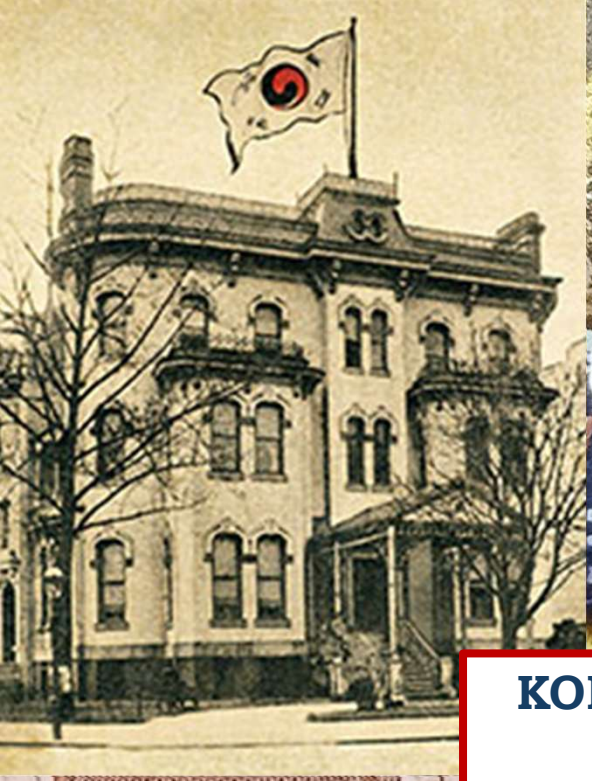

KOREAN AMERICANS IN WASHINGTON, D.C.: A HISTORIC CONTEXT STUDY

This material was produced with assistance from the Underrepresented Communities Grant Program from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior.

The Historic Preservation Office of the District of Columbia Office of Planning was the grant recipient, entering a cooperative agreement with the D.C. Preservation League to carry out the work of preparing context studies on the Korean American and Chinese American communities of the District of Columbia, nominations of related properties to the National Register of Historic Places, and amendments of existing historic district nominations with additional documentation of Asian American contributions.

The D.C. Preservation League engaged the 1882 Foundation as consultant and the principal preparers of the contexts.

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CONTRIBUTORS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Remembering our old friend and colleague Franklin S. Odo, Ph.D. (1939-2022)

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Additional thanks for their research, and editorial and collegial support and collaboration:
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- The Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage; University of Maryland Historic Preservation Program and the School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation; Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center; Chinese Community Church; Old Korean Legation Museum; Philip Jaisohn Memorial Foundation; University of Maryland Department of American Studies; American University Humanities Truck; American University Public History Program; Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation; District of Columbia Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs; Foundry United Methodist Church; D.C. History Center; D.C. Public Library People's Archives; George Washington University Special Collections Research Center; Library of Congress Asian Division Reading Room.

Cover photo credits

Clockwise from upper left:

A circa 1910 postcard of the Korean Legation. Collection of Ann Hyeongju, courtesy of the Old Korean Legation Museum.

Local Korean and Korean American residents in traditional clothing for an Asian Heritage event at the Sylvan Theater, 1979 or 1980. Courtesy of Hi Saeng duBusc.

Protest at the White House demanding an end to military rule in the Republic of Korea, 1963. Associated Press photograph, reprinted with permission of the D.C. Public Library, Star Collection. Copyright *The Washington Post*.

Participants in the First Korean Congress, 1919. University of Southern California Korean Heritage and Digital Libraries, Korean American Digital Archive Collection.

A program for a 1967 martial arts tournament at the D.C. Armory. Collection of Harry Lee Chow.

Young Sok Chong, daughter-in-law Myung Hee Chong, and her son Jesse in front of the family's 1900 Capitol Avenue store, circa 1984. Courtesy of Jesse Chong.

Philip and Muriel Jaisohn, 1894. Courtesy of the Philip Jaisohn Memorial Foundation.

Library of Congress.

INTRODUCTION

This historic context examines the migration, network building, and community development of Korean Americans in Washington, D.C. It covers the period from the mid-1880s to the early 1990s, spanning a historical period when Koreans first traveled to the United States for diplomatic activities to the formation of a multigenerational community of residents and its institutions and businesses within the city and in suburban Maryland and Virginia.

The narrative extends to the early 1990s to account for two major forces that reverberated for the Korean diaspora in the U.S. In the late 1980s, ongoing growth of the Korean economy and the end of the military dictatorship relieved some of the pressures that had compelled many to emigrate from Korea in the 1970s and 1980s.[1] Stateside in the 1980s, the presence of Korean-owned businesses in low-income, primarily Black communities, became a source of contention in several urban centers, including Washington, New York and Los Angeles. Instances of negative interactions between Korean business-owners and local communities were widely covered in media, inflaming already complex dynamics. The 1992 Los Angeles uprising, one of the largest instances of civil unrest in twentieth-century America, was a testament to these simmering tensions, having a wide-reaching impact on discourse about structural racism and inequality in urban communities. With Korean businesses sustaining about half of all property damages, the events of 1992 had a significant effect on how the public and Koreans themselves, viewed their place in American society.

As of 2020, the D.C. metropolitan region had the third largest Korean American population after Los Angeles and New York City, numbering about 96,000.[2] In 2022, there were 103,718 Koreans in the D.C. metro region.[3] Even so, the number of Koreans living and working in the city of Washington itself remains relatively small. The context narratives that follow highlight three notable dynamics related to Korean American histories tied to D.C. sites:

1. A transnational context is particularly important due to the instability of the Korean peninsula over the past century and a half. The first two historic periods discussed relate to efforts to assert Korea's independence from the time of its first treaty with the United States through World War II. The struggle for independence conditioned the reasons and ways subsequent generations of Koreans settled in the United States, and Washington in particular.
2. The Maryland and Virginia suburbs have far more Korean Americans than D.C. However, Korean Americans established several significant and enduring community-serving and religious organizations in D.C. before relocating outside the city, where they thrive today.

[1] After Mexico and the Philippines, Korea was the third largest sending country of origin for immigrants to the U.S. during this time period. See, for example, Shelley Sang-Hee Lee, *A New History of Asian America* (New York and London: Routledge, 2014); Il Kim, *Korean Americans: Past, Present, and Future* (Elizabeth, New Jersey: Hollym International Corps, 2004); Pyong Gap Min, "The Immigration of Koreans to the U.S.: A Review of 45 Year (1965-2009) Trends" in *Development and Society* Vol. 40, No. 2 (December 2011), 195-223.

[2] Pew Research Center, "Top ten metro areas by Korean population, 2019," https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/chart/top-10-u-s-metropolitan-areas-by-korean-population-2019/. In 2023, the population is estimated at about 103,500.

[3] Figure calculated by Julie Park (University of Maryland) using the same definition parameters of the Pew Research Center report. The number is from a five-year estimate, Census data table B02018.

3. Residentially, Korean Americans have never been heavily concentrated in D.C., but they have made an outsized contribution to the city's commercial ecosystem.

The telling of Korean American history often follows these conventional historical periods and themes:

- The arrival of the first group migration of Koreans as agricultural workers to Hawai`i in 1903;[4]
- Korean American settlement and community life in Hawai`i and the continental U.S., from the early 1900s through World War II, and the emergence of an independence movement across the diaspora;[5]
- Korean liberation from Japanese colonialism and the impact of the Cold War on immigration policy, from the arrival of military spouses and "orphaned" children through the landmark 1965 Hart-Celler Immigration and Nationality Act;[6]
- Korean immigrant entrepreneurship and urban inter-racial tension in the 1970s through the 1990s.[7]

This context will address these broad waves of activity and precede them with a description of a nineteenth-century historical context.

Today, the U.S. population of Koreans and Korean Americans is estimated at over two million. This number reflects mostly growth through immigration, primarily as a result of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (Hart-Celler Act), which enabled large-scale Korean immigration in the 1970s and 1980s through a new preference system that favored certain professions and prioritized family reunification. For the period under consideration, among Asian immigrants, Koreans have historically been the most widely dispersed across the U.S., less likely to congregate in areas with existing large populations of compatriots.[8]

This report highlights the transnational dimension of Korean American experiences—the way that their moves to and activities in D.C. were often made with an eye toward politics in Korea. Koreans came to Washington beginning in the early 1900s and continued through the 1980s to engage in political lobbying or protest.

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[4] See Lee Houchins and Chang-su Houchins, "The Korean Experience in America, 1903-1924," *Pacific Historical Review* 43, No. 4 (1974): 548–75.

[5] See Mary Paik Lee, *Quiet Odyssey: A Pioneer Korean Women in America* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990); Kim Ronyoung, *Clay Walls* (New York: Permanent Press, 1996); Richard Kim, *The Quest for Statehood: Korean Immigrant Nationalism and U.S. Sovereignty, 1905-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); David Yoo, *Contentious Spirits: Religion in Korean American History, 1903-1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010).

[6] See Soojin Pate, *From Orphan to Adoptee: U.S. Empire and Genealogies of Korean Adoption* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014); Christina Stein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

[7] See Kwang Chung Kim, *Koreans in the hood: Conflict with African Americans* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999): 39-59; Pyong Gap Min, *Caught in the Middle: Korean Communities in New York and Los Angeles* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1996).

[8] Eui-Young Yu and Peter Choe, "Korean Population in the United States as Reflected in the Year 2000 Census" in *Amerasia Journal*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (2003/2004), 15.

Sites referenced in this report are both extant and demolished. None in D.C. were purpose-built for a particular use by Koreans. Small in number and short on resources initially, Koreans in D.C. adapted their needs to existing places. Few of the sites included in the Associated Properties List would meet the criteria for a historic landmark designation or listing in the National Register of Historic Places solely for their association with Korean Americans. However, they are historically significant for illustrating how Koreans engaged people, places, and ideas in this city—their place, literally, in a cosmopolitan, complex, and sometimes contentious social and political geography.

This narrative draws heavily on the 350-plus-page publication *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area* produced by the Korean Association of Greater Washington (now the Korean American Foundation-Greater Washington). It is available in Korean and English in editions from 1994, 1995, and 2009. Young Chang Chae served as editor-in-chief of the 1990s editions. Woong Joe Kang was the editor-in-chief of the 2009 edition. Kyu won Lee was the translator who worked on both English editions. Direct citations for information in those volumes is minimal. It is an impressive accomplishment involving a wide community of collaborators, and it was a guide to help structure this inquiry. This source is relatively accessible through libraries. Circulating copies in English and Korean are made available through university libraries such as the University of Maryland. The D.C. Public Library and D.C. History Center have non-circulating copies that can be accessed on site. The 1993 Korean edition and the 1995 and 2009 English-language editions are consistent for the most part, but there is expanded content in the 2005 edition. The 2009 edition is accessible as a PDF from the organization's website: kafgw.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/searchable-PDF_min.pdf.

Names and Terms

A major challenge for tracking organizations and people across time through print sources is that there are many inconsistencies in English spellings of Korean proper names, both for individuals and organizations. Korean personal names are typically made up of at least three syllables, with the given name composed of two syllables. Names are transliterated into English using varied spellings, and the proper order of words and names is often transposed. Organizational names are inconsistently translated into English in ways that can be misleading.[9]

Herein, Korean terms are transliterated or translated according to the most consistent spelling found in the research. The standard of romanization before 2000 was the McCune-Reischauer system and, after 2000, the revised romanization. Neither system has been favored; instead, the narrative follows what already existed in print.

Korean names are usually presented with the surname first, but not always consistently. Many names instead reflect the way the individuals referred to themselves in print sources or were commonly referred to by others. For example, 변수 is referred to as Pyon Su, although he seems to have used Penn Su in official paperwork. 서광범 is transliterated here as Soh Kwang Pom, although he was often referred to in newspapers of his time as Soh Kwang-pom.

[9] For example, it is unclear if a group identified as the Association of Koreans in America is the same as an organization referred to as the Korean-American Association.

Some people with Korean names also took Western names. In some cases, both the "American" and Korean names are presented in the Western format—surname last—for consistency. For organizational names, the most common translated names are used. Korean names are usually provided in parentheses, along with alternate spellings. All translations are done by the authors of this report unless otherwise indicated.

The term "Korean American" is employed to encompass a broad range of people, including those born in the U.S., naturalized citizens, and immigrants who were not naturalized. The contours of Korean American history, experience, and culture involve the interactions of people of varying legal statuses. Events and the activities of Koreans outside the U.S. also shaped the experiences and opportunities of those who settled in D.C.

Population Numbers

Census counts for Koreans are not the best means for estimating the population, for a number of reasons. There was no census classification for Koreans before 1910, and "Korean" as a racial category was removed from the 1950 census. From 1905 until World War II, while Korea was a protectorate of Japan, Koreans in the U.S. were recognized as Japanese subjects. Finally, movement between the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia made individuals difficult to track or count.

This chart primarily reflects numbers from Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, for the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States*, Population Division Working Paper No. 56, U.S. Census Bureau, 2002. Counts for Maryland and Virginia are for the entire states, not just the D.C. metropolitan area. Although Koreans were first classified as a separate category in U.S. Census in 1910, no Koreans were enumerated in D.C. at that time. [10]

	1920	**1930**	**1940**	**1950**	**1960**	**1970**	**1980**	**1990**
D.C.	5 (105)	1 (30)	3 (??)			391	338	814
MD	1		2			2,047	14,989	30,320
VA		4	1			1,052	12,550	30,164

[10] The numbers in parentheses for 1920 and 1930 are calculated from the IPUMS data (usa.ipums.org/usa/intro.shtml) by Natasha Chhabra and Julie Park of University of Maryland, whose estimates are larger than the numbers recorded in Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, for the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States*, Population Division Working Paper No. 56, U.S. Census Bureau, 2002. Anecdotal information supports higher numbers than was recorded Gibson and Jung, in particular for the 1930s.

PART 1
1883 to 1903—BEGINNINGS: DIPLOMACY, EXILE, EDUCATION

Origins

The arrival of the first Koreans in D.C. coincides with the beginnings of a national immigration policy to exclude Asians, first targeting the Chinese population in the American West. It was during the last decades of the nineteenth century that the first racial or national categories for Asians were introduced in the U.S. Census: Chinese in 1870, and Japanese in 1890.[11] Koreans were not officially accounted for at this time as their numbers were very small, comprised of diplomats and their families, and exiles and students.

As historian Gary Okihiro pithily observed, "Asians did not go to America; Americans went to Asia." That is, geopolitics and global capitalism shaped U.S. interventions in the Asia-Pacific region, and it is from those contacts that Asian American histories emerge. It is appropriate then that the most significant property in D.C. associated with Koreans is the Old Korean Legation at Logan Circle, purchased in 1891 by King Gojong (고종).[12]

In the late 1800s, after centuries of purposeful isolation, Korea was negotiating relationships with its more powerful neighbors to preserve its sovereignty. Each was fiercely meddling in the peninsula's domestic affairs, and engagement led to a series of treaties with China, Japan, Russia, and the United States, which all vied for access to the region's resources, trade opportunities, and strategic geography.[13] An 1871 American expedition to open relations with the kingdom ended violently and inconclusively, but threats from its neighbors encouraged Korea to conclude the "Treaty of Peace, Amity, Commerce and Navigation" with the United States on May 22, 1882. A year later, the U.S. deployed diplomatic personnel to Korea and, within a few months, a Korean envoy was on his way to America.

For Korea, diplomatic engagement with the U.S. was part of a strategy through which the ruling Joseon (or Chosŏn) dynasty hoped to balance China and Japan. The treaty ushered in the arrival of American diplomats, businesspeople, and missionaries. It corresponded to a period of intense governmental instability, characterized by precipitous shifts in influence among internal factions supported variably by China, Japan, and Russia.

Christianity arrived in the 1780s with Koreans exposed to missionaries in China. Later Western proselytizers were associated with both social reform and modernity and became an influential force. They were required to steer clear of politics, but some held posts as trusted counsel to the royal family, advising on matters of business, economic development and infrastructure. They established churches, set up modern schools, and introduced Western social welfare practices. They were conduits for virtually all Koreans who came to the U.S. before 1950. Missionaries had encouraged the Korean government to support the first large-scale migration of Koreans to Hawai`i in 1903, recruiting migrants from their congregations.

[11] In 1860, "Chinese" was a category only in the California state census.
[12] Gojong is currently the standard spelling, but older sources consulted for this section were still using the older spelling, Kojong.
[13] Previously, the ruling Joseon dynasty had effectively closed itself off from foreign influence, including from European and U.S. engagement, and was aptly known as "the hermit kingdom."

Korea was theoretically ripe for emigration. Population increases led to deforestation that precipitated recurrent flooding, contributing to a general disrepair of irrigation systems. Weak rulers, largely controlled by wealthy landowning families, failed to settle disputes over water rights. The resulting Donghak peasant uprising (동학 농민 혁명) of 1894 was only quelled with the help of Chinese and Japanese troops, triggering the Sino-Japanese War. The tightening grip of Japan would mean a closer relationship with that country, which also instituted an infrastructure program.[14] With tenuous ties to a country as distant as the United States, only about 50 Koreans set foot in America before the turn of the century.[15] They came as diplomats, students, or exiles—all enjoying privileged exemptions from the anti-Asian immigration apparatus developed during this period, from the 1875 Page Act through the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and its renewals. These laws specifically legislated against laborers and women coming from China and were primarily targeted at preventing the permanent settlement of Chinese in West Coast communities, but they came to affect Koreans as well.

The nineteenth-century Korean imprint on D.C. was necessarily small, but it was influential, taking the form of diplomatic and intellectual contributions. These activities and their legacies elaborate on the entwined evangelical, imperial, and scientific aspirations of the period in the context of a national capital stepping onto an international stage. Nineteenth-century international geopolitics shaped Korea's sovereignty struggles and political challenges of the twentieth century, which in turn conditioned the terms and experiences of Korean migrants. As the capital of the United States, Washington was an important site of Korean diplomatic efforts to obtain recognition as a sovereign nation. The Joseon dynasty went to great efforts to establish a physical space for operations, and its legation building would retain symbolic resonance for Koreans in exile and in the U.S. diaspora even after the building passed from their ownership.

Korean histories in D.C. in the late nineteenth century reflect the city's uniqueness as a destination for a specific privileged class of people—those of higher social station, means, and connections, including diplomats; those who were in exile due to their political activities; and those in pursuit of Western education.

The Korean Legation in the United States

In 1883, King Gojong dispatched the first official delegation (or *bobingsa*, 보빙사) to the United States. It arrived in San Francisco in September and made its way across the country by rail,

[14] Myung Soo Cha, "The Economic History of Korea," EH.net/encyclopedia/the-economic-history-of-korea.
[15] Estimates vary. Richard Kim 2011 gives this number for the years between 1880 and 1903 (15). Jean H. Park, In her dissertation "Exiled Envoys: Korean Students in New York City, 1907-1937" (Columbia University. 2021), writes that there were approximately 64 students between 1890 and 1905 (121), citing H. Brett Melendy, Asians in America: Filipinos, Koreans, and East Indians (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1977). Ick Young Lew in *Early Korean Encounters with the United States and Japan: Six Essays on Late Nineteenth-Century Korea (*Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society, Korea Branch, 2008) writes that between 1882 and 1905, there were fewer than 70 students enrolled in U.S. schools (24). The number of students is estimated at 80 to 100 between 1883 and 1910 is in Byung Joon Jung, "한말 미국 유학 지식인의 서구 '사회과학' 수용과 현실 인식" ["The Learning of Western Social Science by the Koreans Studying in the United States and their Understanding of the Changing Times in the late Chosen Dynasty"] in *Ewha History Research*, No. 44 (2012), kci.go.kr/kciportal/ci/sereArticleSearch/ciSereArtiView.kci?sereArticleSearch Bean.artiId=ART001668819.

stopping in Chicago, Boston, and New York before arriving in D.C., where the members spent most of their time before their mid-November departure for home. This small group was comprised of government officials, attachés, an interpreter, and a secretary to an official American escort. They visited government agencies and cultural sites, such as the U.S. Mint, the Agriculture and Treasury departments, the Bureau of Education, and the Smithsonian Institution.[16] The delegates were relatively young, most in their twenties, selected with the expectation that they would absorb new ideas that could benefit Korea's modernization. The press traced their activities with curiosity.

> The gentlemen are short in stature and have the Mongolian features. Some of them wear sparse black beards and a few affect long mustaches. They are highly educated in their own literature and Chinese and Japanese. They are Buddhists in religion. It is contrary to Korean politeness to exhibit any feelings. Stoicism is of the highest type of good breeding. It is therefore difficult to tell what are their impressions of this country. But they certainly must have been startling, for they are the first Koreans who have ever left their native country for the New World. They are rapidly acquiring a knowledge of English. They exhibit no race particularities other than their remarkable costumes. They eat ordinary fare in an ordinary manner and have been very apt in adapting the customs of our civilization.[17]

The first Korean delegation to the U.S. Photo by George C. Foulk. George C. Foulk Collection, American Geographical Society Library, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries.

[16] For details on this mission, see Gary D. Walter, "The Korean Special Mission to the United States in 1883," *Journal of Korean Studies* 1, No. 1 (July-December 1969): 89-142.
[17] "The Embassy from Corea," *The New York Times*, September 18, 1883.

In 1887, four years after this visit, the Korean government established a permanent legation in Washington. American missionary Horace Allen,[18] who had been living in Korea, was appointed as foreign secretary to the legation, charged with furnishing the offices and quarters and making them operational.[19] By early 1888, the legation was operating from a rented building at 1513 O Street NW. The first minister was Park Chung Yang (박정양, 1842-1905). He and his staff performed official diplomatic duties from this site for eleven months, until he was recalled through the interference of a Chinese government official concerned about his assertions of Korean diplomatic autonomy.

A new minister would not be installed for several years, but operations continued through the staff. In 1889, the Legation moved to a new site, the former residence of Civil War veteran and diplomat Seth Ledyard Phelps at 15 Iowa (now Logan) Circle, today's 1500 13th Street. After initially renting the building, King Gojong purchased it in 1891. Ye Cha Yun (이채연, 1861-1900), the former secretary, now functioning as chargé d'affaires, led the building's renovation, which attracted great public interest. *The Evening Star* reported on the expansion of interior spaces and the refurnishing. [20] An 1893 article in *Demorest's Family Magazine* published photographs of several rooms, describing the spaces as "tasteful," with "extremely modern quarters, where all the newest accessories, from steam heat and electric bells to furnishing of brocade satin, and plush" could be found.[21]

Several women's magazines with national readerships reported on the legation building and its occupants. *The Puritan*, "a journal for gentlewomen," described the vexing curiosity of the public, "When the legation was first established its doors were besieged, day after day, by applicants for admission. Many of the visitors seemed to be laboring under the impression that these good people from the Hermit Nation were on a level with monkeys—monkeys enticed over here by generous Uncle Sam for the express purpose of amusing the class who find leisure a luxury thrust upon them."[22] The writer seems to express a cosmopolitan attitude that circulated among educated, upper class society during the end of the century; and it may have provided a softer landing for some international visitors and residents.[23]

The press described Minister Ye and his wife, Lady Ye of the Bae clan, as sociable and entertaining while they regularly interacted with Americans through their attendance of services at the Church of the Covenant (Old National Presbyterian Church) at Connecticut Avenue and N Street NW. [24]

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[18] Horace Allen (1858-1932) was a doctor and the first American missionary in Korea. He served as an advisor to King Gojong, and after living in D.C. for two years working at the Korean Legation, he returned to Korea as U.S. Embassy staff in Seoul. He was be instrumental in the emigration of Korean plantation workers to Hawai`i.

[19] This initial location of the legation was a property referred to as the Fisher House, which is no longer extant. For more information, see Jong-Hun Kim, "최초의 주미조선공사관피서옥(皮瑞屋) 개설과 그 의미에 관한 연구" ["A Study on the First Korean Legation Building, The Fisher House, in Washington, D.C."], *Journal of Architectural History* 28, No. 6 (2019): 77-85, doi.org/10.7738/JAH.2019.28.6.077

[20] "The Korean Legation: Mr. and Mrs. Ye Cha Yun and Their Home in This City," *The Evening Star*, July 4, 1891.

[21] "The Foreign Legations at Washington," *Demorest's Family Magazine* XXIX, No. 7, May 1893, 523-525. The article includes photos of interior spaces.

[22] Catherine Frances Cavanagh, "The Corean Legation," *The Puritan* (November 1897): 38. See similar coverage in Mary Logan Tucker, "The Korean Legation," *Home Magazine* (1891): 5.

[23] For more information on D.C.'s Gilded Age, see Kathryn Allamong Jacob, "'Like Moths to a Candle' The Noveaux Riches Flock to Washington," in *Urban Odyssey: A Multicultural History of Washington, D.C.*, ed. Francie Curro Cary (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), 79-96.

[24] "The Korean Legation: Mr. and Mrs. Ye Cha Yun and Their Home in This City," *The Evening Star*, July 4, 1891.

Above: A visit by Korean Legation staff to Mount Vernon, May 6, 1889. Secretary Ye Cha Yun and his wife are shown in white garments (right). The first minister had visited the site, and Ye Cha Yun continued these visits with legation staff. They reportedly took inspiration from George Washington's fight for American independence and commitment to a democratic system of government. Photo attributed to Luke C. Dillo. Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington at Mount Vernon. Courtesy of The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.

Left: A postcard view of the Korean Legation mailed from Washington October 29, 1907. Collection of the Old Korean Legation Museum.

Ye was fluent in English and had first come to D.C. as a translator with the 1883 Korean mission. Articles complimented Lady Bae's "elegant hanboks, her classy but friendly manner, and her outgoing personality."[25] When she became pregnant, this too was reported. Her child was born on October 12, 1890 and christened at the Church of the Covenant. The first Korean American by nativity, he was named Washon (or Hwason, 화손) to honor the city in which he was born. Sadly, he only lived two months, buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in Georgetown in a plot secured by Sevellon A. Brown, the son-in-law of Seth Phelps, the previous owner of the Korean Legation building.[26] His namesake city mourned with the family.

Over the next decade, different factions and foreign influences rose and fell within the Korean government, and new ministers were sent to Washington. Japan's dominance over the peninsula continued to grow, manifest in its victory in the 1894-1895 war with China and culminating in its outright annexation of Korea in 1910. After eighteen years, the legation property passed from Korean to Japanese possession and was sold to an American, Horace K. Fulton.[27] Soon after, Koreans defiantly printed postcards depicting the legation building still flying the Korean flag (*Taegeukgi*, 태극기). These were reportedly circulated among the diaspora as an assertion of independence.

An 1890 Oak Hill Cemetery grave marker for the infant son of legation chargé d'affaires Ye Cha Yun. Courtesy of Old Korean Legation Museum.

[25] "Corean Minister Going," *The New York Daily Tribune*, February 4, 1900: 3.

[26] Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation, *자주외교와 한미우호의 상징 주미대한제국공사관* [*Old Korean Legation in Washington D.C.: The Symbol of Diplomatic Sovereignty and Korea-US Friendship*] (Seoul: Cultural Heritage Administration. 2019), 60-61.

[27] After comparing the signatures on the document, some experts suggest that the deed to Japan was forged.

"The Corean Legation" by Catherine Frances Cavanagh ran in* The Puritan *in November 1897. The spread included an interior photograph of the Korean Legation and a portrait of the Ye family. Their young son was reportedly attending elementary school in Washington, already fluent in English.* Courtesy *of the Old Korean Legation Museum.

Over the next century, the Old Legation would serve multiple purposes. From 1940 to 1950, it was used by African American soldiers as a recreation center. In 1960 it became the office for the Transport Workers' Union. On June 6, 1972, the Logan Circle neighborhood was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district. In 1977, Old Legation was purchased by Timothy and Lauretta Jenkins for use as a residence. In the 1980s, Korean scholars had begun to recover the building's historical significance. Starting in the early 2000s, a number of groups, including the Korean American Foundation and the Christian Council of Korea, made offers to the building's owners. On October 18, 2012, through the joint efforts of multiple Korean officials and the Korean American community, the Korean government purchased the building from the Jenkinses for $3,500,000.

The Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation, a division of the Cultural Heritage Administration of the Republic of Korea, undertook extensive research to inform the building's renovation and restoration.[28] Among the archival resources of value were reports of damages to the legation property caused by a fire in 1898. Inventories were sent to King Gojong in 1900 and are now in the collection of the Seoul National Museum. During the latest building renovation, the restoration team recovered, from behind fireplace mantle on the second floor, correspondence including an invitation to a Christmas party from President Cleveland.

The building opened to the public as a museum on May 22, 2018 to educate the public about Korean-American diplomatic history through the use of documents such as coverage of the ministers and their families in popular American magazines; the published diary of first Minister Park Jung Yang; the published diary of missionary-diplomat Horace Allen; and the photos and correspondence of Admiral George Clayton Foulk, a U.S. naval officer assigned to the first Korean delegation to the U.S. and charges d'affaires of the U.S. Legation in Korea.

Left: Pak Yong Kiu, chargé d'affaires, works in the back parlor of the Korean Legation at Logan Circle, circa 1895. Collection of the Independence Hall of Korea.
Right: The same room, renovated, in 2018. Courtesy of the Old Korean Legation Museum.

[28] See Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation, 자주외교와 한미 우호의 상징) 주미대한제국공사관 [*Old Korean Legation in Washington D.C.: The Symbol of Diplomatic Sovereignty and Korea-US Friendship*], (Seoul: Overseas Cultural Heritage Foundation, 2019); Jong-Hun Kim, "A Study on the First Korean Legation Building, The Fisher House, in Washington, D.C." *Journal of Architectural History* 28, No. 6 (December 31, 2019). doi.org/10.7738/JAH.2019.28.6.077.

Prominent Exiles

Two of the three most notable figures of early local Korean American history are men who initially visited D.C. as diplomats and returned later, settling as exiles: Soh Kwang Pom and Pyon Su (Penn Su). The third was So Jae P'il, known here as Philip Jaisohn, the only one of the three who lived beyond the turn of the century. Their changing fortunes within the Korean government reflected the shifting tides of influence. At a time when pathways to the U.S. were extremely limited for most Asians, all three became American citizens or had at least initiated the naturalization process. Their ability to carve out a place in a new society reflects the privilege accorded to their higher station in the cosmopolitan circles in which they moved. All three seem to have energetically engaged with local social and intellectual circles.

Born into middle-class or aristocratic families, these men came of age in Korea during a turbulent period when larger neighboring powers—Japan, China, and Russia—vied for control and influence over the government and territory. This was also the period during which the U.S. and Korea were in the early stages of establishing diplomatic relations. The men were involved in a "progressive" movement that sought to enlighten and reform Korean government and society. Each held appointments that placed them in positions of trust near the royal family, but they were dissatisfied with corruption and weakness in the government. They hoped to restore the king's power and build a modern bureaucracy, economy, and infrastructure that would support the welfare of the people and remove self-dealing leaders and families.

In December 1884, the men participated in a bloody and ultimately unsuccessful three-day coup d'état, the Gapsin Coup. They fled to Japan, and then the U.S. Facing possible execution if they were to return, they chose to remain in the United States and establish new lives. Each leveraged connections to U.S. missionaries, diplomats, and businesspeople for support along the way.

Pyon Su (변수, 1861-1891) or Penn Su, as his name was most often written during his lifetime, was the middle-class son and grandson of government interpreters. In the early 1880s, he had studied sericulture and chemistry in Japan before being selected to join the 1883 Korean mission to the United States. Although he was not one of the leaders among the coup plotters, Pyon was a member of the progressive movement and slated for a position in the new administration. Forced into exile in Japan, he made his way to the United States by early 1886. In contrast to Soh and Jaisohn, he seems to have headed straight for Washington, presumably because he was familiar with the city and had contacts from his earlier visit.[29]

Because his transit to the United States had been abetted by people who had stolen money from the royal family, Pyon did not seek the assistance of people he had met during his first visit to D.C. His ability to settle down, though, was enabled by an American official, Everett Frazer, the honorary consul general for Korea in New York. He had met Pyon during the 1883 mission, and he refused to extradite him to Korea to face punishment.[30]

In D.C., Pyon Su applied himself to educational pursuits. He first appears in the annual city

[29] Kwang-rin Lee, "Pyon Su the First Korean Student in an American College," in *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 58, No. 1 (1983).

[30] Frazer first met Pyon in New York City during the Korean mission trip in 1883, when he was head of the East Indian Merchants' Committee.

directory of 1887. Listed as Penn Su, he resided at the Berlitz School of Language at 1538 I Street NW, where he was studying English. In September 1887, Pyon matriculated to the Maryland Agricultural College (now the University of Maryland), where he studied agronomy and helped to found a student club. He supported himself by working at the Bureau of Vital Statistics.[31] In 1891, he became the first Korean to graduate from an American university, after which he was employed at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, crafting reports about farming in Japan and China.

Above left: Portrait of Pyon Su, 1891. University of Maryland Archives.
Above right: Pyon-Chen Hall opened in 2020 at the University of Maryland and is named for the school's first Korean and Chinese graduates. Photo by Grace Dahye Kwon.

Pyon Su would have become eligible to naturalize in 1893, three years after he had submitted to the Supreme Court of D.C. his declaration of intent to become a U.S. citizen.[32] But on October 22, 1891, he died after being struck by a train in Maryland. He was buried in Ammendale (or De La Salle) Catholic graveyard in Beltsville, Maryland, in a plot reserved for Commodore Daniel Ammen, whose sons Pyon had befriended while in school. At the time, a headstone was erected which includes an inscription of his name in English and *hangul*. In 2003, on the hundredth anniversary of the first large-scale migration of Koreans to the U.S., the Greater Washington Centennial Committee of Korean Immigration to the United States installed a new marker adjacent to the old one.[33]

Soh Kwang Pom (1859-1897, 서광범, variously Romanized as Suh Kwang Beom, So Kwang-

[31] "UMD Pioneers Remembered," Terrapin Tales from the University of Maryland Archives, August 10, 2020, umdarchives.wordpress.com/2020/08/10/umd-pioneers-remembered/.
[32] The declaration had to be submitted at least three years prior to naturalization application.
[33] The Pyon Su Room in the Adele H. Stamp Student Union at the University of Maryland is named for him. In 2020, the university opened new student housing, Pyon-Chen Hall, honoring its first Korean and Chinese graduates.

pom, So Kwangbom, Suh Kwang-pom, So Koang Pom, Seo Gwang-beom) was also known by his adopted name Kennedy or Kenneth Soh. Like Pyon, he visited Washington in 1883 as a secretary with the first Korean diplomatic mission. This trip likely introduced him to several agencies and people with whom he would connect in exile, including the staff of the Bureau of Education and Ensign George Clayton Foulk, who travelled back to Korea with the group and served as naval attaché and acting chargé d'affaires at the U.S. Legation in Seoul.[34]

Pyon Su's grave in Beltsville, Maryland has two markers. The Korean/hangul on the original tombstone (left) transliterates his name as it was commonly written in English. Photos by Robert Provine.

After the 1884 coup attempt, Soh also fled to Japan and then the United States, landing in San Francisco in spring 1885, a year before Pyon Su was able to cross. He made his way to the East Coast with financial support from John Underwood, the millionaire brother of American missionary Horace Underwood, whom Soh had befriended in Japan.[35] Sources place Soh in New York and New Jersey for the next few years, during which time he supported himself as a handyman while attending Rutgers University.[36] He was living in D.C. by the end of 1886.[37] Soh is listed in the 1887 *Boyd's* city directory with an address of 1007 13th Street NW. In a letter of August 1887, he informed his old associate, now-Lieutenant Foulk, that he was living in D.C. with Pyon Su.[38] Both then worked at the Bureau of Vital Statistics, and Soh eked out a living over the

[34] During the 1883 Mission, Soh also met Everett Frazer, who would serve as executor of his estate. See, too, Walter, "The Korean Special Mission to the United States in 1883."
[35] Horace Underwood (1859-1916) is not to be mistaken with Horace Allen, another Presbyterian missionary. He was born in England, but his family immigrated to the U.S. in the 1870s, where Underwood completed his schooling. He was en route to Korea when the coup broke out, and he had to remain in Japan for several months.
[36] Lew, "Late Nineteenth Century Korean Reformers' Receptivity to Protestantism" in *Early Korean Encounters with the United States and Japan: Six Essays on Late Nineteenth-Century Korea*. The reference to Soh's work as a handyman is from a Korean Wikipedia page, ko.wikipedia.org/wiki/서광범.
[37] Korean Association of Greater Washington, *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993*, Young Chang Chae, ed. (Annandale, Virginia: Korean Association of Greater Washington, 1995), 28. When Soh arrived, Pyon was already enrolled at Maryland Agricultural College.
[38] Robert Oppenheim, *An Asian Frontier: American Anthropology and Korea, 1882-1945* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016), 284.

next decade as a translator working with Smithsonian ethnology curators. Later, he was a clerk, translator, and interpreter for the Bureau of Education. He was an active member and caretaker for the Blavatsky Theosophical Society, an influential pseudo-philosophical organization that drew upon Eastern mysticism. In late 1892, Soh became a U.S. citizen.

In 1895, after progressive politicians gained control of the Korean government, the surviving leaders of the 1884 Gapsin coup were pardoned. Soh was invited back home to serve in government, where he briefly held posts in the education and justice ministries. Soon after, another turn of political events forced him out of office and back to the U.S. From January through August 1896, he served as minister at the Korean Legation in D.C., but he was ultimately replaced by someone from a different political faction.

Soh's dramatically changing fortunes proved detrimental to his health, and he reportedly suffered from tuberculosis. In August 1897, he died at the age of 38 from complications precipitated by a bike ride. There was considerable media coverage of his death and funeral; he seems to have been the object of public curiosity as much for his connection to the Korean Legation as for his involvement in the Theosophical Society. *Washington Post* coverage of his funeral was rather prurient and contains a remarkable level of detail, describing the viewing of his body in his 14th Street home before it was transported to the chapel at Lee's crematory on Pennsylvania Avenue and a small service before cremation. His casket was reportedly draped with a silk American flag as well as his ministerial robes. His friends from the Blavatsky Theosophical Society offered eulogies, which the newspaper quoted liberally.[39]

Portraits of Soh Kwang Bom circa 1882 and 1890.
***Sources:* Encyclopedia of Korean National Culture [한국민족문화대백과] *and International Cultural Association,* Min Tae-won, the Gapsin Coup and Kim Ok-gyun.**

[39]"Rites Over Pom Soh," *The Washington Post,* August 16, 1897: 7.

The 1897 city directory places Soh's residential address at 1450 P Street NW, but his home when he died was 2819 14th Street NW. This house, no longer extant, was reportedly purchased in 1895, the year Soh had returned to Korea. After his death, his property became the source of legal dispute, generating inquiry into its status and his. Had he effectively renounced U.S. citizenship when he returned to Korea to take a government post? What were his rights as a U.S. citizen given his race and nativity? By extension, what were the rights of his family in Korea to his American assets? How had he purchased the property? The Korean Legation claimed he had used governmental funds. And how binding was a verbal will? A Senate bill eventually allowed U.S. property to be held in trust for non-citizen heirs. Everett Frazer, the consul-general of Korea in New York would later manage, lease, and sell the property on behalf of Soh Kwang Pom's widow in Korea.[40]

Seo Jai-pil (서재필, 1864- 1951) was the youngest of the three exiles. He anglicized his name to Philip Jaisohn early on. He is notable as the first Korean immigrant to become a naturalized U.S. citizen and the only Korean to be represented in a monument in D.C.

A portrait of Philip Jaisohn and an 1885 group photo of Soh Kwang Pom and Philip Jaisohn (back row, left and right, respectively) with Pak Yong-hyo and Kim Ok-kyun in Japan after fleeing Korea following the failed Gapsin coup. Courtesy of the Philip Jaisohn Memorial Foundation.

[40] This is the same person who refused to deport Pyon Su to Korea to face punishment for his crimes. With regard to claims that Soh purchased his house with funds stolen from the Korean Legation, see *General Records of the Department of State, Notes from the Korean Legation in the United States to the Department of State, 1883-1906*, Washington National Archives, 1949. For coverage of Soh's estate probate process, see "Pom K. Soh's Will," *New York Times*, August 21, 1897: 2; "Korean Minister's Estate," *New York Times*, February 4, 1898: 3; and "Passed by the House," *The Washington Post*, March 15, 1898: 4. For a detailed description of the legal deliberations related to Soh's property, see E.I. Renick, "A Korean Case," *American Law Review* (November-December 1899), 869-875.

Jaisohn had not accompanied Pyon Su and Soh Kwang Pom on the 1883 Korean mission to the United States. But the three were linked through class connections and educational experiences. Jaisohn's family was affluent, and he had shown academic promise from an early age. He had also been educated in Japan and aspired to apply modern systems and practices towards Korea's reform.

Along with Soh Kwang Pom, Jaisohn was one of the leaders of the 1884 coup attempt. When he fled to Japan, his entire family was severely punished, most, including his wife and child, dying by execution or suicide. From Japan, he and Soh Kwang Pom traveled together to the U.S. Arriving at San Francisco in 1885, he earned money through odd jobs, including furniture delivery. He learned English by attending church services and evening classes at the YMCA.[41] Through his church, he met J.W. Hollenback, a wealthy coal mine operator from Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Hollenback sponsored Jaisohn's move to the East Coast and his enrollment at the Harry Hillman Academy in Norristown, Pennsylvania, where he was a trustee. Jaisohn enrolled at Hillman in September 1886 and paid for his education by working as the headmaster's gardener.

Jaisohn's benefactor encouraged him to become a Christian minister and evangelize Korea. Instead, by autumn 1889, Jaisohn had moved to D.C. and was working for the Army Medical Library translating Japanese medical books into English. This inspired him to enroll at Columbian Medical College (later the George Washington University Medical School), taking classes in the evening. The 1889 city directory identified Jaisohn as a clerk in the surgeon general's office, residing at 1017 12th Street NW. Over the next few years, he was reported at several addresses, including 14th and Sheridan streets NW (1892-1893), 1208 K Street NW (1893-1894), and 1416 Rhode Island Avenue NW (1895-1896).[42]

Jaisohn's personal history included a number of "firsts." In addition to being the first Korean naturalized as an American citizen, in 1890, two years later, he was the first Korean immigrant to obtain a medical degree from a U.S. institution.[43] In 1894, he married Muriel Armstrong, a niece of the former president of the United States James Buchanan. Wed at the Church of the Covenant at Connecticut Avenue and N Street NW, theirs was likely the first interracial marriage for a Korean in the United States.

After receiving his medical degree, Jaisohn worked at Garfield Hospital.[44] He and his wife remained in D.C., where he attempted to establish a private medical practice before he, too, was pardoned by the Korean government for his role in the 1884 coup and invited to return from exile.[45]

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[41] Channing Liem, *America's Finest Gift to Korea: The Life of Philip Jaisohn* (New York: The William Frederick Press, 1952), 32-36; Andrei Lancov, "Seo Jae-pil: Pioneering Reformer, Independence Fighter," *The Korea Times*, December 28, 2011.

[42] These may be residential or business addresses—or both. The 1897 Boyd's directory has a listing for Jaisohn, although he was in Korea by the start of 1896.

[43] Jaisohn was naturalized in Pennsylvania, where he had initially settled on the East Coast, and where he would later return permanently.

[44] *History of the Korean Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-2005* (1995) states that Jaisohn had a medical internship from 1892 to 1893, then received his medical license (31). An article in *The Evening Star* of March 8, 1895 reported that Jaisohn was re-elected as pathologist in charge of the pathological and bacteriological laboratories at Garfield and that he was a member of the executive committee.

[45] The 1894 Boyd's directory lists Jaisohn as a physician at 1208 K Street NW. It is unclear if that is his office, his residence, or both. His 1896 listing mentions his wife, Muriel, gives a residential address of 1500 13th Street NW, the Korean Legation, and an office address of 1416 Rhode Island Ave NW.

Above: Philip Jaisohn (back row, third from left) with other graduating students of Columbian Medical College, 1893.
Below: Muriel and Philip Jaisohn during their honeymoon, 1894. On their marriage certificate, Jaisohn's "color" is given as "Japanese." Photos courtesy of the Philip Jaisohn Memorial Foundation.

Jaisohn may have had direct connections to the Korean Legation building. A legation staffer knew that Jaisohn's private medical practice had not been doing well and that the couple was short on funds. To help, he invited them to stay at the Legation from July to November 1895, preceding their return to Korea. They were housed in the third-floor living quarters, incurring expenses of $200, which Jaisohn later repaid.[46] Jaisohn's November 1895 passport application indicates the legation to be the location where "applicant desires passport to be sent."[47] The 1896 city directory has Jaisohn and his wife at the legation, with a separate address for his office.

In Korea, Jaisohn declined a government position and instead focused on activities that he considered crucial to promoting democratic reform and national sovereignty. He organized the Independence Club (독립협회) and published a newspaper, *Tongnip Shinmum* (독립신문, *The Independent*). By 1898, as Japan consolidated its control of the peninsula, he was again forced to leave.

Jaisohn returned to the U.S. with his wife and a child who had been born abroad. The family would settle permanently in Pennsylvania, but they first stayed in D.C., where his 1898 medical license was issued. The license may have been required for his service as an Army medical officer during the Spanish-American War, but the 1899 city directory identified Jaisohn as again practicing at the Stratford, an apartment house at 14th and Sheridan streets in Brightwood, an address he was associated with six years earlier. His second child Muriel may have been born in Washington, as her maternal grandmother lived here.[48]

Jaisohn's connections to Washington persisted in the twentieth century through his leadership in the Korean Independence Movement. For that reason, in 2008, a statue of him was installed in front of the Korean Consulate at 2320 Massachusetts Avenue NW.

As immigrants and non-white, non-native English speakers, Pyon, Soh, and Jaisohn lived with some obvious disadvantages. Further, in exile, they lost the material and political advantages of the upper-class status into which they had been born. Still, their foreignness and "noble" backgrounds, as well as association with politicians and philanthropists, afforded them many privileges—to

Memorial statue of Philip Jaisohn. Photo by Sojin Kim.

[46] *History of the Korean Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-2005*, 31, names Pak Yong Gyu as the legislative staffer who helped Jaisohn.

[47] Dr. Juman Kim, Director of the Program in Law and American Civilization at Towson College, provided an image of the passport application.

[48] The 1940 census for Delaware indicates that his daughter Muriel was born in Pennsylvania—but all of the dates of births of the family members are incorrect by over a decade, which calls into question the accuracy of the information. Dr. Sun-pyo Hong, an expert on the life of Philip Jaisohn, surmises that Muriel was born in D.C., personal communication in Korean with Grace Dahye Kwon and Sojin Kim, January 11, 2022.

circulate in cosmopolitan, intellectual circles; to live and work in white spaces, and to own property. They were privileged by not being racialized as Chinese or Black, second-class citizens at the time. Some historians have suggested that the anglicization of Jaisohn's name may have obscured or de-emphasized his race and ethnicity.[49] Both Soh and Jaisohn were enrolled in institutions of higher learning that would not admit Black students until the 1950s. Several Western states had enacted legislation excluding Asians from marrying outside their race, and a similar law was considered in D.C. during the 1910s, but never enacted, so Jaisohn's marriage to Muriel Armstrong was legal.[50] On the other hand, numerous private residential covenants excluding non-white residential tenants or buyers were executed in Washington during this era, but these appear not to have impeded at least these three exiles.

To some degree, their access—their ability to attend school, take white-collar jobs, naturalize, own property, marry whom they chose—underlines how, during this period, the anti-Asian sentiment behind the 1875 Page Act and the 1882 Exclusion Act specifically targeted Chinese women and laborers. It also reflects how immigration laws were variably enforced in regional courts. These men's class origins and educations, their small numbers, their professions, and their connections to mainline Christian denominations spared them from accusations of unfair competition to native industrial or agricultural labor. Although immigration and citizenship restrictions were expanded to exclude all Asians, this would not take place until after 1910. In the late-nineteenth century, Koreans were still so small in numbers that there was not even a census category for them.

The experiences of Pyon Su, Soh Kwang Pom, and Philip Jaisohn were forged from extraordinary circumstances. But their exceptional opportunities in D.C. were shaped by specific intellectual and political currents tied to the institutions—national and international, governmental and quasi-governmental—based in the nation's capital. The presence of these three men coincided with and contributed to an emergent scientific interest in Korea which related to contemporaneous U.S. military, diplomatic, and evangelical interventions in the region. The convergence of these attentions produced opportunities for ethnologists from the Smithsonian Institution, who began systematically to collect and catalog natural and ethnographic material related to Korea. The first such items were collected by military officers and missionaries in the mid-1880s. With enough in hand by 1889, the Smithsonian produced a display of its Korean collections more than three years prior to a Korea exhibition at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.[51] Walter Hough was the primary cataloger of the Smithsonian's Korea materials. His 1891 report on the collections acknowledged the work of Pyon, Soh, and Jaisohn in providing translation assistance and descriptions.[52] Soh's connection to Hough, and by extension to the Smithsonian, was reportedly the deepest and most

[49] Shawn McHale, "From Asia to America: Uncovering GW's First Asian Students," *GW Magazine* (Fall 2007), www2.gwu.edu/~magazine/archive/2007_fall/docs/feature_asia.html. This article reports that Jaisohn was described as white in the 1920 U.S. Census. The June 21, 1894 *Evening Star* announcement of the wedding of Jaisohn and Armstrong does not mention his background other than his profession.

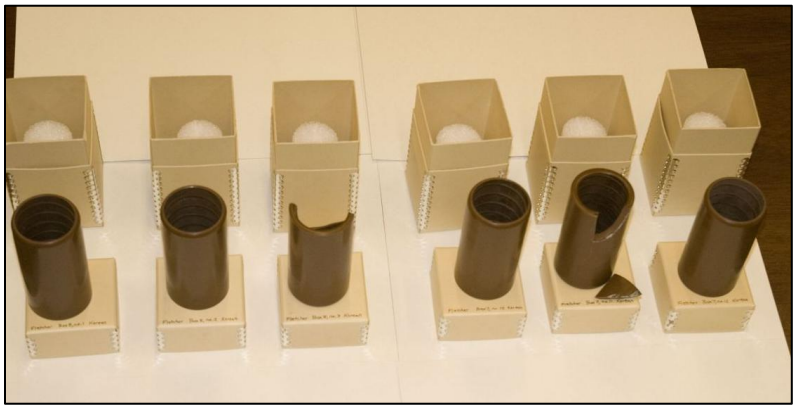
[50] Deenesh Sohoni, "Unsuitable Suitors: Anti-Miscegenation Laws, Naturalization Laws, and the Construction of Asian Identities," *Law & Society Review* 41, No. 3 (September 2007), 587-618; Jeff Jenkins, "When Democrats in Congress Tried to Ban Interracial Marriage," *BroadStreet* (blog), broadstreet.blog/2021/01/04/ban-interracial-marriage/.

[51] Smithsonian ethnologists participated in the cultural and anthropological displays.

[52] Walter Hough, "The Bernadou, Allen, and Jouy Korean Collections in the U.S. National Museum," *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution, Showing the Operation, Condition, and Expenditures of the Institution for the Year Ending June 30, 1891. Report of the U.S. National Museum* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1892), 429-488.

enduring. When he was forced to leave his government position in Korea and return to the U.S. in 1896, he transported items collected by missionary-diplomat Horace Allen back to D.C., delivering them to the doorstep of Otis Mason, curator of ethnology at the Smithsonian.[53]

Pyon, Soh, and Jaisohn all leveraged their experiences as multilingual and well-travelled Koreans to contribute to the production of knowledge about Asia for Americans, through their own writing and through the access they provided to others. At the invitation of the U.S. Commissioner of Education W.T. Harris, Soh penned an article "Education in Korea" that was included in an 1891 report to Congress. In the mid-1890s, he helped Forster H. Jenings with an article about the Smithsonian's Korean headdresses and wrote a preface for Jenings's compilation of Confucian maxims.[54] Soh also created several short stories for *The Path*, the magazine of the Blavatsky Theosophical Society in D.C. In July 1896, he may have played a role in coordinating the wax-cylinder recording of Korean songs performed by at least two Korean students enrolled at Howard University. Recorded by anthropologist Alice C. Fletcher at her Capitol Hill home, the session was likely organized at the request of her friend Anna Tolman Smith, Soh's colleague at the U.S. Bureau of Education. Smith later published an article on Korean nursery rhymes, including the songs recorded by Fletcher, in the *Journal of American Folklore* in 1897.[55] These wax cylinders are the oldest known recordings of Korean music and are archived at the Library of Congress.[56]



Six wax cylinders at the Library of Congress feature the earliest known recording of Korean music. Dr. Robert Provine surmises that Soh Kwang Bom was acquainted with the singers, two of whom were students enrolled at Howard. They were recorded by Alice Cunningham Fletcher at her home on Capitol Hill in July 1896. Photo courtesy of Library of Congress.

[53] Oppenheim, 57.

[54] Forster H. Jennings, attaché of the Korean Legation compiled *The Proverbial Philosophy of Confucius: Quotations from the Chinese Classics for each Day in the Year*, a volume published in 1896. On this volume, his name is indicated as Forster H. Jenings; on the publication about Korean head-dresses, his name is spelled Foster H. Jenings.

[55] Anna Tolman Smith, "Some Nursery Rhymes of Korea," *Journal of American Folklore* 10, No. 38 (July-September 1897): 181-186.

[56] Dr. Robert Provine, University of Maryland emeritus professor of music has done extensive research on the recordings and generously shared his notes and resources, which include his compilation of primary and secondary sources related to Soh Kwang Bom and the Howard University students. In 2009, Provine presented this research in "*Revolutionaries, Nursery Rhymes, and Edison Wax Cylinders*: The Remarkable Tale of the Earliest Korean Sound Recordings" for a program at the Library of Congress, produced by the American Folklife Center, Washington, D.C. It is viewable here: loc.gov/item/2021688047/. This research is now published as "The Earliest Recordings of Korean Music (1896)," in Jidong Yang, ed., *Beyond the Book: Unique and Rare Primary Sources for East Asian Studies Collected in North America* (New York: Columbia University Press/Association for Asian Studies, 2022).

Educational Opportunities

Students comprise the final category of Koreans in D.C. in the late nineteenth century. A handful traveled to the United States before 1900 in pursuit of higher education.[57] Some ended up in the D.C. area, their opportunities aided by diplomats, by Christian benefactors or educators, and by the Korean government, which supported these endeavors in service of nation building. In 1896, at least seven Korean students were enrolled at Howard University through the intervention of Soh Kwang Pom during his short tenure as legation minister.[58] They had been studying in Japan but decided to make their way to the United States. When stranded without funds in Canada, they appealed to the legation for assistance. As late as 1908, publications of the university claimed Koreans among its international student body.[59] In 1904, the school conferred an honorary doctorate of divinity upon the Seoul-based missionary Rev. James D. Gale, editor of the only Christian newspaper in Korea, author of a Korean grammar, and translator of the Bible into the language.[60]

Korean students at Howard University, circa 1898.
Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.

[57] Both Pyon and Jaisohn received American degrees. Soh reportedly studied at Rutgers, but never earned a degree there. Although they were all students at one point, their primary objective for coming to the U.S. was for refuge, not for education.
[58] Soh reportedly provided for their expenses initially, see "Seven Koreans at Howard," *The Washington Post*, May 8, 1896: 2.
[59] Dr. Robert Provine's notes of his survey of Howard University catalogs 1896 through 1904 reflect enrollment to at least 1900; "Howard's Influence Universal," *The Washington Bee*, June 13, 1908.
[60] "Degrees Awarded in Arts and Sciences," *The Washington Times*, June 3, 1904.

Lutheran-founded Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia, was a hub for Korean students as well. Located in central Virginia, it is not part of the Washington metropolitan region, yet it is close enough that connections to D.C. Koreans were inevitable. In 1892, the school's president, Dr. Julius Daniel Drescher, called on the Korean Legation and met Secretary Ye Cha Yun. Ye had already learned from the Japanese minister of the opportunity for foreign students to study at Roanoke. Later that year, he and his wife visited the school, and that was "the beginning of an interesting acquaintance with the Korean officials of our country, with eminent Korean visitors, and also with a number of young men who became students at Roanoke College." In 1897, Soh Kwang Pom received there a master of arts degree *honoris causa*. By the early 1900s, around seven Koreans had been enrolled, including Cong Ke Ye (or Chong Ki Ye, 이종기), son of the Korean minister and an attaché to the legation, and Yi Kang (이강, or Prince Uihwa or Eui Wha), the second son of King Gojong.[61]

Above left: Prince Yi Kang, from Rev. James S. Gale,* Korean Sketches *(1898).
Above right: Ye Chong Ki, son of minister Ye Chin Pom.* The Indianapolis News, *November 18, 1898.

[61] Julius Daniel Drescher, "Koreans in America," *Roanoke Collegian*, March 26, 1904.; Another student was Hi Beung Pak, who had previously been enrolled at Howard University in Spring 1896. Dr. Stella Y. Xu, professor of history at Roanoke College, has researched the early Roanoke Asian students and compiled the archival records related to their enrollment. Her scans of these records were shared with our research team by the staff at the Old Korea Legation. See also Dwayne Yancey, "Roanoke College's hidden history: How it defied the times to attract Korean students in the late 1800s and early 1900s," *Cardinal News*, May 11, 1923, cardinalnews.org/2023/05/11/roanoke-colleges-hidden-history-how-it-defied-the-times-to-attract-korean-students-in-the-early-1900s/

The first Korean student to enroll at and to graduate from Roanoke College was Kiu Beung Surh (So Pyonggyu, 서병규, 1872-1952).[62] Accounts of his early life vary, with some reporting his arrival in the U.S. in 1890 and at least one source suggesting he may have attended elementary school in San Francisco and middle school in D.C.[63] What is known for certain is that he served as an interpreter at the 1893 Columbian Exposition and that, while attending Roanoke, he traveled to D.C. frequently enough that he held a membership to the National Geographic Society (founded in 1888). Surh assisted Smithsonian Institution curators labeling Korean collections in the late 1890s. He wrote several articles about Korean history and culture for the *Roanoke Collegian*, and the Smithsonian's Walter Hough acknowledged him as the key informant for his article "Korean Clan Organization," published in *American Anthropologist* in 1899.[64] Surh also seemed to have a working arrangement with the legation during summers he was not enrolled at school.[65]

Surh's connection to Roanoke endured, with at least two subsequent generations of his family enrolling there. After graduate studies at Princeton University, he returned to Korea, where he held local and national political offices and worked to reform the country's commerce and industry. Among the posts he held was as director of general affairs at the Office of Emigration Service (Yu Min Won, 유민원), which helped to coordinate the first group of Korean labor recruits sent to Hawai`i plantations in 1903.[66]

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[62] Many sources, including those generated by Roanoke College, erroneously identify him as the first Korean graduate of an American university. But he may have been the first to earn a bachelor of arts degree in the U.S.

[63] There are many sources for information on Surh's life, in English and Korean, including a biography, *Destined*, written by one of Surh's daughters, Anna Chesnutt. This article, "Roanoke's First Oriental Student," from *The Roanoke Collegian* 10, No. 1 (1950), indicates that Surh came to Roanoke after having met the college president in Asia. A newspaper article about Surh's granddaughter, Patsy Surh O'Connell, reports that Surh worked as an agricultural laborer in California to pay for his room and board at an American high school. His grandmother in Korea suggested to diplomats heading to the U.S. for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition that they hire her son. It was at the World's Fair that he connected with Dr. Julius Dreher of Roanoke College, who awarded him a full scholarship (John C. Hughes, "Preserving Asia Pacific Culture," South *Sound Magazine*, September 14, 2017, southsoundmag.com/arts-entertainment/preserving-asia-pacific-culture/article_a8603132-9302-5542-9236-05d4db69e34c.html. Robert Oppenheim, in *An Asian Frontier: American Anthropology and Korea* summarizes known sources for Surh's biography in his footnotes for pages 59-60. He also indicates that other sources indicate that either Ye Cha Yun of the legation or Soh Kwang Pom was the party that connected Surh to Roanoke. At the time of this writing, Dr. Juman Kim (Towson University) is in the process of researching Surh, and has come across a Korean government document from 1906 that indicates Surh transferred to Central Middle School in DC after attending school in in 1893 being enrolled at a school in San Francisco.

[64] Walter Hough, "Korean Clan Organization," *American Anthropologist* 1 (1899): 150-154. Hough opens the piece, "The following information concerning the Korean family or survival of the clan was elicited during several conversations with an intelligent Korean, Mr. Kiu Beung Surh, who is receiving his education in the United States."

[65] The *Roanoke Collegian* reported in June 1894 (Vol. 20, No. 8, 65) that Surh had declined a position at the legation specifically because he wished to return to Roanoke for the fall semester. In the previously cited article about Surh's granddaughter, the writer reports that he "worked summers at the Korean Embassy in Washington, D.C."

[66] See "Roanoke's First Oriental Student" in *The Roanoke Collegian* 10 (1950). Thanks, too, to Dr. Juman Kim of University of Maryland, Towson, for sharing some of his research findings on Surh, which he has also blogged about in Korean: brunch.co.kr/@jumankim/57.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

	District of Columbia	United States	Korea
1871			U.S. Expedition to Korea
1876			Korea-Japan Treaty of Amity
1882		Chinese Exclusion Act Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association is formed in San Francisco.	U.S.-Korea Treaty of Commerce and Amity
1883	First diplomatic mission from Korea arrives.		
1884			Gapsin coup d'etat The first U.S. missionary arrives in Korea.
1885-1887	Forced into exile, Soh Kwang Pom, Pyon Su, Philip Jaisohn settle in D.C.		
1888	Korean Legation opens at 1513 O Street NW.	Scott Act expands the Exclusion Act of 1882.	
1889	Korean Legation moves to new building at Iowa (Logan) Circle. Korean display installed at Smithsonian.		
1890	Philip Jaisohn becomes a U.S. citizen. Washon Ye born.		
1891	King Gojong purchases Korean Legation building at Logan Circle. Pyon Su graduates from Maryland Agricultural College months before he is killed in accident. Soh Kwang Pom becomes a U.S. citizen.		
1892	Philip Jaisohn earns a medical degree from Columbian College.	Geary Act extends the Exclusion Act of 1882.	

1893		Chicago World's Columbian Exposition includes a Korean display. U.S. overthrows the Kingdom of Hawai`i.	
1894			Donghak Peasant Uprising leads to governmental and societal reforms and the Sino-Japanese War.
1895			China loses the Sino-Japanese War and recognizes Korean independence. Gapsin coup participants pardoned, and Soh Kwang Pom and Philip Jaisohn temporarily return to Korea. Queen Min is assassinated.
1896	Soh Kwang Pom returns to D.C. and briefly serves as minister of Korean Legation. Seven Korean students enroll at Howard University.		King Gojong takes refuge in Russian Legation in Seoul. Philip Jaisohn founds Independence Club.
1897	Soh Kwang Pom dies, and rights to his property are settled.		King Gojong returns to palace and proclaims Korea an empire.
1898	Philip Jaisohn is forced to return to the U.S.	Supreme Court upholds birthright citizenship in *U.S. vs. Wong Kim Ark*. After the Spanish-American War, the U.S. acquires the Philippines, Samoa, Guam, and Puerto Rico as territories. U.S. annexes Hawai`i.	Philip Jaisohn is forced to return to the U.S.

PART 2
1903 to 1945—FIGHTING FOR SOVEREIGNTY: EXILES AND MIGRANTS

Early Community: Colonization, Exclusion and Exceptions

Korean American history from 1903 through 1945 is defined by three interrelated forces: the beginning of group migration, the broadening of U.S. Asian exclusion, and Korea's loss of national sovereignty. This is a period of population growth followed by a tightening of U.S. restrictions on Asian immigration, and it is marked by the mobilization of a coordinated Korean independence movement across the diaspora.

Hawai`i saw the first organized group migration of Koreans in early 1903. The Chinese Exclusion Act had already blocked the entry of laborers from China, and the Organic Act of 1900 had ended the contract labor system when it transferred the sovereignty of Hawai`i to the United States. Japanese workers recruited to replace the Chinese on the islands were staging strikes or simply abandoning plantations for better opportunities. Rather than meet laborers' demands, plantation owners sought a new source of cheap and stable labor. Horace Allen, the medical missionary who had helped establish the Korean Legation in D.C., set in motion the recruitment of Korean workers.

Between 1903 and 1905, 7,000 to 7,500 Koreans came to Hawai`i. They left behind the uncertainty of life under Japanese rule, as well as political and economic instability and the fallout from recent epidemics and plagues. Many were motivated by the encouragement of Christian educators and ministers. By the turn of the century, American missionaries exerted a strong social and cultural influence in Korea, and Christianity became associated with resistance to Japanese colonialism and a pathway to a better life. Almost half of the first emigrants were recruited from a single Christian congregation near the embarkation port of Inchon.[67]

The treaty concluding the 1904-1905 Russo-Japanese War was brokered by the United States, and it acknowledged Japanese control of Korea and part of Manchuria. In 1905, Japan forced upon the Koreans a treaty that made the nation a "protectorate." Five years later, Japan announced the formal annexation of the peninsula. All Korean diplomatic operations shut down, including the Korean Legation in Washington. Under Japanese occupation, Koreans were subject to repression, including land expropriation, labor and military conscription, and a process of Japanization whereby the Korean language was removed from the public sphere, and people were forced to adopt Japanese names.

Japan's control extended to Koreans living overseas, including those in the U.S., who were now considered Japanese subjects. After 1905, Japan ceased issuing passports for laborers en route to Hawai`i, and Korean passports were no longer recognized by the U.S. State Department. In 1907, the United States and Japanese governments concluded the "Gentlemen's Agreement," in which the Japanese consented to restrict emigration of laborers, while the U.S. agreed not to force Japanese and Korean students into segregated schools in America. The U.S. assented to the immigration of family members of laborers already in the country. Consequently, between 1907 and 1924, about 1,000 Korean women migrated to the U.S., mainly as wives to Hawai`i plantation

[67] Houchins and Houchins, "The Korean Experience in America, 1903-1924," 553.

workers.[68] In addition, 900 "students, intellectuals, and political refugees who had been involved in the anti-Japanese movement" were able to reach the U.S. before the 1924 Immigration Act effectively ended settlement from Asia.[69] By that time, the total population of Koreans in the U.S. may have topped 10,000.[70]

The increasing visibility of Asian migrants in Hawai`i and the West Coast provoked a series of laws that expanded the reach of exclusionary legislation beyond Chinese laborers. The Immigration Act of 1907 aimed to end the migration of Japanese laborers to Hawai`i, and from Hawai`i to the continental U.S. It was followed a decade later by the so-called "Barred Zone Act" which prohibited entrance of all Asians except those of certain privileged occupations and classes. The 1922 Supreme Court ruling in *Ozawa v. United States* affirmed that the 1790 Nationality Act excluded all East Asians from naturalization based on their race. Finally, the passage of the 1924 Immigration Act established a national origins quota, all but prohibiting further arrivals. Koreans, along with Japanese, would be the last Asians to gain the legal right to immigrate and naturalize in 1952.[71] Without citizenship, Korean immigrants lacked both electoral and legal leverage.

Undeterred, this first generation of immigrants established institutions such as churches, language schools, mutual aid societies, and commercial enterprises. Political organizations were of foremost concern and came "to dominate the structure of the Korean community in America."[72] Founded in 1909, the Korean National Association (대한인국민회 or "KNA") was the first such organization with national reach.[73] With headquarters in San Francisco and Honolulu and chapters in other regions, it provided services to immigrants, but it also functioned in a quasi-diplomatic fashion on behalf of all Koreans living in the U.S., much as the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association did for Chinese. For example, in 1913, KNA chairperson Rev. David Lee (Dae-wii, 이대위) appealed to Secretary of State William Jennings Bryant for the issuance of special permits to enable Korean exiles in China to enter the U.S. without passports. Through this channel, some 300 political refugees circumvented Japanese consular control.[74] In 1918, concerned about students abroad fomenting anti-Japanese sentiment, the Japanese consulate in San Francisco began arresting students who tried to enter without passports and prevailed upon U.S. immigration authorities to do the same.[75]

[68] Many of these came as "picture brides," joining husbands they knew only from outdated photographs that had been sent to them. According to Houchins and Houchins, the age disparity between older husbands and younger wives probably accounts for the high rate of diverse in Hawai`i Korean families between 1914 and 1926 (560).
[69] Jean H. Park, "Exiled Envoys: Korean Students in New York City, 1907-1937," 56.
[70] Richard Kim, "Imagining the American Century: The 1919 Philadelphia Congress, Korean Diasporic Nationalism and American Protestant Missionaries," *Journal of Ethnic History* 26, No. 1 (Fall 2006), 51.
[71] Shelley Sang-Hee Lee, *A New History of Asian America* (New York and London: Routledge, 2014), 238.
[72] Houchins and Houchins, 565.
[73] This mobilization was organized to generate broad support for the legal defense of a Korean immigrant in San Francisco who had assassinated Durham Steven, an American politician working with the Japanese foreign ministry who had made disparaging comments about Koreans' ability to govern themselves.
[74] Richard Kim, *The Quest for Statehood: Korean Immigrant Nationalism and U.S. Sovereignty, 1905-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 45; Jean H. Park, "Exiled Envoys: Korean Students in New York City, 1907-1937."
[75] Jean H. Park, *Exiled Envoys: Korean Students in New York City, 1907-1937*," 73.

Independence leader Ahn Chang Ho (front row, second from left) founded the Pachappa Camp, an agricultural community in Riverside, California, in 1905. Ahn was also founder of the Korean National Association. In his efforts to liberate Korea, he emphasized education and the cultivation of young leaders. University of Southern California Korean Heritage and Digital Libraries, Korean American Digital Archive Collection.

Koreans in Washington, D.C.

Compared to the numbers in Hawai`i and in the U.S. as a whole, the number of Koreans in Washington remained very small. Although they were first classified as a separate ethnic/national category in the U.S. Census in 1910, no Koreans were enumerated in D.C. at that time.[76] In 1920, there were approximately 105 individuals in the city. A decade later, their numbers were said to decline to about 30.[77] One of the earliest residents who was neither a diplomat nor a student was James C. Kim, who arrived in the U.S. at age 27 in 1897 and, three years later, was employed as a laborer by the Soldiers' Home.[78] And by the time the United States entered World War I, the 24-year-old David Namkoong Yun was a clerk for the Security Storage Company.[79]

The Great War's demand for troops created a path to citizenship for some immigrants. Enormous numbers of the foreign-born enlisted in the military, with many offered naturalization for their service. Although the pool of Koreans was small, several joined up. Private Manner Oak Jung

[76] Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, for the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States*, Population Division Working Paper No. 56, U.S. Census Bureau, 2002.
[77] These figures are calculated from the IPUMS data (usa.ipums.org/usa/intro.shtml) by Natasha Chhabra and Julie Park of University of Maryland, whose estimates are larger than the numbers recorded in Gibson and Jung 2002.
[78] United States Census, Population Schedules for the District of Columbia, 1900.
[79] World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918, National Archives and Records Administration, Ancestry.com.

arrived in the United States in 1905 and enlisted in June 1918, a private assigned to the Army Medical Department at Walter Reed General Hospital. He was still serving there the following year, when he received his citizenship papers.[80] One of the hospital's patients in 1920 was Private Lion Jung, who had immigrated in 1910 and naturalized in 1918.[81] And Private Sorel Kim, who had also come to these shores in 1910, enlisted in September 1917 and was granted his papers by the D.C. Supreme Court in 1919, while stationed at the base hospital at Camp Meade, Maryland.[82]

As the nation's capital, Washington continued to attract a few Koreans to the federal workforce. David Mankau, almost certainly another veteran, immigrated in 1913, soon naturalized, and was a government clerk by 1920.[83] Nora K.S. Ahn, born to Korean parents on Maui in 1908, came to Washington by the end of 1927 to train as a nurse at Walter Reed. She married Yun Kwan Cheigh in 1931.[84]

Unlike the communities in Hawai`i and California, Washington's Koreans were otherwise almost exclusively political exiles, activists, and students. The District served as an important hub for activist networks in the independence movement. It became a base for organizing, because it provided access to policymakers and to major channels of communications and propaganda. It was a place from which the movement could leverage this country's growing global influence. Although representing an international effort, these activities were largely supported by the Korean diaspora in the U.S.

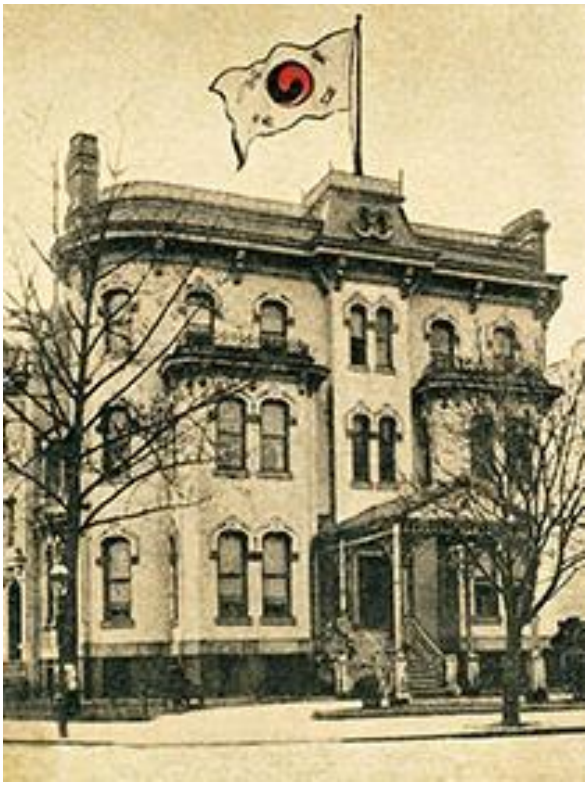
While the West Coast and Hawai`i represent larger collective participation in the independence movement, two iconic figures had strong associations with Washington: Philip Jaisohn, who naturalized and settled permanently in the U.S., and future Republic of Korea president Syngman Rhee, who established Washington as a base for the Korean Provisional Government in exile in the 1920s and again in the 1940s. In fact, the influential and divisive Rhee touched much of the history and the significant sites relating to Koreans in Washington during this period.

The Korean Legation Building

Closed in 1905 and sold by the Japanese government in 1910, the former Korean Legation on Logan Circle remained a rallying point for the independence movement. Kim Hon-sik had been its first secretary and the consul general under Soh Kwang Pom. According to Henry Cu Kim, "When the Korean legation was abolished in 1905, he [Kim] did not return to Korea, but became a permanent resident. He considered himself to be a national envoy without pay, without portfolio, even as he earned his living working at such menial jobs as kitchen helper, waiter, janitor, and actor; and every time a Korea-related question came up, he directly or indirectly offered his

[80] Washington, D.C. Naturalization Petitions, 1918-1924, National Archives and Records Administration, Ancestry.com.
[81] United States Census, Population Schedules for the District of Columbia, 1920.
[82] Washington, D.C. Naturalization Petitions, 1918-1924, National Archives and Records Administration, Ancestry.com.
[83] United States Census, Population Schedules for the District of Columbia, 1920.
[84] United States Census, Population Schedules for the District of Columbia, 1930; Cheigh family tree, Ancestry.com; R.L. Polk & Co., *Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia, 1928*, (Washington, D.C.: R.L. Polk & Co., 1928); District of Columbia Marriage Records, 1810-1955, District of Columbia Archives, Ancestry.com.

testimony to both houses of the U.S. Congress."[85] There were at least two short-lived efforts to establish a new legation after annexation, first in 1919 and then in 1921, and both on Massachusetts Avenue NW. An image of the old building, flying the Korean flag, circulated as a postcard. Activist Henry Chung DeYoung photographed the building in the early 1920s, presumably for similar publicity purposes.



Above left: A circa 1910 postcard, carrying a new year's greeting between two members of the Korean National Association—Young-Jun Ma to Seung-Won Hur (or Heo). Both men originally came to the U.S. via Hawai`i, moved to the mainland, worked as agricultural laborers, and were involved in the independence movement. The address to which the card was sent, 2928 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, is the first location of the Korean National Association from 1908 to 1909. Notable is the addition of the hand-drawn Korean flag atop the building, not present on earlier postcards. Private collection of Ann Hyeongju courtesy of the Old Korean Legation Museum.

Above right: A photograph of the former Korean Legation from the collection of Henry Chung DeYoung, who studied and worked in D.C. in the early 1920s. It demonstrates how the property remained in the consciousness of independence movement activists years after it had been sold. University of Southern California Korean Heritage and Digital Libraries, Korean American Digital Archive Collection.

[85] Henry Cu Kim and Dae-Sook Suh, eds., *The Writings of Henry Cu Kim: Autobiography with Commentaries on Syngman Rhee, Pak Yong-man, and Chong Sun-man* (Honolulu: Center for Korean Studies, University of Hawaii, 1987), 123-124. The book's editor Dae-Sook Suh cautions in his introduction, "Since Rhee was his adversary, Henry's account is extremely biased, and since Henry wrote entirely from memory without the help of reference works, his information on historical events is at times incorrect. However, the account of his personal dealings with Rhee is most revealing and valuable, both for the study of Rhee and of the Korean community in the United States" (xiv).

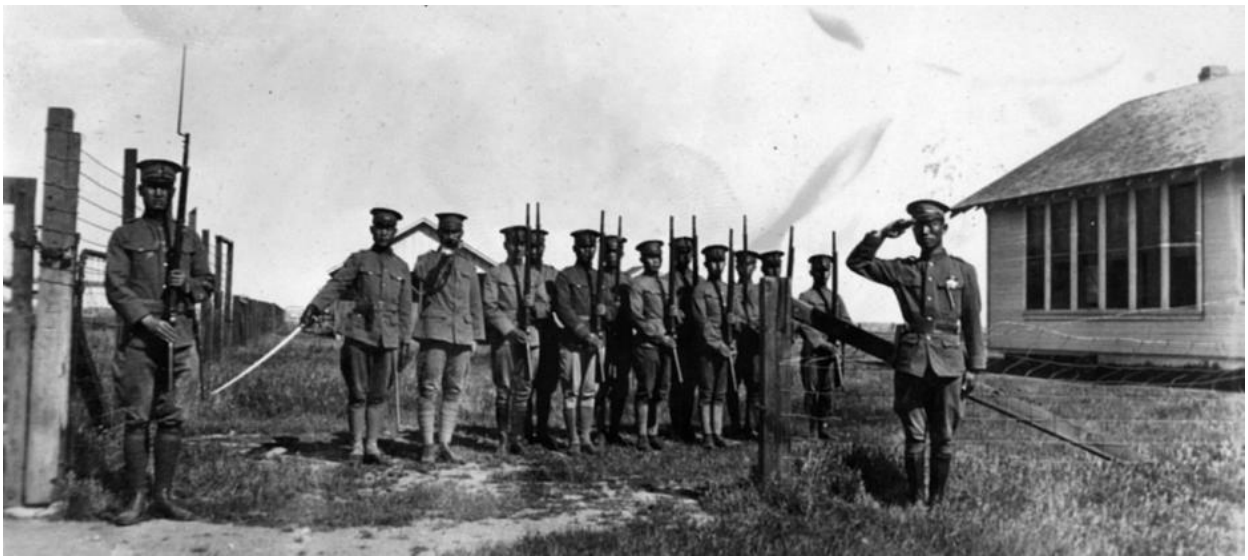
Syngman Rhee and the Korean Commission

Different dispositions and strategies for regaining Korean independence fractured the movement. And ongoing factional realignments of the 1920s and 1930s played out in Washington. The three most prominent factions in the U.S. were associated with Ahn Chang Ho, Pak Yong-man, and Syngman Rhee.

Ahn Chang Ho (안창호, 1878-1938) is primarily identified with California sites and communities.[86] He and his wife arrived in the U.S. in 1903. He helped establish an agricultural community in Riverside, California in 1905, and he founded a mutual assistance organization that later merged into what became the Korean National Association (대한인국민회).

In 1914, Ahn moved his family to Los Angeles and established Heungsadan (or Hung Sa Dahn, 흥사단, Young Korean Academy). Through his work, he emphasized the importance of education, self-improvement, and cultivating leadership among overseas Koreans so that they could lead the country when the government was restored. He spent much of the 1920s and 1930s abroad drumming up support for Korea's cause. He died a political prisoner after working in Korea in the late 1930s. A number of properties related to Ahn and his family have been designated or are under consideration for designation as historical-cultural monuments by the City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Commission.[87]

Park Yong-man (박용만, 1881-1928) was a proponent of direct military action. He came to the U.S. in 1905, around the time of the establishment of Japan's protectorate over Korea. He attended Hastings College in Nebraska, worked as a journalist, and was associated with the Korean National Association. He organized military academies in Nebraska and Hawai`i. He returned to Asia in 1919, joining military campaigns in Siberia and Manchuria. He was working to recruit and train soldiers when he was assassinated in China in the late 1920s.

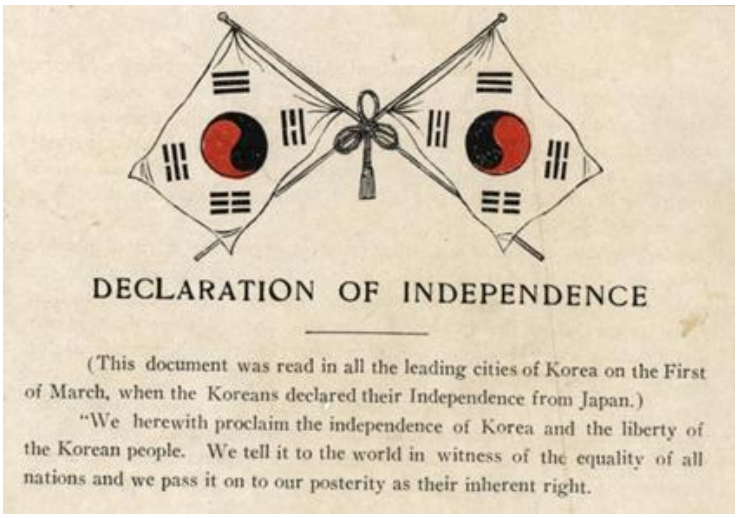


Park Yong-man trained freedom fighters in Nebraska and Hawai`i. University of Southern California Korean Heritage and Digital Libraries, Korean American Digital Archive Collection.

[86] Although he also spent much of his time outside the United States, in Korea and China.
[87] See Los Angeles Conservancy, laconservancy.org/learn/historic-places/hung-sa-dahn/.

While Anh Chang Ho and Pak Yong-Man were influential figures, the history of Koreans in Washington between the early 1900s and 1945 largely revolves around Syngman Rhee (이승만, 1875-1965), who moved frequently in and out of the city, operating from both D.C. and Hawai`i. Rhee mobilized students, recent graduates, and other itinerant people to join him in advancing his vision for independence. For Rhee, D.C.'s proximity to the corridors of power was critical. He believed that the most effective path to regaining Korean sovereignty was through diplomatic channels, cultivating influential allies, influencing public opinion through the distribution of propaganda, and participation at international conferences. Persistent and divisive, he was one of the movement's most prominent leaders.

A product of American Methodist missionary education, Rhee was in his late twenties when he left for the U.S. in 1904, following a five-year prison sentence for agitation for government reform. He headed directly to Washington to plead Korea's case to President Theodore Roosevelt who was preparing to negotiate the Portsmouth Treaty to end the Russo-Japanese War. Rhee visited the Korean Legation before seeking an audience with congressmen, cabinet members, and President Roosevelt himself.[88] His presentation garnered little support from American officials, as would be the case over the next three decades.[89]



DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

(This document was read in all the leading cities of Korea on the First of March, when the Koreans declared their Independence from Japan.)

"We herewith proclaim the independence of Korea and the liberty of the Korean people. We tell it to the world in witness of the equality of all nations and we pass it on to our posterity as their inherent right.

Left: The Red Cross circulated an English translation of the "Korean Declaration of Independence from Japan," proclaimed during the March 1, 1919 uprising in Korea.
Right: Despite his divisiveness, Syngman Rhee became one of the most prominent independence leaders, basing his operations in the District of Columbia and Hawai`i. University of Southern California Korean Heritage and Digital Libraries, Korean American Digital Archive Collection.

[88] Young Ick Lew, *The Making of the First Korean President: Syngman Rhee's Quest for Independence, 1875-1948* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2014), 20.
[89] With the Taft-Katsura Memorandum of this time, President Roosevelt conceded to Japan's dominance of Korea in return for Japan's assurance that it would not interfere with U.S. control of the Philippines.

Supported by a ministerial scholarship, Rhee earned his undergraduate degree from the George Washington University in 1907, followed by a doctorate in international law and diplomacy from Princeton in 1910. Like Jaisohn and the legation staff in the decades prior, he attended the Church of the Covenant at Connecticut Avenue and N Street NW, where he was baptized.[90] Rhee frequently gave speeches about Korea at churches and YMCAs, forming influential friendships that connected him to a socially engaged and affluent Christian network.

In 1913, Rhee moved to Hawai`i, where he worked as an educator, founded and edited a magazine, and established a base of operations that would support his work over the next twenty-five years.[91]

The First Korean Congress was organized by Philip Jaisohn with Syngman Rhee (both standing left of center roughly between the women with flags) and held in Philadelphia in April 1919. Around 200 Koreans participated, travelling from around the U.S. and beyond. University of Southern California Korean Heritage and Digital Libraries, Korean American Digital Archive Collection.

The first half of 1919 represented a watershed moment and compelled Rhee's return to D.C. In January, Korean independence leaders from around the world gathered in Shanghai to plan the creation of a government in exile. European and American leaders were meanwhile convening for the Paris Peace Conference to address the terms for the end of World War I.[92] Rhee requested a

[90] In the late nineteenth century, Rhee had been involved in Jaisohn's International Club in Korea.

[91] So involved was Rhee in a number of significant Hawai`i-based organizations—and the conflicts in which they became embroiled—that some sources simply describe his time from 1913 to 1939 as having been based in Hawai`i.

[92] The Korean Peace Delegates submitted their first petition to the Peace Conference at Paris on May 12, 1919. They also sent a copy to President Woodrow Wilson with a letter signed J[ohn] Kiusic S[oho] Kimm. See Korean American Digital Archives, University of Southern California Libraries, Legacy Identifier: kna-correspondence-88/kna-correspondence-88-01.tiff thru 6; Unique identifier: UC11953835.

passport to travel to Paris, but the State Department withheld authorization. On March 1, Koreans staged protests across the peninsula declaring their independence, but the suppression of this uprising by Japanese forces led to thousands of deaths, injuries, and arrests. In April, the Korean Provisional Government was established in Shanghai with Rhee appointed president in absentia.[93] From April 14 to 16, Philip Jaisohn convened the First Korean Congress in Philadelphia to bring attention to this new government.[94] Rhee served as committee chair. All presentations were made in English, with the rhetoric linking Korea's fight for independence to America's own revolutionary history in Philadelphia. Two hundred delegates from around North America attended, mostly Koreans, but also "half a dozen American intellectuals."[95]

The First Korean Congress spurred a flurry of activities. Philip Jaisohn established the Korean Information Bureau in Philadelphia to circulate English-language articles through the *Korea Review* and other publications. He also helped establish the League of the Friends of Korea, a group of Philadelphia academics and religious leaders that organized more than a dozen regional chapters around the U.S., including in D.C.[96]

In June 1919, Jaisohn and Rhee set up what seems to have been a short-lived legation headquarters at 1804 Massachusetts Avenue NW. This operation appears to have transformed into the Korean Commission to America and Europe for the Republic of Korea (대한민국임시정부 구미위원부) formally established by Rhee by the end of that summer. Also referred to as the Korean Commission (구미주차한국위원회), it was conceived of by Rhee as a diplomatic agency, an arm of the provisional government, but entirely under his control.[97] Through it, he raised funds from the Koreans in America to support office operations, including support for the government in exile in Shanghai.

The status and operations of the Korean Commission caused considerable acrimony between Rhee and other leaders based in the U.S., as well as between Rhee and the Korean Provisional Government, which relied on the diaspora for funding. The Commission's activities were run by an ever-changing staff of Korean men and women educated in American universities, plus a handful of Americans.[98]

The Korean Commission offices were located in Rooms 905 and 907 in the Continental Trust Building, at 14th and H streets NW downtown from 1919 to at least 1926.[99] The League of the Friends of Korea is also associated with this building as evidenced by letterhead over

[93] Both Ahn Chang Ho and Pak Yong-man held positions in the founding cabinet.
[94] After leaving Washington around the turn of the twentieth century, Jaisohn resettled his family in Pennsylvania, where he practiced medicine. In 1904, he opened a stationery shop, which he co-owned with a partner. He used the profits from the business to support the independence movement.
[95] Lew, *The Making of the First Korean President: Syngman Rhee's Quest for Independence, 1875-1948*, 92. See also Richard Kim, "Imagining the American Century: The 1919 Philadelphia Congress, Korean Diasporic Nationalism and American Protestant Missionaries."
[96] The D.C. office was located at 733 15th Street NW, the Woodward Building, according to *미국속 한국을 만나다* [*Finding Korea in the U.S.*] (Heritage of Korea, 2021), 53.
[97] Lew, *The Making of the First Korean President*, 100, 102, 110.
[98] Various sources provide names and information about some of the Korean students who worked with Rhee in D.C., including Lew, *The Making of the First Korean President*; *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995); and Kim and Suh, *The Writings of Henry Cu Kim: Autobiography with Commentaries on Syngman Rhee, Pak Yong-man, and Chong Sun-man*.
[99] Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation, [*Finding Korea in the U.S.*], 58.

correspondence from secretary-vice president Pyeng Koo Yoon (or Pyeng Ku, 윤병구).[100] Another address, the Woodward Building at 733 15th Street NW, is also associated with the League from 1919 to 1923.[101]

Between October 1919 and June 1920, Rhee traveled extensively, delivering lectures on Korean independence at college campuses, churches, YMCAs, Rotary clubs, and chambers of commerce. Meanwhile, Kuisic Kimm (김규식, also Kim Kyu-sic and John Kuisic Kim, 1881-1950), served as Korean Commission chairman. Kimm had grown up in the care of an American missionary after being orphaned. He completed high school in the U.S. and graduated from Roanoke College in 1903.[102] Just prior to his appointment to the Korean Commission in D.C., he had been living in exile in China, where he was appointed to the cabinet of the Korean Provisional Government and from where he had been sent to the Paris peace conference. In late 1920, Kimm resigned from the Commission, citing irreconcilable differences with Rhee over the latter's handling of fundraising, specifically the sales of government bonds to the diaspora community and the use of the proceeds.[103]

From October 1920 to April 1921, Rev. Soon Hyun (or Hyun Sun, 현순) was placed in the role of Korean Commission chairman. Hyun had arrived in the U.S. in 1903 to interpret for and minister to the first group of Korean labor migrants in Hawai`i. He later returned to Korea before going into exile in Shanghai, where he helped set up the provisional government. Rhee invited him to join the Korean Commission in D.C. in 1920. The 1921 city directory identified Hyun as treasurer of the Commission, living at 1016 14th Street NW. An October 1920 statement of income and expenses provides an interesting glimpse into the Commission's expenditures. Office rental was $95; funds were designated to support staff travel as well as Jaisohn's operations in Philadelphia; and the D.C. office payroll included commissioners, a counsellor, a clerk, and a stenographer.[104]

Hyun's tenure at the Commission was relatively short, and he clashed with Rhee about the reorganization of operations. Among his initiatives while Rhee was abroad were the establishment of a legation in a rented building at 1325 Massachusetts Avenue NW and his assumption of the title of Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States. Items in the University of Southern California Libraries corroborate that, despite the men's differences, Rhee confirmed Hyun's appointment and

[100] Korean American Digital Archives. Pyeng Koo Yoon (1880-1849) was an early Christian convert who immigrated to Hawai`i with his family in 1905. With Rhee, he traveled to Washington to petition Roosevelt in advance of the Russo-Japanese Portsmouth Treaty. He attended Harvard University before dropping out to focus on the independence movement. He moved frequently between the West and East coasts, and he served as one of the officiants for Rhee's second marriage, to Francesca Donner, in New York in 1934.

[101] [*Finding Korea in the U.S.*] identifies this Massachusetts Avenue address with the League of the Friends of Korea office in D.C. (57). This letter is in the USC Korean Heritage and Digital Libraries, Korean American Digital Archive Collection.

[102] In March 2022, an historical roadside marker was installed in Salem, Virginia by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to honor "Kyusik Kim," an alumnus of Roanoke College. Kim was nominated by students of Cumberland Middle School in a contest, sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education and the Virginia Office of the Governor, to nominate Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders as the subjects of historic markers.

[103] Although Kimm resigned from the Korean Commission in 1920, he is listed in the 1921 Boyd's Directory as "Hon chairman". He also appears to be pictured in photos that Henry Chung DeYoung took in Washington in 1921 and 1922. After he left D.C., Kimm would spend most of the time in China, working as a teacher and with the Sino-Korean Peoples League. He returned to Korea after liberation, when the south was occupied by the U.S. Army Military Government. He vehemently opposed the partitioning of the country and was killed in North Korea in 1950.

[104] "Financial Statement for October 1920" is digitized and accessible in the USC Korean Heritage and Digital Libraries, Korean American Digital Archive Collection: Legacy Identifier: KADA-HenryDeYoung-297_09 Unique identifier: UC1191143.

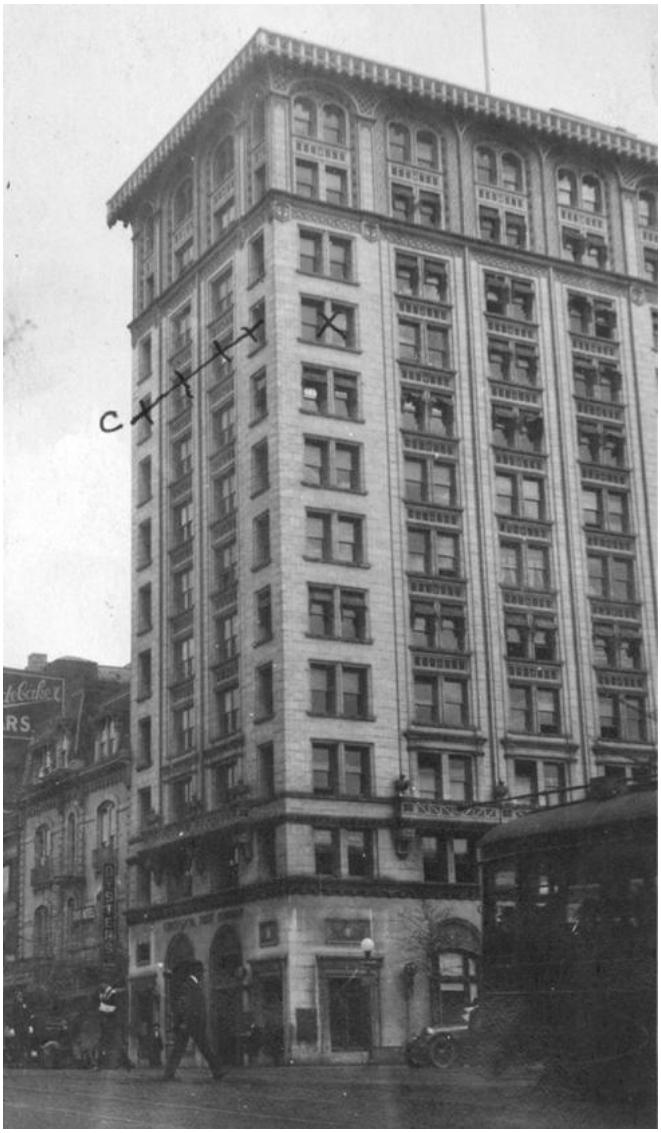
the establishment of the legation.[105] After Hyun was dismissed in spring 1921, Philip Jaisohn assumed the commission chairmanship, reportedly commuting by train from Philadelphia once a month. Jaisohn managed with the assistance of Henry Chung DeYoung and undersecretary Youngchick Lee and ample support from attorney Fred Dolph.[106]

Rhee's handling of fundraising and communications led not just to staff turnover at the Korean Commission but also within the cabinet of the Korean Provisional Government. In early 1921, Kimm Kuisic, who had earlier left his Korean Commission position, also resigned from the provisional government, along with Ahn Chang Ho and several others.

Henry Chung DeYoung (right) with Philip Jaisohn at Union Station, April 1922. University of Southern California Korean Heritage and Digital Libraries, Korean American Digital Archive Collection.

[105] See, for example, see correspondence in USC Korean American Digital Archives, April 4, 1921 (KADA-shyun04-007.jpg).

[106] After his dismissal from the Korean Commission, Hyun moved to Hawai`i and served as minister to a Methodist congregation in Honolulu before later resettling in Los Angeles with his family. See Robert Hyung-Chan Kim, "Soon Hyun (Hyon Sun) and His Place in the History of the Korean Independence Movement: With Emphasis on the Korean Commission," *Acta Koreana* 12, No. 2 (December 2009): 127-183. See *Lew, The Making of a Korean President,* for details on the organization and reorganization of the Korean Commission. See Kim and Suh, *The Writings of Henry Cu Kim*, for a glowing profile of Fred Dolph. Originally from Chicago, he specialized in drafting government and personal legal documents, and he had served as legal advisor to the Polish Independence Party. Kim wrote that he "volunteered to help the Korean movement" and that he lived alone in a Washington hotel (162-163). According to the Boyd directory, Youngchick Lee resided at 1016 14th Street NW, the former address of Jaisohn's predecessor, Rev. Hyun Soon.



Left: The Continental Trust Building, 14th and H streets NW, circa 1921.

Below left: A Rock Creek Park picnic of Korean Commission staff, (left to right) Kimm Kuisic, Henry Chung DeYoung, and Youngchick Lee.

Below right: (left to right) Youngchick Lee, Pyong-Su Min, and Henry Chung DeYoung in the offices of the Korean Commission, September 1921.

Henry Chung DeYoung Collection, University of Southern California Korean Heritage and Digital Libraries, Korean American Digital Archive Collection.

Korean Commission Activities in the 1920s and 1930s

The Washington Disarmament Conference—also referred to as the Washington Conference, the Washington Naval Conference, the Pacific Conference, and the Conference for Limitation of Armaments and Far Eastern Problem—brought together the world's largest naval powers, including Japan and the United Kingdom, America's principal rivals. The conference took place at Memorial Continental Hall between November 12, 1921 and February 2, 1922.[107]

Plans for the gathering made international headlines. Peace activists convened groups from around the country to rally public support for ratification of arms limitation agreements. Having heard that the situation in East Asia would be a topic of discussion, Syngman Rhee sought to exploit the opportunity to highlight Korea's unjust situation in the context of international law. The Korean Commission invested "extensive human and financial capital" at the "expense of all other activities" to prepare.[108] In October 1921, it submitted a ten-page petition requesting an invitation to participate.

The Commission temporarily renamed itself the Korean Mission to the Naval Conference and established a base of operations in a rented house at 1327 16th Street NW. The members went to great lengths to present themselves as "professional" in their diplomatic outreach, lobbying, and public relations. They entertained former Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan and journalists H.G. Wells and Louis Seibold.[109] Beside Rhee and Jaisohn, other notable figures were the typist Ms. Melbourne, lawyer Fred Dolph, and Youngchik Lee, as documented in photographs from the collection of Henry Chung DeYoung, who was deeply involved in preparations.

Henry Chung DeYoung, also known as Henry Chung, Henry Deyoung and Chong Han-gyong (정한경이, 1890-1985) was a scholar and diplomat whose connections across the independence movement were broad and deep. He worked directly with all the factional leaders in the United States, including Pak Yong-man, Ahn Chang Ho of the Korean National Association, and Syngman Rhee and the Korean Commission. Chung immigrated to the U.S. in 1905, when he was fourteen years old. He completed secondary school in Nebraska, where he was cared for by an American family.[110] He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from Nebraska State University, then a doctorate in international jurisprudence at American University. Under the name Henry Chung, he authored *The Case of Korea* (1919) and *The Oriental Policy of the United States* (1918). He also compiled *Korean Treaties* (1919), which was widely distributed as part of a KNA education campaign. By the end of 1920, he was the Korean Commission's secretary, living at the Lincoln Hotel, 10th and H streets NW.

The efforts of Chung DeYoung and the others bore little fruit in terms of recognition for Korea's cause. While the conference produced one of the most successful arms limitations agreements and had the Japanese recognize Chinese authority over Shandong province, it confirmed Japan's naval parity with Britain and the U.S. in the Pacific and its special interests in Manchuria and Mongolia.

[107] Lew, *The Making of a Korean President*, 144.
[108] Lew, *The Making of a Korean President*, 144-147.
[109] David P. Fields, *Foreign Friends: Syngman Rhee, American Exceptionalism, and the Division of Korea* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2019), 85-107.
[110] The 1920 U.S. census lists Frank Roby Sr. as his father.

Top: Henry Chung DeYoung sat next to the First Lady in the front row at his American University commencement in which President Warren G. Harding was among the speakers.
Bottom: Henry Chung DeYoung is indicated by an X in this commencement procession photo. He earned his doctorate in jurisprudence from the university in 1921.
Inset: Henry Chung DeYoung, circa 1904, not long after his arrival to Los Angeles at the age of fourteen. University of Southern California Korean Heritage and Digital Libraries, Korean American Digital Archive Collection.

Top left: The Korean Mission to the Disarmament Conference of 1921-1922 was based at 1327 16th Street NW. The mission's letterhead indicates that they may still have been using the Continental Trust Building office, too.
Top center: Henry Chung DeYoung poses in front of the Korean Mission after a snowstorm, possibly the Knickerbocker storm of January 1922.
Top right: Valentine's Day party in the mission parlor, 1922.
Bottom left: The team working on the disarmament conference included stenographer Ms. Melbourne and legal advisor Fred A. Dolph, center front. The team's size contracted and expanded at different times as the inscription reads, "When our family was the largest."
Bottom right: An elaborate display installed for the Disarmament Conference in Washington, D.C., 1921-1922.
University of Southern California Korean Heritage and Digital Libraries, Korean American Digital Archive Collection.

Korea was overlooked.[111] The Korean Commission's momentum dissipated in the conference's aftermath. The efforts of Chung DeYoung and the others bore little fruit. Three key staff resigned, including Philip Jaisohn, who returned to Philadelphia. Although a new chairman was appointed, Rhee now ran the Commission virtually alone.[112]

In 1925, the Korean Provisional Government, concerned with Rhee's activities, impeached him as its president and ordered him to shut down the Korean Commission in D.C. He resisted and kept operating with sparse funds and a skeleton staff, including Yun Chi'i-yong (1898-1996) and Chang Ki-yong (1907-1981) under the supervision of Commissioner Ho Chong (허정, 1896-1988). Rhee moved to Hawai`i to organize support from institutions he had established there.[113]

Henry Cu Kim (Kim Hyon-gu, 김현구, 1889-1998) served as Commission chairman from September 1926 through 1928, when Rhee was mostly absent.[114] Kim had immigrated to the U.S. in 1909 from an exile in China. After military training in Nebraska with Pak Yong-man, he earned his bachelor's degree at Columbus College in Ohio and completed coursework for a Ph.D. at the University of California at Berkeley. In his memoir, he described a "Korean Mission" run entirely on donations.[115] By this time, it had moved from the Continental Trust Building to a much smaller rental space at 1310 Park Road.[116] Meanwhile, Kim lived in a hotel with his family, including two children born in D.C. As a means for generating revenue, Kim proposed the mission purchase headquarters with rooms to rent to Korean students, who could supply both revenue and labor. Although some funds were raised, the project never materialized. The Kim family resettled in Hawai`i in 1929, and the funds pledged for the D.C. building were redirected to cover operational expenses of one of Rhee's Hawai`i-based organizations.

By the 1930s, the Korean movement for independence was decentralized and fraying, with efforts and priorities taken up by different factions both in the U.S. and in Asia, sometimes coordinating and consulting one another, other times not. It is not clear whether a Korean Commission continued to have a physical footprint in Washington, but there are some reports of a skeletal office continued in absentia by Rhee.

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[111] Richard Kim, in *The Quest for Statehood*, describes how, between World War I and World War II, Koreans were among immigrants from several stateless territories that petitioned the U.S. government for recognition or some intervention. All had taken note Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points speech and referred to the right of national self-determination for colonized people. The "Korea question" was occasionally debated in Congress during the latter half of 1919. On March 17, 1920, the Senate formally took up the issue of recognizing Korean and Irish sovereignty. A resolution supporting Ireland's independence passed, but the one for Korea did not. Kim points out that Koreans in the U.S. had no electoral power; as Asians, they were denied the right of naturalization, and their largest population center was Hawai`i, which remained a territory until 1959.

[112] The 1923 Boyd's directory included an organizational listing for the Korean Commission with Syngman Rhee as "director."

[113] Lew, in *The Making of the First Korean President*, indicates that Rhee continued to maintain the office in D.C. from his base in Honolulu through a series of trusted supporters serving as commissioners. See also Kim and Suh, *The Writings of Henry Cu Kim*, for reference to Ho Chong (pp. 158-159, 205).

[114] Kim and Suh, *The Writings of Henry Cu Kim*.

[115] According to Henry Cu Kim, the Korean Mission existed for "more than six years," and during this time, among the services it was able to provide was a certificate that enabled Koreans who had lost passports to gain reentry to the U.S. (164). Some of Kim's accounts and chronologies may be inaccurate. He also uses "Mission" to refer to the Korean Commission, perhaps because the name assumed in preparation for the Naval Conference persisted.

[116] Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation, [*Finding Korea in the U.S.*] indicates that the Korean Commission was operating at this location on Park Road from 1927 to 1931 (58-59).

Reconstitution of the Korean Commission

In 1939, Rhee returned to Washington to leverage U.S. concerns about Japan's escalating encroachments in the Pacific and to cultivate a political climate more inclined to intervene in Asia in Korea's favor. He established local residence with his second wife, Francesca Donner (1900-1992), and there were several properties associated with him during this period. These include a house at 1766 Hobart Street NW, which he bought in early 1940 and where he supposedly wrote his book *Japan Inside Out*: *The Challenge of Today*.[117] In his own memoir, writer and Rhee advisor Robert T. Oliver recalled meetings at a house on Connecticut Avenue.[118] But Rhee's longest association with a property began with his purchase of 4700 16th Street NW in spring 1944, a home he sold a dozen years later. He lived there until his return to Korea in October 1945, but he returned to Washington to lobby from December 1946 to April 1947. This was also the space used for the reconstituted Korean Commission and, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, as an office from which the nascent Korean embassy was planned and operated under Rhee's direction.[119]

In 1941, the Korean Commission was re-established in Washington with Rhee at the helm.[120] Its purpose was to lobby for official recognition of the Korean Provisional Government, now relocated to Chongqing to escape the Japanese control of the Chinese coast. In 1942, Rhee and his wife formed the Korean-American Council, which included, among others, lawyer and businessman John W. Staggers, former ambassador James H.R. Cromwell, and Frederick Harris, chaplain of the U.S. Senate.[121] After this group failed to raise a productive response from the State Department, Rhee organized another pressure group, the Christian Friends of Korea, composed of such movers and shakers as Dr. Paul F. Douglass, president of American University; Dr. Oliver R. Avison, a medical missionary; Rev. Dr. Peter Marshall, pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church; along with Staggers and Harris from the Korean-American Council.[122]

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[117] Several sources suggest that this was the property at which he penned *Japan Inside Out* (New York, Fleming H. Revell, 1941), including Lew, *The Making of the First Korean President,* 205, and Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation, [*Finding Korea in the U.S.*], 62. "Korean Conference on Liberty Hopes to Help Crush Japan," in *The Evening Star* of February 26, 1942, reported on the Korean Liberty Conference, explaining that Rhee had been back in Washington since November 1939 as the chairman of the Korean Commission.

[118] Oliver also penned Rhee's 1955 memoir, *The Man Behind the Myth: Syngman Rhee*.

[119] [*Finding Korea in the U.S.*], 63. Also, see *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), which indicates that after Rhee left for Korea, the house was cared for by Byung Jik Lim (48). See also communications with between Rhee and John W. Staggers about arrangement for the sale of the house in the 1950s. These are accessible through the Wilson Center Digital Archives, for example B-016-012, B-016-013, B-016-027, Official Correspondences, President Rhee's Correspondences, Syngman Rhee Institute, Yonsei University

[120] Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation, [*Finding Korea in the U.S.*], locates the Commission at Rhee's 16th Street house (63), but a document from Rhee's FBI file gives the address for the Commission as 416 5th Street NW, the law office of John W. Staggers.

[121] It also included Robert T. Oliver, Rhee's trusted advisor, ghost writer, and biographer. [*Finding Korea in the U.S.*] locates the office for this organization in the Brawner Building at 888 17th Street NW. There are other addresses that come up as well: 1700 Eye Street NW, Wagners and Bronners Real Estate Company, and 1341 G Street NW, the Colorado Building.

[122] Jay Jerome Williams, an International News Service reporter, was also a member of both groups.

Syngman Rhee's house from 1944 to 1956, 4700 16th Street NW, with an addition built by the Washington Seventh-day Adventist Church. Photo by Sojin Kim.

The United Korean Committee and the Liberty Conference

These renewed activities coordinated efforts across the diaspora, cooperation that had not occurred since the early 1920s and which proved short-lived. They still involved veteran nationalists such as Rhee and Jaisohn, but also an emerging generation of activists who had come of age in the U.S. The United Korean Committee in America (UKC) was a new federation that came together in 1941 to play a coordinating role among multiple autonomous organizations. With headquarters in Los Angeles and Honolulu, it was formed to support the work of the Korean Commission. A few months after the United States entered World War II, UKC organized the Korean Liberty Conference at Washington from February 27 through March 1, 1942. Events were held at American University and the Lafayette Hotel, with a night service at Foundry Methodist Church.[123] The gathering received media attention and support in D.C. circles, and it was a last high point of efforts on behalf of Korea. By 1943, UKC had acrimoniously split from the Korean Commission, denounced Rhee, and set up its own lobbying office at 1717 K Street NW.[124]

Among the historical figures associated with UKC's activities in Washington were Jacob Kyung Dunn (전경무, 1903-1947), Kilsoo Haan (한길수,1900-1976) and Kim Yong-jeong (1898-1975). Dunn and Haan were both children of Hawai`i plantation workers. With support from an American

[123] "Korean Conference on Liberty Hopes to Crush Japan," *The Washington Evening Star*, February 26, 1942.
[124] This is the address on letterhead of correspondence digitized for the Korean American Digital Archives, University of Southern California Libraries. See KADA-knadocs10-001~44.tiff (filename), kada-c126-7619. For more about Jacob Dunn and his activities at UKC, see Richard Kim 2011.

family in the continental U.S., Dunn earned a degree in political science from Michigan State University before returning to Hawai`i to start a successful business. He was involved in the establishment of the UKC, instrumental in establishing the D.C. office as secretary to the chairman, and he was a vocal and articulate opponent of Syngman Rhee. Dunn was killed in a plane crash shortly after World War II.[125]

Kilsoo Haan (also Kilsu Han, Han Kil-su, and Kilsoo Kenneth Haan) joined the nationalist movement in the 1930s, focused largely on the support of military operations against the Japanese. A charismatic speaker and anti-Japanese agitator, he spoke provocatively of fifth-column threats to U.S. national security based on intelligence he claimed to have gleaned from prior work at the Japanese consulate in Hawai`i. In 1939, he came to Washington at the invitation of Senator Guy Gillette (D-Iowa) to speak before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Haan set up shop in the Senate Hotel at 101 D Street NE, near Union Station and the Capitol. There, he continued his anti-Japanese agitation through letter writing and meetings with intelligence agencies. He was appointed UKC representative to the American National Defense Program, through which he worked with government agencies to involve Koreans in the U.S. war effort.[126] Haan was forced to resign from the UKC in February 1942 because of his vocal opposition to Rhee. He stayed in D.C. promoting Korean independence on behalf of the Korean National Front Federation and the Sino-Korean Peoples League, which he believed could fight the Japanese and provide intelligence. Haan was once considered a viable alternative to Rhee's leadership, in part because he had warned of an imminent Japanese attack on the U.S. in October 1941, but by 1944 he went largely unheeded.[127] He would eventually settle in California.

Yong-jeong Kim (김용중, also Kim Yongjung, Kim Yong-jeung,1898-1975) arrived in United States in 1916 at the age of 22. Although an adult, he completed grammar school in San Francisco before pursuing degrees in political science at Harvard, the University of Southern California, Columbia, and finally the George Washington University. He worked with the Korean National Association before becoming involved with the UKC in 1941. He married the American-born daughter of Charles Ho Kim, a KNA proponent and successful Central California farmer who generously supported independence movement activities.[128] In 1943, Kim founded the Korean Affairs Institute in Washington to provide another source of information about the peninsula beyond what was promoted through Syngman Rhee's operations. He published articles in *The Voice of Korea*, one of the platforms of the Korean Affairs Institute. He also made radio broadcasts to Korea for the U.S. Office of War Information. The addresses associated with his organization include 1029 Vermont Avenue, his office location from 1943 to 1961, and 4615 Reno Road, which appears to have been Kim's residence.[129] He raised his family in Washington, becoming one of the old-timers of the Korean community that took shape after 1950. He continued to bring attention

[125] "Jacob Kyung Dunn," Korean National Association Memorial Foundation website, knamf.org/jacob-kyung-dunn.
[126] Richard Kim, *The Quest for Statehood,* 137.
[127] For more on Kilsoo Haan, see Lew, The Making of the First Korean President and Brian Masaru Hayashi, "Kilsoo Haan, American Intelligence, and the Anticipated Japanese Invasion of California, 1931-1943," *Pacific Historical Review* 83, No. 2 (May 1, 2014): 277–293.
[128] Kim also worked as a spokesperson and liaison for his in-laws' enterprise, the Kim Brothers, produce growers and shippers. "During the off-season, Yong-jeung lived in Washington, D. C. to keep abreast of current international politics and to foster media relations for the company. With funding from the company, he also published *Voice of Korea*, a bi-weekly magazine that channeled political views of the Korean National Association," "Charles H. Kim: An Introduction to His Life" (website), charleshkim.wordpress.com/kim-brothers/.
[129] He is associated with this address through most of the 1950s until he moves to another address in Northwest Washington.

to events in Korea. In 1973, he retired to Reedley, California, where his in-laws' business was based.

A Korean Liberty Conference session at the Lafayette Hotel, February 1942.
Courtesy of the Philip Jaisohn Memorial Foundation.

Blossoms and Victory

With their country occupied long before World War II, Koreans in exile contributed to the war effort in many ways. A number of Korean Americans, predominantly those from Hawai`i and California, served in the U.S. military, and several in Washington were subject to the draft. Koreans took positions with the Army Map Service and some, including Pyeng Kan Lee, worked in the War Department's translation division.[130]

In April 1943, Syngman Rhee orchestrated a gesture of arboreal patriotism on behalf of Korea. The famous, decades-old Japanese cherry trees ringing Washington's Tidal Basin evoked other associations during a war with the empire. Rhee arranged for the planting of four Korean cherry trees on the campus of the American University to commemorate the anniversary of the establishment of the Korean Provisional Government. The college paper described the presentation by the Korean Women's Relief Society of Honolulu and the planting of the first tree by Rhee. University president Paul Douglass, a member of the Christian Friends of Korea, and diplomat

[130] World War II Draft Cards, Young Men, 1940-1947, National Archives and Records Administration, Ancestry.com.

James Cromwell, who had served on Rhee's Korean-American Council, both spoke.[131] In 1986, a memorial plaque was installed at the site.[132] Three of the cherry trees still standing near what is now the School of International Studies near Nebraska Avenue.

Above left: "First Secretary of the Korean Embassy points out the beauty of the Korean cherry blossoms on campus to his wife, Ambassador John M Chang, and Chun Lee, a student assistant in the Chemistry Department."* Aucola *yearbook of American University, 1949.
Above right: Three of the original four Korean cherry trees still bloom on the American University campus, March 2022. Photo by Mia Owens.

On August 15, 1945, the emperor of Japan announced his country's surrender, liberating the Korean peninsula. According to Rhee associate Pyo Wook Han, "All Koreans residing in the Washington area came over to Dr. Rhee's residence. Dr. Rhee, Byung Jik Lim, Ki Yong Chang, my wife and I, and other close Koreans watched the people who jumped out to the streets celebrating the defeat of Japan. We went to a Chinese restaurant called the Chinese Lantern near Union Station and had lunch there. Dr. Rhee was happy, but he showed some concern on Russia's

[131] "Cherry Trees Korean, Not Jap; Impressive Rights Confirm Facts," *Eagle* 13 (April 1943). Also see Jimmy Hoover, "Diplomacy Blossoms: The Secret History of D.C.'s Favorite Tree," *AWOL* (April 30, 2014), awolau.org/864/uncategorized/diplomacy-blossoms-the-secret-history-of-dcs-favorite-tree. Scientific research since conducted on the Tidal Basin trees have supposedly traced the genetic origin of these trees to Korea's Jeju Island. Dr. Louis Goodman, former dean of the university's School of International Studies, has been involved in the research about these trees and the ongoing development of the Korean landscape on this site, which has been augmented by new landscaping in recent years.
[132] Maria DePaul, "Korean Stone WWII Memorial Unveiled," *Eagle* 18 (April 1986).

next move."[133] Sam J. Chan's Chinese Lantern, which had relocated to 14 F Street NW that year, was said to have been a gathering place for Korean expats coming and going through nearby Union Station.

In mid-October 1945, Rhee was back in Korea which, although freed of Japanese rule, had effectively been partitioned between a Russian-occupied north and a U.S.-occupied south. As the leader of three organizations promoting Korea's self-determination and unification, he continued to travel to international gatherings to expedite transition to its self-governance. In 1948, he was elected president of the Republic of Korea. Rhee brought some of his old associates from the U.S. into the new government. Many of those who had supported the movement remained in America, a number of them becoming enduring figures in the Korean community that emerged in the Washington area in the 1950s.

This second location of the Chinese Lantern restaurant may have been a popular meeting place for Koreans residing in D.C. for study and independence-movement work. Located near Union Station, it was convenient for those coming into or leaving town. Collection of Grace Dahye Kwon.

[133] In *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington, D.C. Area, 1883-1993* (1995), this anecdote is attributed to Pyo Wook Han, 43.

Becoming Korean American

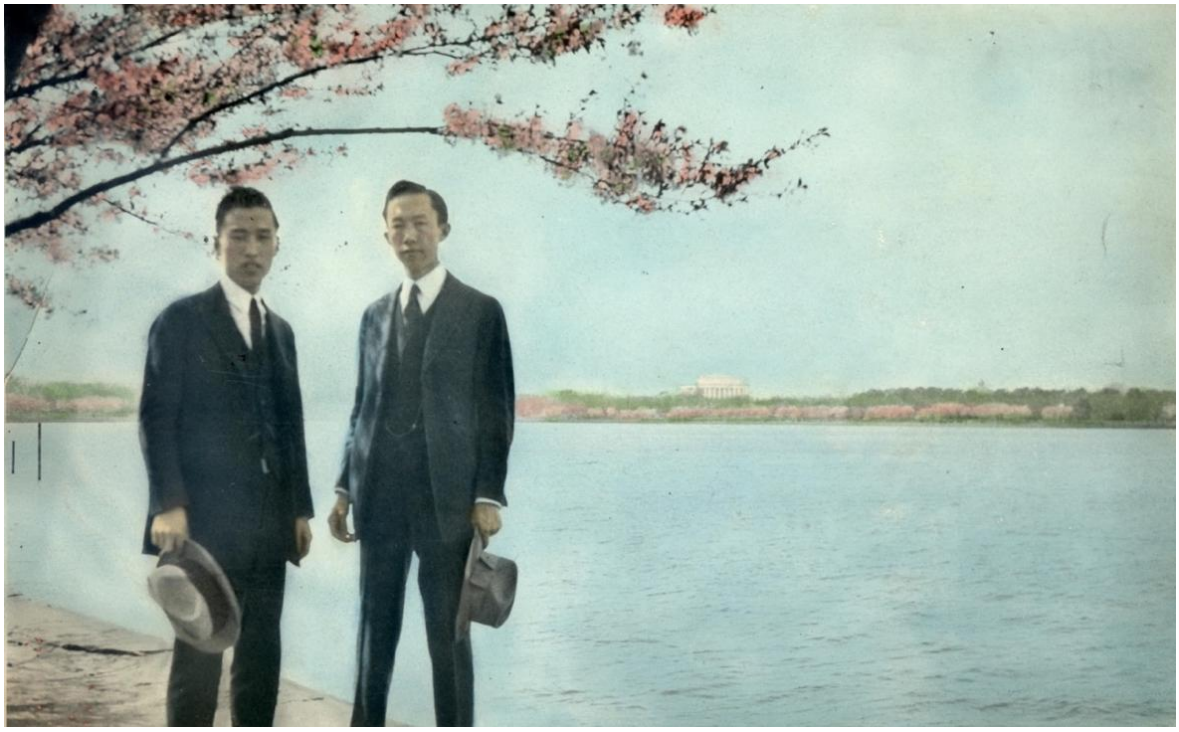
For the generation of Koreans who grew up under Japanese rule, the experiences of voluntary emigration and exile were often inseparable. Delineating who was a Korean American, a Korean immigrant, or a foreign national residing in the United States is neither straightforward nor productive. A university education in the United States was one of the few routes available as the U.S. closed entry to laborers from Asia.[134] As exiles from a colonized territory and ineligible to become U.S. citizens, these stateless students took on roles as emissaries for the cause of Korea's sovereignty. Few in number and internationally oriented, they represent a seminal experience in Korean American history. Some scholars estimate that of the nearly 1,000 students who came to the U.S. to study between 1899 and 1940 more than fifty percent became permanent residents.[135]

Washington, D.C, was a proving ground and way station for intellectuals en route to lives in the new Korean republic after World War II as well as to roles in Korean American communities elsewhere in the U.S.—in churches, as educators, at newspapers, and in business. In D.C., Korean intellectuals positioned themselves as transnational liaisons, engaging the American political system and serving as intermediaries between Koreans and non-Koreans. They forged networks that reached across the continent and to Hawai`i and China, ultimately supplying a significant portion of the leadership of the Republic of Korea. They also constituted a nucleus of activity significant enough to draw others to Washington, a foundation upon which a more permanent community was established.

Attendees of the second annual convention of the Korean Students Federation of North America, a network supported by the YMCA and with headquarters in New York City. Taken in Chicago in 1924, the photo shows the pool from which the Korean Commission drew its temporary staff. University of Southern California Korean Heritage and Digital Libraries, Korean American Digital Archive.

[134] Jean H. Park, "Exiled Envoys," 72.

[135] See Jean H. Park "Exiled Envoys" (109), who in turn cites Chandler H. Im and Amos Yong, *Global Diasporas and Mission* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), 236. Warren Y. Kim, who was himself one of these students, published *Koreans in America* (Seoul, Korea: Po chin Chae Printing Co., 1971) and asserts that between 1899 and 1940, 900 Korean students came to the U.S. for study. For more on foreign students and the independence movement, see David K. Yoo, *Contentious Spirits: Religion in Korean American History, 1903-1945* (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010); Liping Bu, "The Challenge of Race Relations: American Ecumenism and Foreign Student Nationalism, 1900-1940," *Journal of American Studies* 35, No. 2 (August 2001): 217-237.



Above: Pyong-Su Min and Henry Chung DeYoung at the Tidal Basin circa 1921.
Below: The Korean delegation to the United Nations Conference on International Organization included several leaders who had served with the first incarnation of the Korean Commission as well as in the League of the Friends of Korea. In addition to Syngman Rhee (front center), it included Pyeng Koo Yoon, Henry Chung DeYoung, Byung Jik Lim, and Hurn Joo Song.
Both images courtesy of the University of Southern California Korean Heritage and Digital Libraries, Korean American Digital Archive Collection.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

	District of Columbia	United States	Korea/World
1903		First 100 Korean contract laborers arrive in Hawai`i.	
1904			Russo-Japanese War starts and continues into 1905.
1905	Syngman Rhee arrives in D.C. The Korean Legation ceases operation.	The last group migration of Korean laborers to Hawai`i. Ahn Chang Ho organizes Korean Mutual Assistance Association in California.	Portsmouth Treaty Korea-Japan Protectorate Treaty
1906	Rhee graduates from the George Washington University, then matriculates at Harvard.	The San Francisco Board of Education attempts to force Asian students into their own segregated schools.	
1907		Immigration Act restricts Japanese immigration to Hawai`i and the U.S. mainland.	
1907-1908		Gentlemen's Agreement	
1909		Korean National Association established in San Francisco.	
1910	Korean Legation building sold by the Japanese government.		Korea is annexed by Japan.
1917		Immigration Act of 1917, "Asiatic Barred Zone Act"	
1918		President Woodrow Wilson gives his Fourteen Points Speech.	
1919	Rhee returns to D.C. on the eve of Paris peace talks. A temporary legation is set up at 1804 Massachusetts Avenue. Korean Commission to America and Europe	First Korean Congress organized in Philadelphia by Philip Jaisohn.	Paris Peace Conference March 1 Movement in Korea Provisional Korean Government is established in Shanghai with Rhee as president.

	established by Rhee in June.		
1921-1922	In April, a temporary Korean legation building established at 1325 Massachusetts Avenue NW. Korean Mission to the Washington Naval Conference begins.	Washington Naval Conference	Some Korean Provisional Government cabinet members resign.
1923		Korean Student Federation of North America established in New York City.	
1924		Johnson-Reed Immigration Act creates national origins quota and closes entry to nearly all Asians.	
1925/27?	Rhee keeps Korean Commission open despite Korean Provisional Government orders to close it.		Korean Provisional Government impeaches Rhee.
1931			Korean Provisional Government reorganized.
1939	Kilsoo Haan arrives.		
1940		Alien Registration Act	
1941	Kilsoo Haan opens office. Korean Commission re-established with Rhee as chairman.	United Korean Council (UKC) established to unify all Korean organizations and support Korean Commission. Following Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, U.S. enters World War II.	Atlantic Charter
1942	Korean-American Council formed Korea Liberty Conference organized by UKC.	Executive Order 9066 precipitates exclusion and then forced removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast.	
1943	Syngman Rhee plants Korean cherry trees on	U.S. Army General Order 45 formally distinguishes	Cairo Declaration

	the American University Campus. Yong-jeong Kim establishes Korean Affairs Institute.	Koreans from Japanese; Koreans are no longer assigned enemy alien classification. Magnuson Act repeals the Chinese Exclusion Act	
1944	United Korean Council office established in D.C. Korean Commission reorganized as Korean Diplomatic Mission with Rhee as chairman.		
1945	Syngman Rhee leaves for Korea.	War Brides Act Presidential Directive on Displaced Persons	Japan surrenders, war ends, Korea is liberated and then partitioned.

PART 3
1945 to 1969—COLD WAR-ERA SETTLEMENT AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

The Cold War and "Second Wave" Korean Immigration

The end of World War II heralded the beginning of a Cold War between communist and non-communist nations, with the Korean peninsula as an early battleground. The United States' political interests and alliances in Asia during and after the war directly affected domestic immigration policy.

As the U.S. positioned itself internationally as a champion of freedom, it was pressed to demonstrate its commitment to equality at home. From 1947 to 1949, Walter Jhung was among those lobbying on Capitol Hill for a Korean Immigration and Naturalization Bill, sponsored by Korean organizations in Hawai`i.[136] After wartime alliances, military service, and the arrival of thousands of war brides, Asians were suddenly reimagined as assimilable. The 1952 McCarran-Walter Act technically terminated Asian exclusion, and Koreans and Japanese became the last categories of Asians to gain the rights to immigrate and naturalize. This legislation set a very small annual quota of 100 Koreans per year, but there were other means and non-quota categories through which they were able to enter the country, most significantly as refugees, orphans adopted by U.S. families, students and, the largest group, as wives of U.S. servicemen.[137] Of Koreans who immigrated between 1951 and 1964, women outnumbered men seven to two.[138]

The 1965 Hart-Celler Immigration and Nationality Act replaced America's former quota system, which had favored western and northern Europeans, now instead prioritizing family reunification and the possession of skills. The bill also made it possible for foreign students to apply for permanent status upon earning degrees and securing work sponsorship. In the first year after implementation, family members of naturalized citizens and permanent residents constituted the majority of growth in immigration. On the eve of the Korean War there were about 10,000 Koreans in the continental U.S. By the end of the 1960s, the population had grown to 70,000.[139]

Ongoing instability in Korea during the 1950s and 1960s motivated emigration and shaped Korean American life. Following liberation, the peninsula was partitioned. After being engulfed in civil war, the governance of South Korea shifted between a U.S. military government, the autocratic rule of Syngman Rhee, a short-lived parliamentary government initiated by a popular revolt, and

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[136] Jhung later moved to South Korea to work in the Rhee administration. For more information, see Jane H. Hong, *Opening the Gates to Asia: Transpacific History of How America Repealed Asian Exclusion* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 175-207.

[137] Shelley Sang-Hee Lee, *A New History of Asian America* (London, England: Routledge, 2013), 26 and 253: Most Asian migration to the U.S. from 1945 to the 1965 came through the non-quota categories established by the 1945 War Brides Act, the Displaced Person Act of 1948, and the 1953 Refugee Act. Between 1950 and 1965, an estimated 7,700 women, 2000 children, and 3,500 mixed-race children of servicemen came to the U.S. See also Susie Woo, "A New American Comes 'Home': Race, Nation, and the Immigration of Korean War Adoptees, 'GI Babies,' and Brides," Ph.D. dissertation (Yale, 2010),16-17; Ilpyong J. Kim, *Korean Americans Past, Present and Future* (Seoul, Korea: Hollym International Corp., 2004), 26.

[138] Shelley Sang-Hee Lee, *A New History of Asian America*, 248.

[139] Hong, "The Origins and Construction of Korean America Immigration Before 1965," in *A Companion to Korean American Studies*, eds. Rachael Miyung Joo and Shelley Sang-Hee Lee (Boston: Brill, 2018), 3; John Lie, "The Korean Diaspora in the United States," in *Global East Asia: Into the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Frank N. Pieke and Koichi Iwabuchi (Oakland: University of California Press, 2021), 182.

a military junta. By 1960, South Korea had among the lowest per capita income and gross domestic product in the world.[140]

Syngman Rhee's influence on the lives of Korean Americans extended into this period, but a popular student-run uprising ousted him in 1960. John Chang became prime minister over a parliamentary cabinet, but his government was short-lived, overthrown the following year in a coup d'état led by General Park Chung Hee. Park resolved to stabilize and transform South Korea's economy. In addition to building up the country's trade capacity, he encouraged emigration to alleviate population pressures. Among his defense measures was the establishment of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency to surveil and suppress dissenters, including those in the diaspora. Park's dictatorship continued until his assassination in 1979.

Putting Down Roots

The Koreans who arrived in Washington after World War II resembled those who were already here in that many came via educational or diplomatic pathways. The most pronounced difference was the prominence of women and children, many of whom entered as non-quota immigrants, sponsored by family members such as adoptive parents or new spouses.

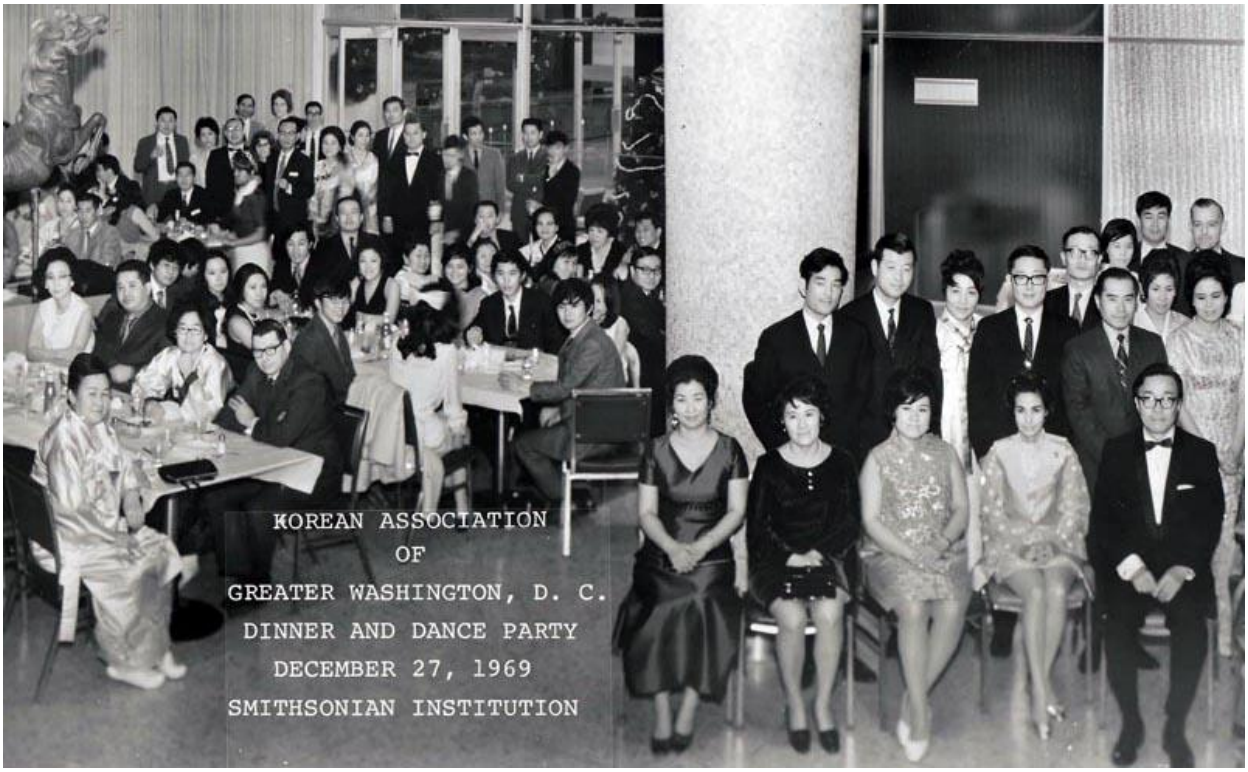
There is limited data on Koreans for 1940 to 1960, because the U.S. census did not provide a separate category for them.[141] The 1950 census actually reduced the number of Asian national and ethnic categories to Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino. Everyone else, including those of mixed-race ancestry, as well as Koreans and "Hindus," were counted as "other race."

Estimates of the local Korean population, shared anecdotally in interviews or cited in *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993,* indicate only a few dozen residents of the Washington area on the eve of the Korean War. Most were students or people involved with the new embassy. Some students had opted to remain in the U.S. after liberation, and following the war, they were joined by refugee family members.

Mr. Won Kook Park came to D.C. in 1956. A contributor to several important community institutions, including the Korean Community Service Center (established 1974), he has witnessed the growth of the local population. When he arrived, he counted sixteen families or households, about 30 people total, mostly students. He recalls no businesspeople in the area yet. He remembers that the population was so small that when he saw "Asian-looking" people riding the bus, he would stop them to ask if they were Korean.[142] A 1958 directory compiled by the Association of Korean Students listed 138 Korean residents of Washington.[143]

[140] In 1960, the per capita income in Korea was $79, among the lowest in the world. The per capita gross national product was $82. See John Kie-chiang Oh and Bonnie Bongwan Cho Oh, *Korean Embassy in America* (Elizabeth, NJ and Seoul, Korea: Hollym International Corp, 2003), 73 and 93.
[141] Gibson and Jung 2002.
[142] Won Kook Park (board member, Korean Community Service Center), personal communication with Grace Dahye Kwon and Sojin Kim, July 27, 2022.
[143] According to *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), the largest number of students identified were enrolled at American University. Other schools were Georgetown University, the George Washington University, the Catholic University of America, Washington Seminary, the University of Maryland, Howard University, and the District of Columbia Teachers College (63-64).

By the end of the 1960s, the metropolitan region's Korean population may have grown as large as 400 to 500.[144] This was an important period of community building during which immigrants put concerted effort into settling permanently and creating cooperative institutions.



A detail of a panoramic photo of the Korean Association's 1969 end-of-year party for which a space at the Smithsonian was rented. Collection of the family of Kwang Wook Rowe.

While homeland and international politics continued to concern D.C. Koreans, the emergence of a second generation meant attention to matters closer to home, including education, culture, and leisure and recreation. A number of community-based organizations that continue to serve today were established in the 1950s and 1960s.

There are few extant properties and no purpose-built ones associated with Koreans of this era in Washington. But by tracing the experiences of Koreans during this time, we can elaborate on the historical meaning and uses of other known sites, including Syngman Rhee's residences, the Korean Embassy on Massachusetts Avenue, and religious institutions. This is a story less about sites than about the networks that connected a fluid community of Koreans in the wider region. Significant themes of the period are Cold War and homeland politics; religious institutions; labor and enterprise; leisure and mutual aid; and second-generation experiences.

[144] According to *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), in 1950, there were 22 Koreans, seven of whom were embassy staff and their family members, plus students. In 1953, there were more than 100, not including students. The number 138 for 1958 is based on a directory compiled by the Association of Korean Students, and including both students and diplomats (57, 58, 63). Census data for 1970 reports 365 Koreans in D.C., 2,333 in the state of Maryland, and 1,805 in the entire state of Virginia.

The Korean Embassy, Educational Pathways, and Community Building

The emancipation of the Korean peninsula from Japanese domination and the establishment of the Republic of Korea (ROK) were watershed events for Asia. The last-minute entrance of the Soviet Union into the war against Japan left the country partitioned, with the northern half under communist rule. During the Cold War, Korea again had to navigate between larger powers, and the republic's diplomatic presence in Washington soon took on an outsized importance.

The first Korean Embassy in the United States was established at 4700 16th Street NW in 1949.[145] This was Syngman Rhee's former residence, from which he had been running the reconstituted Korean Commission at the end of World War II. Elected president of the ROK in 1948, Rhee appointed John Myon Chang (Chang Myon, 장면, 1899-1966) its first ambassador.[146] Philip Han (Han Pyo wook, 한표욱, 1916-2003) served as first secretary and Sae Sun Kim (김세선) as minister counselor. Kim and Han had come to America as students and worked for the Korean Commission during the war.[147] After several months, the small embassy staff removed to offices at 416 5th Street NW, a building owned by John W. Staggers, an attorney and longtime Rhee associate.[148] At the direction of Rhee, Han then purchased for the embassy a large house at 2320 Massachusetts Avenue NW.

While the embassy was the most important institutional link between the two nations, it played a significant role in Korean American experiences as well.[149] Its early staff included immigrants who settled permanently and became prominent community builders. As Korea rebuilt its own economy and infrastructure, its government promoted educational opportunities abroad to build the capacity of the population. It sponsored university students who settled in the Washington area. The embassy was also one of the few organizations on the East Coast through which scattered expats and immigrants could connect to their cultural heritage and with one another.

Students were crucial to the development of a Korean American community. Among the most notable was Key Paik Yang (양기백, 1920-2015), who came with two other young officials to the U.S. in 1949, sponsored by the Korean government, to continue their education. After graduating from Monmouth College in Illinois, Yang was preparing for a fellowship at Boston University when the Korean War broke out. Anxious to send for his young family and provide for it, he moved to Washington in search of work. In 1950, he was hired as a cataloger at the Library of Congress. Later, he founded and managed the library's Korean collection after discovering that Korean materials were being cataloged in the Chinese section. Yang was the library's sole Korean specialist for many years and, while employed there, earned two master's degrees from local

[145] For an in-depth history of the embassy, see Oh and Oh, *Korean Embassy in America*.
[146] His youngest brother, Paul Keuk Chang, was a NASA scientist and a professor of physics and aerospace science at Catholic University from 1958 to 1979.
[147] After the liberation, Han left D.C. and was working on his doctorate in political science at the University of Michigan when he was directed by Rhee to return to Washington, according to *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), 49. Oh and Oh, in *Korean Embassy in America,* include a section addressing the role of women, in this case, wives of diplomats. Philip Han's wife, for example, Dr. Choi Chung-Lim, was in the midst of her anthropology studies when they were called to D.C. She ran the household and managed the needs of the embassy staff, including standing in for the ambassador's spouse in the initial days of operation.
[148] The offices were reportedly spread out on three floors, with space for the ambassador, first minister, procurement officer, and two "American secretaries." This seems to be the building that Rhee had used during World War II for the Korean Commission. It is no longer extant.
[149] Oh and Oh, *Korean Embassy in America,* 2.

universities (political science at American University; library science at Catholic University). He became the first head of the Korean Section, then chief of the Asian Division. Nobel-prize-winning author Pearl Buck contacted him while writing *The Living Reed*, her novel set in Korea. He assisted visiting Korea scholars and promoted their work. From 1968 until his retirement in 1995, he provided space at the library for a luncheon group that met for monthly presentations and discussions on Korean history and politics.[150] As the Cold War turned hot in Korea, Yang was naturally called upon by the State Department and congressmen for information about the peninsula. He assisted the Army Map Service to ensure accuracy and consistency in the translation of place names. During the time of the House Un-American Activities Committee hearings, he vouched for Korean friends investigated as communist sympathizers and threatened with deportation.[151]

The Korean Embassy, 2320 Massachusetts Avenue NW, 1951.
John P. Wymer Photograph Collection, Kiplinger Library, D.C. History Center.

[150] The organizers of this group included State Department staff, university faculty, and Smithsonian curators. Attendees tended to be students and retired military, but not as many Korean Americans. Dr. David Steinberg, Distinguished Professor of Asian Studies Emeritus, Georgetown University, with whom Yang organized these Tuesday luncheons, said, "Every Korean intellectual who came to Washington owes him a debt. He really helped them," personal communication with Sojin Kim and Grace Dahye Kwon, March 7, 2022. Yang also helped to organize conferences on Korea in the U.S. and abroad.

[151] Won Yang Everett (daughter of K.P. Yang), personal communication with Sojin Kim, May 26, 2023. America's military intervention and Cold War stakes in the peninsula created occupational opportunities for other Koreans. Some were hired by the Army Map Service, and others, after the war, by the Voice of America.

The embassy was a gathering point for Koreans before the development of community organizations. The staff organized Korean independence picnics as well as dances for young Korean Americans later on. It would come to play a lesser role in their lives as new institutions and associations were built. It was viewed warily once the Rhee government turned autocratic and was later succeeded by a military junta.

K.W. Lee (b. 1928), seated at front left, with other students and expatriates at a Korean Embassy holiday party circa 1953. Like many, K.W. never returned to Korea. He started his family and his journalism career in Appalachia in the 1950s, covering civil rights and poverty issues, eventually moving to California. While a student at the University of West Virginia in the early 1950s, he traveled to Washington on multiple occasions, including at the summons of Francesca Donner Rhee, who recognized his value as a journalist. The embassy was one of the few places in the region where he could meet other Koreans. Collection of K.W. Lee.

Two staff from the early years of the embassy, Sae Sun Kim and Walter K. Park, exemplify the transition from student to diplomat to community organizer. Both men settled in the Washington area, raising families and holding leadership or advisory roles in foundational institutions of this period.

Sae Sun Kim's family embodied the circuitous journeys of this generation of Korean student-immigrants. Born in Choerwon, Korea, in 1901, Kim arrived in the United States in 1926 after graduating Waseda University in Tokyo. He studied economics in Chicago and was able to remain

in the U.S. by renewing his student visa every year for almost two decades. His wife, Anne Chung-hi Lee (김정희, 1903-1989), had been an infant among Hawai`i's early Korean community.[152] Her early life was itinerant—living in California, Oregon, Washington, Montana, and Utah with her farmworker mother and stepfather. She met Kim in Chicago and, by the 1930s, the couple was living in New York City, where Kim attended graduate school at Columbia University. Anne quickly became absorbed in an education she had not received during her migratory life. She studied geography at Mount Holyoke on a missionary scholarship for women and was admitted to Cornell graduate school, which she could not afford to attend. Having grown up in the U.S., she was fluent in English and earned money by ghost-writing master's theses for Chinese students. Excluded from most occupations in New York City, Sae Sun Kim was selling novelties to corner stores and working in Chinese restaurants to support the family, which now included two children. He traveled regularly to Washington, D.C. for work with Syngman Rhee's Korean Commission and later with the U.S. Department of War, which recruited Koreans literate in Japanese. The entire family relocated to the D.C. area in 1946, settling first in Takoma Park, then Silver Spring, Maryland. After Kim left the embassy in 1953, he founded his own business, Sae Sun Kim Company Limited. His daughter recalls that the family home was outfitted with wall-to-wall beds for "refugees" of the Korean War, foreign students stranded by the conflict or arriving soon after.[153]

Walter K. Park (박원규, 1904-1995) was employed as commercial attaché to the Korean Embassy from 1952 to 1953. He, too, had entered the U.S. as a young student, joined later by his family.[154] Walter and wife Florence were the catalysts for or advisors to virtually all the community organizations started in the 1950s and 1960s. The earliest of these was the Korean Social Group.[155] In 1950, Walter Park convened at his home a group of embassy workers and Korean university students. They initially met as a social club weekly, then monthly. The first address associated with the group was 3200 19th Street in Mount Pleasant. By 1953, they had written a group charter and changed their name to Korean Residents in Washington (and later, the Korean American Association of Greater Washington).[156] Membership broadened over the next two decades, and the group would become autonomous, distanced from the embassy during times of political tension.

The Korean Students Association (KSA), or Association of Korean Students, emerged in the mid-1950s from relationships formed around the embassy, and it thereafter merged into the Korean

[152] She may or may not have been born in Hawai`i. Her daughter Elaine H. Kim has not yet found birth records for her mother. Personal communication with Sojin Kim, July 23, 2022.
[153] Elaine H. Kim, personal communication with Sojin Kim, July 23, 2022.
[154] Walter K. Park arrived in the U.S. with his family on May 7, 1951, from Pusan, Korea, where they had been refugees. See *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), 57.
[155] The group survives to the present day. The publication *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* is one of its initiatives.
[156] This address may have been Walter and Florence Park's home. The organization's name was changed to Korean Residents in Washington by 1953. Another group, about which there is little information, is the Korean American Cultural Foundation which, according to the 1953 Polk directory, was associated with the residential address of Chang Soon Kim, 3222 Oliver Street NW. *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995) references the Korean American Culture Center on page 57. The group's name is also translated as the Korean Friendship Promotion Association, described as "the first such Korean gathering," a group of nine people organized by Walter Park, according to *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), 150-151. See The Committee for the Korean Centennial Pictorial Picture Book of North America, *Koreans in North America: A Pictorial History* (Los Angeles: The Christian Herald USA, 2006), 412.

Above: Walter K. Park (far right) with family and friends, mid-1950s. **Below:** ***Two Kim families (left to right), Sae Sun Kim, Sylvia Kim, Anne Chung-hi Lee Kim, Mary Soondek Juhn Kim, and Rev. Daniel Taimook Kim at Foundry Methodist Church, circa 1956. Collection of Carol Kim Retka.***

Residents in Washington and the Korean American Association of Greater Washington.[157] Among its most significant functions was the production of a newsletter, *The Torch*, and the compilation of an annual directory of all Korean residents. The Korean American Association would take on the latter role in 1980.[158]

John Kie-chiang Oh (1930-2010) was president of the student association in the early 1960s.[159] He worked on his doctorate in political science at Georgetown University while wife Bonnie Bongwan Cho-Oh studied for her master's degree in Russian and European Intellectual History.[160] Recalling this period, Bonnie Oh emphasizes how the political instability in Korea affected social interactions. The community included former Rhee regime military personnel, who had gone into self-imposed exile after he was ousted. Many of these remained in Washington for access to policymakers, diplomats, and media. The Ohs' apartment became a place where students and former military met. Views could vary sharply, and she remembers, "When you started hearing dissenting voices… when friendly gatherings started getting frayed, we stopped talking politics." Like many who had expected to return to Korea after earning their degrees, the Ohs opted to pursue appointments in the U.S. rather than return to the uncertain Korean political climate.[161]

A still-earlier group sponsored an exchange program for college students from the two nations. The Korean-American Cultural Association (KACA) was founded in Hawai`i in 1939 by Changsoon Kim, who relocated its headquarters to Washington around 1944. The association had branches in Honolulu, Seattle, and other cities. It set up scholarships to send Koreans to American universities and vice versa, a program that lasted until after the Korean War.[162] Kim invited Albert Einstein to chair the group's Honorary Scholars Committee.[163] He also edited the book, *The Culture of Korea*, published by the association in 1946.[164] His own story is reflective of the travails of many immigrants. Born in 1904, Kim had arrived in America as a student in 1926 and later penned a humorous newspaper account of "My First Day in America." The circumstance of his migration, the outbreak of two wars, America's strict limitations on Asian immigrants, and transportation difficulties left him separated from his fiancée for 22 years, so their first child was

[157] According to the Korean-language *Minju Hanguk Ilbo* newspaper of April 8, 1977, they were founded in 1958. But 1955 is the year indicated in *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995) as well as in the very comprehensive chronology in the Committee for the Korean Centennial Pictorial Picture Book of North America, *Koreans in North America: A Pictorial History*.

[158] The largest number of members are identified with American University. The other schools include Georgetown University, the George Washington University, the Catholic University of America, Washington Seminary, the University of Maryland, Howard University, and the District of Columbia Teachers College. *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), 63-64.

[159] His name also appears in print as Kie-Chang and Kie-Chiang.

[160] After John Oh left D.C., he was professor of Korean studies as well as vice president and president of Marquette University in Milwaukee. In 1985, he returned to Washington when appointed academic vice president at the Catholic University of America, where he held an endowed chair of politics. Bonnie Oh later earned her Ph.D. in East Asian history from the University of Chicago (1974). She held a tenured position at Loyola University of Chicago; served as assistant dean at St. Mary's College in Maryland and at University of Maryland; started the first women's studies course at Loyola University and the first Asian American course at the University of Maryland, College Park. She retired as distinguished professor of Korean studies at Georgetown University.

[161] Bonnie Oh, personal communication with Sojin Kim, February 16, 2022.

[162] Kimm, Richard C., "Korean Culture Gains World Recognition," *The Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, June 30, 1943; "Koreans Married After Separation of 22 Years," *The Seattle Times*, April 17, 1948.

[163] Christie's Online Auction 23113, onlineonly.christies.com/s/fine-printed-books-manuscripts-including-americana/declining-chairmanship-within-korean-american-cultural-association-104/226188.

[164] Kim Changsoon, ed., *The Culture of Korea: Racial Background, Sketch of Geography, History of Korea, Religion, Literature, Art, Science, Music, Economic Background, and History of Revolutionary Movement* (Honolulu: Korean-American Cultural Association).

born when his wife was 36 years old.[165] During World War II, Kim had written in defense of Koreans accused as enemy aliens because they were Japanese subjects.[166] During the Korean War, the Federal Bureau of Investigation compiled an extensive dossier on KACA which, despite being nonpolitical, was progressive in its outlook.[167]

Although they had come to the U.S. through the privileged path of higher education, Korean students often struggled to make ends meet. Few received assistance from family, and the Korean government restricted the amount that could be sent to those who did. Students drove cabs and worked at dry cleaners and in restaurants to support themselves. To ease this financial hardship, the Scholarship Fund for Korean Students in America was formed in 1969 with Walter K. Park as chairman and volunteers from the Korean church community. With $325 in seed money raised at a concert, the organization filled its coffers from charity art shows, dinners, golf tournaments and lotteries, and donations solicited at shopping centers. This once-local organization that had convened in members' homes is now a national organization known as the Korean American Scholarship Foundation (KASF, 한미장학재단), with regional branches coordinated from an office in the Virginia suburbs. In 1984, a scholarship was named in Walter Park's honor.[168]

While these organizations supported Korean students studying locally, they also socialized recipients, organizers, and contributors into a community of Korean Americans, creating networks of mutual aid that strengthened a permanent community in the region.

Community Fissures

As friction between students and former military in the KSA suggests, Cold War fears created anger and distrust among Koreans of different political persuasions. Partisanship was sometimes institutionalized by the creation of new organizations, such as the Korean Culture and Freedom Foundation. This group was established in the mid-1960s by former embassy military attaché Bo Hi Pak (박보희, 1930-2019), who regarded conciliatory gestures towards North Korea as a threat to the peninsula's security. Another was the Korean Affairs Institute, outspoken in its support of reunification of north and south.[169] Yong-jeung Kim founded the Korean Affairs Institute in 1943. He had been a critic of Syngman Rhee since before Korea's liberation, and he remained active until the mid-1970s. Kim published materials criticizing the Rhee government, including the journal *The Voice of Korea*. He also lobbied for reunification, an ideal looked upon with increasing suspicion.[170]

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[165] "Koreans Married After Separation of 22 Years," *The Seattle Times*, April 17, 1948; Kim, Changsoon, "My First Day in America," *The Omaha World-Herald*, December 24, 1933; United States Census Population Schedules for the District of Columbia, 1950.

[166] Macmillan, Michael, "Unwanted Allies: Koreans as Enemy Aliens in World War II," *The Hawaiian Journal of History*, Vol. 19 (1985), 202.

[167] Christie's Online Auction 23113, onlineonly.christies.com/s/fine-printed-books-manuscripts-including-americana/declining-chairmanship-within-korean-american-cultural-association-104/226188.

[168] Young Whan Park, personal communication with Grace Dahye Kwon and Sojin Kim, March 10, 2022.

[169] In 1950, Yong Jeong Kim and the Korea Affairs Institute started "English Monthly," a newsletter criticizing the Rhee government and calling for the unification of Korea. See *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), 144.

[170] The 1945 Boyd's Directory puts the Korean Affairs Institute at 1029 Mount Vernon Avenue NW. The 1954 directory places it at 1507 M Street NW, Room 300. A later directory gives the address as 4614 Reno Road, which may have been Kim's home. Yong-jeong Kim's papers are housed at Columbia University. See *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), 144.

Throughout the 1960s, Korean residents, many of them students, organized protests to address homeland issues. After a 1960 student-led April Revolution toppled Syngman Rhee's government, its D.C. counterparts threatened to storm the Korean embassy, calling for the ambassador's resignation.[171] When Park Chung Hee's military junta seized power in the country, demonstrators appeared in front of the White House. Divisions intensified in 1969, when Park introduced an amendment to the Korean constitution to enable him to stay in office for a third term. The Korean Students Association defied embassy advice against involvement in politics, and a group of students, exiles, and immigrant residents formed the Korean Struggle Committee. They protested at the embassy, fundraised, petitioned, and expressed their concerns to American politicians and the Korean National Assembly. Four hundred people showed up to impeach the president of the Korean-American Association after he placed ads in newspapers expressing support for the Park Chung Hee regime on behalf of the D.C. Korean population. Kwang Wook Rowe (노광욱, 1922-2014), a longtime democracy activist, was elected in his place.[172]

Differences and mistrust continued into the next decade. Students who might have returned to Korea extended their stays in the U.S., many becoming permanent residents or citizens, anchoring future immigration.

***Demonstrators protest at the White House in 1963, demanding an end to military rule and the restoration of democracy in South Korea. Associated Press photograph, reprinted with permission of the D.C. Public Library, Star Collection, copyright the* Washington Post.**

[171] Winzola McLendon, "His Resignation Won't Ruin Her Birthday," *The Washington Post*, April 27, 1960.
[172] *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), 146, 150-151.

Religious Institutions

It would be impossible to overstate the importance of organized religion to Korean American community building. With the partition of the peninsula and the ensuing war, northern Christians largely fled communist rule, and many joined the diaspora. Christian conversion and the formation of independent churches continued in the homeland for decades. Churches were among the earliest institutions established in the large Korean communities of Hawai`i and California before World War II. In Washington, D.C., some of the earliest Korean residents were associated with the Church of the Covenant (Old National Presbyterian Church) at Connecticut Avenue and N Street, but fully Korean congregations would not form until the after the war. The first permanent churches were organized between 1950 and 1970.

Faith-based organizations gathered and supported a growing population. Churches not only attended to spiritual matters, but they provided critical services and cultural and social networking. Toward the end of the 1960s, religious leaders explored merging congregations to form a single, regional Korean American church. Several meetings were convened to discuss the idea, but the initiative did not progress, reflecting doctrinal differences and how consensus became challenging as the population grew, diversified, and dispersed.[173]

Organized by Seunghwa Ahn, a writer and insurance agent who had been associated with the Korean National Association, a Korean Christian congregation met at Mount Vernon Place United Methodist Church, 900 Massachusetts Avenue NW, in 1944.[174] Ahn and his brother went on to found the first Korean church in the Boston area, but little came of the Massachusetts Avenue assembly.[175]

Established in 1951, the Korean Church in Washington, D.C. is arguably the most important institution in the history of the local Korean community.[176] It was founded by a small group who sought connection and solace as military conflict engulfed their homeland. The continuing influence of Syngman Rhee shaped its organization. Its first minister was Rev. Daniel Taimook Kim (김태묵, 1908-1994), who came to D.C. after an assignment at Rhee's old church in Honolulu. The congregation met in the Ball Memorial Chapel of Foundry Methodist Church on 16th Street NW. Foundry's pastor, Rev. Frederick Harris, had been chaplain of the U.S. Senate and was an old Rhee associate. Rhee had attended services at Foundry in the years before World War II, and Harris had been a member of the Korean American Council, which worked with the United Korean Council to organize the 1942 Liberty Conference of independence activists.

Although most of the original congregants were Presbyterian and they met in a Methodist space,

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[173] *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), 37.

[174] "Korean Church Here," *The Evening Star*, July 15, 1944. In *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995) Ahn (writinging his name as Sung Hwa Ahn) is described as among four "Christian leaders" in the area during World War II, who held "prayer meetings and fellowships at home" (114).

[175] "Sungha Kim, an expert in Asian history, at 64," *The Boston Herald*, January 17, 1989.

[176] The church was registered with the Washington Council of Churches as "Hwabu Korean Church" (화부 한인교해) and with the District of Columbia as the "Korean Church in Washington." See Korean United Methodist Church of Greater Washington, 와싱톤한인교회 삼십오년사 [*Thirty Five Years of the Korean United Methodist Church of Greater Washington*, 1951-1986], 6, kumcgw.org. Also, *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995) indicates that Walter K. Park, who also worked at the Korean embassy, made many of the arrangements for the church. Key Y. Park, Library of Congress cataloger, served as the church's "recording secretary." Byung Chol Koh, described as "a student leader," was another of the founders (117).

the church's name and services deliberately transcended denomination in order to emphasize service to the immigrant population.[177] Rev. Kim's daughter Ellen recalled:

> A year after the Korean War broke out and we had relocated from Honolulu… [my father] decided that what the Koreans in Washington D.C. needed was a church to meet as a community not only to worship but in solidarity for peace in Korea. He approached the Presbytery (the governing body of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.) to express this desire to have a Korean Presbyterian church. But he told us that the Presbytery did not want him to establish a separate Korean church and told him that the Korean people should join already existing Presbyterian churches in the area. He felt that was against his purpose… [and there should be] a Korean community Christian (Presbyterian) church during the time of war in their homeland.[178]

On October 15, 1951, Rev. Kim preached his first sermon, "Let's Pray for the Country and People," to 32 worshippers. [179] Until 1978, the congregation met in Foundry's Ball Memorial Chapel. The Korean Church presided over funerals and weddings; welcomed new residents, students, and visiting diplomats; organized community picnics; and offered Korean-language classes for an American-born generation. A panoramic photograph commemorated the church's tenth anniversary in 1961, showing a multigenerational group of 200 people, powerful visual evidence of how the population of Koreans grew in the intervening decade. In the late 1970s, after over 25 years, the congregation outgrew its space at the Foundry. It relocated several times in D.C. and Maryland before purchasing land in Virginia and building the sanctuary where members now worship as the Korean United Methodist Church of Greater Washington.[180]

In 1964, the Korean Church tried to establish a permanent home in the city, acquiring a house at 5505 16th Street NW. Members raised the purchase price through donations and borrowing from the United Methodist Church of America and the Baltimore Conference's Methodist Credit Union. Called "Our House" or "*Woori-jip*" (우리집), it opened on February 28, 1965. Church leaders hoped to renovate the property for services.[181] Youngwan Park (박영환, b. 1937), a member and a licensed architect, prepared reconstruction plans. As there were few Korean American architects of this time, and he was responsible for a number of local commissions, his career merits a profile.

Park first attended services at the Korean Church in 1962 while visiting the woman he would later marry. Sun Kyung Auh was the daughter of a Korean diplomat who had studied at Columbia University in the 1930s. She came to D.C. after supporting her father during his tour of duty in Mexico, joining her sister who was in the University of Maryland music doctoral program and serving as the choir director at the church.

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[177] *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), 115; Carol Kim Retka (youngest daughter of Rev. Taimook Kim), personal communication with Sojin Kim, May 11, 2022.
[178] Ellen Lee (middle daughter of Rev. Taimook Kim), personal communication with Sojin Kim, February 7, 2022.
[179] Korean United Methodist Church of Greater Washington, [*Thirty Five Years of the Korean United Methodist Church of Greater Washington*], 7.
[180] After leaving the Foundry in 1978, the congregation was based first at St. Luke's United Methodist Church at 3655 Calvert Street NW (1978-1982), the Silver Spring United Methodist Church (1982-1983), and the Trinity Church (1983-1984).
[181] Korean United Methodist Church of Greater Washington, [*Thirty-Five Years of the Korean United Methodist Church of Greater Washington, 1951-1986*].

Above: Rev. Daniel Taimook Kim (standing second from left), Mary Soondek Juhn Kim Kim (seated far right), and their children with Syngman Rhee (seated center) and Frances Donner Rhee in Korea before the Kims' departure for Hawai`i, circa 1949.
Below: Rev. Frederick Brown Harris and his wife with Rev. Taimook Kim and Mary Soondek Kim, Juhn Kim, Florence Park, and other family members at Foundry Methodist Church circa 1952.
Photos from the collection of Carol Kim Retka.

A tenth-anniversary portrait of the Korean Church in Washington in front of Foundry Church, 1961. Collection of Carol Kim Retka.

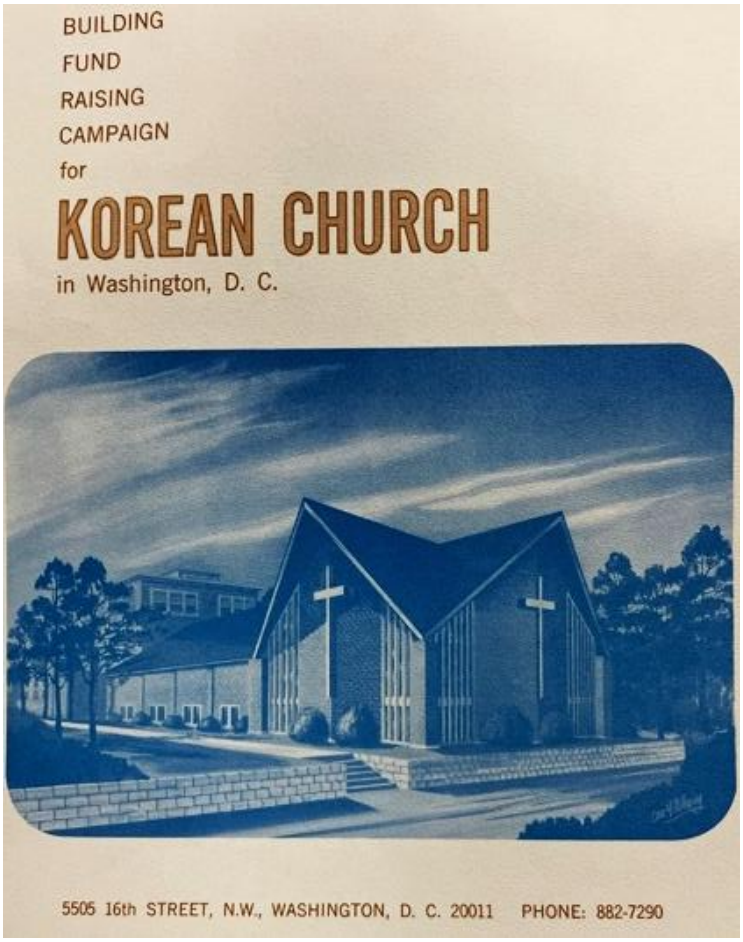
Youngwan Park had come to the U.S. as a student in the late 1950s and earned his bachelor of architecture degree in 1963 from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. He later received a graduate degree in city and regional planning from Catholic University. From 1963 to 1967, he worked at Morton W. Noble Architects in D.C., and from 1967 to 1978 at H.D. Nottingham and Associates in McLean, Virginia, as the director of architecture and planning. In 1978, he founded his own practice, Designtech-East, Ltd., in an office on 17th Street NW near National Geographic, which he later moved to Rockville, Maryland. As an architect and planner, he worked on federal government projects across the region, including at the Smithsonian, Walter Reed Army Medical Center, the U.S. Information Agency, and U.S. Prison Industries. His resumé includes private and commercial projects in China, Saudi Arabia, Korea, and Nigeria. But his most important life's project has been working to build and support a permanent home for the Korean Church of Washington, now known as the Korean United Methodist Church. Park oversaw multiple phases of the church's building campaigns: one for *Woori Jip* in D.C. and three phases of the eventual church construction in Virginia. "It was a blessing and grace of God for me to participate in this process of growth and transformation from a small immigrant minority church to a matured main street United Methodist church in the nation's capital area."[182]

The proposed 16th Street church edifice *Woori Jip* did not win zoning approval, because neighbors were concerned about the impact on residential parking. The property remained a meeting place for committees, such as the Women's Mission, and for choir practice. It was to be used for religious classes, but it was not close enough to Foundry to be convenient for members. The congregation sold the property in 1969.

In 1956, the Korean Baptist Church of Washington (워싱톤한인침례교회) became the third congregation established by Koreans in the city and the first Korean Baptist church in the nation. In fact, initially named the First Korean Baptist Church in the United States, it is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. Its founder, Rev. Chang Soon Kim, had also been a pastor in

[182] Young Whan Park personal communication with Sojin Kim and Grace Dahye Kwon, March 10, 2022.

Hawai`i. He reportedly declined an invitation to join Rev. Taimook's church, instead working with the Baptist Church Promotion Headquarters in Korea to establish this congregation in a residential property at 3200 Rittenhouse Street NW. The first service was held in May 1956 by Pastor Wong-Yong Kang, who had been a seminary student in New York. [183] The congregation worshipped at this site until 1959, when it moved to its own chapel in the National Baptist Memorial Church at 1501 Columbia Road NW.[184] By the end of the 1960s, it appears to have been accommodated in the Temple Baptist Church sanctuary at 3850 Nebraska Avenue NW.[185] In 1980, the church relocated to a new edifice in Silver Spring, Maryland, where the congregation remains today.



Korean Church in Washington, D.C. building campaign brochure depicting the architectural design by Young Whan Park. Program design by Lee Y. Whang, circa 1966. Collection of Young Whan Park.

Two Korean Presbyterian churches were organized in D.C. before 1970. The first service of the Washington Korean Presbyterian Church (or Korean Presbyterian Church of Washington, 워싱톤한인장로교회) was held at Howard University Chapel on July 4, 1965. Subsequent services took place at the National Presbyterian Church, until the congregation was able to secure for worship the Lincoln Chapel of New York Avenue Presbyterian Church. The members purchased

[183] *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), 116-117.
[184] District of Columbia Land Records, Document No. 1959033620; "Pastor Hopes to Guide New Korean Leaders," *The Evening Star*, June 25, 1966.
[185] "Union Thanksgiving Service" advertisement, *The Evening Star*, November 26, 1969; "Good Friday, March 26" advertisement, *The Washington Post*, March 25, 1907.

a building of their own in Alexandria, Virginia in 1975. They later moved to Burke, Virginia, where they continue to worship.[186]

Founded in 1969, the United Korean Presbyterian Church of Washington (워싱턴 한인 연합 장로교회 or UKPC) began through the initiative of laypeople and was based at Sixth Presbyterian Church, 5413 16th Street NW. Services were held Sunday afternoons, after the host congregation met in the mornings. In 1976, the congregation moved a few blocks to the Northminster Presbyterian Church, 7720 Alaska Avenue, where it remained for a decade before relocating to Maryland, first to Wheaton, then Bethesda. In 1974, the church joined the Capital Union Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America. The same year, it organized the Korean Service Center of Washington to aid Korean immigrants.

The churches began to relocate outside the District in the 1970s, some outgrowing their mostly borrowed spaces as the population expanded and dispersed to surrounding suburbs. All continue to operate, providing a link between the early, more transient generation of Korean residents in D.C. and subsequent suburban settlers.

Another development that tangentially involved Korean immigrants was the organizing of the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity. Commonly known as the Unification Church, it was founded in 1954 in Seoul by Rev. Sun Myung Moon (문선명, 1920-2012). Moon had taught in a Presbyterian Sunday school, but he came to believe that he was the second coming of Christ foretold by the Book of Revelations. He saw his mission as the founding of a new, ideal family, a worldwide human lineage free from sin. To that end, Moon presided over mass weddings of adherents, which became one of the characteristics by which the church became known to outsiders.

Moon dispatched missionaries to form congregations across the world. It was not until 1971 that he established residence in the United States, but Unification Church congregations and activities in the U.S. preceded him. The church's first property in Washington was a house at 1611 Upshur Street NW, which it has owned since 1968.[187] In addition to being used for study groups, lectures, and the home base for a house-cleaning business, it was also the site of the first Unification Church wedding in D.C., where thirteen couples were blessed by Rev. Moon. In 1969, the church bought 4224 16th Street NW, which it occupied until 1985. It appears also to have been used for lectures and the planning of Moon's addresses.[188]

One of Moon's closest associates was Lieutenant Colonel Bo Hi Pak, a church missionary who often translated for him at big events. Pak had been military attaché to the Korean Embassy from 1961 to 1964. After his tour of duty, he settled in Northern Virginia and founded an organization

[186] These Virginia buildings had been used by other churches, the Alexandria Bible Protestant Church and the Church of God, respectively. See *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), 118.

[187] The Unification Church was established temporarily in a number of spaces, including 1907 S Street NW, where it had offices and some members lived; 18th Street in Adams Morgan, a home base during preparations for a 1976 rally; and a space near Dupont Circle between 1973 and 1975, which served as national headquarters and a ginseng-tea house. More details can be found in the timeline and testimonies of church members in *1977-2002, Celebrating 25 Years [of] The Washington Family Church, The National Shrine of The Family Federation for World Peace and Unification,* tparents.org/Library/Unification/Publications/DC-25thAnniv.pdf.

[188] District of Columbia Land Records, Document Nos. 1969021341and 1969021341; "Presbyterian Official Speaks Today, Sunday," *The Washington Post*, January 9, 1971; "Unknown But Known," advertisement in *The Evening Star*, February 11, 1972.

that promoted Korean cultural performances as a form of public diplomacy.[189] He led the effort to acquire for Moon a large and permanent edifice at Columbia Road along 16th Street, Washington's "Avenue of Churches." Formerly belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Moon rededicated the sanctuary in December 1977 by proclaiming, "I can see how hard the Washington members have worked to make this day possible, and I'm sure they have learned a great lesson about how hard restoration work can be. It is common sense that it is not easy to restore something to a state better than it was originally."[190] Also through the efforts of Bo Hi Pak, the church established the conservative *The Washington Times* newspaper in 1982. Headquartered on New York Avenue NE, critics charged the publication with being an organ of the church.[191]

The Unification Church demonstrates the complexity of documenting histories of communities by cultural heritage. Its buildings were not erected by Koreans. The church membership was not predominantly Korean American, despite being founded by a Korean. The congregation appears to have been multi-racial throughout its history in the area, but a collection of sermons from 1999 to 2001 reveals the ongoing involvement of Korean ministers, as well as a Korean language service that commenced in 1980. According to local church leader Charles Kim,

> although our Korean church here in Washington has not grown as much as we wish, we have been able to participate in numerous providential events that have had a significant impact on the fatherland of Korea, both directly and indirectly. And it is worth noting that, although the core of God's restoration efforts is being spearheaded by our True Parents, God is working on another dimension through the millions of Koreans who have immigrated to this country since the 1970s (interestingly, the time Father also came to America).[192]

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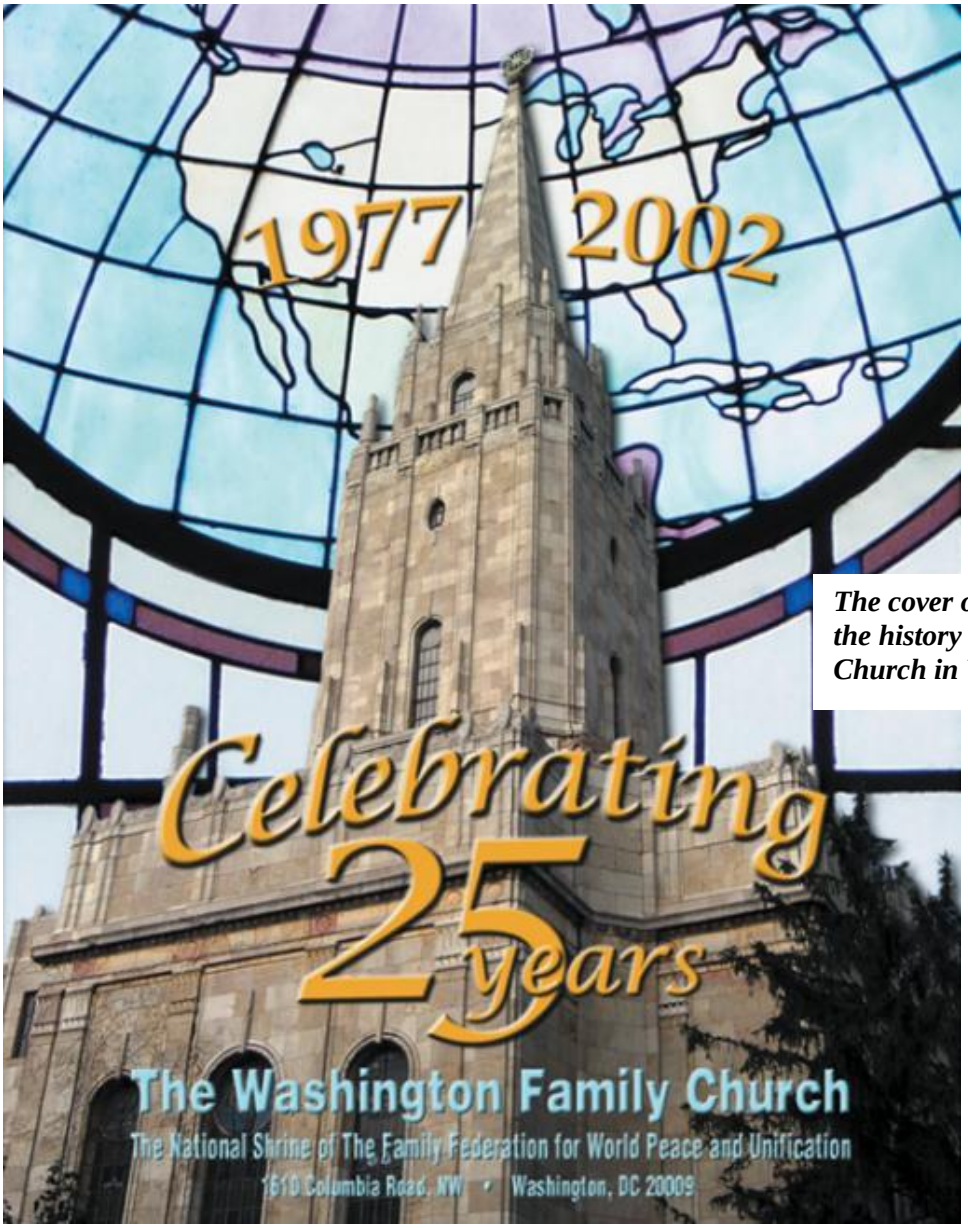
[189] In 1965, after his tenure at the embassy, Pak founded the Korean Cultural and Freedom Foundation (KCFF), whose mission was to promote Korean culture and the "spirit of freedom." These efforts were focused largely on tours of a youth troupe, Little Angels, but they also supported Radio Free Asia. In the 1960s, KCFF was among the sponsors of Jhoon Rhee's martial arts tournaments. In the 1970s, Pak and Rhee were both questioned during the Koreagate investigation about ties with the KCIA and Tongsun Park and regarding potential Unification Church violations of securities, tax, banking, foreign-agent, and arms-export laws. See Shelley Sang-Hee Lee, "The Party's Over : Sex, Gender, and Orientalism in the Koreagate Scandal of the 1970s," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 39, No. 3 (2018) and "Congress Ends 'Koreagate' Lobbying Probe" in *CQ Almanac 1978*, 34th edition (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1979), 803-813.

[190] "Washington Family Church National Cathedral," Atlas Obscura, *https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/former-mormon-ward-building-family-church-of-washington-dc*; Unification Church; *1977-2002, Celebrating 25 Years [of] The Washington Family Church: The National Shrine of The Family Federation for World Peace and Unification*, tparents.org/Library/Unification/Publications/DC-25thAnniv.pdf; Bo Hi Pak, "Washington Embassy—Messiah—My Testimony to Rev Sun Myung Moon," tparents.org/library/unification/books/messiah/Messiah-10.htm.

[191] Michael Isikoff and Eleanor Randolph Washington, "The Washington Times's Mission: Critics Say 5-Year Old Paper is Used to Advance Church Agenda," *The Washington Post*, May 6, 1997.

[192]See sermons between 1999 and 2001 at https://www.unification.net/ucdc/. Also Charles Kim, "The History of the Korean Church in Washington, "in *Unification Church, 1977-2002, Celebrating 25 Years [of] The Washington Family Church: The National Shrine of The Family Federation for World Peace and Unification*, 55-56, indicates that the seeds of this participation by Koreans may be traced to an enthusiastically promoted "Korean Night" that the church organized at the Washington Hilton which drew about 1,000 Korean Americans. He seems to lament the small number of Koreans in the church, "In conclusion, although our Korean church here in Washington has not grown as much as we wish, we have been able to participate in numerous providential events that have had a significant impact on the fatherland of Korea, both directly and indirectly. And it is worth noting that, although the core of God's restoration efforts is being spearheaded by our True Parents, God is working on another dimension through the millions of Koreans who have immigrated to this country since the 1970s (interestingly, the time Father [Moon] also came to America)," tparents.org/Library/Unification/Publications/DC-25thAnniv.pdf, accessed October 2023.



The cover of a booklet celebrating the history of the Unification Church in Washington.

Enterprise

There was no occupational niche that was dominated by Koreans early in the postwar era. Many elders of the community held white-collar positions as diplomats, U.S. government officials, medical professionals, and academics, reflecting how education and Cold War politics provided the primary immigration pathways during the years before Hart-Celler immigration reform of the 1960s. Thomas Kang, for instance, was a forestry researcher for the Department of Agriculture by 1950, but a younger generation was in the early stages of establishing itself professionally.[193]

[193] United States Census Population Schedules for the District of Columbia, 1950.

While still enrolled in school, younger immigrants worked a variety of service jobs to support themselves while transitioning to professional careers.[194]

In the 1960s, Koreans were not yet prominently represented in commercial enterprises. This was a time when Korea was recovering economically, and immigrants had little access to capital. Many did not have permanent residency status. Hee Ja Lee was among the earliest entrepreneurs, setting up a hamburger stand at 603 Pennsylvania Avenue NW in 1959 after completing graduate work at the University of Maryland. She and husband Hyun Tae Kim, who had been in a doctoral program at Catholic University, have been called "the godfather and godmother in the field of Korean business," mentoring the generation of entrepreneurs who emerged in the 1970s.[195] Already by 1950, Kwang Min was proprietor of a valet shop in the basement of the building his family occupied at 2612 Woodley Place NW, a precursor of a cohort that would come to dominate the dry cleaning and tailoring business. The Mins had been residents of Hawai`i since at least the mid-1920s but had moved in 1949 to this multi-unit building, which Mrs. Duk Ah Kim managed as landlady, first acquiring a half interest and then, in 1956, the whole property.[196]

Some local Koreans were involved in trade and import. The little-known Korean American Export & Import, Inc. was founded shortly after World War II. In the 1950s, former Korean Embassy staffer Sae Sun Kim started Sae Sun Kim Company Limited, which served as purchasing agent for the Spinners and Weavers Association of Korea, which needed raw cotton to supply textile factories. Its office was in the Colorado Building downtown, 1341 G Street. Both the East West Import Company and Nonomura Studio, identified with Byung Choll Koh and Ann W. Kim, were headquartered at a residence at 3141 Adams Mill Road.

The "father of taekwondo" in America, Jhoon Rhee (이준구, 1932-2018) is a notable example of a Korean student turned entrepreneur who established himself in Washington in the 1960s. Rhee Jhoon-goo came to the U.S. in 1956 for a military training program in San Antonio, Texas.[197] There, he taught his first students in martial arts. He moved to the D.C. area in 1962, where he set up a first studio at 2035 K Street NW before moving three times within the decade. The location longest associated with the school is 2000 L Street NW (demolished), into which the Washington studio moved in October 1967. It remained there until 1983, after Rhee's retirement. He ran as many as eleven studios at one time in the metropolitan area, plus giving lessons at the Pentagon and the Senate gym. He expanded the business to a franchise chain of 30 locations in the U.S. and the Caribbean by the mid-1970s.

Rhee was the primary popularizer of "Korean karate" in the Western hemisphere, training champions, promoted the sport through competitions, and developed safety equipment that has become standard. Rhee's tournaments were major affairs, held at the D.C. Armory and the Hilton Hotel and featuring celebrity guests such as Bruce Lee and Chuck Norris. Everyone who lived in the Washington area in the 1970s and 1980s remembers the "Nobody bothers me!" tagline of his television commercials. Rhee often said that Bruce Lee taught him to punch, and he taught Lee to kick. At Lee's recommendation, he starred with Sammo Hung and Angela Mao in a 1973 martial

[194] Young Whan Park personal communication with Sojin Kim and Grace Dahye Kwon, March 10, 2022.
[195] *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), 60 and 66.
[196] United States Census Population Schedules for the District of Columbia, 1950; District of Columbia Land Records, Document Nos. 1949027780 and 1956036064.
[197] Jimmy Rhee (son of Jhoon Rhee), personal communication with Sojin Kim, November 1, 2023.

arts movie, *Sting of the Dragon Masters*, set in Japanese-occupied Korea. Rhee penned a memoir, *Bruce Lee and I*, published in 2000.

Two other Korean immigrants were teaching martial arts in the area during the 1960s. Seventh-degree karate black belt Soo Woong Lee (이수웅) taught taekwondo at his Lee School of Karate until moving the studio to Norfolk, Virginia in 1972 and then setting up a chain of schools on the West Coast in the 1980s.[198] Ki Whang Kim (김기황), a master of judo and tang soo do, taught a mixture of Japanese and Korean martial arts to a predominantly African American group of students at the 12th Street YMCA as early as 1965.[199] Kim built a reputation for creating champions who dominated local and national tournaments. He fostered a loyal family of blackbelts who continue his legacy today. Together with Rhee, Lee and Kim's promotion of this Asian cultural practice predates the explosion of interest in martial arts that accompanied the film career of Bruce Lee. They opened a viable entrepreneurial niche that others built upon in subsequent decades, notable as one in which Korean identity was explicit, but which attracted both Asian American and non-Asian practitioners. In cities around the U.S., Asian martial arts were adopted by African Americans as a form of expression, defense, and community development. A number of influential figures trained with these three Korean immigrant teachers beginning in the 1960s, including Dr. Albert Jose Jones, founder of Underwater Adventure Seekers and the National Association of Black Scuba Divers; Furman Marshall, grandmaster of Simba Dojang and co-founder of Black Ski; and Bishop Kwabena Albert Rainier Cheeks, founder and senior pastor of Inner Light Ministries and taekwondo grandmaster and hall-of-famer. According to Cheeks:

> So martial arts really blew up in the D.C. area. There weren't as many schools then, because many people were still under their grandmasters at the time. And there might have been a school here or a school there; the Chinese had one or two styles going on, and in the Korean forms, there was Jhoon Rhee and Ki Whang Kim.... We had some of the best fighters and people in form competition right here in D.C. It grew really fast. And all of us that were in that beginning, you knew it was something special. This was something unique that was gonna stay. And you could make up your mind to be part of it or not. And what was so interesting is that you had to really trust the people you were training with because you could get hurt. That camaraderie, that wanting what's best for the other person, too, was just magic... the art was something that brought us all together. And you just knew that men, women, young and old, race didn't make a difference. We were locked, and it was just something that was gonna stay.[200]

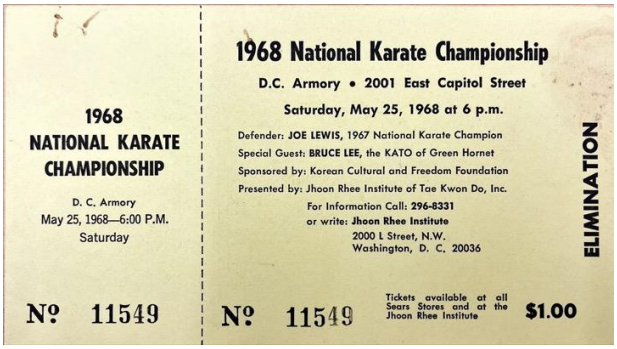
[198] "Lee School of Karate," The Virginian-Pilot, June 18, 1972; "About Us," Martial Arts USA webpage, martialartsusapetaluma.com/about-us-1.

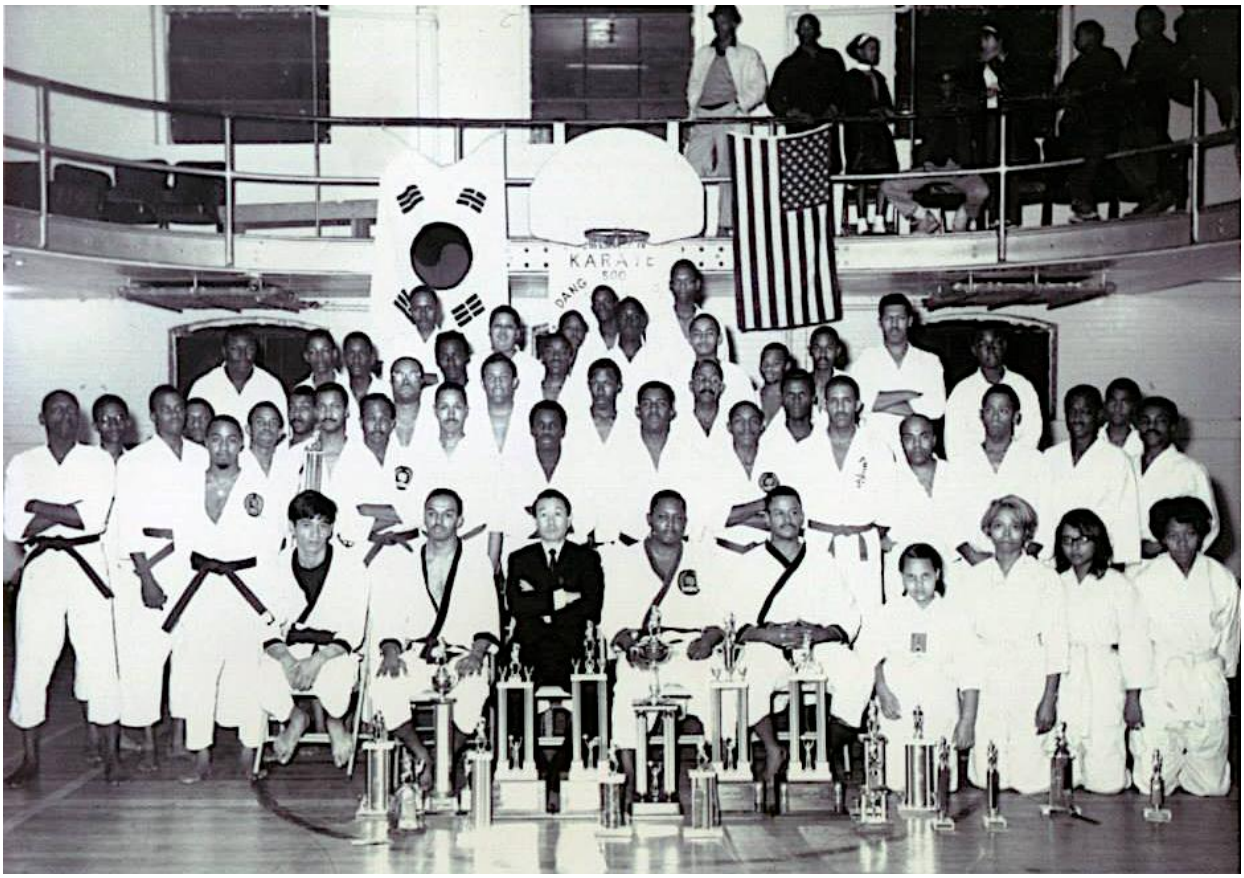
[199] Ki Whang Kim eventually moved his studio to a permanent space on Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring, Maryland, where he remained until his death in 1995.

[200] Albert Cheeks, personal communication with Sojin Kim and Michelle Banks, November 14, 2023.

Left and below: A program and a ticket for martial arts tournaments at the D.C. Armory, 1967 and 1968. Jhoon Rhee organized these each year starting in the mid-1960s and is pictured. The event sponsor was the Korean Cultural and Freedom Foundation, founded in 1965 by former Korean Embassy military attaché Bo Hi Pak to combat the influence of communism. Collection of Harry Lee Chow.

Bottom: Ki Whang Kim (center) with his students and blackbelts at the Twelfth Street YMCA, circa 1965. Collection of Furman Marshall.





Leisure and Mutual Aid

As Koreans became increasingly settled into their lives in D.C., social life became more specialized, giving rise to new organizations and activities that built upon and moved beyond the activities of businesses, churches and student networks.

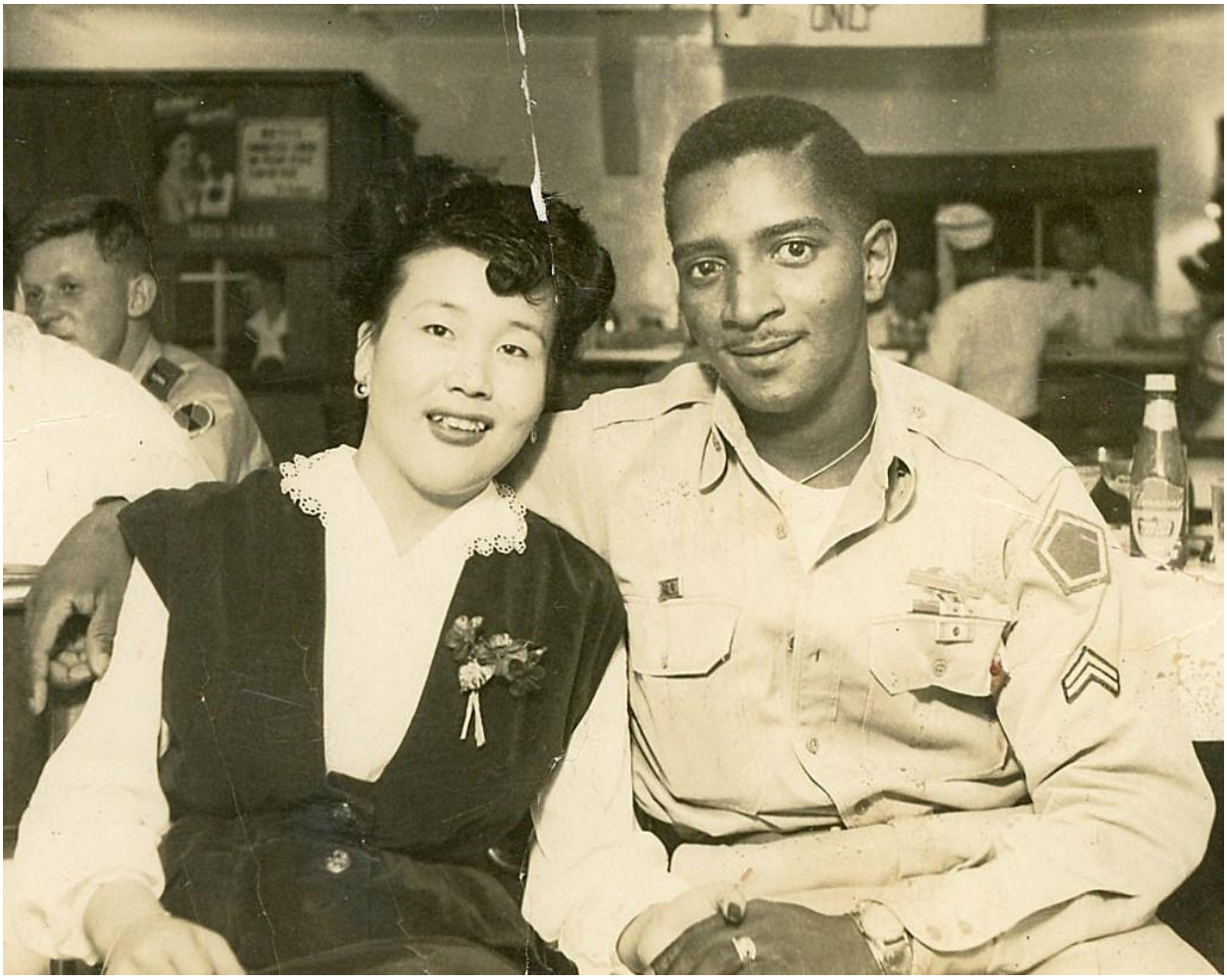
Martial arts were hardly the only sports popular among Korean Americans. In the mid-1960s, Duk Jun Lee (이덕준, 1935-2013) organized a baseball team, the Korean Tigers, with players from D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. Baseball had been introduced to East Asia by missionaries in the late nineteenth century, and its popularity only increased after the wars. Lee served as athletic director for the Korean Students Association in Washington during the early 1960s before fielding his team that competed in the Industrial League, a semi-professional regional league. Its tenure was short-lived, as the team lacked sponsorships and found it difficult to meet a full schedule of games due to work commitments.[201] But it represents an early foray of a young ethnic community into the mainstream culture. It also marked the beginning of Lee's decades-long promotion of the sport nationally.

Women who immigrated to the area as spouses of Americans carved out an important social and cultural space. Between 1951 and 1965, they constituted the largest category of new arrivals.[202] As members of interracial families, they often did not live in Korean population centers or have opportunities for participation in Korean cultural activities. Their stigmatization as "war brides" further increased their isolation. On July 7, 1963, a small group of Korean women started the "American Wives Club."[203] Founded as a social club through which members could connect and share meals, the group held meetings in homes in Washington and the suburbs. Its first president, Chon Edwards (송전기), was a 1955 graduate of the National Academy of Broadcasting in Washington and had married a foreign service officer.[204] The members changed the name to the Korean American Women's Association as they became more engaged in community service, such as volunteering at hospitals and orphanages and helping new arrivals adjust to life in America.[205]

With a small and dispersed population, it was a challenge to even find such a group, but members transcended this challenge through outreach. Hi Saeng duBusc (양희생, 1936-2022) met her husband Lewis during his military tour of duty in Korea. She moved with him back to the United States three weeks after their 1960 wedding. One day, on his way home after selling computers to the Pentagon, Lewis spotted two Korean naval officers in front of the Smithsonian Institution. Excited, because "you hardly saw any Koreans in those times," he invited them to dinner. They then told their colleagues about the duBuscs, and Hi Saeng's contact information was immediately added to a database of local Koreans. Shortly thereafter, unannounced, one of the founders of the

[201] Charlie Blackburn (former commissioner of the Industrial League), personal communication with Grace Dahye Kwon, May 2, 2022. Blackburn recalls that sometimes the team only showed up with nine players, just enough to take the field.
[202] Madeline Y. Hsu and Ellen D. Wu, "'Smoke and Mirrors': Conditional Inclusion, Model Minorities, and the Pre-1965 Dismantling of Asian Exclusion," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 34, No. 4 (Summer 2015): 50. During this period, 6500 wives and 6300 adopted Korean children immigrated.
[203] *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), 71; Hi Saeng duBusc (former president, Korean American Women's Association), personal communication with Grace Dahye Kwon, February 14, 2022.
[204] In 2002, Chon Edwards published a memoir called *Kimchi and French Fries: A Woman Between Two Worlds* (Pittsburgh: Dorrance Publishing Co., 2002).
[205] *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), 71-72.

Korean American Women's Association, Chon Bacon, appeared at the duBusc's house and "enlisted" Hi Saeng, who would go on to serve as the group's president from 1976 to 1977.[206]



An unidentified soldier and his wife. Private collection.

Growing Up Korean American: Asian American In-betweenness

The Korean Americans who grew up in D.C. in the 1950s and 1960s were mostly children of parents who had arrived during the Cold War, while America was reckoning with racism. Their parents had stories of their first confused encounters with the racial apartheid while making their way across the country. Some wandered uncertainly between "Colored" and "White" waiting areas, and some opted to sit in the "Colored" section, only to be told they should be sitting in the other. Such experiences are apt metaphors for how Asians have often sat on the fence on issues of race and how the "model minority" paradigm was bestowed upon them, sometimes assigning them an "honorary white" status that provided access to schools, neighborhoods, public accommodations, and social experiences from which African Americans were excluded. For better or worse, and because they were so few at this time, Koreans in Washington tended to experience

[206] Chon's husband, Wilbur D. Bacon, administered an import program for South Korea at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

racism not through overt assaults, but as social slights and disparaging remarks.[207]

Second-generation experiences reflect the racial and ethnic in-betweenness of Koreans in D.C. during this period, as well as a generational in-betweenness.[208] With no roadmap, they negotiated the transition from legal segregation to integration, from immigrant community to Asian American consciousness.

The family of Rev. Taimook Kim and Mary Kim moved frequently, and both parents returned to Korea for periods of time. At one point, to make ends meet, they lived in and ran a rooming house for men at 728 6th Street in Chinatown. The Kim children were exposed to relationships and interactions diverse and transnational. Daughters Carol and Ellen later recounted the boarding house days of the early 1950s, doing laundry for elderly Chinese tenants and playing with the children of Chinese shop owners.

The Kims moved closer to Foundry Church, to a one-bedroom apartment at 16th and S streets, then to Virginia and back to Washington. John, the only son, enlisted in the military and was stationed in Korea before attending Georgetown Law School and spending a long period back in Korea. Oldest daughter Sylvia married a student from Tennessee who was a refugee from North Korea. Their maternal aunt, Helen Juhn, married into a Chinatown family in the restaurant business. She and husband Richard Lee opened Jenny's, a cafeteria named for Richard's mother that served a pan-Asian menu. Youngest daughter Carol attended Seaton Elementary School downtown, then middle school in Virginia. She graduated Western High School in 1959, after her family moved back to D.C. She remembers Asian classmates, a few from Chinatown and a couple Korean girls, including one whose family had transferred her from Theodore Roosevelt High School because it was integrating. Middle daughter Ellen graduated from the George Washington University. Her husband, Henry Lee, was born in California and came to Washington to attend the Georgetown School of Foreign Service. His mother, Mary Paik Lee (1900-1995), was a child of the first generation of Korean migrants to Hawai`i and California. Her memoir, *Quiet Odyssey: A Pioneer Korean Woman in America* (1990), is now a staple of Asian American college syllabi.

Although Korean had been Ellen Kim's first language, she eventually forgot it. While her parents repeatedly visited Korea, sometimes staying for long stretches, they never expected their children to return there.

> Our parents didn't have us continue knowing Korean. They wanted us to be assimilated and know English. From the very beginning, they spoke English so we could speak English. They never propagated the idea that we are Koreans and that we should—well, yes, we are Koreans, but we are Koreans *living in America*. And they just left us to ourselves and we just made our way.[209]

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[207] Model minority is a social construction formulated in the 1950s and 1960s, promoting Asian American achievement to implicitly critique other minorities while unrest and militancy grew in the Civil Rights movement. See Denaree Best, "California's Amazing Japanese," *Saturday Evening Post*, April 30, 1955; "Success Story of One Minority Group in the U.S.," *U.S. News and World Report*, December 26, 1966. The term was coined in relation to Asian Americans by William Petersen. "Success story: Japanese American style," *The New York Times*, January 9, 1966. For context and analysis, see Hsu and Wu, "'Smoke and Mirrors': Conditional Inclusion, Model Minorities, and the Pre-1965 Dismantling of Asian Exclusion."

[208] Jeff Chang has an essay titled "The In-Betweens: On Asian Americanness" in his book *We Gon' Be Alright: Notes of Race and Resegregation* (New York: Picador USA, 2016).

[209] Ellen Lee, personal communication with Sojin Kim, February 7, 2022.

Above: The Kim family, circa 1951. Son John (top left) was about to be deployed to Korea after having left college to enlist in the U.S. Army against his parents' wishes. Left: Ellen Kim (seated) with other young parishioners in front of Foundry Methodist Church, circa 1955. Collection of Carol Kim Retka.

The children of Key P. Yang (양기백), a Korean specialist at the Library of Congress, were born in Korea just prior to the war. They and their mother joined him in Washington in 1953. His oldest daughter, Won Yang Everett, has wondered how her immigrant parents—raised under Japanese colonialism in a racially homogeneous country like Korea—might have perceived their place in America. She noted how slow promotions across a three-decade government career prompted her father to deal in real estate on the side. She sensed the humiliation her parents felt when the family was denied entry to Mayo Beach, Maryland in the late 1950s. And she remembers how her father took the bus to the National Mall when Martin Luther King Jr. led the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963.[210]

Everett describes her own experiences with respect to race and racism as confusing and disturbing. At seven years old, with both parents working, she was put in charge of her younger siblings.

> We were on Capitol Hill, 311 Third Street NE. So, I and my sisters walked all over. And the thing was, my friends from second and third grade—I knew them even though I didn't speak English very well, there were like three of them within a few blocks of where we lived. But none of them would let me in their house. When I would stop by, they would come to the door, talk to me, but never say, "Will you come in?" or anything. One lived in an apartment. I remember walking up the stairs because she would wave to me from her… window. So, I would go up to speak with her, but I think someone—her grandmother—stopped me from coming in. But it didn't occur to me that the reason was prejudice. I just thought they didn't want three little girls in their home or something.[211]

After one or two tries with each, she never tried to visit them again.

In 1956, the Yang family moved into an apartment in the mostly white Fort Dupont neighborhood. Because of school overcrowding, Won attended elementary school classes at Sousa Junior High School in 1959. Sousa had been at the center of the Supreme Court's 1954 *Bolling v. Sharpe* decision striking down racial segregation in D.C. public schools as a violation of the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment. She recalled:

> I had close friends who were white and Black. I remember I was in seventh grade with three or four white students. They had never displayed bigotry until they had to attend classes with the Black students. They would make negative comments like they didn't want to be around Black students and told me not to talk to them. In fact, one was almost threatening. I was a little afraid of her and she would say things like, "Why are they here?!"[212]

Elaine and Ronald Kim, the children of Sae Sun Kim, left the Washington area after graduating Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Spring. Although they grew up attending the gatherings of their parents and their Korean friends, some of whom were refugees, they were used to being the only Asian Americans in the neighborhood and in the classroom. Ronald C. Kim became a neuropathologist and professor of medicine at the University of California, Irvine. Elaine H. Kim completed her Ph.D. at the University of California, Berkeley, where she participated in the student

[210] Won Yang Everett, personal communication with Sojin Kim, May 26, 2023.
[211] Won Yang Everett, personal communication with Sojin Kim, May 26, 2023.
[212] Won Yang Everett, personal communication with Sojin Kim, May 26, 2023.

movement for a "third world college" in the late 1960s. She was a founding member of the Asian American Studies program and the Ethnic Studies Department, established in 1969. In 1981, she became the first native-born Asian American to become a tenured faculty member at Berkeley.

April 1968 brought one of the biggest crises in U.S. race relations, the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis. As news of his death spread, rioting broke out in cities across America. In D.C., the flashpoint of the uprising was the intersection of 14th and U streets NW, near the office of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Nearby at the 12th Street YMCA, Ki Whang Kim was in the middle of leading a martial arts class of mostly African American youth. When the news reached the school, students explained the situation to their teacher, who dismissed the class, advising the students to quickly make their way home. But many of the disciplined martial artists seized the opportunity to serve a higher purpose. A teenager at the time, Albert Cheeks recalls lingering with some of his classmates to escort neighborhood residents to safety.[213]

Left: The Yang family in front of their Capitol Hill apartment building at 311 3rd Street NE circa 1952.
Below: The Kimball Elementary School sixth-grade graduation portrait of 1958. Won Yang, standing second from left in the middle row, recalls being the only immigrant in her class. Collection of Won Yang Everett.

[213] Albert Cheeks, personal communication with Sojin Kim and Michelle Banks, November 14, 2023.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

	District of Columbia	United States	Korea/World
1945	Syngman Rhee leaves Washington for Korea.	War Brides Act Presidential Directive on Displaced Persons	With the end of World War II, Korea is partitioned.
1946		Luce-Celler Bill	
1947			India and Pakistan gain independence and are partitioned.
1948		Displaced Persons Act	Separate governments are formed in north and south Korea. Syngman Rhee is elected president of South Korea.
1949	The Korean Embassy is established and purchases 2320 Massachusetts Avenue NW.		People's Republic of China is established, and the U.S. severs diplomatic ties with China.
1950	The Korean Social Group is organized, later to be known as the Korean-American Association of Greater Washington		The Korean War begins.
1951	Korean Church in Washington is established at Foundry Methodist Church.		
1952		McCarran-Walter Act	
1953	Korean American Cultural Foundation is established.	Refugee Relief Act	Korean War armistice
1954	The *Bolling v. Sharpe* decision desegregates D.C. public schools. The Voice of America moves from New York.	*Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision	
1955	Korean Students Association organized.	Holt Adoption Program established	
1956	First Korean Baptist Church established at 3200 Rittenhouse Street NW.	Chinese Confession Program	Re-election of Syngman Rhee
1959		Hawai`i becomes 50th state	
1960	Ambassador You Chan Yang resigns after Korean Americans challenge his	Civil Rights Act	Re-election of Syngman Rhee followed by popular uprising forcing his resignation and exile.

	validity following Syngman Rhee's resignation.		Parliamentary government of "John" Chang Myon is established.
1961			Park Chung Hee coup d'état Korean Central Intelligence Agency founded.
1962	Jhoon Rhee Tae Kwon Do established on K Street NW.		
1963	American Wives Club (later Korean American Women's Association) is organized. Protests at White House against Park Chung Hee.	March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom	Park Chung Hee elected president of the Republic of South Korea.
1964	Korean Church in Washington purchases "Our House" building at 5505 16th Street NW.	Civil Rights Act	
1965	Korean Culture and Freedom Foundation founded by Bo Hi Pak. The Washington Korean Presbyterian Church congregation forms.	Voting Rights Act Hart-Celler or Immigration and Nationality Act U.S. combat troops arrive in Vietnam.	
1966		William Petersen's *New York Times* article "Success story: Japanese American style" coins the term "model minority".	
1968	Riots erupt after news of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination.	Implementation of Hart-Celler immigration policy Student protests begin on San Francisco Bay campuses and eventually lead to ethnic studies programs on college campuses.	
1969	United Korean Presbyterian Church of Washington moves to Sixth Presbyterian Church on 16th Street NW.		Park government amends the constitution to allow him to hold the presidency for two more terms.

	A scholarship Fund for Korean Students in American organized. The Korean Struggle Committee is formed to demonstrate opposition to Park government in Korea.		

PART 4
1970 to 1993: GROWTH, SUBURBANIZATION, DIVERSIFICATION

Immigration Reform and Post-1965 "Third Wave" Korean Immigration

Post-1965 Korean American population growth was driven by the preferences of the newly enacted Hart-Celler Immigration Act, which prioritized admitting family members of citizens and permanent residents and attracting professionals with skills sought in the United States. One segment of new immigrants included physicians, nurses, engineers, and scientists. They, along with students who could apply for permanent residence under the Hart-Celler provisions, and Korean spouses of Americans anchored the more diverse waves of immigration that followed.[214] Because they were able to petition to reunite with spouses, children, siblings, and parents, Koreans rapidly comprised multigenerational and extended family networks. By the early 1970s, there were second-generation Korean Americans who were adults. Meanwhile a generational cohort identified as "1.5" was emerging—young immigrants largely raised and socialized in the U.S.

The United States Census reinstituted "Korean" as a category of origin in 1970. Their numbers recorded in the region thereafter were:

	1970	**1980**	**1990**
D.C.	391	338	814
Maryland	2,047	14,989	30,320
Virginia	1,502	12,550	30,164

The population grew substantially nationally during the 1970s and 1980s, from 70,000 in 1970 to around 800,000 in 1990. Geographic dispersal became more pronounced, with the highest growth rates in Southern states, including Virginia.[215]

Increased settlement occurred against the backdrop of Korea's political volatility and economic restructuring. Through the 1970s and into the 1980s, South Korea was governed by two leaders who came into power via military coups. The authoritarian regimes and human rights violations of Park Chung Hee and Chung Doo-hwan provoked division among Koreans in the diaspora. In 1987, massive demonstrations across South Korea forced governmental reform and the country's first elections since 1972.

Suburbanization in the Washington Metropolitan Area

The arrival of large numbers of Koreans to American metro areas in the 1970s coincided with suburbanization and disinvestment from central cities following civil unrest in some urban areas. Koreans were largely settling in the Maryland and Virginia suburbs of Washington, but they were

[214] Yu and Choe, 5. Between 1953-1980, 15,000 Korean students came to the U.S., and only about ten percent returned to Korea; 13,0000 doctors, nurses, pharmacists came between 1966-1979. See also, Won Moo Hurh, *The Korean Americans* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998), 329; and Ilpyong Kim, *Korean Americans: Past, Present, and Future*, 332.

[215] Eui-Young Yu and Peter Choe, "Korean Population in the United States as Reflected in the Year 2000 Census," *Amerasia Journal* 29, No. 3 (2003/2004): 15.

carving out an economic niche in the city. The U.S. Census recorded fewer than 400 Koreans residing in D.C. in both 1970 and 1980, but they were reportedly operating over 1,000 small businesses in the city—or more than half of the total—by the late 1980s.

Local Koreans dressed in traditional clothing for the 1980 Asian and Pacific Heritage Festival at the Sylvan Theater on the National Mall. Courtesy of Hi Saeng duBusc.

Exponential growth in the suburbs contributed to the metropolitan Washington region surpassing Chicago as the U.S.'s third largest Korean population (after California and New York) in the 1990s.[216] Maryland apartment complexes saw clusters of Korean renters in the 1970s. Kent Village in Landover had as many as 200 Korean tenants by 1975, and 500 at a later peak. Many heads of household there were reportedly mechanically skilled Vietnam War veterans recruited by an immigration agent to work in area auto repair shops.[217] A post on a 1996 internet rating of Kent Village offered some recent history:

> I grew up in this complex during the late 80s and early 90s... I used to see Kent Village on the evening news all the time because of some drug-related violence. My parents were part of a large wave of Korean immigrants that moved into the community during the 1970s and 80s due to the low rent housing. They're all gone now as far as I know.... This community made me who I am today, drug dealers and all."[218]

[216] *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), 16.
[217] *History of the Korean Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-2005,* Woong Joe Kang, editor-in-chief, with translation by Kyu Won Lee (Seoul, Korea: Korean American Foundation-Greater Washington. 2009). (Seoul: Korean American Foundation-Greater Washington, 2009), 93; Chae (1995), 111. The expanded 2009 edition can be accessed at kafgw.org/wp-content/uploads/ 2021/12/searchable-PDF_min.pdf
[218] apartmentratings.com/md/landover/kent-village-apartments_20785/u-1572552/.

In the suburbs, immigrant families eventually found more options and affordability as well as proximity to desirable schools. Many settled in Northern Virginia, with Annandale gaining recognition as a suburban, commercial Koreatown by the early 1990s. Centreville became a residential and commercial Koreatown in the 2000s. But aside from a multitude of shops, the dispersion of residents meant that only a handful of notable sites are associated with Korean Americans in the District of Columbia.

The 1964 Annandale Business Center, now home to a variety of Asian-owned shops. Photo by Ruth Trocolli.

Religious and Community Organizations

The growth and diversification of the Korean American population drove a proliferation of institutions, networks and activities in the 1970s and 1980s. The number of religious congregations in the area jumped to as many as 200 in the mid-1980s.[219] A second Baptist congregation and the first Korean Catholic congregation in Washington were organized in the 1970s. The Korean Catholic Church was established in 1974, holding regular services at several chapels in the Northeast quadrant, including at Catholic University, Oblate College, and Trinity College.[220] The church ran the Korean School of Washington on Saturdays from the Trinity campus. Like some other churches, it offered to elementary and middle-school students lessons in Korean language, but also instruction in Korean culture, history, music, and martial arts.[221] By the 1990s, it and the four earlier churches established in D.C. had relocated to Maryland or Virginia.[222] Subsequent Korean churches were founded only in the suburbs, and the first predominantly Korean Buddhist temples and meditation centers followed.

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[219] Linda Wheeler, "Korean Merchants Find Opportunity in D.C." *The Washington Post*, December 14, 1986.
[220] *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), 138.
[221] The information is from an August 1975 advertisement in the *Miju Hanguk Ilbo*, translated into English by Grace Dahye Kwon.
[222] According to their 1974 directory, the Korean Church of Washington at Foundry United Methodist Church had almost 250 members—but only 25 of these had D.C. addresses, dispersed largely through Northwest in Logan Circle, Mt. Pleasant, Foggy Bottom, Forest Hills, plus two Southeast addresses. By 1978, the directory listed about 196 members with fifteen addresses in D.C. Many members living in the nearby Maryland suburbs were in Silver Spring, Wheaton, Rockville, and Potomac.

The religious institutions made provision for the end of life. In the early 1970s, the Korean Church of Washington and possibly others purchased burial plots for parishioners at Fort Lincoln Cemetery in Brentwood, just over the Maryland border. A large section near the Garden of the Apostles contains the graves of many Korean community elders.[223]

As churches continued to be centers of community life, many more organizations sprang up to fill a diversity of roles. There would be a Korean-American Business Association, a Korean American Chamber of Commerce, a Korean Christian Business Men's Committee, a Korean American Grocers Association, and a Korean American Retail Liquor Association, as well as groups for professions such as pharmacists, physicians, musicians and artists, architects, ministers, and journalists. A Korean American Alliance represented young professionals of all kinds who worked in Washington but lived in the suburbs. There were sports clubs for golf, baseball, and fishing. A Korean dance troupe and a second women's association formed in the early 1980s. There were even groups of groups, such as the Federation of Korean Associations, the Coalition of Koreans in America, the Korean American Coalition, and the Council of Korean Americans.
The Korean Association of Greater Washington compiled a directory to help people find one another. The local Korean-language newspaper *Miju Hanguk Ilbu* ran ads and announcements to promote services, events, and organizations. The Washington Korean American Broadcast was a Saturday-morning television show on UHF Channel 20. There were dedicated Sunday morning and evening hours of Korean-language radio programing on WHFS (102.3 FM) and scheduled programming on WEEL, 1310 AM.

Few of these organizations had dedicated facilities, and many were located outside the District. Diverse and dispersed as they were, the Korean population organized countless community events and gatherings in D.C. spaces, such as kite competitions on the National Mall, Korean-film screenings at the Biograph theater, bazaars at local churches, a concert at the DAR Constitution Hall, and music and theater presentations in university venues.[224]

Among noteworthy sites was a four-story office building at 1730 Connecticut Avenue NW purchased by the Korean Association of Washington in 1977 with a bank loan, donations, and the sale of lottery tickets. But the cost of repairs and mortgage payments forced its sale in 1980.[225]

The Korean Culture Center (한국문화센터) opened in early 1975 at 1729 21st Street NW. Its 74 founding members soon rechristened themselves the Korean Culture Association (한국문화협회) with a mission to educate the American and Korean American public about Korean arts and heritage. Events included exhibitions and fashion shows. The group participated in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival during the nation's bicentennial.[226]

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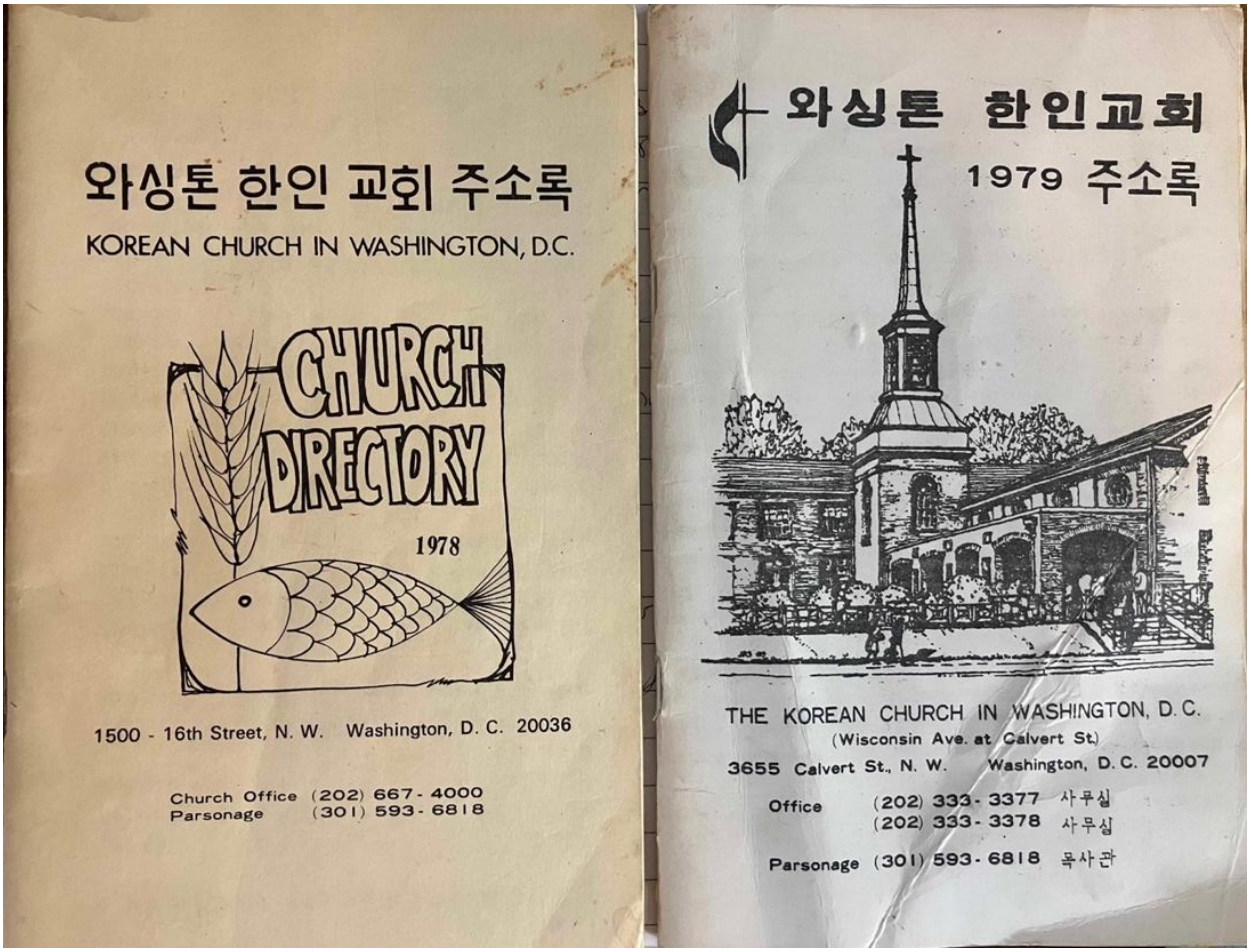
[223] Fort Lincoln has long been a burial place for Chinese residents, and the Muslim Community Center of Silver Spring also purchased plots here during the early years of its existence.
[224] The George Washington University's Gelman Library holds records of events presented at the Lisner Auditorium. Among these are programs for shows organized by Korean American organizations in the region.
[225] *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), 249-250.
[226] Advertisements and articles in the *Miju Hanguk Ilbu* from 1975 and 1976 report that the organization was directed by Ji chae-jil, Park Ho Sep, and Jae Yuk. Its president was Han Sil Go (고한실), a professor at Southeastern University. An ad from July 1975 promotes a Korean Artist Association competition at this address. This organization may or may not be related to a Korean-American Culture Center, established by Chang Soon Kim at 3222 Oliver Street NW in 1955, which is described as focused on providing information for Koreans interested in studying abroad, according to *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), 57.

The Korean Community Service Center (or KCSC, 워싱턴한인복지센터) was established by the United Korean Presbyterian Church in 1974. Reverend Yong Chul Chung (정용철), pastor at the time, became the inaugural chairman of its board. First operated entirely by volunteers, the organization addressed the needs of the newest Korean immigrants, assisting with translation and transportation, apartment rental, setting up utilities, and enrolling kids in school. The workers helped applicants with immigration forms and to prepare for citizenship tests. KCSC began at Sixth Presbyterian Church at 5413 16th Street and moved with the Korean Presbyterian congregation to Northminster Presbyterian, 7720 Alaska Avenue, in 1976. In 1986, KCSC relocated to Wheaton, Maryland and began work on the development of University Gardens apartments for low-income elderly tenants in Silver Spring. It again moved in the early 2000s, this time to Virginia, where the large independent nonprofit provides multiple services, including medical care, to Koreans through all stages of life.[227]



Left: ***According to its 1974 directory, the Korean Church of Washington had almost 250 members meeting at Foundry United Methodist Church, but only one tenth of these had D.C. addresses. The 1978 directory listed about 196 members with only fifteen in Washington. Many lived in Silver Spring, Wheaton, Rockville, and Potomac, Maryland.*** **Right:** ***By 1979, the church had moved to St. Luke's United Methodist Church, where they remained for a brief period. Courtesy of family of Hui-Sung Yoon.***

[227] Key Young Kim (Korean Community Service Center), Won Kook Park (Korean Community Service Center), and Young Whan Kim (United Korean Methodist Church of Greater Washington), personal communication with Grace Dahye Kwon and Sojin Kim, March 10, 2022.

와싱톤한국학교 학생모집

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1 모집인원 : 기본과정 (3 개반) 40 명
(국민학교 1 ~ 6 학년 정도)
청소년과정 (2 개반) 20 명
(국민학교 7 ~ 9 학년 정도)
2 교육장소 : TRINITY COLLEGE
Michigan Ave. & Franklin St. N. E.
Washington, D. C.
3 교육일자 : 매주 토요일 10 시 ~ 10 :00 시 ~ 15 :00 시
4 교육내용 : 한국어, 한국문화및역사, 음악, 무용, 태권도등
5 납 부 금 : 등록금 ..... 1 가정당 20 불
수업료 ..... 1 인당 5 불 (매월)
6 원서접수처 : KOREAN SCHOOL OF WASHINGTON, D. C.
P. O. Box 1481, Rockville, Md. 20850
전화 : (301) 840 - 1627
7 원서접수 마감일 : 1975 년 8 월 31 일
8 개학일시 : 1975 년 9 월 6 일 (토) 10 :00 시

재단법인 와싱톤한국학교 이사장 김 성 덕
교 장 이 재 은

Above left: Charles Blackburn, president of the Maryland State Baseball Association, presents Duk Jun Lee the Edward W. Brook Award for his contributions to amateur baseball in Maryland, circa 1972. Lee organized a Korean American team, served as vice president of the Industrial League, was a scout for Major League Baseball, and coached at Montgomery College. Courtesy of Charles Blackburn.
Above right: An August 1975 advertisement in* Miju Hanguk Ilbo *for a Korean-language school organized by the Korean Catholic Church on the campus of Trinity College.
Below: A fundraising concert poster for the Korean Community Service Center organized by the United Korean Presbyterian Church of Washington. Lisner Auditorium Records, Special Collections Research Center, the George Washington University.

Businesses

As with many immigrant groups, Koreans eventually established eateries serving food of their native land. In the beginning, the community was too small to sustain such restaurants or cultivate a sufficient demand among natives. About 1938, Chai Hui Lee, born in 1896 at Sun Chum Koon, Korea, had established the China Food Company at 7309 Georgia Avenue, a restaurant or caterer, and one of Washington's earliest Korean-owned businesses. The name suggests the unfamiliarity of Korean cuisine on the East Coast; it would not be surprising for a restaurateur or caterer to serve Chinese food, or to assume a "Chinese" brand or purchase ingredients from Chinese wholesalers. It was the site of a 1945 dinner celebrating the 26th anniversary of the Korean Declaration of Independence.[228] It lasted another five years, moving to 1230 Crittenden Street NW.

The first confirmed restaurant serving Korean cuisine dates to 1971, when Jung Doo Kim and Joseph Chang opened Sorabol (or Soerabol) on the ground floor of the Windsor Park Hotel, 2300 Connecticut Avenue. J.D. Kim (김두정) had lived in the Washington area since 1964, having entered the U.S. for work with the Korean Augmentation to the United States Army (KATUSA) program. After keeping the books for the Cosmos Club for seven years, a friend suggested he take over a struggling hotel restaurant. His partner, Joseph Chang (장진필, 1942-2020), had immigrated as a student in 1963 and often supported himself by working in restaurants, including Billy Martin's Carriage House in Georgetown.[229]

Sorabol launched with minimal start-up expenses, because the owners were able to take over the space's existing equipment, furniture, and liquor license. Kim and Chang took home ten percent of the monthly profits. The restaurant's name, the historic capital of the Silla dynasty, was suggested by a friend, a four-star U.S. Army general who had been stationed in Seoul. Kim and Chang hired the former Korean Embassy chef Tai Ho Choi. The menu included both American and Korean foods, and the ingredients were sourced from a Korean restaurant in New York and a local Japanese market. Staple Korean dishes included *bulgogi*, *bibimbap*, *yukgae jang*, *mandu* soup, and *jaiyook gui*.[230] U.S. military personnel returning from Korea comprised much of the clientele, alongside hotel guests, politicians, and staff from the nearby Chinese Embassy. Although the men operated it for only three years, Sorabol gauged the commercial viability of Korean cuisine and set the table for subsequent restaurants.

The restaurant was forced to close when the Chinese Embassy bought the hotel after President Nixon established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. "Sorabol became the first victim of the Nixon-Mao relationship," Kim joked.[231] He reopened on Columbia Pike in Arlington, Virginia, but mostly worked thereafter as an insurance agent for New York Life. He stayed involved with Korean American matters, helping dozens of people, free of charge, with their immigration paperwork. He ran a Korean concession at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in 1976.

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[228] "Korean Colony to Mark Independence Today," *The Evening Star*, March 1, 1945; "Ahn Changho, Korean Patriot, Dies in Prison," *The Evening Star*, March 23, 1938.

[229] Joseph Chang is also known as Chang Jin Pil, Jang Jin Pil, and Joseph Jang. He enrolled in what his family called the Temple School. Personal communication with Grace Dahye Kwon, March 4, 2022.

[230] J.D. Kim identified the Japanese store as Hana Market on 14th Street NW. The New York Korean restaurant may have been Sambok. As a customer, Young Whan Park recalls that the menu expanded to dishes like grilled and fried fish, *kalbi*, *kimchi-jjigae*, *dwenjang jjigae*, and *japchae*. Personal communication with Grace Dahye Kwon and Sojin Kim, March 10, 2022.

[231] J.D. Kim personal communication with Grace n Dahye Kwon, April 2022.

Joseph Chang went on to open a golf store in Tyson's Corner, Virginia. His son, David Chang, is a founder of Momofuku restaurant group and possessor of a Michelin star.

Jhoon Rhee standing (left) with Joseph Chang at Rhee's mother's birthday celebration at Sorabol, circa 1972. Collection of the family of Joseph Chang.

A purveyor of Korean food at a much larger scale is Rhee Brothers, Inc. Syngman "Steve" Rhee founded the company in 1976 to distribute Korean imports to mom-and-pop stores around the metropolitan area. Rhee and his wife came to the U.S. in 1968, when he enrolled at American University. Intending to return to Korea and enter politics, he majored in political science and participated in protests against the government of President Park Chung Hee. The Rhees lived in various apartments in the District and Maryland.[232] Mrs. Rhee opened a hair salon, and Steve Rhee first worked at restaurants, including as a server at Sorabol. His first business ventures involved street vending, hawking imitation flowers at the Tidal Basin during the cherry blossom season and selling costume jewelry and toys.

In 1975, Rhee's family shipped him a box of dried squid from Korea. He sold this to Japanese businesses, then transitioned to building a Korean food business with Korean clients. He built a customer base by visiting stores listed in phone directories, including those published by the Korean American Association of Greater Washington. He gradually expanded his inventory with other items his family sent. Formally establishing his business in 1976 in Silver Spring, Maryland

[232] Choonok Janet Rhee (spouse of Syngman Rhee, Rhee Bros.) personal communication with Grace Dahye Kwon, March 4, 2022. Their first apartment was near Thomas Circle in D.C., before they moved up 16th Street to Silver Spring.

with the help of four brothers, a brother-in-law, and eventually his sons, he distributed to Washington, Philadelphia and New York, and eventually nationwide.[233] In the mid-1980s, Rhee Brothers established its own label, "Assi." In 1989, the Rhees opened their first "Lotte Plaza" supermarket in Rockville, Maryland, and today there are fifteen of these in Florida, New Jersey, and the D.C. metro area.[234] In 2009, *Forbes* magazine called Rhee Brothers the "largest Asian-food importer and distributor in North America with affiliates in Korea, Japan and China," serving Korean communities in 145 countries and with 1,600 U.S. customers.[235] Among those were Korean businesses at Washington's Florida Avenue Market, who retailed Rhee Brothers' foods.

Popularly known as the Florida Avenue Market, the Union Market Terminal was established in 1930 to replace the city's venerable Center Market, razed to construct the National Archives. A group of merchants organized the Union Market Terminal Company to develop store and warehouse spaces and farm stands for wholesale and retail sales on a parcel along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad line at 4th, 5th, Morse and Neal streets NE. At any given time, there have been as many as 60 different business owners at the site.[236] Both the market and the surrounding neighborhood had declined since the 1968 riots. An earlier generation of business owners was retiring or seeking newer facilities in the suburbs, and chain supermarkets sourced their supplies elsewhere.

Sang-Oh Choi (최상오) recalled that when he first arrived at the market in 1975, about one third of the buildings were vacant, and trash was not being picked up. But he and his brothers saw an opportunity to start their own produce wholesale operation, Sam Wang (삼왕, "Three Kings") Produce. They worked long hours and sometimes slept in the store. Sang-Oh, the eventual chief operating officer, felt that the older generation of market merchants eyed the first Asian proprietors with suspicion, even sabotaging their efforts and spreading reputation-damaging rumors.[237] The Chois catered to a largely Asian clientele, providing vegetables and other ingredients not readily available. They had learned business at the knee of their father, Jeong-seop Choi, who had established a store on Richmond Highway in Woodbridge, Virginia in 1968. His may have been the first Asian grocery in the region.[238]

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[233] They were based in Silver Spring from 1976 to 1979, moved to Columbia, Maryland in 1979, and then to Hanover, Maryland, in 2009.

[234] Yian Q. Mui, "Tastes from Home: Immigration Feeds Rhee Bros. Growth," *The Washington Post, October 16, 2005*; Robin Rhee (president of Rhee Brothers), personal communication with Grace Dahye Kwon and Sojin Kim, February 25, 2022.

[235] "Bankers, Grocers, and Lots of Kims," *Forbes*, January 2, 2009, forbes.com/global/2009/0112/040. html?sh=31 dc89441b4a.

[236] Bruce Pascal (attorney for many Florida market businesspeople, son of Paul Pascal, aka "Mayor of the Market"), personal communication with Grace Dahye Kwon and Sojin Kim, July 16, 2021.

[237] "플로리다마켓의 산 증인 최상오 삼왕 대표" ["Choi Sang-oh, president of the three kings, a living witness of the Florida Market"] *The Korea Daily*, January 25, 2002. While most sources identify Sang-Oh Choi or his father Jeong-seop Choi as the first Korean proprietor at the market, it might require further research to confirm this. The Korean telephone directories are one means for doing this, and the Korean-language newspapers another. There is an August 1975 advertisement for the New York Fish Co Inc. at 40 [sic] North Morse Street in the Korean-language newspaper *Miju Hangul Ilbo*. This may or may not have been a Korean-run business, and it may or may not have preceded the Chois' business, too.

[238] Accounts vary of the history and endeavors of the different family members. In *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-2005* (2009) Jong-seop Choi is described as having immigrated as a student in 1966, opening "Korea House" grocery in 1968, and then becoming the first Asian business in Florida Market in 1975. It also states that he was thwarted in his endeavors by a Japanese wholesale monopoly and moved to New York in the early 1980s to open a clothing store, only to be killed in an armed robbery on a subway car in

In 1984, the District of Columbia announced an initiative to revitalize the Northeast quadrant, with the Florida Avenue Market to be a focal point, to be renamed Capital City Market. Although funding ran dry before the revitalization was complete, some physical improvements were made, such as street paving and the acquisition of additional land for new warehouses.[239] Sang-oh Choi rented some of this land and erected a 60,000-square-foot warehouse, technically owned by Sun Development, a real estate holding company established for Sam Wang Produce.[240] Sam Wang, six other Korean wholesalers, and one Chinese wholesaler set up shop in this new facility. Sam Wang Produce was now the largest produce wholesaler in the District of Columbia. It was a catalyst for transforming Union Market Terminal into a commercial landscape composed almost entirely of Asian immigrant entrepreneurs through the 1990s.[241] The Choi brothers established other businesses there, including a rice cake factory and a kitchen equipment supplier. Other wholesalers sold groceries, liquor, vegetables, beauty supplies, and souvenir items.[242]

The Korean enterprises at Florida Avenue Market were fostered by supporting organizations. In 1988, the Florida Market Korean Group (or "Florida Market Mutual Consultation") was established with 29 members.[243] Shop owners were prominent in the Korean American Chamber of Commerce, incorporated in 1964. Korean Federal Credit Union, headquartered at the market, was a primary source of loans to small-business owners and of interest to hundreds of depositors until 1991.[244] Washington Cash and Carry became an informal meeting place for Korean shop owners.[245] Thomas Hur, a manager there in the early 1990s, recalled the store opening at four a.m. to provide free coffee and seating to all customers. Owners of delis, corner stores, small groceries, and carryouts across the District could connect and exchange information about policies affecting their businesses.

1983 (218). This may be inaccurate, as it seems like Choi was still doing business after 2000. Eddie Dean, in "Seoul Brother #1," in *The Washington City Paper* of December 18, 1998, describes the family as immigrating in the early 1970s, his father saving money from his janitorial job to open "Seoul House," a store providing Asian foods. The brothers pooled their resources to open their own retail businesses at Florida Market before going into produce wholesale. "워싱턴의 심장, 플로리다마켓워싱턴" ["The Heart of Washington, Florida Market"], *중앙일보* [The Korea Daily], December 19, 2001, attributes the first Korean store at Florida Market to Sang-oh Choi, who opened the Dong Yang Grocery in 1974. The article references a gathering in 1988 at which Jung-seop Choi was present. Lisa Choi (the daughter-in-law of Jeong-seop Choi and Florida Market business owner) describes her father-in-law's business as "Seoul Market" in a personal communication with Grace Dahye Kwon and Kevin Kim, July 27, 2021.

[239] Rudolph A. Pyatt Jr., "Fla. Ave. Market Restoration Is City's First Move in NE Corridor," *The Washington Post*, September 24, 1984.

[240] ["Choi Sang-oh, president of the three kings, a living witness of the Florida Market"] *The Korea Daily*, January 25, 2002. The writer indicates that Sun General Shopping Center was launched on this land in 1985. See also Eddie Dean, "Seoul Brother #1" *Washington City Paper*, December 18, 1998.

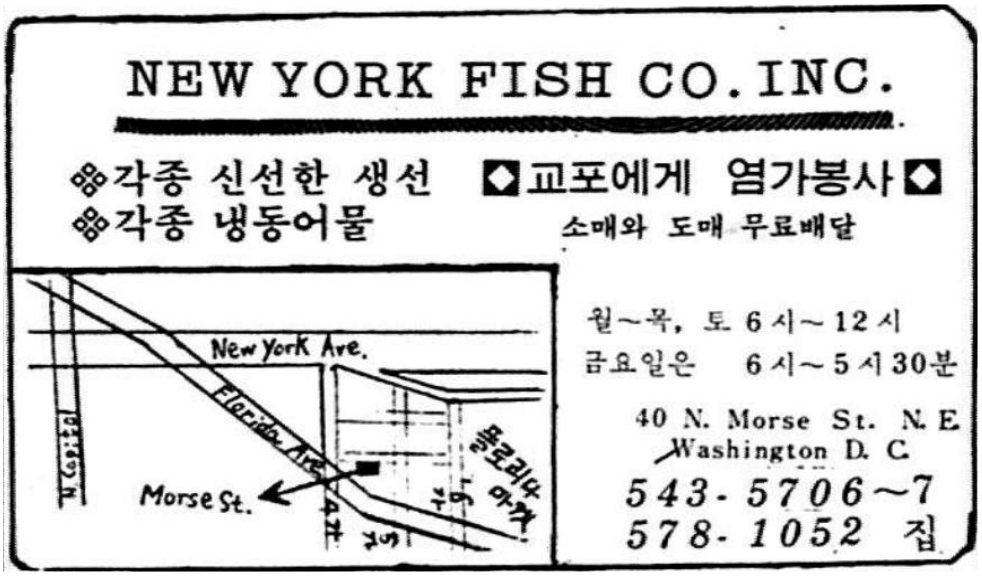
[241] The business name is variously written as Sam Wang Produce and Samwang Produce.

[242] *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-2005* (2009), 45.

[243] This is a translation of the group name from the article ["Choi Sang-oh, president of the three kings, a living witness of the Florida Market"], *The Korea Daily*, January 25, 2002. This may be the same group referred to as the "Korean Merchants Association of Florida Market" in *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-2005* (2009).

[244]The credit union was established in 1980 and had 500 clients when it closed eleven years later. Liz Spayd, "Korean Credit Union Closes," *The Washington Post*, October 17, 1991.

[245] Cash-and-carrys are wholesale stores that require customers to pay for their goods upfront in cash. There were several such businesses at Florida Market. Washington Cash and Carry was initially located at 1270 4th Street NE, when Lee Young Gil purchased it in the late 1970s from its former, Jewish owner. The business was later sold to James Son. Thomas Hur (Washington Cash and Carry), personal communication in Korean with Grace Dahye Kwon on August 10, 2022.



Above: Located at the Florida Avenue Market, the New York Fish Company advertised in* Miju Hangul Ilbo *in August 1975.

Left:"Florida Market is my hometown and alter ego."—Sang-Oh Choi, Sam Wang Produce.
The Korea Daily(싱턴중앙일보), ***January 25, 2002.***

The Korea Daily noted the changes over two decades, writing that "Korean merchants in the Florida Market boast in unison, 'The Florida Market is the only place in the United States where Korean merchants occupy the majority of wholesale business districts.'"[246] A *Washington Post* reporter surmised that the Korean businesses there may have served half of the region's food and hospitality industry—providing vegetables, meat, equipment, and paper supplies.[247] They were

[246] ["The Heart of Washington, Florida Market"] *The Korea Daily*, December 19, 2001.
[247] Sugarman, "To Market, To Market—A Capital Idea: New Beginnings for DC's Capital City Market," *The Washington Post*, May 14, 1986.

also supplying ingredients to Asian restaurants throughout the southern and mid-Atlantic states.[248] The number of Korean businesses at the market peaked in the early 1990s, with five produce wholesalers, three meat wholesalers, one rice cake factory, a restaurant equipment supplier, one bean curd producer, a milk distributor, and nine vendors of accessories, T-shirts, and souvenirs. Retail establishments included carryouts, tofu shops, restaurants, clothing stores, and herbal medicine shops.[249]

The Florida Avenue Market's Korean presence dropped to around 40 by the year 2000, with retirements and moves to the suburbs to chase customers and escape crime.[250] Korean business representation traces the demographic trends for metropolitan-area Korean Americans.[251] It is not hyperbole to say the market been a lifeline for the community, offering occupational opportunities for immigrant families seeking to gain an economic foothold.

> Florida Market, a place that opens at the dawn of hope amid tough immigrant life. Washington, D.C., at 2 a.m, in December, when the Potomac winds drive the cold fronts of early winter. There are people who open shop at the dawn of Washington, "the heart of world politics," at a time when streetlights are also asleep, the sound of sirens coming from afar. The main characters are Korean merchants, who have been sailing on a voyage of hope for more than 20 years to the engine sound of a large trailer….[252]

No matter how much they eventually grew, Korean businesses began as family enterprises, with Sorabol, Sam Wang Produce, and Rhee Brothers being notable examples. Although families increasingly chose to settle in the suburbs, Korean small businesses became ubiquitous in the District in the 1980s. A 1977 survey of area Korean-owned shops conducted by the Korean Business Association identified more than 50 retail and service categories, most commonly hair salons, wig shops, groceries, carryouts, gas stations, and dry cleaners.[253] Although accounts vary, Koreans may have come to operate about half the small businesses in D.C. in the 1980s.[254] They

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[248] John Mintz, "Market Gets a $6 Million Face Lift," *The Washington Post*, October 9, 1986.

[249] *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area, 1883-1993* (1995), 112; The 2009 edition listed eleven Korean businesses still operating at Florida/Union Market in 2005 (46). ["Choi Sang-oh, president of the three kings, a living witness of the Florida Market"], *The Korea Daily*, January 25, 2002. Names and addresses of the businesses could probably be culled from the Korean American phone directories of these decades. Other names that have come up in conversation include *Hangook Shikdang*, 1301-A Fourth Street NE, which opened at 4 a.m. and served breakfast and lunch to Amtrak riders and wholesalers.

[250] ["Choi Sang-oh, president of the three kings, a living witness of the Florida Market"], *The Korea Daily*, January 25, 2002.

[251] There is a complicated post-1990s coda to this story involving area redevelopment and the Choi family. For more information, see Kwang Duk Park, "DC 플로리다 마켓 재개발, 입주상인, 반대 서명운동" ["DC Florida Market redevelopment, tenants, protest signature"] *Miju Hanguk Ilbo* (*Korea Times)*, January 19, 2007, mapp.koreatimes.com/article/20070119/360866; and Paul Schwartzman, "Despite Challenges and Change, Market is Still 'Another World'," *The Washington Post*, March 10, 2005.

[252] ["The Heart of Washington, Florida Market"] *The Korea Daily*, December 19, 2001. Sang-oh Choi and his brothers contributed to the redevelopment that has since changed the Florida Market landscape. His decades on that land shaped not only his fortune, but a deep attachment. "Florida Market is my hometown and alter ego," he said in "Choi Sang-oh, president of the three kings, a living witness of the Florida Market," *The Korea Daily*, January 25, 2002.

[253] *Miju Hanguk Ilbo* [*Korea Times*], December 10, 1977.

[254] This statistic was commonly shared in *The Washington Post* coverage of news related to Korean merchants, including Athelia Knight, "Shotgun Blast Ends Grocer's Dream," December 15, 1979. According to Linda Wheeler,

reportedly ran at least half of Washington's "carryout" and "convenience" stores.[255]

An early 1990s *Washington Post* article tallied the numbers: "Most of the D.C. lottery agents are Korean; of the 278 liquor stores in the District, 127 are owned by Koreans or Korean Americans; more than 700 dry-cleaning [and tailoring] establishments in the [metropolitan] area are Korean; one-third of the city's 3000 street vendors are Koreans; and two dozen Korean wholesalers control much of the merchandise sold on the street." Most proprietors had not been merchants in their native land; many came from professional backgrounds but had to become entrepreneurs to feed their families in this country.[256]

Carryouts, delicatessens, and corner markets operated in all parts of town, feeding office workers in downtown buildings and setting up shop in neighborhoods lacking grocery stores. These were some of the first sites to offer Korean food, when proprietors added a dish or two to their standard menus of sandwiches, salad, and chicken.[257] In the early years, Koreans acquired businesses that had previously been owned by an older generation of immigrants, Jewish, Italian, and Greek. Later, they often bought stores from relatives or other Koreans.

Entrepreneurs of the 1970s and 1980s represented both a specific generation of immigrants and a tactic for economic stability that met the circumstances of the period. Some sought educational alternatives to Korea's stringent, competitive system, arriving as students but staying as permanent residents. Others came in middle age, looking for opportunities during a time of political instability and limited economic mobility in Korea. In the 1970s, they stepped into a space made available by the aging out or moving out of a previous generation of business owners, and by disinvestment, especially from Black neighborhoods.

Self-employment afforded a path for those not fluent in English and those who could not transfer their professional credentials to equivalent work in America. Small businesses required relatively small amounts of capital to start, but enormous quantities of unpaid family labor.[258] Those who

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"Korean Merchants Find Opportunity in D.C.," *The Washington Post*, December 14, 1986, there were 2,000 small businesses. According to Peter Pae, "Korean Americans Get a Corner on the Small Store Scene in Washington," December 16, 1987, Korean small businesses numbered 1,000, or half of the total, mostly located in Black neighborhoods. In 1993, a Police Training Subcommittee of the Afro-Asian Relations Council drafted a "Background Information of Asian Pacific Americans (APA's) in Metro D.C. Area" that indicated, "There are over 1,100 Asian-owned businesses in D.C., many located in economically depressed inner-city neighborhoods. Two-thirds of all small businesses in D.C. are Asian-operated and 55% are Korean-operated." See also LaBarbara Bowman, "The Koreans: Corner Store Revolution: Corner Grocery Store Undergoes a Korean Metamorphosis," in *The Washington Post*, May 28, 1979.

[254] Joel Garreau, "A People Molded into Merchants: Immigrants' Quest to Survive Leads Down the Road of Retail," *The Washington Post*, July 5, 1992.

[255] LaBarbara Bowman, "The Koreans: Corner Stone Revolution," *The Washington Post*, May 28, 1979; Linda Wheeler, "Tragedy Brings Cooperation to Anacostia," *The Washington Post*, May 7, 1987.

[256] Joel Garreau, "A People Molded into Merchants: Immigrants' Quest to Survive Leads Down the Road of Retail," *The Washington Post*, July 5, 1992.

[257] The presentation of "California rolls" in salad bars is one common example. Lisa Choi, proprietor of Best Kitchen Supply at Florida Market, described how her clients who own mom-and-pop carryout stores will sometimes prepare Korean food like bulgogi rice bowls or bulgogi sandwiches, although they find it easier to stick to American sandwiches. The shop owners also built salad bars in their stores. Personal communication in Korean with Grace Dahye and Kevin Kim, July 27, 2021.

[258] There is a great deal of scholarship and media chronicling of the phenomenon. See, for example, Pyong Gap Min, "From White-Collar Occupations to Small Business: Korean Immigrant's Economic Adjustment," *The Sociological Quarterly* 25, No. 3 (Summer 1984), 333-352; Edward Taehan Chang, "Toward Understanding Korean and African American Relations" in *OAH Magazine of History* 10, No. 4 (Summer 1996), 67-71.

immigrated after the early 1980s often had start-up capital because of an improved Korean economy and loosened capital controls. The older generation of business owners typically began with savings from wages as convenience store managers or in food service and construction. These were supplemented by the shared resources of relatives or funds from immigrant lending circles or rotating credit associations called *kye* (or *keh*).

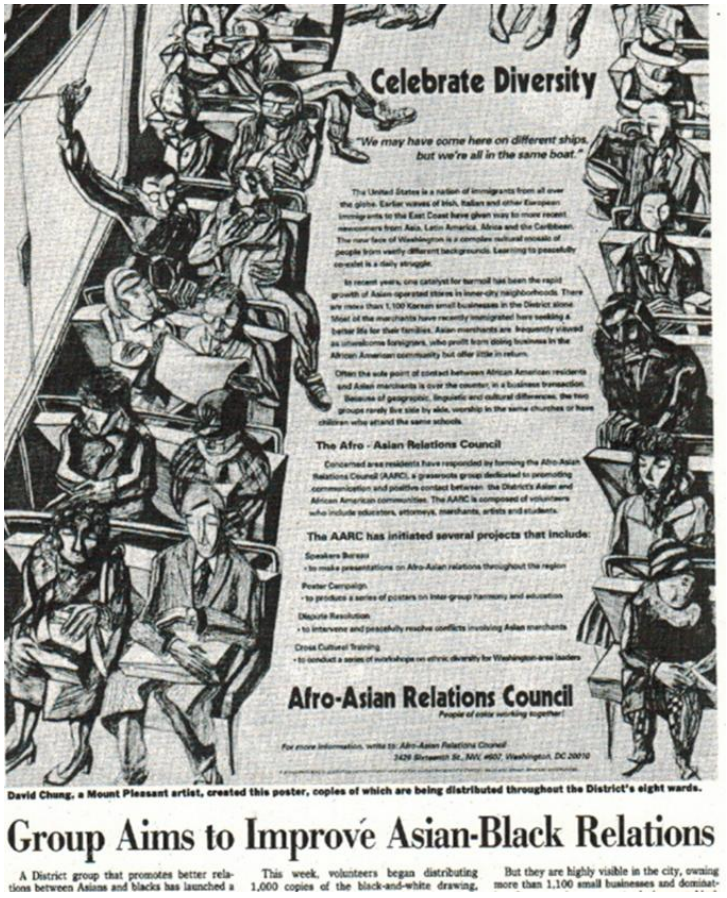
In 1975, Diplomat National Bank was established to serve the region's growing Asian American population. Its initial backers were newspaper columnist Jack Anderson, television journalist Connie Chung, physicians William Chin-Lee and Magin T. Qiambao, taekwondo-school magnate Jhoon Rhee, and Export-Import Bank officer Chosei Duge. Rev. Sun Myung Moon and members of his Unification Church reportedly bought up nearly half the stock. According to its chairman, Charles Kim, "The Bank that Speaks your Language" lent to small businesses and offer currency exchange through bilingual tellers and loan officers.[259] The sole branch of what was said to be the nation's first Asian American bank was located at 2033 K Street NW. Unfortunately, it was unprofitable, having failed to recover some bad loans. Undercapitalized and under suspicion for having substantial undisclosed foreign ownership, Diplomat National was forced to sell in 1980.[260] More enduring was the community-serving Korean Federal Credit Union, operating until 1991 at 1287 4th Street NE in the Florida Avenue Market.[261]

There were other serious challenges to small-business ownership, including tensions between Korean storeowners and Black patrons.[262] When eleven Korean-owned stores were firebombed in the city over a period of eighteen months in 1985 and 1986, victims concluded that anti-Asian hatred was the motive, while police theorized about extortion by Korean gangs.[263] In November 1986, a Chinese owner of an Anacostia carryout store brandished a gun at a Black customer, n incident that became "a flashpoint and a symbol of long-standing resentment towards some of the immigrant merchants."[264] It sparked a protracted protest of the business and hard feelings all around, while some Black neighborhood leaders ultimately supported the store owner.[265]

Even before this last incident, several groups had initiated efforts to facilitate better communication and stronger relationships between Asians and Blacks. As early as 1986, the Korean-American Chamber of Commerce organized an annual scholarship program for high school seniors graduating from all eight wards of the city[266] In October 1986, the Korean Christian Businessmen's Committee of Greater Washington staged a one-week educational tour of Korea

[259] Gloria Borger, "Bank Aimed At Orientals Organizing," *The Washington Star-News,* August 14, 1974; "Rev. Moon Owns Half of Bank," *The Journal*, June 19, 1976; "Grand Opening Today!" *The Washington Star*, December 15, 1975.
[260] *History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area* (1995), 246-47; Patrick E. Tyler, "South Korean Bid for D.C. Bank Fails," *The Washington Post,* July 26, 1980.
[261] Liz Spayd, "Korean Credit Union Closes," *The Washington Post*, October 17, 1991.
[262] In the 1980s and 1990s, media coverage of conflicts in places like Los Angeles and New York sensationalized and inflamed tensions.
[263] John Ward Anderson, "Extortion Eyed in Firebombing of Korean-Owned Businesses," *The Washington Post*, October 19, 1985; John Ward Anderson, "2 Korean-Owned Stores Firebombed, Raising Total to 11," *The Washington Post*, June 6, 1986.
[264] Marshall Wong (D.C. Mayor's Office and D.C. Afro-Asian Affairs Council), personal communication with Sojin Kim and Grace Kwon, July 23, 2021; Cheryl Shelton, "Asian Store Owners Reflect on Protest," *The Community News*, November 27, 1986.
[265] Arthur S. Brisbane, "Asian Owner's Backers Reviled," *The Washington Post*, November 9, 1986.
[266] "Korean-American Scholarships," *The Washington Post*, November 13, 1986.

for Black church leaders.[267] And in August 1986, the Mayor's Office established an Office of Asian Pacific Affairs. Marshall Wong, engaged as the special assistant to the A.P.A. office, went on to convene the Afro-Asian Relations Council of Washington, D.C. in 1989, to facilitate "non-crisis mode" conversations among Asian and African American communities.[268]



David Chung, a Mount Pleasant artist, created this poster, copies of which are being distributed throughout the District's eight wards.

Group Aims to Improve Asian-Black Relations

A District group that promotes better relations between Asians and blacks has launched a

This week, volunteers began distributing 1,000 copies of the black-and-white drawing,

But they are highly visible in the city, owning more than 1,100 small businesses and dominat-

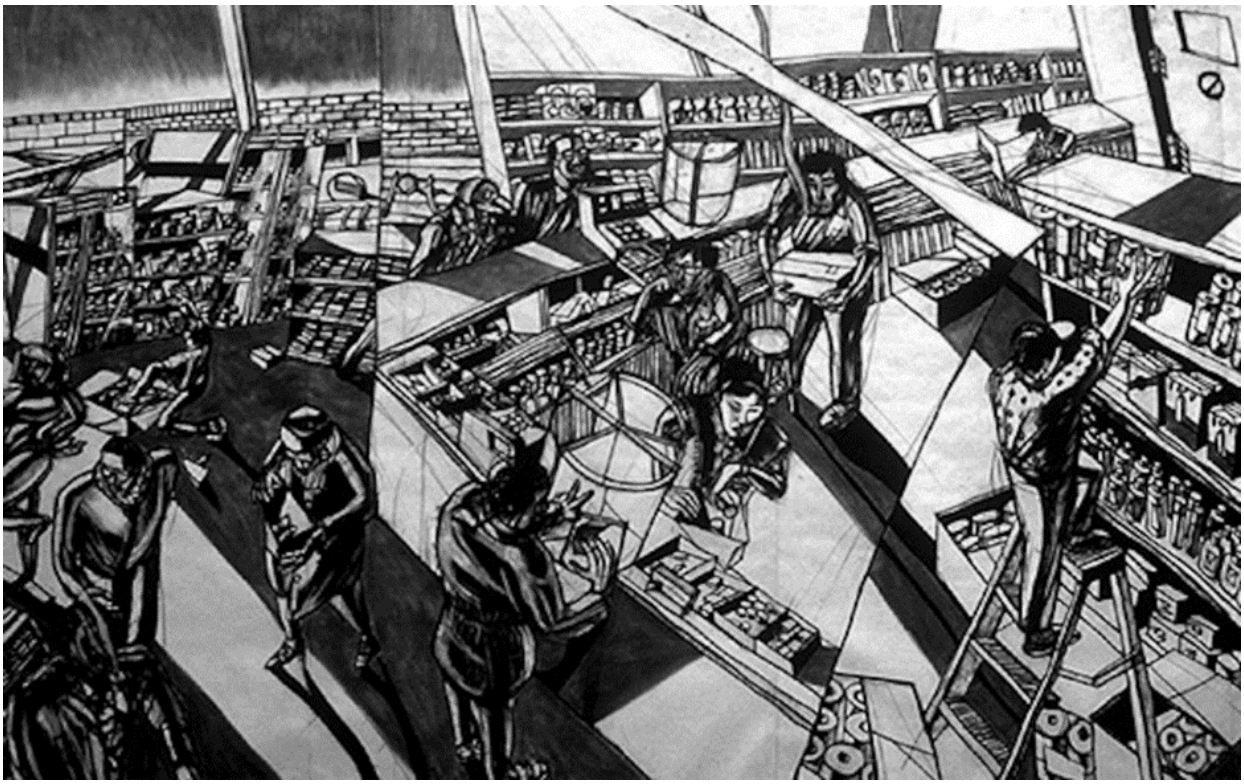
Washington Post ***coverage of the Afro-Asian Relations Council poster campaign with an image of the poster designed by Chung, May 7, 1992.***

Similar tensions led to Korean-owned shops being targeted in the 1992 Los Angeles riots following the police beating of Rodney King. Unrest brought both positive and unflattering attention to Korean business owners in both cities and to the challenges of their line of work. *The Washington Post* published a three-part series, "A People Molded into Merchants," by Joel Garreau.[269] The Korean American Grocers Association (KAGRO) redoubled efforts to support member businesses and to demonstrate commitment to the communities in which they worked. But resentments lingered about the number of Korean-owned shops in predominantly Black neighborhoods.

The number of Korean-owned stores in D.C. began to diminish in the early 2000s. Korean immigration declined in the 1990s, and those who arrived during this time often had other

[267] Larry D. Payne, "District Black Church Civic Leaders Off to Korea," *The Washington Afro-American*, October 26, 1986; Larry D. Payne, "Black Leaders Return from Korea," *The Washington Afro-American*, November 4, 1986.
[268] For more on the history of this organization, see Margo Okazawa-Rey, "Organizing in Communities of Color: Addressing Interethnic Conflicts," *Social Justice* 24, No. 1 (1997).
[269] Joel Garreau, "A People Molded into Merchants," *The Washington Post*, July 5, 1992; Joel Garreau, "Capitalizing on the American dream: Koreans and the Changing Face of Small Business," *The Washington Post*, July 6, 1992; Joel Garreau, "For Korean Merchants, Cultural Clashes Fan the Flames of Misunderstanding," *The Washington Post*, July 7, 1992.

employment opportunities, better English skills and more access to capital. Older store owners retired, and younger family members did not take over their businesses. Still, emerging "1.5"- and second-generation entrepreneurs have been expanding the nature of small-scale businesses as venues for creativity and expressions of heritage. For example, sisters Ginger and Frances Park started what is now D.C.'s oldest independent chocolate store, Chocolate Chocolate, at 1130 Connecticut Avenue NW in 1984. They are also award-winning children's book authors who explore their family history and Korean culture in their writing.[270]



A detail of Y. David Chung's 10- by 70-foot charcoal drawing, Seoul House, 1988. This mural-scale drawing was used in a multi-media installation and performance that Chung produced for the Washington Project for the Arts. The artist was born in Germany and grew up in Europe, Africa and Korea before his family settled in the Washington area. After retiring from a diplomatic career begun in Washington in the 1950s, his father owned small businesses in this area, as did other relatives. For a time, David Chung managed his family's downtown take-out. He studied at the Corcoran College of Art and Design and was a founding member of the Afro-Asian Relations Council, because "I felt that, as somebody who had family in the store business and knew about this experience firsthand, and because of what I was exploring in my artwork, I was interested in seeing if it was possible to do things with art to help inform people about who these Korean merchants were."

[270] Williams, Elliot C. "Meet the D.C. chocolate shop owner writing children's books about her Korean heritage." *WAMU 88.5*, February 11, 2022.

Three generations of the Chong family have operated small businesses in Washington since the 1970s. The extended family has owned businesses in Fort Dupont, Petworth, Ivy City, Columbia Heights, and Mount Pleasant, each serving as training grounds for staff and relatives.[271]
Top left: Young Sok Chong, his daughter-in-law Myung Hee Chong, and her son Jesse in front of their store at 1900 Capitol Avenue NE in the Ivy City neighborhood, circa 1984.
Top right: Hae Young Chong with his father Young Sok Chong and son Jesse inside the Ivy City store.
Bottom left: Hae Young and Myung Hee Chong with customers at Lee-Irving Liquor at 3100 Mount Pleasant Street NW, 1996. In the 1980s, Mr. Chong purchased this business from his uncle, who had run it since the 1970s.
Bottom right: Jesse Chong with his child at Lee-Irving Liquor, renamed Irving Wine & Spirits in 2007. Jesse took over the business when his father, Hae Young Chong, became ill and subsequently passed away. He helped to re-envision the business and continues to run it with his mother.
Photos courtesy of Jesse Chong.

Homeland Politics Again

Korean internal politics continued to influence the diaspora, both as a motive for emigration and as a divisive force within it. The U.S. capital was still a destination for activists, lobbyists, and foreign policy wonks, and it was the scene of protests and scandals.

[271] Jesse Chong (owner of Lee-Irving Wine and Spirits), personal communication with Grace Dahye Kwon and Sojin Kim, July 28, 2021.

At the start of the 1970s, as American involvement in an unpopular war in Southeast Asia continued, the Nixon administration began to reduce investment in Korea. Concerned about diminishing U.S. economic and military assistance, the Park Chung Hee government deployed the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) to lobby U.S. congressmen for support, to improve public relations through cultural activities, and to suppress anti-government activities in the diaspora through surveillance and harassment. The presence of KCIA operatives in Washington exacerbated fissures and spread distrust among a population whose numbers and diversity were growing, and which was increasingly divided by geography, class, nativity, and politics. In 1976, when Congress opened an investigation into potential illegal activities of the KCIA, the mainstream press dubbed it "Koreagate," referencing former President Nixon's own recent scandal.

The investigation sensationalized the conduct of Koreans in America and reinforced some negative Asian stereotypes.[272] The profiles of the those questioned by investigators demonstrate the idiosyncratic quality of the region's Korean population and how Koreans were increasingly involved with non-Koreans in the realms of business, politics, and even religion. Shelley Sang-He Lee observes, "While diplomatic concerns ignited the firestorm over the 'Korean Connection,' the controversy reverberated through Korean America. For Asian Americans, life in the 1970s—what we might call the start of the post-exclusion era—was a new frontier. Geopolitical, legal, and demographic change made possible new forms of minority participation and visibility..."[273]

At the center of the Koreagate investigation was Tongsun Park (박동선, born 1935), a businessman, lobbyist, and a popular 1962 graduate of Georgetown University School of Foreign Service. In 1966, he established The GeorgeTown Club at 1530 Wisconsin Avenue, known for its lavish private parties attended by politicians and members of society. A permanent resident, Park's relationships with the Korean government reportedly dated back to the 1960s, when he had asked the KCIA's assistance to become the sole purchasing agent of American rice, for which he earned hefty commissions. Park denied working for the agency, but he admitted to contributing nearly a million dollars in gifts, cash, and campaign contributions to members of Congress. Influence-peddling charges against him were eventually dropped, but his testimony resulted in the indictment of two congressmen. The GeorgeTown Club, under different management, continues to operate in the same building.

Another Koreagate figure was Rev. Sun Myung Moon (문선명, 1920-2012), leader of the Unification Church. The investigation raised questions about sources and uses of the church's funds—including as investors in the Diplomat National Bank—and its relationship with the Park Chung Hee regime and the KCIA. Moon's close associate Lieutenant Colonel Bo Hi Pak, a church missionary, had previously been a military attaché to the Korean Embassy. Pak also denied under oath working with the KCIA, but several sources have identified him as liaison between the agency and American intelligence.[274] The congressional investigation lasted from 1976 through 1977, during which Pak dutifully defended Rev. Moon and the church.

[272] Patrick Chung, "Koreagate," "Tongsun Park," and "KCIA and the Korean American Community," unpublished encyclopedia entries shared June 8, 2022.
[273] Shelley Sang-Hee Lee, "The Party's Over: Sex, Gender, and Orientalism in the Koreagate Scandal of the 1970s" in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 39, No. 3 (2018), 2.
[274] Peter McGill, "The Dark Shadow Cast by Moon Sun Myung's Unification Church and Abe Shinzo" in *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 20, Issue 17, No. 10 (October 15, 2022), 7.

Mainstream Christians considered the Unification Church a heretical cult, and its connections to an autocratic regime with an active intelligence program in an allied country were easy to sensationalize. The Koreagate scandal drew unwelcome attention to Korean Americans, reinforcing stereotypes of Asians as foreign agents with suspicious access to wealth.

To those living in the Washington area, there was an added immediacy to the U.S.-Korea relationship because of the proximity of agencies of both nations. Korean Embassy staff attended local churches and community gatherings. And American institutions provided a stage upon which the protests of the Korean democracy movement played out.

Since the early 1900s, Koreans concerned about events in the peninsula had made their way to Washington to be closer to policymakers. Some came for temporary campaigns, others settled permanently. By 1970, an older generation of immigrants had already been organizing dissent against their government for more than a decade. In the 1980s, a new generation of immigrant and "1.5" activists came to D.C. to organize around the democratization of South Korea. They directly opposed the Park and Chun dictatorships, hosted dissidents, raised funds for education and direct relief efforts in North Korea, and rallied around a vision of reunification of North with South.

In 1986, the Korean Information and Resource Center (KIRC) was established in Washington by Young Koreans United of North America (YKU). With chapters in major Korean communities around the U.S. and Canada, the organization advocated for democracy in South Korea, peaceful unification of the peninsula, and labor rights. Through programs and events in community centers, the organization promoted engagement with Korean cultural arts, such as *pung mul* 풍물, a percussion tradition. KIRC rented an office at 1314 14th Street near Thomas Circle. From here, the organization compiled its *Korea Report*, an English-language news magazine about Korea-related issues distributed to congressmembers, the media, think tanks, academics, and allies from international communities.[275]

KIRC and YKU played an important role linking the older and younger generations of activists, supporting the continuity of efforts across the diaspora. They linked Korean human rights struggles with those happening in other countries. According to H.K. Suh, editor of the *Korea Report* in the late 1980s, "KIRC was located in a downtown D.C. building which also housed the national offices of CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador) and NISGUA (Network in Solidarity with Guatemala), which gave great opportunities to network and interact with other international solidarity groups, peace organizations and NGOs—sharing respective histories, cultures, and struggles."[276]

[275] H.K. Suh (Young Koreans United, *Korea Report* editor), personal communication with Sojin Kim and Grace Dahye Kwon, January 25, 2022. The magazine ran for nine years, and then was published online for fourteen years as a weblog.

[276] Describing the goals of YKU, Suh emphasized that its focus was policy. Members were a group of Koreans and Korean Americans bringing public awareness to Korea, and not so much focused on working in the Korean American community. Had that been the case, they would have opted to locate in Virginia, closer to a large Korean residential population.

Members of Young Koreans United D.C. participate in the 1989 International Peace March in Korea. Collection of H.K. Suh.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

	District of Columbia	United States	Korea/World
1970	Korean Church in Washington sells its property, "Our House" (우리집) at 5505 16th Street NW.		
1971	Sorabol, D.C.'s first Korean restaurant, is established in the Windsor Park Hotel.		
1972	Multiple protests against Yushin Constitution. Korean Catholic Church is organized, with services held in Northeast D.C. churches.		Yushin Constitution codifies Park Chung Hee's dictatorial authority. Nixon visits China and re-establishes relationship between the U.S. and the People's Republic.
1973	Support for Korean opposition leader Kim Dae-jung is mobilized with public demonstrations.	U.S. withdraws combat troops from Vietnam.	Korean opposition leader Kim Dae-jung is kidnapped by the KCIA but released through pressure from the U.S.
1975	First Korean store established at Florida Avenue Market. Federation of Korean Churches is formed. "The Voice of Hope" broadcast begins on WHFS.	Displaced Persons Act	Saigon falls. Syngman Rhee is elected president of South Korea.
1977	Korean Residents' Association purchases an office building.		
1979		*Koreatown Weekly*, an English-language newspaper, is established in Los Angeles.	Park Chung Hee is assassinated. Chun Doo-hwan orchestrates a military coup.
1980	The Korean American Women's Association of America is founded.		Gwangju students rise up against martial law. Former president Kim Dae-jung is imprisoned and sentenced to death for inciting riots.

1981	Dual demonstrations outside White House when Chun Doo-hwan visits.		U.S. negotiates for Kim Dae-jung's release. President Chun Doo-hwan is invited to the White House.
1982	Released from prison, Kim Dae-jung has a second exile in the U.S. *The Washington Time*s is founded by Sun Myung Moon, and Moon is sentenced to prison for tax evasion.	U.S. Congress issues a resolution to commemorate 100 years of U.S-Korean friendship.	
1983	Kim Dae-jung launches the Korean Institute for Human Rights.		
1986	The Korean Information and Resource Center is established by Young Koreans United. D.C. Mayor's Office of Asian Pacific Affairs is established. A Chinese American store owner brandishes a weapon at a customer, setting off protests against Asian American merchants.		
1987			First democratic election in Korea since 1972
1989	Afro-Asian Relations Council is formed.		
1991		Korean storeowner in Los Angeles shoots an unarmed Black teenager in her store.	
1992		Los Angeles uprising and riots in which Korean businesses sustain $350,000.000 in damages.	
1994	Korean Residents Association (Korean Association of Greater Washington) publishes a *History of Koreans in Washington, D.C.* (first edition in Korean; English translation in 1995).		

PART 5:
WHAT'S NEXT?

The presence of Koreans in the District of Columbia for the past century and a half has given rise to a population that is multi-generational. Homeland politics have shaped their experiences, relationships, and how they have been perceived by others. The overlapping stories of Tongsun Park, the Unification Church, and the KCIA are intersectional and transnational in scope. They do not necessarily reflect the flattering narratives we tell of our own communities. They both explode and reinforce stereotypes—of insularity, of achievement, of the nature of community, of the production of ethnicity. Some readers may not consider the spaces associated with their stories appropriate as representative of Washington's Korean American history.

Never proportionately large, the local Korean population was also geographically dispersed, and personal histories intersected with those of non-Koreans in the realm of politics, culture, work, and religion. Korean American experiences, especially post-1965, suggest the necessity of looking beyond the older, conventional framework of ethnic enclaves to locate their historical presence. With some exceptions, Koreans did not build and often did not own the sites most important to the community's past.

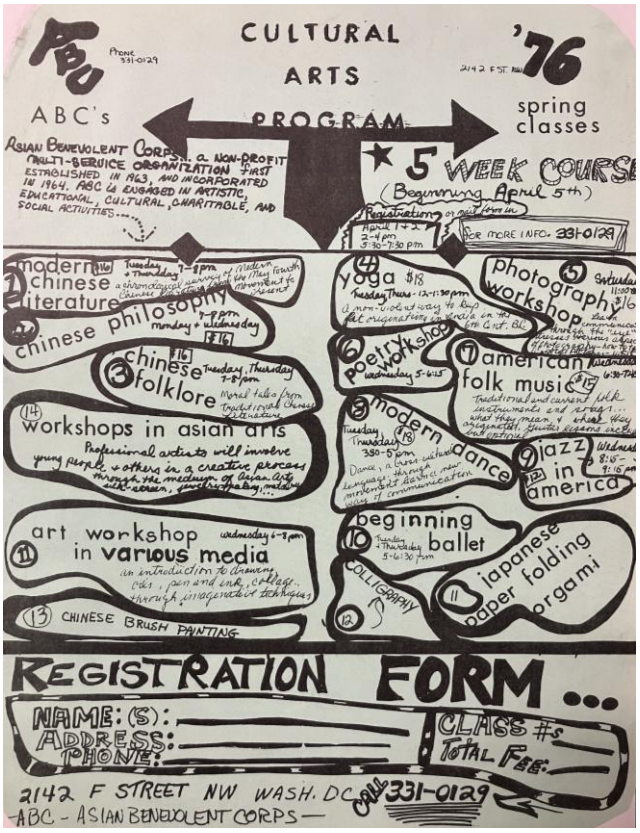
A number of social scientists have worked with data about Koreans in the D.C. metro region. There remains much more work to be done to document the social history and institutions of Koreans in the city, as well as to clarify population numbers and settlement patterns. Two editions of a monograph published by the Korean-American Association of Greater Washington remain excellent resources. Important sources for future research include the organizational records and personal recollections of individuals associated with:

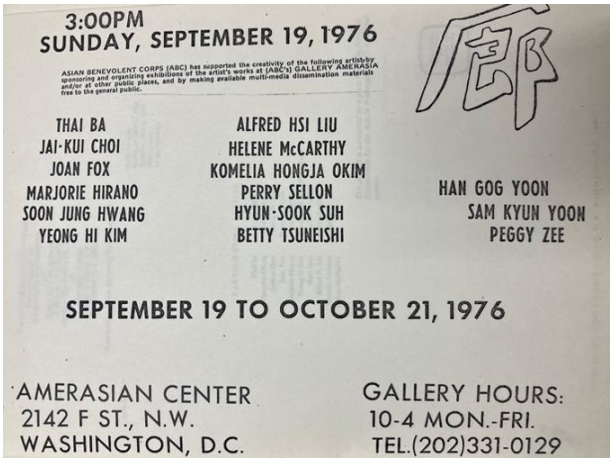
- the Korean-American Association of Greater Washington;
- the Korean American Scholarship Foundation;
- the Korean American Service Committee;
- the Korean American Grocers Association of Greater Washington and the more recent Korean American Business Association;
- the Korean American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Washington;
- Young Koreans United;
- the National Association of Korean Americans;
- alumni associations of Korean schools (organized in the Washington area since at least the 1960s);
- congregations once based in the city, as well as their host churches, such as the United Korean Methodist Church and Foundry United Methodist Church; and
- associations of Florida Avenue Market merchants.

Some of these organizations produced newsletters and directories. This report primarily accessed these second-hand, through the documentation of others.

Deeper investigation into Korean student directories would provide important insights into the movement of graduates in later life. Local universities that educated large numbers of Korean students or important figures may have records of value, including Howard University, American University, the Catholic University, Georgetown University, the George Washington University, and Roanoke College. As represented in Antoinette Lee's 2016 *Washington History* article about

Asian and Asian American students in the D.C. public schools, the Charles Sumner School Museum and Collections may contain revealing records.





The Asian Benevolent Corps (ABC) was a pan-Asian organization founded by Dwan Lai and Alfred Liu. Liu is a Chinese-born architect and the principal of the firm AEPA. In the 1980s, he designed and produced the Friendship Archway in Chinatown and created the Chinatown Design Guidelines. Liu and Lai established ABC in the 1960s while living in New York City. In Washington, the men continued to organize activities through the group which, in 1976, had a space for exhibitions, workshops, and services to immigrants, such as language translation and citizenship-test preparation. Liu envisioned a Far East Trade Center in Chinatown, a hotel and shopping center development featuring businesses representing many Asian cultures. Collection of Alfred H. Liu and Asia Liu.

Newspaper coverage, such as that of *The Washington Post* and *Miju Hanguk Ilbo*, provides an insight into themes considered newsworthy for different reading publics. There is more work to be done there and with other local media, including the Korean-language press and African American and Chinese-language newspapers.

Early Korean immigrants left a country different in many ways from today's Korean peninsula. Ongoing tensions there sustain divergent Korean cultural histories and ideologies. The global influence of South Korean music, film, television, and cuisine, and the rise of consumer brands such as Samsung and Hyundai have shifted the cultural dynamic beyond the early days of exotic curiosity experienced by the first Koreans in the U.S. or even more recently in the twentieth century, when most Americans could not distinguish Koreans from Japanese or Chinese. Yet there are strands of continuity between the complex origin stories of Koreans in D.C. and the endeavors

of a new generation of Korean peace activists and pro-democracy coalition builders and, perhaps, of the creatives and historic preservationists, too.

It is also important to broaden our view and consider a pan-Asian American identity or coalition that emerged in the late 1960s. How might this be figured into historically contextualizing and physically locating Korean or Chinese or Filipino or Indian Americans in D.C.? In the early 1970s, the Eastern Wind Collective was organized by a group of young people, immigrants and second-generation Americans who identified with or recognized commonalities among multiple ethnicities. Some had grown up in Chinatown or greater Washington, and others came to the area to study at local universities. Coming of age during an era of civil rights and anti-war activism, they were inspired by the Black Power movement. Through art, writing, and documentation projects, they endeavored to recover and represent their histories and culture. Eastern Wind members organized events, compiled a newsletter, and undertook a community history project from spaces in D.C. Chinatown, including Calvary Baptist Church, 755 8th Street NW.[277] In 1976, Gallery Amerasia opened at 2142 F Street NW, organized by the Asian Benevolent Corps, a project of Dwan L. Tai and architect Alfred H. Liu. Their gallery featured exhibitions and workshops with artists who identified as Lao, Vietnamese, Indian, Burmese, Indonesian, Filipino, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, among others. They also organized an Asian Festival, picnics, and services for immigrants.

The public-policy-oriented Organization of Pan Asian American Women (OPAAW) was established in 1976, followed by the Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) in 1985, each largely composed of federal employees.

Just a few blocks from Foundry United Methodist Church, where Korean Americans regularly gathered from the 1950s through the 1970s, is 1628 16th Street NW, owned by the National Baptist Convention. A number of Asian American-serving organizations have been tenants there for decades, including the Newcomer Community Service Center (originally the Indochinese Community Center), the Southeast Asian Resource Action Center, and the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development.

The Korean American and Chinese American community contexts produced for the District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office are expected to be the first of several contexts and articles on the many local ethnic communities who trace their heritage to the immense Asian continent and the islands of the Pacific.

[277] Other Asian American initiatives organized during this time include the "Gold Mountain" radio program hosted by Theo Feng, a Defense Department employee. It ran on WPFW from 1979 through the 1980s. And there was Asian American Arts and Media, Inc., established by Wendy Lim in 1982 "to promote more positive and realistic images of Asian Pacific Americans through the arts and humanities, and to develop a greater appreciation an awareness of Asian Pacific American art forms."

A 2021 window display at Meeps clothing store, 2104 18th Street NW. During the Covid pandemic, Cathy Chung, the Korean American store owner, was interested in supporting conversations about anti-Asian hate and the history of D.C. Asian American communities. This display, organized with the 1882 Foundation, shared historical photos of Chinese, Korean, Filipino, and Vietnamese neighbors from Adams Morgan and nearby Mt. Pleasant and Columbia Heights. Photo by Cathy Chung.

APPENDIX
Significant Associated Properties

Name	Location	Property Type or Significance	Comments
Soh Kwang Pom residence	2819 14th Street NW	PERSON Residential	Building not extant. Soh reportedly purchased the house in 1895. After his death in 1897, the property was the subject of dispute over his citizenship status and the rights of his family to property perhaps bought with Korean government funds.
Syngman Rhee residence	1766 Hobart Street NW	PERSON Residential	Rhee and wife Francesca Donner purchased the house in February 1940 and sold it in April 1944. It is where Rhee is said to have written his book *Japan Inside Out: The Challenge of Today*.
Syngman Rhee residence/Korean Commission/first Korean Embassy	4700 16th Street NW	PERSON Residential	Rhee purchased this house in April 1944 and sold it in June 1956. For most of this time, he was absent, serving as president of the new Republic of Korea. The reconstituted Korean Commission operated here from 1945, as did the first Korean Embassy when it replaced the Commission in March 1949.
Changsoon Kim residence	5426 30th Street NW	PERSON Residential	Home of Changsoon Kim and his family circa 1950, it may have been the headquarters of the Korean-American Cultural Association, of which Kim was president. The KACA had chapters in several cities, published a volume on the culture of Korea, and provided scholarships to Koreans to study at American universities.
Korean Legation	1500 13th Street NW	POLITICS Government	First occupied by the Korean Legation in 1889, the building was purchased by King Gojong in 1891. The legation ceased operating in 1905, when Korea became a protectorate of Japan. It was sold in 1910, after Korea was annexed. After its closure, it remained a

			symbol to independence activists. Again owned by the Republic of Korea, it is a museum commemorating its diplomatic use. The property is listed in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites and the National Register of Historic Places.
Korean Embassy (historic)/ Korean Consulate General/ Philip Jaisohn statue	2320 Massachusetts Avenue NW	POLITICS Government	The first permanent Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the United States, the property was purchased in July 1949, and the building was subsequently expanded. Now the Korean consulate general in the U.S., it is the location of a bronze statue of Philip Jaisohn, "The first Korean American Pioneer for the Korean Independence and Democracy," installed in 2008.
Korean Embassy (historic)	2730 Massachusetts Avenue NW	POLITICS GOVERNMENT	This 1931 home served as the second Embassy of the Republic of Korea to the United States from 1973 to 1992. It is now the Korean Cultural Center Washington, D.C.
Korean Embassy (present)	2450 Massachusetts Avenue NW	POLITICS GOVERNMENT	The present chancery was purchased from the government of Canada in May 1990.
Korean Ambassador's Residence	4801 Glenbrook Drive NW	POLITICS GOVERNMENT ARCHITECTURE	This contemporary home is significant for being erected in 1986 as the residence of the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the United States. It is important as one of the last works of prominent Korean architect Swoo-geun Kim.
Real Estate Trust Company (Continental Trust Building)	1343 H Street NW	POLITICS GOVERNMENT COMMUNITY	Offices on the ninth floor were used by Syngman Rhee's Korean Commission from 1919 until at least 1926. Other notable independence activists associated with this address are Philip Jaisohn and Henry Chung DeYoung. The property is listed in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites and the National Register of Historic Places.

Woodward Building/Friends of Korea offices	733 15th Street NW	POLITICS GOVERNMENT	An office of the binational and pro-independence League of the Friends of Korea was located in the Woodward Building from 1919 to 1923.
Site of provisional government legation	1325 Massachusetts Avenue NW	POLITICS	Not extant. Soon Hyun, acting chairman of the Korean Commission to America and Europe, established a legation for Korea's provisional government in exile here in 1921.
Site of the Korean-American Council office	888 17th Street NW	POLITICS	Not extant. In 1942, a group of Americans formed the Korean-American Council to advocate for the independence and recognition of a Republic of Korea. The group had an office here in the Brawner Building.
Site of the United Korean Committee office	1719 K Street NW	POLITICS	Not extant. The United Korean Committee was only one of the organizations representing often-fractious coalitions of independence-minded exiles during World War II. The UKC had offices in the former building on this site in 1944-1945.
Site of the Lafayette Hotel	815 16th Street NW	POLITICS	Not extant. The Korean Foreign Affairs Commission and United Korean Committee staged an independence conference and rally here in late winter 1942.
Site of the United Korean Committee office	1719 K Street NW	POLITICS	Not extant. The United Korean Committee was among the organizations representing fractious coalitions of independence-minded exiles during World War II. The UKC had offices in the former building on this site in 1944-1945.
Site of Korean Affairs Institute office	1029 Vermont Avenue NW	POLITICS	Founded in 1943 by Yong-jung Kim, the Korean Affairs Institute promoted friendship between Koreans and the Allies in the interest of the independence movement. Not affiliated with Syngman Rhee's organizations, the KAI remained here until 1961, advocating for democracy on the peninsula.

Pyon Su's grave	De La Salle Cemetery, 6011 Ammendale Road, Beltsville, Maryland	BIRTHPLACES-GRAVES	Pyon Su (1861-1891) traveled to Washington with the first official Korean delegation in 1883. He later returned and lived in D.C. as an exile. He was the first Korean to graduate from an American university, the Maryland Agricultural College (University of Maryland) in 1891. He was buried in a plot belonging to Commodore Daniel Ammen, whose sons Pyon had befriended at school. A headstone includes inscriptions in English and *hangul*. In 2003, on the 100th anniversary of the first large-scale migration of Koreans to the U.S., the Greater Washington Centennial Committee of Korean Immigration to the United States installed a new marker beside the old.
Washon Ye's grave	Oak Hill Cemetery, 3001 R Street NW	BIRTHPLACES-GRAVES	The grave of the first Korean American by nativity, born October 12, 1890 to the legation's Minister Ye Cha Yun and his wife, Lady Ye of the Bae clan. Washon lived only two months and was buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in Georgetown in a plot secured by Sevellon A. Brown, the son-in-law of Seth Phelps, previous owner of the Korean Legation building.
Fort Lincoln Cemetery	Fort Lincoln Cemetery, 3401 Bladensburg Road, Brentwood, Maryland	BIRTHPLACES-GRAVES	Located just over the Maryland border, the cemetery contains a small concentration of graves for Korean American elders born in the early twentieth century, including, for example, Walter Park, who was involved in founding the earliest Korean American organizations in Washington in the 1950s.
Korean cherry trees	American University, 4400 Massachusetts Avenue NW	LANDSCAPE EDUCATION	In April 1943, Syngman Rhee arranged the planting of four Korean cherry trees on the campus of American University to commemorate the anniversary of the establishment of the Korean Provisional Government in exile.

			Three still stand near the School of International Studies at Nebraska Avenue near New Mexico Avenue. A memorial plaque was installed in 1986.
Jhoon Rhee studio	1801 Connecticut Avenue NW	BUSINESS SPORTS and RECREATION	The third and the oldest extant (1964-1967) D.C. location of the martial arts studio of the "Father of Taekwondo in America," Jhoon Goo Rhee. Rhee moved to D.C. in 1962 from San Antonio, Texas, where he had taught since 1959. He would run as many as eleven studios at one time in the D.C. metropolitan area, plus giving lessons at the Pentagon and the Senate gym. He expanded the business to a chain of 30 studios in the U.S. and the Caribbean by the mid-1970s, as the primary popularizer of Korean karate in the Western hemisphere.
The GeorgeTown Club	1530 Wisconsin Avenue NW	BUSINESS	This upscale club was established in 1966 by Tongsun Park who, ten years later, was at the center of the "Koreagate" scandal and investigation.
Windsor Park Hotel	2300 Connecticut Avenue NW	BUSINESS Food-Restaurant	Building not extant. Sorabol, the first confirmed Korean restaurant in D.C., was established on this site in 1971. Under the management of JD Kim and Joseph Chang, it was in operation until 1974.
China Food Company	7309 Georgia Avenue NW	BUSINESS Food-Restaurant	Home of the China Food Company from 1938 to 1948. Despite the name, the business was run by a Korean, Chai Hui Lee. Sources suggest that this was a restaurant and the location of a 1945 dinner celebrating the 26th anniversary of the Korean Declaration of Independence. It may have been a caterer or wholesaler. The property was once residence of insurance broker Seunghwa Ahn, founder of the first Korean Christian congregation in Washington and

			connected to the Korean National Association.
Union Market Terminal	4th, 5th, Morse, Neal and Penn streets NE	INDUSTRY Grocery wholesaler BUSINESS and COMMERCE Food Restaurant Retail-Gift Shop Retail-Restaurant Etc.	The first Korean retailer reportedly set up shop in this established wholesale/retail complex in 1972. The Choi family would open several businesses here, including Sam Wang Produce, which became the largest wholesaler in the city. By the 1980s, Asian businesses—primarily Korean with some Chinese—were the majority at the market. Some of the buildings are still owned by Korean and Chinese proprietors, notably Best Equipment and Supplies/Best Kitchen Supply at 413 Street NE, owned by Steve and Lisa Choi and present since the mid-1980s.
Korean Federal Credit Union	1287 4th Street NE	BUSINESS and COMMERCE Credit Union	This credit union was headquartered among the warehouses of Florida Market from 1975 to 1991, "a lifeline that has helped hundreds of Korean groceries, dry cleaners, and carry-outs to flourish."
Diplomat Bank	2033 K Street NW	BUSINESS and COMMERCE Bank	Diplomat Bank opened in 1977 to serve the region's growing Asian American population. "The Bank that Speaks your Language" closed in 1980 after losing money and being embroiled in the "Koreagate" controversy.
National Presbyterian Church (Church of the Covenant)	Connecticut Avenue and N Street NW	RELIGION Church	Building not extant. Koreans attended services at the former church on this site from the first years of the Korean Legation. Washon Ye was baptized here, and Philip and Muriel Jaisohn were married here.
Foundry United Methodist Church	1500 16th Street NW	RELIGION Church	Established in 1951, the Korean Church of Washington is arguably the most important institution of D.C.'s historical Korean community. The congregation met at Foundry United Methodist from 1951 to 1979. It continues today as the Korean United Methodist

			Church of Greater Washington in McLean, Virginia.
Woori-jip ("Our Church")	5505 16th Street NW	RELIGION Church	In 1965, the First Korean Church of Washington occupied this residential property with the intent of making it a house of worship. Because of zoning restrictions, it was used for after-service schools, committee meetings, and choir practice. It was sold in 1969.
First Korean Baptist Church	3200 Rittenhouse Street NW.	RELIGION Church	Founded by Rev. Chang Soon Kim in 1956, this was the third Korean religious organization established in D.C. and the first Korean Baptist Church in the U.S. The congregation worshipped here until 1959.
National Baptist Memorial Church	1501 Columbia Road NW	RELIGION Church	First Korean Baptist Church met in a chapel at National Baptist Memorial from 1959 until the late 1960s.
Temple Baptist Church	3850 Nebraska Avenue NW	RELIGION Church	First Korean Baptist Church met at Temple Baptist from at least 1969 until 1980, when it moved to Silver Spring, Maryland.
New York Avenue Presbyterian Church	1313 New York Avenue NW	RELIGION Church	After an initial service at Howard University Chapel on July 4, 1965, subsequent services of the Korean Presbyterian Church of Washington were held at National Presbyterian Church until the congregation secured use of the Lincoln Chapel of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church for worship, which it used until the end of 1976. The congregation purchased a building of its own in Alexandria, Virginia in 1975 and later moved to Fairfax, Virginia.
Sixth Presbyterian Church	5413 16th Street NW	RELIGION Church	The United Korean Presbyterian Church of Washington was established in 1969, worshipping at Sixth Presbyterian until 1976.
Northminster Church	7720 Alaska Avenue NE	RELIGION Church	The United Korean Presbyterian Church of Washington worshipped here from 1976 until relocating to Wheaton, Maryland a decade later.

Trinity College	125 Michigan Avenue NE	RELIGION Church	The Korean Catholic Church was established in 1974, holding regular services at several spots in Northeast, including Catholic University, Oblate College, and Trinity College. From at least 1975, the church ran the Korean School of Washington for elementary and middle-school students on Saturdays from the Trinity campus, teaching lessons on Korean culture and history, music, and taekwondo. The church moved to Maryland in 1981 and into its own purpose-built sanctuary in Olney in 2002, where members worship as St. Andrew Kim Catholic Church.
Washington, D.C. Family Church	1610 Columbia Road NW	RELIGION Church	Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church purchased this former Mormon temple in 1977. It became the national church building for the Unification Church in America.
Washington Times headquarters	3600 New York Avenue NE	MEDIA Office-Newspaper	The conservative daily newspaper was founded by Rev. Sun Myung Moon in 1982. In 2020, the organization announced that it would downsize and sell the building. There were Koreans and Korean Americans on the board and among administrative staff, but no Korean reporters. Yet, "no other Korean business is comparable to the *Times* in terms of the size of the organization."
Korean Association of Greater Washington	1730 Connecticut Avenue NW	COMMUNITY Social Club-Office	Also known as the Korean Social Group, Korean Residents in Washington, and the Korean American Association of Greater Washington, the Korean Association of Greater Washington developed from the oldest continuous formal association of Koreans in D.C. It began as a social club convened by Walter Park in his house at 3200 19th Street NW. In 1977, the members purchased this

			office building, but they were forced to sell it three years later.
Korean Culture Association (한국문화협회)	1729 21st Street NW	COMMUNITY Social Club-Office, Cultural Center	The Korean Culture Center opened here in early 1975 with 74 founding members. They renamed themselves the Korean Culture Association in 1976. The group preserved, promoted, and researched Korean and Korean American culture.
Young Koreans United	1314 14th Street NW	COMMUNITY Office Meeting Hall	In the late 1980s, Young Koreans United rented a space here for its Korean Information and Resource Center (KIRC), which published *Korea Report*. It was the site of meetings related to the democracy movement. At the time, the building housed the national offices of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador and the Network in Solidarity with Guatemala.
Changsoon Kim residence	5426 30th Street NW	COMMUNITY Other	Home of Changsoon Kim and his family circa 1950, this may have been de facto headquarters of the Korean-American Cultural Association, of which Kim was president. The KACA had chapters in several cities, published a volume on the culture of Korea, and provided scholarships to Koreans to study at American universities.

N.B.: There are few extant properties or purpose-built ones significantly associated with Koreans in D.C. The Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea and the Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation, which operates the Old Korean Legation Museum, has produced a series of maps and books identifying U.S. sites related to Korean and Korean American history. *Finding Korea in the U.S.* includes sites in Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., New York, and Philadelphia. Originally published in Korean, an updated English version was published in 2022. A map of D.C. sites is available only in Korean at the time of this writing.

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CONTRIBUTORS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This material was produced with assistance from the Underrepresented Communities Grant Program from the Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of the Interior.

The Historic Preservation Office of the District of Columbia Office of Planning was the grant recipient, entering a cooperative agreement with the D.C. Preservation League to carry out the work of preparing context studies on the Chinese American and Korean American communities of the District of Columbia, three nominations of related properties to the National Register of Historic Places, and the amendment of historic district nominations of Downtown and Union Market with additional documentation of Asian American contributions. The D.C. Preservation League engaged the 1882 Foundation as consultant, and the Foundation collaborated with numerous other contributors and informants.

Remembering our old friend and colleague Franklin S. Odo, Ph.D. (1939-2022)

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Additional thanks for their research, editorial, and collegial support and collaboration:

- Lin Liu, Shae Corey, Ting-Yi Oei, Gabi Chu, Sam Vong, George Choe, Robert Provine, Juman Kim, Patrick Chung, Mary Sies, Pyong Gap Min, David Steinberg, Young-Key Kim-Renaud, Ann Hitchcock, Im San Kang, Haengri Cho, Michelle Cho, Minchi Hyun, Somi Kim, Cathy Chung, Rita Cacas, Yahya and Maliha Luqman, Risa Hirao, Hope Elizabeth May, Jennings Wong, Evelyn Moy, Eddie Moy, Lynn Rowe, Charlie Blackburn, Erwin R. Tiongson, Dan Kerr, Kimberly Springle, Louis W. Goodman, Yao-Fen You,

Ngoc Trinh, Ben de Guzman, Elizabeth Ratigan, Marya McQuirter, Tracye McQuirter, Anthony Padua, Jesse Chong, Tom Fong, Evelyn and Philip Lee, Sue Lee, Sandy Lee, Lisa Hasegawa, Sandy Dang, Les Talusan, Tara Vassefi, Yeonggeun Kim.

- The Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage; University of Maryland Historic Preservation Program and the School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation; Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center; Chinese Community Church; Old Korean Legation Museum; Philip Jaisohn Memorial Foundation; University of Maryland Department of American Studies; American University Humanities Truck; American University Public History Program; Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation; District of Columbia Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs; Foundry United Methodist Church; D.C. History Center; D.C. Public Library People's Archives; George Washington University Special Collections Research Center; Library of Congress Asian Division Reading Room.

Purpose and Scope

In 2019, the D.C. Office of Planning's Historic Preservation Office was awarded funding through the National Park Service Underrepresented Communities Grant Program to prepare a historic context study to identify themes and properties in Washington, D.C. associated with the history of local Asian and Pacific Islander communities. As contractor, the D.C. Preservation League coordinated the process and engaged the 1882 Foundation to produce contexts for both Chinese Americans and Korean Americans in the District of Columbia.

A historic context study, also referred to as a historical context statement, is a narrative document that provides a framework for collecting information about historic places that share a common theme. Although not intended to be the definitive history of a community, it can be comprehensive enough to highlight historical trends and patterns that shaped the built environment and to evaluate the significance of properties that participate in the theme.

The style and scope of context studies may vary depending upon the needs and objectives. This first study on Asian Americans in D.C. presents a social history of people of Chinese and Korean ancestry in Washington, D.C. for its own sake, and to guide the recognition and historic designation of places created and used by them. These first two "chapters" are intended to be followed by additional contexts for other major Asian American and Pacific Islander communities found in Washington today. Although not an architectural history, these context studies tell stories of sites that have survived, as well as many no longer extant. These studies are not exhaustive, but they constitute an effort to synthesize a large volume of existing historical materials and highlight a selection of key events, people, and places that might be considered emblematic of the particular chronologies and contours of these communities. Each context is followed by an inventory of some related properties highlighted in the narrative.

Asian American and Pacific Islander Context Studies

These contexts build upon earlier efforts to recognize the history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders within the field of historic preservation by professionals and community organizations working across the United States.

In 1979, the California Office of Historic Preservation developed the framework *Five Views: An Ethnic Sites Survey for California*[1] to identify and describe historical sites associated with five major ethnic groups in California: American Indians, African Americans, Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and Mexican Americans. This statewide context study provided the structure for subsequent historic context statements to document, identify, and preserve historic and cultural resources.

In 2013, Secretary of the Interior Kenneth Salazar announced the creation within the National Park Service of an Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Initiative and National Historic Landmarks Theme Study. This effort was overseen by Dr. Franklin Odo, who convened a

[1] Dwight Dutschke, et al. *Five views: An Ethnic Sites Survey for California* (Sacramento: California State Office of Historic Preservation, 1988).

committee of advisors and scholars to produce *Finding A Path Forward: Asian American/Pacific Islander National Historic Landmarks* (2018), a compendium of seventeen thematic essays highlighting community histories and historic resources.[2]

In 2017, the National Park Service established the Underrepresented Communities Grant (UCG) program to increase the diversity of sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places and as National Historic Landmarks by providing financial support to the preparation of nominations of properties associated with currently underrepresented communities. Through this competitive program, local certified governments have been able to support surveys and nominations related to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. These include context statements for *Boston's Chinatown* (awarded 2016), *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California* (awarded in 2017), and *Asian Americans in Los Angeles,1950-1980* (2018).[3] These studies produced National Register nominations, including for the Gran Oriente Filipino Hotel and the Japanese YWCA in San Francisco, the Filipino Christian Church in Los Angeles, and Quincy Street Grammar School in Boston.

In 2020, the Maryland Department of Planning and Maryland Historical Trust received UCG funding to prepare a historic context study of Asian American communities in Maryland. The concurrent work in Maryland and D.C. should be considered complementary, as the experiences of Asian Americans extend across municipal and state boundaries, connecting people, places, and events through networks of activities.

The District of Columbia Historic Preservation Office has undertaken similar context studies on events and sites associated with the twentieth-century civil rights movement, the women's suffrage movement, LGBTQ heritage, Hispanic heritage, and African American workforce housing.

Terms and Translation

The term **"**Asian American and Pacific Islander" (AAPI) is as defined by the National Park Service in *Finding a Path Forward: Asian American Pacific Islander National Historic Landmarks Theme Study*.

> [W]e refer to the people from these diverse and geographically far-flung cultures as 'Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders'—AAPI, in short. Because they share a sense of community in the United States, they often unite for political or cultural reasons under various umbrella terms, sometimes as "Asian Pacific Americans" (APA), 'Asian American and Pacific Americans' (AAPA), or simply 'Asian Pacific Americans' (APA). While the two groups were once unified for census purposes, they are now disaggregated. There is no common agreement that one designation is more accurate

[2] Franklin Odo, *Finding a Path Forward: Asian American/Pacific Islander National Historic Landmarks* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2018).
[3] Rosalind M. Sagara, Flora Chou, and Marissa Moshier, *Asian Americans in Los Angeles, 1850-1970*, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2019.

than others; we selected AAPI as a convenient acronym, but we do not consider it superior to others.[4]

The online content created for public engagement during the preparation of this context statement uses "AAPI" as a website name, URL, and social media handle.[5] We acknowledge the historical misrepresentation and tokenization of Pacific Islanders through the use of such categories by Asian Americans. Our use of AAPI is representative of the research team's coalitional philosophy, and it is ultimately aspirational, used in the hope that these contexts are the first in a series that will eventually address the diverse histories of both Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in D.C.

The term "Asian American" can be simply and superficially a bureaucratic description, used in reference, for example, to an American of an ancestry that can be traced back to any of the dozens of countries that comprise the continent of Asia and nearby island nations. Largely a social construct, this racial category was developed by the U.S. Census Bureau and then politicized in the late 1960s to signal a deliberately coalitional identity.[6] In 1968, University of California, Berkeley student activists Yuji Ichioka and Emma Gee coined "Asian American" as a social and political identity in the context of the era's civil rights and anti-war movements.[7] Under this banner, Asian American students joined with other student activists to form the Third World Liberation Front and carried out a months-long strike to advocate for ethnic studies and the diversification of curriculums at Berkeley and San Francisco State University. Use of the term Asian American prioritizes a sense of shared identification and historical experiences based in colonialism, imperialism, immigration, and exclusion. Over the decades, its utility as a pan-ethnic term has been debated, and emerging simultaneously have been more specific ethnic terms, such as Chinese American, Japanese American, Filipino American, Korean American, and Indian American, etc.

The term Asian American is here used to refer to Americans of Asian ancestry and to encompass U.S.-born descendants of immigrants from Asia, naturalized Americans who are immigrants from specific regions in Asia, and residents from Asia who are not naturalized. This extends to how the terms Chinese American and Korean American are used.

For both Chinese and Korean Americans, we use the term "second generation" to describe people who are the first generation of their families to be born in the United States.

Chinese names are traditionally formed with surname—of one or occasionally two characters/syllables—followed by the given name. There are no middle names. The given name is typically composed of two characters, with each corresponding to a single syllable. Names were not always recorded accurately or consistently in American documents. Nicknames, courtesy names, pen names, honorifics like "Ah" (阿, which precedes a given name and connotes familiarity), and family relationship titles like "Oldest Uncle" were sometimes used instead.

[4] Odo 2018, 4.
[5] The 1882 Foundation hosts a website with the address aapidc.org and use the Instragram handle myaapidc.
[6] Yen Le Espiritu, *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992); Ronald T. Takaki, ed. *From Different Shores: Perspectives on Race and Ethnicity in America* (London: Oxford University Press, 1987).
[7] Karen Ishizuka, *Serve the People: Making Asian America in the Long Sixties* (London: Verso, 2016), 83.

Immigrants and their children often adopted American given names and the Western name order. In this document, names are presented as they appear in historic records and as consistent with the way that individuals refer to themselves in print. Where relevant, both the American and Chinese names of individuals are given. For Chinese organizational names where both transliterations and translations are available, the most common usage is continued here. For English translations, the original Chinese and transliterations often parenthetically accompany the initial appearance.

Most early Chinese immigrants to America came from Guangdong Province (also referred to as Canton). The ancestral homeland of most was the district of Taishan (formerly Xinning) or "Toisan" in the local dialect of Toisanese, which is distinct from Cantonese. Such differences were only one reason that names and phrases were transliterated into English as heard and without using a consistent, accepted system. Over time, different romanization systems were developed but not universally adopted; the same Chinese character may have multiple spellings. Mandarin, i.e., the Beijing dialect, became the official language of China following the 1911 Chinese Revolution, and the pinyin system of romanizing Chinese characters, adopted in the People's Republic of China in 1958, became widely used in the West from the 1980s. Given names were no longer hyphenated but most often transliterated as a single "word." In this report, the common spelling of terms is used, and the standard pinyin is provided if important. Chinese characters frequently accompany the introduction of proper names and are typically rendered in the traditional script, rather than the more recent simplified version used on the mainland, for three reasons: (1) it was the form of print used during most of the historical period discussed; (2) it is still intelligible to many Chinese readers, especially historians; and (3) the characters are still used on Taiwan and in Japanese.

Traditional Korean names are also written surname first, but we have represented names in the manner most consistent with the way the individuals appear to have chosen to refer to themselves in English documents. Some Koreans also adopted Western names. In some cases, both the American and Korean names are presented here in the Western format for consistency. For organizational names, the most common English translated names are employed. Korean names in Hangul characters are initially provided in parentheses, along with alternate spellings.

Korean names and terms are romanized according to the most consistent spelling found in the research. The standard of romanization before 2000 was the McCune Reischauer system, gradually being replaced by the recent Revised Romanization of Korean. We have decided not to privilege either system and instead follow what exists in print.

Words transliterated from languages other than English are generally *italicized* when introduced, except for proper nouns.

Pyong-Su Min at the Lincoln Memorial, circa 1921. Photo by Henry Chung DeYoung. University of Southern California Korean Heritage and Digital Libraries, Korean American Digital Archive Collection.

Why Document the History of Asian Americans in D.C.?

Most public and academic treatment of Asian American history has focused on population centers on the West Coast and Hawai`i and issues of labor and racial exclusion. Starting in the nineteenth century, Asian labor contributed significantly to infrastructure and agricultural development in those regions. Nativist legislation at all levels restricted where Asians could live, whom they could marry, and the degree of their access to livelihoods, property, citizenship, and legal redress. The 1790 Naturalization Act established eligibility for naturalized citizenship for White men. Following ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment, the 1870 Naturalization Act opened citizenship through naturalization to people of African descent, after an extensive debate that resulted in refusing this right to Chinese immigrants. The Chinese Restriction Act of 1882 explicitly denied naturalization rights to Chinese immigrants and barred the immigration of laborers and women, violating the Burlingame-Seward Treaty of 1868. The incremental expansion of controls on Chinese impacted other Asians, halting virtually all migration from across Asia by 1924. But virulent racism on the West Coast, coupled with the completion of major railroad lines and the depletion of gold fields, spurred the migration across the country, often via Canada, of Chinese settlers seeking less-hostile environments.

Washington's Asian population has always been comparatively small, due to the distance from the continent as well as from the primary early ports of U.S. entry and settlement. The city was also

increasingly not tied to manufacturing or agriculture. The 2020 census reported 37,874 Asian Americans and 1,215 Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders residing in the District of Columbia, constituting only 5.4 percent of the total population. Of the AAPI population, Indians are the largest group, accounting for almost 30 percent of the total; Chinese are the second largest group (until recently the largest), with 9,000 residents; and Koreans rank fourth with 4,300 residents.[8]

Despite these small numbers, Washington's Asian American history matters. It builds upon and complements the documentation of these groups elsewhere. Asian American experiences have contributed in profound ways to how citizenship and belonging have been defined in this country. It was the 1898 Supreme Court ruling U.S. *v.* Wong Kim Ark that affirmed birthright citizenship as articulated in the Fourteenth Amendment. The forced removal of Japanese Americans from their West Coast communities during World War II set in motion decades of debate over the privileges and immunities of U.S. citizens and permanent residents. The Asian American experience in the District of Columbia has shaped collective perceptions of both race and place. Uncovering the history of Asian Americans in the city can contribute to clarifying how we see the local landscape and how we understand popular assumptions about who belongs, who has been effectively excluded from the body politic, and why.

It was not until World War II that restrictions on the immigration and naturalization of Asian immigrants began to loosen. In 1943, the Chinese Exclusion Act was rescinded, and Chinese immigrants became eligible for citizenship. The 1946 War Brides Act and refugee provisions of the 1950s opened the door for migrants from China, primarily through Hong Kong, addressing decades of pent-up demand for family reunifications. This infused energy into Chinatowns, which were revitalized further with the elimination of the stringent national quotas through the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act. Koreans and Japanese were the last categories of Asian immigrants granted the right to naturalize with the passage of the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act (McCarran-Walter Act). Immigration from Korea was facilitated through the War Brides Act and the Refugee Act of the early Cold War, but significant growth of the population would not occur until after the 1965 legislation.

Already a visible presence in the 1880s, Chinese Americans were the Asian American group of longest tenure in Washington and historically the largest. Although their residences and businesses have been dispersed across the city and beyond since the late nineteenth century, they are also the only Asian American population associated identified with a neighborhood. The first recorded Chinese resident arrived in D.C. in 1851, and the city's first Chinatown took root blocks from the Capitol three decades later.

Despite the harsh restriction of Chinese immigration after 1882, Chinatown nurtured businesses, religious congregations, cultural institutions, and mutual aid societies, and the city at large has been home to thousands of Chinese-owned businesses. Urban renewal and displacement have been a recurring challenge for D.C.'s Chinese American community. In 1929, plans for the construction of Federal Triangle uprooted the 398 Chinese living along Pennsylvania Avenue.[9] Facilitated by

[8] Mayor's Office of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs, Washington, D.C., 2020 and 2021 data.
[9] Esther Ngan-ling Chow, "From Pennsylvania Avenue to H Street, NW: The Transformation of Washington's Chinatown" in Francine Curro Carry, ed., *Urban Odyssey: A Multicultural History of Washington, D.C.* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), 195.

the On Leong Chinese Merchants Association, many were able to relocate to the 600 block of H Street NW, a rebirth of Chinatown.

The Chinese American community continued to spread, as the assimilated, the native-born, and new arrivals followed the general migration to the suburbs. Although less than ten percent of Washington's Chinese population resided in Chinatown by the 1960s, it remained a cultural touchstone and a locus for community organizing around social and political issues. [10] Since that time, former residents have continued to join current ones to mobilize against displacement and perceived threats to neighborhood identity.

The Chinese American historic context emphasizes the development of D.C.'s Chinatown and related historic resources. It discusses sites and people that are still significant to community life and culture, among them the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, the On Leong Chinese Merchants Association, the Lee Family Association, the Chinese Community Church and Service Center, and the Chinese Youth Club, all founded before the middle of the twentieth century.

While the Korean population in the Washington metropolitan area is significant—cumulatively the third largest concentration in the U.S.[11]—the number of Koreans living and working in the city has remained small and thus, there has been no ethnic enclave here comparable to Chinatown. The most prominent Korean American sites relate to the major role they have played in the city's commerce, epitomized by the Florida Avenue Market, and to the early diplomatic and independence movement activities here, as embodied in the Old Korean Legation at 1500 13th Street NW.

Several themes and concepts particularly apply to the experiences of Asian Americans in Washington, D.C. and suggest its place in a broader context.

Global and Transnational Processes—Understanding the significance of Asian American experiences in Washington requires a transnational perspective that frames these histories beyond the borders of the city and even the United States. Asian America was born out of the imperial pursuits of several nations, most notably Britain, Spain, France, Japan, and the United States. The long history of these countries' engagements in Asia to expand their wealth, territory, and political influence has involved diplomacy, trade, and military conflict and occupation. Asian geopolitics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were characterized by regional wars and nation-building efforts in China, Japan, Korea, and Russia.[12] America's interventions conditioned the circumstances under which the first Asians took up residence in D.C. as diplomats, exiles, and students seeking benefits of a Western education. While some of these returned to their homelands, many did not. Their activities sometimes left physical traces. They also created frameworks of

[10] Asch and Musgrove, 427.

[11] This accounts for populations residing in the Maryland and Northern Virginia counties, and some scholars have included Baltimore. Dae Young Kim, *Transnational Communities in the Smartphone Age: The Community in the Nation's Capital* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2017) considers the greater Washington-Baltimore region as a data set.

[12] Major events include the 1868 Burlingame Treaty between the U.S. and China, the 1876 Japan-Korea trade agreement, the 1882 China-Korea and U.S.-Korea treaties, the 1884 Gapsin Coup in Korea, the 1894 Sino-Japanese War, the 1898 Spanish-American War, the 1900 Boxer Rebellion in China, the 1904 Russo-Japanese War, the 1905 Japan-Korea Protectorate Treaty, and the Philippine independence struggles of 1899 to 1913.

perception and interaction between the U.S. and Asian countries that affected subsequent immigration and the community-development experiences of future generations of Asian Americans.

Washington's official monuments underscore the prominence of U.S. military intervention in Asia in the twentieth century. The World War II Memorial (2004), the Korean War Memorial (1995), and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (1993) are reminders of how geopolitics catalyzed Asian immigration to the U.S. during the second half of the twentieth century. The Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II (2001) is the only example of a local war memorial that represents a collective Asian American experience. It arose from the singular experience of Japanese Americans who served in the U.S. military despite the denial of constitutional rights they and their families suffered during the war. The monument is a reminder not only of their service and sacrifices, but also of the ways in which international politics continue to affect diaspora communities. Similarly, while the easing of anti-Asian immigration legislation in the 1950s and 1960s reflects Cold War efforts to portray this country as a champion of freedom, anti-communist fears have often colored the perceptions and treatment of people from China and Korea and Southeast Asia.

With the rise of American power across more than a century, Washington has been a destination for people and organizations who seek access to policymakers and influencers to promote their causes. Koreans, for instance, first mobilized support for Korean independence from Japan and, later, brought attention to the abuses by Korea's military dictatorship.

Race and Immigration—Understanding Asian American history in D.C. requires attention to the way in which race and immigration intersect as salient features of individual and collective experiences across time.

Washington is a city whose governance, economy, cultural life and physical contours have been shaped deeply by race. It is important to consider how Asians have been racialized in the context of D.C.'s prevalent Black-White binary and the consequences for each group. Washington's first Asian resident arrived to a Southern city of approximately 50,000 residents, three-quarters of whom were White. The remaining quarter were free and enslaved Black people whose opportunities and movements were restricted by Black Codes. When the first Chinatown emerged, Washington had grown into a position of national and international prestige. At least four East Asian countries—China, Japan, Korea, and Siam—had placed ministers in the city, still few because so much of the continent was occupied by one empire or another. Diplomatic legations opened in exclusive neighborhoods that largely excluded Blacks as residents, shortly after the District of Columbia had surrendered its self-governance in order to restrict Black suffrage.[13]

By 1900, Washington had the largest urban Black population in the nation. The U.S. census now reported 462 Asians in the city, nearly all of whom were Chinese, with an increasingly visible presence along Pennsylvania Avenue. Although not considered White, Asians were mostly

[13] Chris Myers Asch and George Derek Musgrove, *Chocolate City: A History of Race and Democracy in the Nation's Capital* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Louis E. Horton, "Like Moths to a Candle: The Nouveau Riches Flock to Washington, 1870-1900," in *Urban Odyssey: A Multicultural History of Washington, D.C.*, Francine Curro Cary, ed. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), 79-96.

racialized as "not Black." Antoinette Lee's research into Asians in the D.C. public school system from the late 1800s through the 1940s reveals that they generally attended White schools.[14] The same seems to have been the case at local universities. While there were Asians enrolled at historically Black Howard University in the late 1800s, they were also enrolled at Columbian College of Arts and Sciences (now the George Washington University), which did not admit African American students until 1954.[15] In contrast to the heated battle over Asian segregation in San Francisco schools in the early 1900s, the small number of Asians in D.C. did not provoke the same level of hostility.[16]

According to Lee, the precedent set through the privileged station of children of Asian diplomats extended to subsequent generations of Asian students.[17] The presence of foreign residents with diplomatic functions conveyed prestige on the city and offered access to some groups of Asians, such as the Korean exiles and students who arrived around the turn of the century. Class distinctions were blurred during the turmoil that ensued in Asia in the 1940s and 1950s, pushing more to emigrate.

In their smaller numbers, Asians in Washington were not subjected to the same violence—such as lynchings and being run out of town—as their West Coast counterparts. But the persistent racialization of Asian Americans as unassimilable "perpetual foreigners" and non-Christians challenged their early integration into the D.C. landscape. This manifested itself in covenants that excluded "Mongolians" from housing in many places, and then in Chinatown's recurrent targeting for redevelopment. Asian Americans have sometimes leveraged their "foreign" heritage and culture to their own advantage, to bolster the appeal or authenticity of their places of business. But for others, the assumption of their supposed foreignness has been used to question their participation in some aspects of life. This has been expressed in both the concentration of Asian Americans in certain work sectors and negative comments about it.[18]

Third Space and Polyculturalism—Asian American community life has taken place mainly in spaces that were built with other uses or occupants in mind or that were shared with other communities. Much of the local history of Chinese and Korean Americans is not tied to purpose-built structures, with notable exceptions, such as the Chinese Community Church, Wah Luck House, or Chinatown's Friendship Archway.

"Third space" is a term coined by Homi Bhabha in 1994 and is associated with postcolonial academic discourse. [19] Bhabha was not describing literal physical spaces but rather a dynamic

[14] Antoinette Lee, "Asian and Asian American Students in Washington, D.C., Public Schools During the Segregation Era" in *Washington History*, Vol. 28, 2, 36.
[15] Philip Jaisohn, a naturalized American citizen born in Korea, attended Columbian College in the 1890s; Syngman Rhee received his degree from the George Washington University in 1907.
[16] In 1906, the San Francisco Board of Education adopted a policy that would segregate all local Asian students in "Oriental Schools." Prior to this time, only Chinese students were segregated; Japanese and Korean students had been freely attending schools of their choice and convenience. This policy escalated into an internation matter, with the Japanese government insisting that its students be permitted into public schools as a condition an agreement to halt the migration of laborers to the U.S.
[17] See Lee and Mustrove and Asch.
[18] For example, Chinese and Koreans in small retail businesses and Filipinas in healthcare.
[19] See Homi Bhaba, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

through which relationships are negotiated and, in the process, produce new meanings and social and cultural possibilities. "Polyculturalism" is a term associated with historians Robin D.G. Kelley and V.J. Prashad who, in their writings in the late 1990s and early 2000s, emphasized how cultures and communities are never discretely bounded or immutable, but rather sustained through interactions and subject to flux and transformation.[20]

As small communities within a physically compact city, Chinese and Korean Washingtonians have always had to share space and interact with people other than their co-ethnics. Racially distinctive, with ties to foreign heritage whether or not they themselves were immigrants, Asian Americans have necessarily adapted their cultural and social practices and carved out their physical spaces in direct relationship with non-Asians, generating new forms of culture and social life. Prominent examples include those businesses serving a non-Asian clientele; religious congregations hosted within non-Asian churches; and the proliferation of martial arts schools with racially diverse participants starting in the 1960s.

Research Methodology and Resources

For this project, an interdisciplinary, intergenerational research team of historic preservationists, urban planners, public historians, ethnographers, and community organizers and documentarians designed a multi-faceted research approach that emphasized archival investigation and community engagement, including one-on-one directed outreach, and virtual and limited in-person public programming. The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent health precautions required a revision of plans, including the cancellation of several major convenings of the public for discussion and documentation.

The research for this report began during the pandemic and continued for almost three years. It included the development of educational programming (e.g., teleconference workshops, outreach efforts at community events) as well as archival historical research. Historical and cultural information was documented through site visits, in-person communication, participant observation, oral history interviews, public outreach events, and online communications.

Information has been incorporated from primary and secondary sources in English, Chinese, and Korean. The work on each context presented different challenges and uneven availability of resources. Larger and older than any other Asian American populations, D.C.'s Chinese American communities have been the subject of organized documentation and interpretation. There are many existing sources available in the form of publications, reports, public history projects, and organized archives.

The 350-plus-page publication *A History of Korean-Americans in the Washington Metropolitan Area* was produced by Young Chang Chae with the Korean Association of Greater Washington. It is available in Korean and English in editions from 1994, 1995, and 2005. Direct citation for information in the book is minimal. Nevertheless, it is an impressive accomplishment involving a wide community of collaborators and it was an important resource, which we used as a guide to

[20] See, for example, Robin D.G. Kelley, "Polycultural Me" in *Colorlines* (Winter 1999); V.J. Prashad, *Everybody was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002).

help structure our inquiry and research priorities. Its information was clarified, cross-referenced, and confirmed by consulting a variety of memoirs and archival collections of key people in early Korean diplomacy and the Korean independence movement who spent significant time in D.C. These include resources related to Horace Allen, Henry Chung DeYoung, George Foulk, Philip Jaisohn, Henry Cu Kim, Yong-jeung Kim, Syngman Rhee, Park Jung Yang, P.K. Yoon, and collections from the Columbia University Archives and the Korean American Digital Archives at the University of Southern California. They also included review of articles and advertisements in 1980s issues of the *Miju Hanguk Ilbo* (Korea Times) accessed through the Library of Congress. Other sources included the private organizational collections of individuals, local churches, a service agency, and a social club, as well as Korean-language documentaries, and Korean online encyclopedias and websites. Invaluable to the Korean historic context were the research and collections related to the Old Korean Legation generously made available to our team by the Overseas Korean Cultural Heritage Foundation, Cultural Heritage Administration, Government of the Republic of Korea.

Antoinette Lee's 2016 article "Asian and Asian American Students in Washington, D.C., Public Schools During the Segregation Era," published in *Washington History*, provided excellent material on the city's earliest generation of Asian American students and how Asians in general have been historically racialized in D.C.

The team accessed photos, recordings, documents, and newspaper clippings held at the Library of Congress and the National Archives as well as in local archives, including the People's Archive of the D.C. Public Library, the D.C. History Center, the Smithsonian Institution's Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, and the Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum, as well as university archives such as the George Washington University Special Collections Research Center.

Newspaper reporting offered insights into the changing representation and position of the Korean American and Chinese American communities and different aspects of their experiences. English-language sources were complemented by material gathered from Chinese- and Korean-language newspapers.

Population estimates for Korean Americans and Chinese Americans are derived from a variety of official reports and published secondary sources, including our own research and that of project advisors.

Numerous conversations and interviews with scholars and community members produced leads and filled gaps. Direct queries to community leaders, archivists, and knowledge keepers were critical to this project.

The Chinese American context was able to draw upon materials that have already been collected for these public history projects:

- *Chinatown Off H Street*, an initiative compiling oral histories and community documentation and presenting public programs, produced by the 1882 Foundation since 2019.

- *Dear Chinatown, D.C.*, a 2020 website produced by Jenn W. Low in partnership with the 1882 Foundation.
- *A Right to the City* exhibition, curated by the Anacostia Community and Samir Meghelli in 2018.
- *Through Chinatown's Eyes: April 1968*, a video produced by Penny Lee and Lisa Mao in 2016 in partnership with the 1882 Foundation.
- *Chinatown, D.C.: A Photographic Journal* exhibition and catalog produced by Asian American Arts and Media, Inc. and directed by Wendy Lim in 1991.

Formal reports and dissertations and theses dating back as early as the 1930s have chronicled and analyzed different aspects of Chinese American community life in D.C., from interracial families to linguistic practices to Chinatown architecture and urban redevelopment.