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Historic Significance of the Rapp Road Community Albany, New York

The Promised Land for an African American community residing in Albany, New York happens to be in the middle of the Pine Bush, on Rapp Road. The Rapp Road community is a unique example of the Great Migration. Many of its original residents migrated from Shubuta, Mississippi in the 1930s and 1940s to Albany's South End, and then to Rapp Road. Once a few families moved to Albany, a chain migration occurred as family, friends, and church members encouraged their loved ones in the South to move to Albany. Most of the people who came from the South joined Albany's First Church of God in Christ, under the direction of Louis W. Parson, and later, William Wilborn. Parson, and his wife, Frances, made it possible for members of his congregation to buy land on Rapp Road and, in a sense, recreate the rural life that many missed since leaving Mississippi.

Almost eighty years later, the Rapp Road community is in-tact. Many of the original families still live there, and members from younger generations who previously left the area are moving back to Rapp Road to raise their children. In January 2003, the Rapp Road Community was added to the National Register of Historic Districts, an honor that is rarely bestowed upon African American communities since so few remain in-tact for so many decades. The Rapp Road Community's preservation is imperative since it serves as a testimony to the hard work, faith, and values of a group of Americans who looked for a new life – and found it in the Pine Bush of Albany, New York.

Jennifer Lemak
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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jennifer Lemak'.