (10) and Alice Shean (8) were resident there also. All listed as step-children, and finally Ellen Rainton (22) a domestic servant who boarded with them. (Ref 12)

A marriage for Walter Sims to Sophia Caroline Shean at St. Olave, Southwark in the first quarter of 1898 and this is very likely the remarriage of Walter Sims.(Ref 13)

There are at least 5 Elizabeth Sims who died in London's East End in the relevant period so it is not practical to pinpoint which one was Walter Sims' first wife, but it is safe to assume that she died in view of the remarriage.

There are many Walter Sims's who died about 1901. One can speculate that on his brother's death, the two children came to stay with their uncle and aunt for a time and this happened to be at the time of the census.

1911 Census. Alice Sims, widow. Residence Ilfracome in marital home at 74 Brannock Road (6 rooms). Living with Alice Elizabeth Sims, 24, single, Niece. Shows Alice Annie as a widow and having had no live births. Both were living from private means.

Alice Sims, wife of Henry Sims, Death 6 Nov 1920. Died at home.
Probate 31 Dec 1920 £542-13s-11d to John Knill, Gentleman

Part Four: Anything Else

Please use this space to record anything else you have found out about your pensioner

Henry only lived for 6 years after retiring through ill health. I have not found any references to him in the local newspapers during this period.

Part Five: Your Sources

Please use this space to record the sources you have used

References

Ref 1 Ancestry.com. England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014.

Ref 2 Ancestry.com. England, Select Marriages, 1538–1973 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014.

Ref 3 Ancestry.com. England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014.

Ref 4 <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/StMartins/>

Ref 5 https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/91517/1818-1901-Reeds-School-S-U.pdf

Ref 6 London Metropolitan Archives; London, England; Reference Number: p95/ctc2/012

Ref 7 Ancestry.com. England & Wales, Christening Index, 1530-1980 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2008.

Ref 8 Class: RG11; Piece: 989; Folio: 34; Page: 21; GSU roll: 1341235

Ref 9 The National Archives of the UK (TNA); Kew, Surrey, England; Census Returns of England and Wales, 1891; Class: RG12; Piece: 3761; Folio: 81; Page: 2; GSU roll: 6098871

Ref 10 (RE13 Piece 499 Folio 135 Page 1)

Ref 11 Class: RG13; Piece: 2149; Folio: 100; Page: 42

Ref 12 Class: RG13; Piece: 437; Folio: 17; Page: 25

Ref 13 FreeBMD. England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837-1915
[database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2006.

Ref 14 Class: HO107; Piece: 670; Book: 4; Civil Parish: St Andrew Holborn (Above The
Bars); County: Middlesex; Enumeration District: 9; Folio: 16; Page: 24; Line: 1; GSU roll:
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