

ISCHUA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

RIGGS FAMILY HOMESTEAD

This homestead is located on a parcel of land that was originally owned by the Holland Land Company. In 1798 Joseph Ellicott and Joseph McCluer were hired to survey the parcel of land known today as Franklinville. These two men were accompanied by two axmen, Solomon Curtis and Ira Pratt.

Solomon Curtis built a log cabin on present day Elm Street in April 1806. Solomon and his wife Abigail purchased land from the Holland Land Company in 1815. In 1827 the property passed to John, Horace and Abner Ely. Seth and Laura Ely deeded this parcel to Merlin Mead and wife Polly in 1833. The Meads sold this land to Lewis Riggs on April 3, 1838.

Lewis Riggs was born in Litchfield, Connecticut on January 23, 1808. His parents were Eden Riggs and Thankful Harmon. His father was a farmer, shoemaker, Justice of the Peace, and Representative to the General Assembly in 1841. Lewis studied medicine under his uncle and namesake. He attended Yale University and graduated in 1830. He married Eliza Ann Clark in Fabius, New York on July 4, 1838.

Lewis Riggs came to Franklinville and purchased the 235 acres that would become his family homestead for \$3,000. He built a large frame house from the timber on his land in 1840. This house is the front section of the present day home standing on 28 North Main Street. The family became self-sufficient raising all their own food and making all their own clothing and household supplies.

Dr. Lewis Riggs was a respected prominent physician and farmer in Franklinville. He organized the Cattaraugus County Medical Society. He and his wife had twelve children: Clara, Thankful, Ann, Clark (also called Lewis), Laura, Mary, Harmon, Coral, Franklin, Miles, and a son (possibly named Newman). Dr. Riggs continued to purchase land and at his death in 1862 owned 1,500 acres.

L. Clark Riggs, the son of Dr. Riggs was born in this house on July 14, 1844. He was educated at Alfred University and at the Commercial College in Buffalo. He married Martha McGeorge on September 21, 1868. Their only child Euella, known as Lulu, was born on August 19, 1878. L. Clark Riggs worked on the farm and after his mother's death purchased the entire estate. He enlarged the dairy and brought the first Holstein sire to Franklinville. He owned Hambletonian horses and Cotswald sheep. Riggs served as Director and Superintendent for the Franklinville Fair for many years. He served as a Village Trustee and foreman of the Alert Hook and Ladder Company.

L. Clark Riggs began to sell 20 acre parcels of land. Riggs Street and the north ends of Church and Factory Streets were once part of the farm. The milk plant and the cutlery plant once stood on the former farm land. The Western New York and Pennsylvania Railroad was laid through this property. Riggs donated land for the building of a Methodist Church, sold lots for the Empire Electric company, a pond mill built by the Empire Manufacturing Company and Ontario Knife. Ten Broeck Academy was built on the former Riggs property. A barn and a tenant house were demolished to make way for the school.

In 1896 a barn was built from the timber on the property. The house was improved in 1898. The barn on the property at the present time dates back to 1905. At one time the barn was used as the town livery stable. There are also two smaller outbuildings.

ISCHUA VALLEY

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

RIGGS FAMILY HOMESTEAD

Lulu Riggs, the only daughter of L. Clark Riggs, married Edgar Grierson on June 24, 1903. This marriage united the two wealthiest families in Franklinville. A graduate of Ten Broeck Academy, Grierson took courses at Bryant & Stratton Commercial College of Buffalo. He began his career at the Farmers National Bank of Franklinville. When his bank merged with the Union National Bank he continued as assistant cashier. He was involved in the management of the Riggs Family Farm and in breeding registered Holstein cattle. He served as Village Treasurer, school collector and treasurer, and as one of the trustees of the Franklinville Library Association.

On the death of her parents, Lulu Grierson inherited the estate. Land was sold for a Buick showroom, The Standard Oil Company, and the Bradford Company. The Conservation Club bought all the land west of the railroad tracks. Edgar Grierson inherited the estate on the death of his wife Lulu. Martha Grierson Lowe, the only child of Edgar and Lulu Grierson, came into possession of the property on the death of her father.

Today the property is an antique and gift shop known as The Heart of Franklinville.

Submitted by: Maggie Fredrickson, Village of Franklinville Historian