

November 2025

Dear Friend of the Sing Sing Prison Museum,

We are writing to tell you why we at SSPM believe so strongly that our project deserves your support as we move toward opening our Visitor Center and first exhibition.

After nearly a decade of careful planning, SSPM is looking forward to 2025, the 200th anniversary of building Sing Sing Prison. We will continue and expand our current activities and launch several special programs. We are especially excited to open our Visitor Center and first interpretive exhibition in the Olive Opera House—a historic landmark in Ossining and the perfect setting in which to pursue our goals:

- to lead in preserving and presenting the complex story of incarceration and reform;
- to influence the national conversation on justice;
- to positively impact the people involved at all levels of the justice system;
- to positively impact the local economy of Ossining and the mid-Hudson River Valley.

The Sing Sing Prison Museum is an innovative organization that interprets the history of confinement and brings people together to imagine and create a more just society. If you have taken a SSPM tour or attended a lecture or film screening or poetry reading or webinar or stakeholder forum or contributed an oral history interview, you know that SSPM encourages an unprecedented intersection of voices, and creates space for **intellectual discourse, storytelling, and conversation**.

Our shared experiences lead to deeper understanding, build our capacity for empathy and engagement, and inspire all of us to make a better future.

The news of the past year, filled with cycles of suffering and healing, injustice and reconciliation, shows us that our **mission** and **vision** are relevant and urgent.

Thank you for your continued support of the Sing Sing Prison Museum, where history connects us to the present. The SSPM is on its way to an extraordinary, world-class visitor experience that will add significantly to the dialogue that takes place every day, across our country and around the world.

**Thank you for joining together to create a more just society.**

On **November 14**, please join us at the Ossining Public Library, to celebrate the publication of Dan Slepian's new book [The Sing Sing Files](#), which explores the conviction and exoneration of [Jon-Adrian \(JJ\) Velazquez](#). Dan and JJ will conduct an on-stage conversation that is free and open to the public. You can support SSPM by purchasing a ticket for a post-talk dessert gathering. Visit our website to purchase tickets or make an online donation.

And here are three more ways to support our work:

- 1) Giving Tuesday! is on **December 3** and we will send you an email inviting your tax-deductible donation. Or you can [go to our website](#), or mail a check to: **SSPM, 30 State Street, Ossining NY 10562**.
- 2) Contribute to our Annual Appeal. Your financial support, large or small, helps us plan our future and devote greater energies to programming, building, and connecting.
- 3) Match the Art\$WChallenge grant that provides 1:1 funding to SSPM. All you have to do is give for the first time, or give more than you gave last year, and your gift will be matched by ArtsWestchester.

### **SNAPSHOTS: 2024 IN REVIEW**

- received a major grant from the Lilly Endowment to expand our research-and-planning with a special focus on religion and incarceration
- conducted *Carceral Conversation* webinars engaging formerly incarcerated people in the question “What Did You Bring Home?”
- collaborated with Hudson Books for Humanity on the Short Attention Span Book Club
- hosted five walking tours for more than 200 guests exploring the building of the 1825 original cell block, the quarrying of Sing Sing marble, the origin of U.S. penal philosophy and design and how it relates to crime and punishment today
- presented talks to high school students, civic groups, and professional conferences
- presented a poetry reading at the Ossining Public Library and a book talk with the first Black poet to teach poetry in a New York State prison
- conducted a dozen oral history interviews and produced an Oral History Plan that will guide our work for years to come
- received a MUSE award of excellence for the online exhibition *Opening Windows*
- completed design of the museum’s first floor facility in the Olive Opera House, which will house the Visitor Center and our first interpretive exhibition
- secured financing and an agreement with New York State government to build an accessible entry to the landmark Cellblock at Sing Sing Correctional Facility
- expanded our reach, adding thousands of followers and readers through our social media, our bimonthly e-newsletter, and website content

SSPM did all this with the guidance of a dedicated Board of Trustees, the seasoned leadership of our Executive Director, one full-time staff person, and a host of important part-time professionals who make a mighty team. We were assisted by two paid interns from Mercy University and a fellow supported by Central Synagogue in NYC and their Social Justice Initiative Fellowship Program for returning individuals.

**IN 2025 OUR WORK CONTINUES!**

Two hundred years ago, more than 100 men from Auburn State Prison set up camp along the Hudson River near the village of Sing Sing and were put to work in the quarry to build a new state prison. Our programming and planning will commemorate this milestone with a wide range of events including:

- “*Storied History: Innovative Work in the Field of Oral History & Incarceration*,” a free, open-to-the-public webinar series. This program delves into the pivotal role of oral histories in collecting and preserving historical narratives through personal experiences. Each session will feature SSPM in conversation with oral history partner programs including Riker’s Public Memory Project and the National Public Housing Museum.
- SSPM and Columbia University will collaborate on the Justice Forum, a panel that explores what formed early U.S. notions of rehabilitation and reform; what constituted the actions needed to create a safe and just society; and how our new democracy imagined innovative incarceration. Scholars will examine how this history informs contemporary practices, public perceptions, and prison reform.
- On May 10 2025, SSPM will join the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) to open its 25-year time capsule and dedicate a new time capsule in an in-person event at Sing Sing Correctional Facility. We will engage our community to recommend objects to be sealed up for the next 25 years!
- In October we celebrate a major milestone with the opening of our SSPM Visitor Center and Orientation Gallery at the Olive Opera House, featuring a ribbon cutting, live conversation, and an exhibition in Spanish and English. This opening will share collections in new ways.
- SSPM will complete the documentation required for the nomination of Sing Sing Correctional Facility to the National Register of Historic Places.
- Last but not least, SSPM will launch our Founding Member 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Membership Program, to enable us to engage our community and create the stability necessary to carry our work into the future.

*Nothing could be more hopeful than our project to reinterpret the 1825 cellblock ruin as a monument to listening, and to storytelling. A prison is a space of confinement, yet we construct this prison museum as a space of connection. We listen to the vast justice-impacted community: the incarcerated; partners, parents, sons and daughters; persons living in proximity to a prison; advocates and activists. We listen to the organizations providing direct service, and to workers in the field, from corrections, parole, probation, and police officers and judges. What we learn is that a prison creates a space in the imagination in which we can hold history up to the light of day and explore in our minds and hearts what we see and experience. We construct new monuments, new histories, out of the true stories of what happened here.*

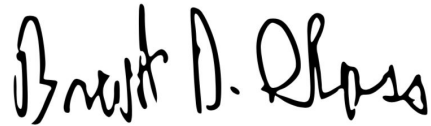
As 2024 draws to a close and we approach our opening in 2025 we invite you to join us, to be part of this new story, new history.

THANK YOU!

Sincerely,



Bob Elliott  
Chair, Board of Trustees



Brent Glass  
Executive Director

Find our offices at 30 State Street, Ossining NY 10562  
info@singsingprisonmuseum.org

[www.singsingprisonmuseum.org](http://www.singsingprisonmuseum.org)  
914-236-4841