

The Forum

Dedicated to the advancement of carceral interpretation for public benefit.

Learn more at
www.carceral.org!

Like and follow us on
Facebook and Instagram
at @TheCarceral.



Featured Site



Postcard (ca. 1910) of the prison's entrance..

In the early 19th century, the city of Jackson, Michigan lobbied to be the location of the state's first prison. Constructed in 1842, Jackson became home to one of the largest prisons in the world – the Michigan State Prison,

later renamed the State Prison of Southern Michigan. The facility closed in the early 2000s, and the campus has since been converted into a residential property. Listen to Allison Downey's Michigan Radio story with formerly incarcerated folks and prison staff [here](#). Read/listen to an interview with Judy Gail Krasnow [here](#), current on-site resident and author of the book [Jacktown: History and Hard Times at Michigan's First State Prison](#).

Monthly Meet-Up

The ACSM hosts monthly meetings for practitioners, scholars, and others involved with or interested in historic prison museums, and/or carceral sites. Meetings take place via Zoom on the second Monday of each month at 3:00 PM EST and cover a wide range of topics, including interpretation, community engagement strategies, and collaborative practices. Contact us at thecarceral@gmail.com to sign-up in order to attend. We hope to see you there!

In The News

"Art Processors Works with National Trust of Australia to Transform Pentridge Prison Visitor Experience," BY CHARLOTTE COATES

Art Processors, the experiential design consultancy, recently worked on a project to produce immersive visitor experiences at the former Pentridge Prison. The reimagined tour combines an exploration of the site's history with powerful first-hand accounts from former inmates, prison officers and clerics. The old B Division, H Division, rock-breaking yards, and former Warders' Residence are all included in the visitor journey. In contrast to the contemporary reconstruction of the larger complex, the company's interpretation of Pentridge Prison completely embodies the National Trust's ambition to ensure that the heritage of the site is not disregarded or forgotten. Visitors are prompted to reflect on the nature of retributive justice as a result of the experience, which also leaves those willing to confront some of the most gruesome episodes in Victoria's criminal history with a complicated mix of emotions and unanswered questions.

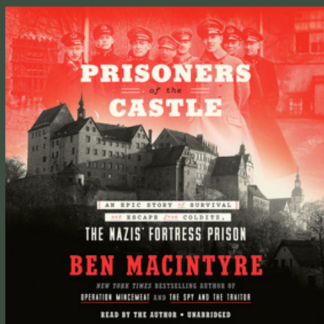
Read the entire article [here](#).

New Read!

Prisoners of the Castle: An Epic Story of Survival and Escape from Colditz, the Nazis' Fortress Prison By Ben Macintyre (Random House, 2022)

Macintyre tackles one of the most famous prison stories in history. During World War II, the German army used the towering Colditz Castle to hold

the most defiant Allied prisoners. For four years, these prisoners of the castle tested its walls and its guards with ingenious escape attempts that would become legend. But as Macintyre shows, the story of Colditz was about much more than escape. Its population represented a society in miniature, full of heroes and traitors, class conflicts and secret alliances, and the full range of human joy and despair. More information available [here](#).



HOW TO REFORM OUR PRISON SYSTEM

H. J. B. MONTGOMERY

From The Archive

EXCERPT FROM "How to Reform Our Prison System," by H. J. B. Montgomery (1907)

"As they are to-day, English prisons are not only manufactories of crime, but forcing-houses for professional criminals. The human, not to say humane, note is absent from them. Routine, a deadly, dull, stupid routine, based on no logical principle, and having no objective point whatever, reigns supreme. Three centuries ago Paolo Sarpi, who was directed by the Venetian Government to investigate and report upon the prisons of Venice, wrote: "The object of punishment should be the emendation, not the destruction of the criminal." These were wise words, but they do not appear to have borne much fruit in 300 years. The time, accordingly, appears to be opportune for directing attention to the defects of the English prison system, not only as regards reformation, but in other details. That system simply tends to make what I may term the accidental criminal an habitual criminal, to case-harden the old offender. It is a system lacking throughout in sympathy, which attempts nothing, and apparently cares nothing, in regard to the improvement of character, or in reference to preparing the incarcerated man or woman for return to the world."

Access the entire publication, courtesy of the Internet Archive, [here](#).

Upcoming Exhibit

Art Against the Odds: Wisconsin Prison Art

Rahr-West Art Museum, Wisconsin
June 4 to August 6, 2023

"Manitowoc's Rahr-West Art Museum will host Art Against the Odds: Wisconsin Prison Art ... featuring more than 60 artists who turned to creative production to mitigate the de-humanizing conditions of incarceration. Under development for two years by Portrait Society Gallery of Contemporary Art in Milwaukee, the exhibition gives voice and visibility to individuals held in the state's carceral system, as well as illustrates the potential healing properties of an art practice.

With few instructional art programs offered in the prison system, these individuals teach themselves through various means, often working with limited materials. The exhibition explores how art becomes a vehicle to develop self-esteem, self-awareness, regulate emotions and explore multi-faceted aspects of identity.

The exhibition underscores the humanity of incarcerated individuals and their potential beyond criminal records." Read the full story [here](#).

Photo below: John Tyson, one of the exhibit's featured artists, shown with his artwork. Photo courtesy of Mark Hoffman of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.



In Case You Missed It...

Carson City Chamber of Commerce members recently got a taste of the storied history — and potential future — of the Nevada State Prison. The prison officially closed in 2012. Since then, the Nevada State Prison Preservation Society, a nonprofit, has been working to preserve the site as a historic and educational resource. The preservation society took over 53 acres and 200,000 square feet of unmaintained buildings, and began offering limited tours. In 2015, the prison was approved for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. However, the future of the site is still being shaped. Learn more about the project [here](#).



From The Desk of The Co-President

DR. MEGAN CULLEN TEWELL
ACSM CO-FOUNDER & CO-PRESIDENT

As the K-12 school year comes to a close, I am faced with the reality that my preteen will soon exit 7th grade and enter an extended summer hiatus. This is joyous in some respects – a temporary break from the drama and heartache and growing pains of middle school. No more 5:30 am alarm, for all of us, to catch the bus! It also poses a prolonged challenge: childcare for three months, and the loss of structure and routine provided by teachers, coaches, and counselors. I forget sometimes how difficult it is to be 12, 13, and 14 years old; how desperate you are for independence, and yet how out of control you feel as your body and brain continuously morph in new ways. I have a front row seat to my daughter figuring out the world around her, making mistakes, and hopefully learning from them in a meaningful, and relatively harmless, way. Some children are less fortunate; their mistakes are not interpreted as the collateral damage of puberty and adolescence, a normal phase of life that we all experience en route to adulthood. Instead they are forced to bear the burden of their mistakes in perpetuity due to institutionalization.

According to the ACLU, the school-to-prison pipeline represents a disturbing national trend, where youth (primarily Black or Brown young people, those with disabilities, or youth with histories of poverty or abuse/neglect) are funneled out of public schools and into the juvenile and criminal legal systems. On any given day, between 48,000 to 60,000 youth are confined in juvenile detention facilities. Why? In addition to instances of discriminatory applications of discipline, "zero-tolerance" policies and police presence in schools heighten criminalization trends. Increased rates of suspension and expulsion, as well as the use of disciplinary alternative schools, push kids out of the classroom and towards institutionalization. Once there, juvenile corrections facilities offer little to no education services, and young people often face stigmatization upon release, as well as poorer physical and mental outcomes later in life, and barriers to re-entry. An overrepresentation of detained Black and American Indian youth mirrors racial discrepancies in the adult correctional system. And according to the Prison Policy Initiative, two thirds of confined youth are held in the most restrictive facilities, or in actual adult jails and prisons. Over 4,500 confined youth — nearly 1 in 10 — are

incarcerated in adult jails and prisons. You know what's astonishing, though? The current statistics actually represent progress. Since 2000, the number of youth in confinement has fallen by an estimated 60 to 70%. This is due to a variety of factors: advocacy, decreasing juvenile crime rates, publicizing of poor conditions, and studies that produced evidence pointing to poor outcomes. Look, I am no education policy expert. And I do not pretend to have all of the answers. Yet, one thing that has become abundantly clear is that American youth would benefit from more resources. And those resources are not going to be found in juvenile detention centers – they are most needed, and will be most effective, in communities and public schools. Young Americans, regardless of background, deserve childhoods punctuated by mistakes, not defined by them. As we continue to analyze, understand, and hopefully dismantle the current carceral state, we must acknowledge that processes and dependence on institutionalization and corrections begins with the hyper-criminalization of children, adolescents, and teens. It is imperative that we become involved (voting, lobbying, advocating) in order to achieve a brighter future for young people so that they remain in classrooms, in society, and out of cellblocks.

Member Spotlight

Congratulations to ACSM Leadership Team Member Morgan Bengel, Curator & Site Administrator of Old New-Gate Prison & Copper Mine! On May 13, 2023 her site unveiled a new sculpture: "The Metal Man,"



by artist Danny Killion, who was formerly incarcerated, complete with a public reception. The piece offers a powerful statement about the forced labor at the prison.

Want your work featured in the next edition of The Forum? Share with us at thecarceral@gmail.com!