



Image: **Rapp Road Smoke House**, 2015, digital photograph, courtesy of Rapp Road Historical Association



Object: **Wooden Skin Board**, c. 1950, wood, courtesy of Emma Dickson and the Rapp Road Historical Association

Rapp Road Community



The Capital Region in 50 Objects

Rapp Road Community

Between 1910 and 1970 more than 14,000 African Americans chose to make Albany their new home. The majority came from the southern United States hoping to find work, less racism, and more opportunities for loved ones. The Rapp Road community, located on the western edge of the City of Albany in the Pine Bush, is a result of this influx, known as the Great Migration. Many of Rapp Road's original residents migrated from Shubuta, Mississippi, in the 1930s and 1940s with the help of their pastor, Louis Parson. They initially settled in Albany's South End and then moved to Rapp Road, where they built homes and raised families. Almost eighty years later, the Rapp Road community is thriving as the second and third generations of many of the original families still live there. In September 2002, the Rapp Road community was added to the New York State Historic Register, and in 2003 it was added to the National Historic Register.

Louis Parson purchased land in the Pine Bush for members of his congregation (the First Church of God in Christ, now called the Wilborn Temple) because many of them did not enjoy living in the South End of Albany. They were accustomed to a rural lifestyle of hunting and farming. Here, with help from the church and neighbors, they built a community complete with a joint smoke house, where they preserved meats from animals they raised or hunted. The skin board was used by members of the McCann and Toliver families for skinning raccoons and other small animals caught while hunting. Living in the Pine Bush allowed the original settlers of Rapp Road to recreate their Southern way of life in the North. This independent rural lifestyle continued until the construction of the Washington Avenue Extension in the 1970s.

Vocabulary

Community – a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society

Congregation – an assembly of persons met for worship and religious instruction

Migration – to move from one country, place, or locality to another

Rural – of or relating to the country, country people or life, or agriculture

Settlement – a place or region newly settled

Rapp Road Community

Name _____ Date _____

Directions

Use the depiction of the object, image, and corresponding text to answer the following questions.

1. From the text, how many African Americans made the journey from the South, north to Albany?

2. Why did many African Americans migrate from the southern United States to northern cities between 1910 and 1970?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

3. What were two activities many Rapp Road families engaged in?

a. _____ b. _____

4. Who was a key figure in supporting the Rapp Road families' migration?

5. What is one reason the Rapp Road Community had a joint smokehouse?

6. What type of economy did Rapp Road practice using a skinning board?

7. Why did the community choose to settle in the Pine Bush?
