



"Preserving The History of Our Nation's First Major Industry"

National Bottle Museum®

THE BOTTLE MUSE Winter 2023

Renew your membership for 2023 – thank you!

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Contact us:

Tel. (518)-885- 7589

Email:

Info@nationalbottlemuseum.org

FB: National Bottle Museum

www.nationalbottlemuseum.org

General Admission - \$5.00

Seniors - \$4.00

Children free

From the Desk of Ellie Dillon



Dear Friends and Members,

2023 has started off bittersweet. First off we will say good bye to long term volunteer Meg Stevens who has served on the board as treasurer, president and Director. Meg's shoes will be impossible to fill but we wish her the best in her well earned retirement! Avonlea Stiles, Assistant Director, also stepped down to return to school. Teaching is in Avonlea's future and we wish her well in her new career.

Now the sweet of bittersweet. We have hired a new director, Kayla Whitehouse, to run the daily operations at the museum. Kayla hails from Albany. She received her masters from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale in anthropology and brings museum experience to her new position. Already Kayla has rolled up her sleeves and made some necessary and creative changes. Stop in to welcome Kayla!

We depend on memberships to support the museum. This is the beginning of a new year and we ask you to please consider joining for another year! Go to nationalbottlemuseum.org to renew or join the museum.

Wishing you all a safe and peaceful New Year!

Ellie

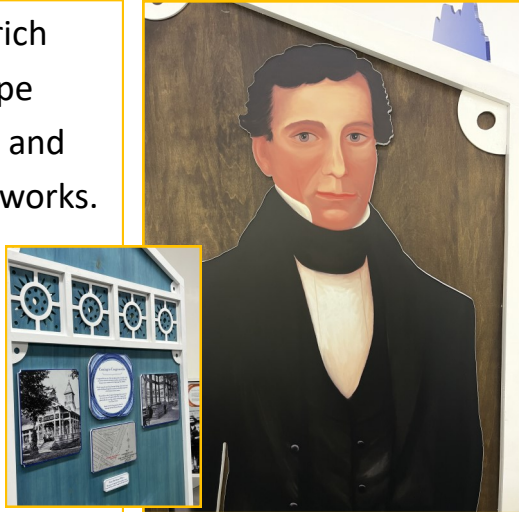


Glass Factory Mountain: Making Bottles and Making History

Come in and see what is new at the museum!

Meet the man behind the rich heritage of the Saratoga type bottle, the Mount Pleasant and Congress and Empire Glassworks.

Oscar Granger's journey began in Mount Vernon and ended in Saratoga Springs.



We are seeking a pre-machine made bottle from Alaska. Can you help us? Contact:

info@nationalbottlemuseum.org

Only one to go!

The JRM Artists' Space:

Contact: Fred@neustudios.com



"WELCOME TO BALLSTON SPA"

February 1st–25th

Artist's Reception February 4th 2pm-4pm

Stu Eichel's Ballston Spa paintings on sale

GUILD OF ADIRONDACK ARTISTS

March 12th – April 1st



Delaware

This is a dark amber Pegasus bottle from the Hartmann and Fehrenbach Brewing Company in Wilmington, Delaware. The exquisite pegasus detail is a masterpiece of mould working. Collectors feel this bottle is one of the best beer bottles to be found. The brewery began operation in 1885 and continued till prohibition in 1920.

Renew your membership today for **2023!**

Form is at end of newsletter or on line.

www.nationalbottlemuseum.org

FOHBC link to bottle shows:

Find a Bottle show near you!

www.fohbc.org/shows/

43rd Annual



DOORS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AT 9 AM
SHOW RUNS TIL 2:30 PM

ADMISSION:
\$5 ADULTS
CHILDREN 12 & UNDER FREE

EARLY ADMISSION
8 AM / \$20

The National Bottle Museum will be open for tours from 10am to 4pm

Saratoga
Antique Bottle Show & Sale

Saratoga County Fairgrounds
162 Prospect St. Ballston Spa NY
Sunday June 4th 2023

Proudly Presented By
NATIONAL BOTTLE MUSEUM®
Preserving the History of our Nation's First Industry
Glass & Bottle Making
NationalBottleMuseum.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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Adam Stoddard
acstoddard@gmail.com

Art of The Bottle VI
In The Artists' Space
National Bottle Museum
76 Milton Ave
Ballston Spa NY
Wed - Sat 10-4

Vendor Space is Available! Contact the National Bottle Museum®
518-885-7589 info@nationalbottlemuseum.org

EMPIRE STATE BOTTLE COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION
51ST ANNUAL

Antiques & Bottle Show

Sunday, March 26th, 2023
9:00 am - 2:00 pm

Located at the Cicero American legion
5575 Legionnaire Dr., Cicero, NY

Admission - \$3 donation
Parking and under 12 admission free!
Handicap accessible

Bottles, insulators, early glass, tabletop antiques, postcards, stoneware, advertising, breweriana, and much more!

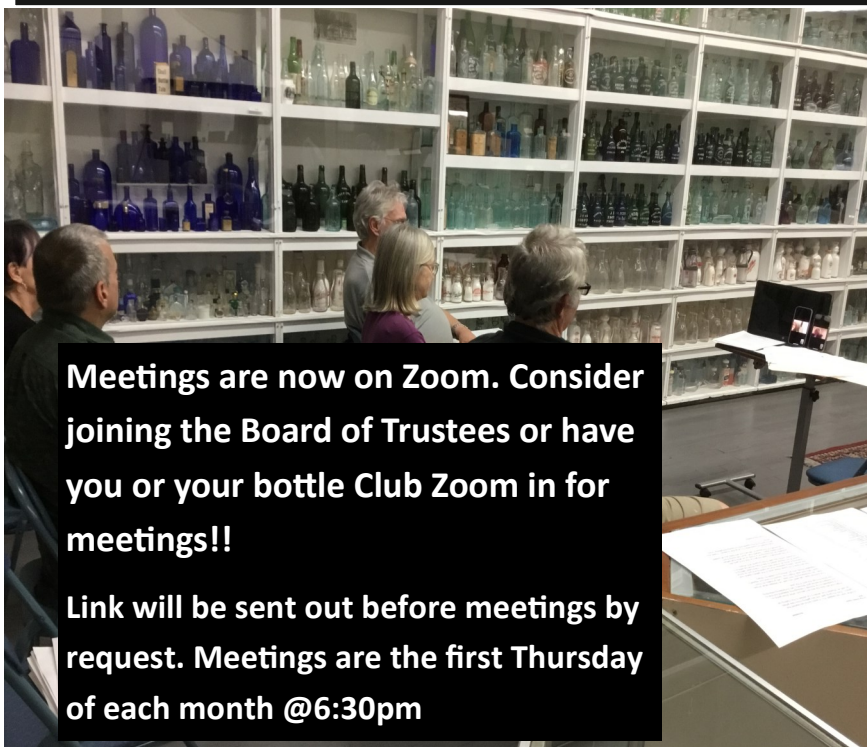
Mark Yates: (315) 560-2560
mlyates@twcny.rr.com

Gary Schaap: (315) 374-8105
garysequipment@gmail.com

All Dealers Contact Dave Tuxill: (315) 469-0629
Dtuxill1@twcny.rr.com



Info@nationalbottlemuseum.org



Meetings are now on Zoom. Consider joining the Board of Trustees or have you or your bottle Club Zoom in for meetings!!

Link will be sent out before meetings by request. Meetings are the first Thursday of each month @6:30pm

52nd Annual Genesee Valley Bottle Collectors Assn

BOTTLE & ANTIQUE SALE

Sunday April 16th, 2023

9am - 3pm

Rochester, NY



Admission \$5.00

17 & Under FREE!

www.gvbca.org

Roberts Wesleyan College
Voller Athletic Center
2301 Westside Dr
Rochester NY 1424

Show & Dealer Inquiries:
Aaron & Pamela Weber
gvbca@frontiernet.net
585-749-8874



Digs and Stories from the Desk of Roy Topka



Greetings.

I can't speak for other diggers, whether you love to dig dumps or are a privy aficionado, but when it gets colder out an urgency to dig filters through me. Of course I would rather open a monstrous hole in the ground when it's cool, but



the fact of the matter is winter will be here with its stupid frozen ground.

Better get my butt in gear and find some pontils which have been sorely lacking in my life.

I decided to contact the owner from a lot that I had dug a few weeks ago to see if they would let me dig again. I was given an ok to do what I wanted. Moving obstructions around I probed a likely spot. Soon I was hitting brick walls that went down about 4',



resting on shale. More important shards looked about 1870 and one whole pickle bottle came out. At about 7' I broke into a mucky c 1865 layer going back into pontil age. Mortality on bottles was high though. Still I managed a smooth base Langleys bitters and smooth base puce Costar's NY, four pontil Winslows (you can't get away from finding these things in the older holes) and two what I thought were pontiled Osgoods India cholagogue bottles (a fairly common bottle), one damaged. I did not have my close reader glasses so I could not tell much of anything. When I cleaned the supposed Osgood bottles it was a pleasant surprise to see they said Maria H. Mellen's Cough Syrup Spafford N.Y., (backwards N's) Never dug one & not a common bottle. Even though this wasn't a loaded pit, after months of finding no pontils it felt like a blessing.

Take care all and good digging!



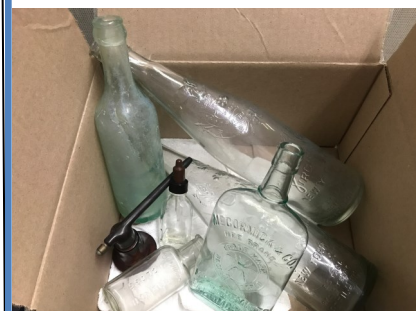
Look what was donated this past quarter!



Thank you Mary "Mimi" Norris Weisbond. Over 85 early medicine cups and advertising shot glasses were donated by Mimi to the National Bottle Museum. Some are already on display!

If a bottle is left on our doorstep....

Often bottles are dropped off at museum's doorstep. If we don't have the bottle in the collection, our team will determine whether we should accession into to the permanent collection. If not, most likely the bottles will become orphans for the visitors to adopt. This then becomes a fundraiser. Either way we thank the anonymous donors!



From the Desk of Director Kayla Whitehouse

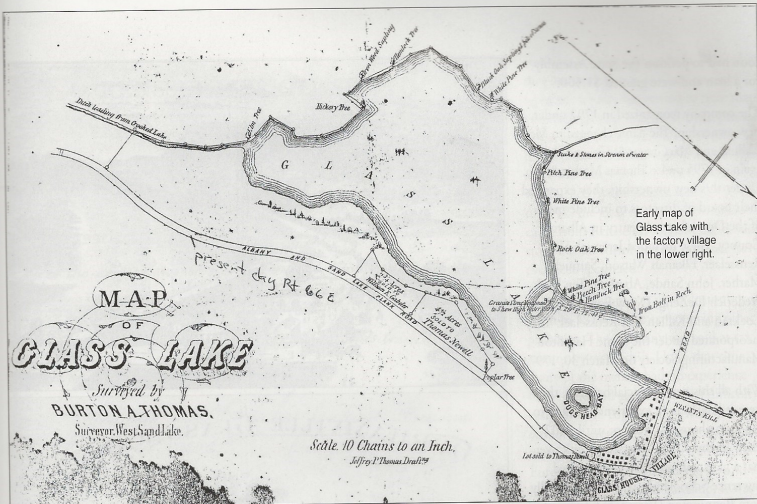
Hi!

I am thrilled to be joining the National Bottle Museum as the new Director. I have a background in anthropology, and have worked in a number of different museums, and I am excited to be able to bring the skills that I have learned throughout my career here to the National Bottle Museum.

I have only just started, so I don't have many updates from the museum yet, but I hope to have something fun and exciting to share with you all for the next newsletter!



Meg showing new director Kayla Whitehouse the ropes!



The Rensselaer Glassworks

A multifaceted — and important — piece of New York history

By Phil Bernard

This glasshouse was located in what is now known as Sand Lake, N.Y., located on Rouses Lake, which today is called Glass Lake. The actual date is disputed. Some say 1788 and some say 1804. Town records indicate the 1804 date. This was when a lease was applied for by a Francis Bloodgood, Elisha Jenkins, Ambrose Spencer, James Kane, John Woodworth, Dudley Walsh, William James, Giles Porter, Ira Porter (all of Albany County) and Matthew Hildreth of Johnstown, N.Y.

It is of interest to note that none of these people had any practical glassmaking experience, so things went awry quickly.

In 1806, the lease was changed between the Van Rensselaers and Thomas Tillotson, Elkanah Watson, Elisha Jenkins and George Pearson as tenants in common and in consideration of \$750. It is interesting to note that in Rensselaer County, the Van Rensselaers never sold any land. They only leased it. Again, this group of owners were local businessmen; they were not involved in glassmaking.

Before going any further, this unique history is difficult to separate out from other glasshouse histories. In point of fact, one must include the first Albany Glassworks (1788-1815), the Durhamville Glassworks (1843-92) and the Berkshire

Glassworks (1860s-1930s). These all had commonalities which tied them together either through common ownership or manpower usage. More on that later.

The Albany Glassworks was thought to be established in 1785. At this time, Guiderland was known as Sloansville. The founding Dutch partners were Leonard De Neauville, Ferdinand Walfahrt (manager) and John Hofke, (business manager). It should be noted that none of them had any experience in this field, and they soon ran into financial difficulty. The most important issue was location. No direct transport, no local access to raw materials, no steady supply of fuel. They



Phil Bernard, Vice president of the Board of Trustees at the National Bottle Museum will be giving a talk on the Rensselaer Glass works at the Sand Lake Historical Society, 8428 NY Rte.66 Averill Park, NY 12018 **March 14th.**

This article Phil wrote for the Antique Bottle and Glass Collector.



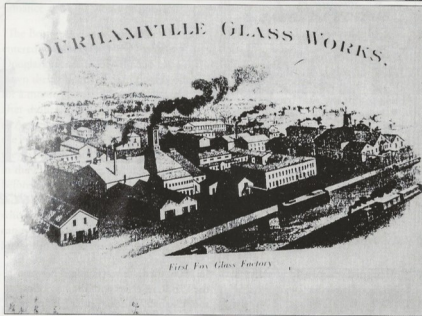
soon had to petition the State Assembly for a loan and were granted \$1,500.

The company reorganized in 1792 under new ownership. The name changed to McCallum and MacGregor & Co. and then again in 1795 under Thomas Mather & Co. Under this new ownership, they expanded their board of directors to include most of the Dutch landed gentry in Albany County. These included Jeremiah Van Rensselaer, Elkanah Watson, Samuel Mather, John Sande, Abraham Ten Eyck, Frederick DeZeng, Douw Fonda, Walter Cockran and Killian Van Rensselaer. They incorporated under the name Hamilton Manufacturing Society on March 30, 1797.

With all this new financial backing, they were still lacking in experience of how to run a glasshouse. It was not until 1802 when Jeremiah Van Rensselaer took over that a glassman was hired. They hired Lawrence Schoolcraft, who was originally from Bennington (Vermont) Glassworks. They were shut down by creditors that same year. He was the plant manager from a family who had multigenerational experience in the field in Europe as well as design experience. He came in and reorganized and redesigned the furnaces in order to increase efficiency.

At this particular time, a great debt hung over the glasshouse. The New York State legislature wanted its loan repaid. But instead of money they wanted window glass. They also had to deal with intense competition from Europe without the benefit of tariff protection. This, combined with material shortages, labor and fuel shortages, forced the works to close.

By 1800, John Van Rensselaer had control of the Land Board. He again petitioned to lease the factory from the manufacturing society, which his brother controlled. Neither of them had any glass experience, only some financial. This was not enough to convince the board. John was asked to provide financial security. He refused, causing negotiations to cease. This rift was never repaired, not to mention that the



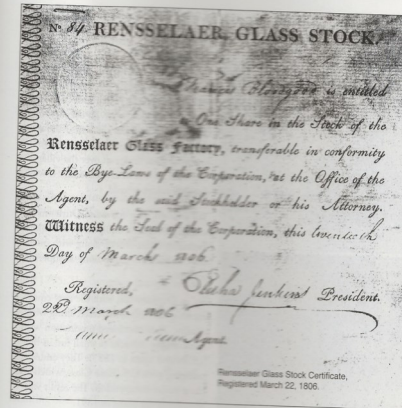
TOP: Drawing of the Village of Sand Lake showing the glassworks and worker's homes.

ABOVE: Sketch of the Durhamville Glass Works that the Fox brothers purchased because they could not expand at the Rensselaer Company site. The Durhamville Glass Works went on to become one of the largest window glass factories in the country.

Hamilton Manufacturing Board found out that he secretly was taking over the new glasshouse in Sand Lake. The meeting got testy and vulgar, but it was found out that several members of that board wanted to start in a new location.

It was at this point that the original Albany Glassworks faded into obscurity.

Between 1800-15 there was a depression, a flooding of the glass market with European goods and another war with England that caused the fires to be put out. But through all that, the factory was able to put out some good quality flasks and window glass, but in limited quantity. So exit Albany Glassworks and enter Rensselaer Glassworks.



There has been debate over when this works actually began. The town springing up first and then the factory, so I like to use the 1806 date. That is when land records coincide with production. The original lease was 1802 and the buildings were put up first. This was basically a company town built for the factory workers.

In that time the land was cleared, leveled and buildings erected. The plant itself was simply made, constructed of wood with clay furnaces and wooden chimneys (a very dangerous combination). Not the best of ideas when one is working with 1,500 degrees. It did not take long to damage the factory. They had two major fires by 1816.

Rensselaer Glassworks had a bright future. It had an abundant source of fuel, good access to raw materials, a good supply of workers and a good system of transport. They were within eight miles of

the Hudson River and shipping to major cities. The only issue was sand quality, but they found a good source in the Berkshire Mountains and were able to build a road to transport it.

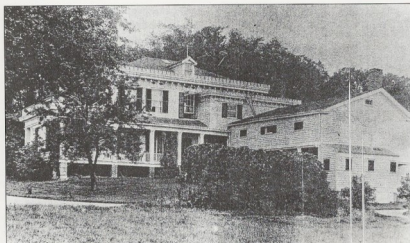
There were also stories of a man from the factory who went to Europe to recruit glassblowers from Scotland and Ireland. He would dress as a piper of sorts because recruiting glassworkers from Europe was still considered a crime, as England was still trying to protect its trades. As nice as these stories are, they can't be substantiated by records.

So by 1813, the factory suffers its first fire. Up until then, the issues were financial, that one was physical. They did have two furnaces, one for crown glass, one for cylinder glass. They lost the cylinder glass furnace and it took almost one and a half years to rebuild. They went and purchased fire equipment (the first of its kind in the

area) but it happened again in 1816 when they lost both furnaces. Only one was replaced. It's also interesting to note that even though they had the fire equipment, it was never used and when they rebuilt, it was done the same way. Again, another story was that when the White House was burned by the British during the War of 1812, the glass to repair the windows came from Rensselaer Glassworks. A nice story but no corroborating evidence has ever been recovered.

When the factory was up and running again in 1819, it was experiencing other problems. The company was sold at tax sales or by ownership. Up to that time, many of the owners had no experience in the field and got in financial difficulty early. This, in combination with current economic events, like depressions, economic panics or stiff competition from Europe, caused the business to be sold at least twice for financial hardship. It was not until 1836 that ownership got their act together. The new owners were Stadler and Rouch and Co. The "and Co" were the Fox Brothers (Albert and Samuel). They ended up taking over in 1838 and began to finally show a profit. The Fox Brothers still had the raw material problem, but they found the source of sand in Lanesborough. The expense was great, but the quality was worth it.

Besides making of window glass, there have been bottles found locally for local merchants that were made in Sand Lake. Also, there were only two found: D. Evans Camomille Pill Bottle and a bottle for liquor from the same doctor. As far as I know, there is no photo of the liquor. If someone has it, I'd love to get a photo for myself or for the National Bottle Museum. The Pill Bottles were located in Glass Lake in the 1960s by a local historian who has since passed. He submitted a report to his high school which was passed on to the Sand Lake town historian where he found a gross case of these bottles in the water near the shoreline of the factory site (Don Carpenter, 1969).



TOP: Home of the last owner of Rensselaer Glassworks, Albert R. Fox.

ABOVE: Photo of D. Evans Camomille Pills bottle thought to be made around 1820 at the factory for a doctor in Schenectady, New York. There was only one gross ever found. Below the bottle is a glass 'ice' from the explosion of the furnace in 1852.

There is also a story of employees moving to Durhamville via the Erie Canal, where they packed their food for the trip in canning jars made for the trip. Again, there is no proof, but it does lend credence to the idea that more than window glass and whimsies were made there.

So when the Fox family bought the glassworks, they began to make changes. They reorganized and re-engineered the factory by hiring someone to redo the kilns and smokestacks so that they were less prone

to fire. The fortunes of the company finally began to change. The quality improved, the sales improved.

In 1843, the Fox brothers purchased Durhamville, a factory that was only two years old and had all modern equipment, most of all not wood. This was formally the DeWitt Stevens factory and considered the largest of its kind in the country. Samuel Fox moved half the workers there, so with two factories they could really supply the entire country with window glass.

So fast forward to 1852, Christmas Day. There is a new batch of ingredients in the kilns. The kilns are being brought up to temperature and the workers are enjoying Christmas Eve merriment, probably a little too much. They fall asleep, the kilns overheat and catch the chimneys on fire (the wooden chimneys). So they ignore the fire, and the kilns catch fire. The result was a very large explosion. There were stories of glass icicles all over the village. The damage was so extensive that it was decided not to rebuild.

The workers were moved to Durhamville and all salvageable equipment was sold to Berkshire Glass Works, along with one of the Fox brothers going along as superintendent.

So, in Durhamville, with the new equipment, glass output increased along with quality. They continued production with some minor setbacks (a small fire in the 1870s and again in 1885). They ended up merging with U.S. Plate Glass, which was their major competition. The result was shuttering the plant in 1891.

Getting back to Berkshire Glass Works, they continued on, developing a very unique product. Through a formula developed by them, they were able to make a glass of extreme purity, unable to be matched by anyone else. Many companies tried to buy the formula or the company without success. It is also rumored that they did make other items but it's only speculation. But with their situation and protection of their proprietary technology, they were able to survive until the Depression in the 20th century.

In closing, Rensselaer Glass Works was filled with mishaps. Three fires, two tax lien sales plus four or five ownership changes over a half century would put anyone off this type of business. But extreme perseverance was there in an uncanny way. There were many good products and whimsies that came from there, locking it into the integral part of Rensselaer County history.

Please Consider joining the National Bottle Museum for 2023.

Your membership entitles you to free admission, 10% discount at gift shop and a personal satisfaction that you are supporting a unique museum. The Museum is a 501 C-3 non profit and chartered by the Board of Regents of New York State Department of Education.

The National Bottle Museum houses the JRM Artists' Space which exhibits regional Artists year round. It also is the Village of Ballston Spa Visitor Center.

JOIN TODAY!

2023 Memberships, Donations and Grants

(As of 02/2023)

Grants

Non Profit COVID Relief Fund — County of Saratoga, NY

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NATIONAL BOTTLE MUSEUM®

76 Milton Ave.

Ballston Spa, N.Y. 12020

(518) 885-7589

www.nationalbottlemuseum.org

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ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP in the National Bottle Museum is open to one and all in the following categories:

\$20.00 up to \$49.00 ---FRIENDS

\$50.00 up to \$149.00 ---SUPPORTERS

\$150.00 and up-----BENEFACTORS

\$500.00 and up-----CORPORATE DONORS

The NATIONAL BOTTLE MUSEUM is a non-profit (501 C-3) educational institution chartered by the Board of Regents of the New York State Department of Education. The museum is not subsidized, but raises all of its own funds and is governed by an elected volunteer Board of Trustees, operating under universally accepted museum policies. Museum memberships include: The Museum Association of New York, The Southern Adirondack, Ballston Spa Business and Professional Association, and the Southern Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce.

Members receive our newsletter containing information on the museum and upcoming shows. Each spring, the Museum sponsors a Bottle Show & Sale known as "The Saratoga Show" which attracts enthusiasts from coast to coast in the United States and several provinces of Canada.

PLEASE PRINT NAME & FULL MAILING ADDRESS

Please make checks payable to National Bottle Museum & mail to:

Membership Chairman
National Bottle Museum
76 Milton Ave.
Ballston Spa, NY 12020

Name: _____ Phone : () _____

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