

NOT SO CORRECT

REBUILDING WITH THE FRAGMENTS OF MEMORIES

by

Yoonjae Oh

Bachelor of Housing and Interior Design
Kyung Hee University, 2017

Submitted to the Department of Architecture in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Architecture
at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

February 2023

© 2023 Yoonjae Oh. All rights reserved.

The author hereby grants to MIT permission to reproduce and to distribute publicly
paper and electronic copies of this thesis document in whole or in part in any
medium now known or hereafter created.

Signature of Author: _____
Department of Architecture
January 6, 2023

Certified by: _____
Rosalyne Shieh
Assistant Professor of Architecture
Thesis Supervisor

Accepted by: _____
Leslie K. Norford
Professor of Building Technology
Chair, Department Committee on Graduate Students

THESIS SUPERVISOR

Rosalyn Shieh MArch
Assistant Professor of Architecture

THESIS READERS

Terry Knight PhD
William and Emma Rogers Professor
Professor of Design and Computation
Associate Head for Strategy and Equity, Department of Architecture

Mohamad Nahleh SMArchS
Lecturer in Architecture and Urbanism

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to **Rosalyn Shieh**, for making this all possible. Your guidance and support has been invaluable to me as I worked on this thesis, which has been about so much more than just completing an academic requirement. Your influence has helped me to learn more about myself, my family, and the value of sharing histories with others. I am deeply thankful to you, my inspiring advisor.

Thank you to my committee members, **Mohamad Nahleh** and **Terry Knight**, for listening to my story all the time with your heartfelt care to the story. Whenever I doubted myself if my story is too personal, your endless support has made me believe in myself. Thank you for bringing your generosity to our discussions.

To MIT Librarians, **Kai Alexis Smith**, **Jennie Murack**, and **Katharine Dunn**, thank you for your assistance in locating the materials I needed. Your expertise has allowed me to delve into the past through both digital and physical MIT libraries, and I have greatly enjoyed the experiences. Thank you for bringing these sleeping histories to life.

Thank you to **Cloe Wang** for your invaluable assistance in finding vintage maps that revealed a wealth of information about the location I was researching. I would also like to thank **Minyoung Kim** for your expert help in constructing the house models. And to my **MArch Thesis cohort**, thank you for the lasting friendships, inspiration, and support you have provided me over the years.

To **the families separated by the Korean War**, thank you for your stories that have been a source of motivation for me. Even though we are strangers, reading your letters on the Korean Ministry of Unification website has inspired me to understand the struggles you and my grandfather have endured.

Thank you to **Jin** and **my family** for constantly being by my side and sharing stories about our family history. Your love and support means the world to me. Thank you.

Finally, to **my dear grandfather**, I send you my eternal love and respect. I wish I could speak with you and hear more of your stories, but the memories you have shared with me will always stay close to my heart. I hope you are finding peace by now in your beloved hometown, listening to the soothing sound of the river and gazing at the majestic mountains.

NOT SO CORRECT

Rebuilding with the Fragments of Memories

by Yoonjae Oh

Submitted to the Department of Architecture on February 15, 2023
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Architecture

ABSTRACT

This thesis was motivated by a question my grandfather (1928-2022) asked, "Can you rebuild my hometown?". How can I rebuild a place that remains in memory? Defining success of rebuilding is highly subjective as people value various elements in memory differently. Furthermore, verifying the result of rebuilding is difficult in the absence of the original author. Thus, the goal of this thesis is not to provide an universal criteria to evaluate rebuilding. Rather, it is to explore different approaches and elements that can be used to rebuild places in memory by recreating my grandfather's hometown based on conversations I had with him.

I partially recreated his hometown's landscape based on a story of the day he left his hometown; he left his house to avoid being drafted into the Korean War in 1952, but what was meant to be a 7-day hide-out ended up becoming a 75-year leave. I recreate his footprints, the spaces he stepped on and the landscape he saw, as if I were closely following him. I create key artifacts of that day by intertwining fragments of my grandfather's memories, layering my interpretations of real data and anecdotal details from his recollection. The hypothetical world created through compilation of these artifacts, closely linked by a thread of imaginations and real memories, represents sentimental and physical qualities of the places that remain in his memory.

Although somewhat enigmatic and obscure, the recreation of my grandfather's cherished hometown was my way of bidding farewell to my grandfather. This project shows that nostalgia can be a powerful source of inspiration, even when memories are fragmented and fuzzy.

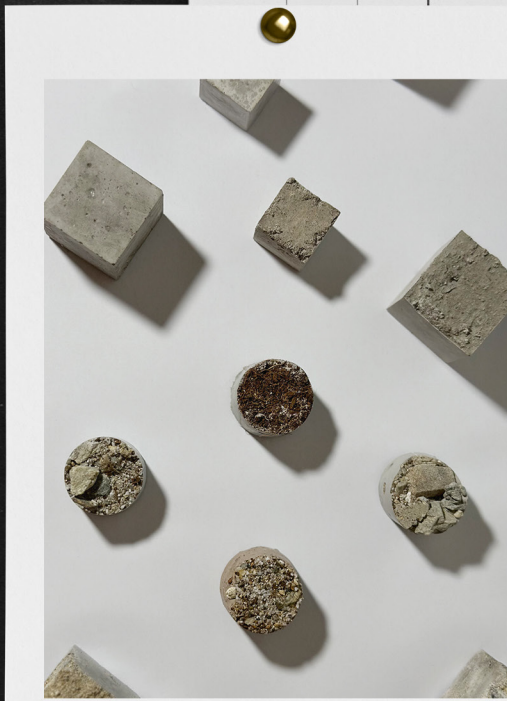
Thesis Advisor : Rosayne Shieh
Title : Assistant Professor of Architecture

(probably) FACTS & ASSUMPTIONS
 Rebuilding Journey #1 - Before his departure

No.

No.	INFORMATION		Notes
	IN	OUT	
		LOGGED- IN.....
			<i>The place where his journey starts might have taken place at his house.</i>
5	●		He said his house was in front of the river. <i>According to his map, there are four houses that are in front of the river.</i>
6		●	I'm going to use a highlighter to mark the house. Possibly, one of these was his house.
7	●		He said his town was surrounded by mountains. He also told me the name of the town was Songam-ni in North Korea.
8	●		(searching for satellite images of Songam-ni) Fig. 3 4 5 <i>As I look at the satellite images, it seems like any direction would have led him to the mountains.</i> <i>Maybe I can draw some of the ways/paths that my grandfather might have taken in the past.</i>

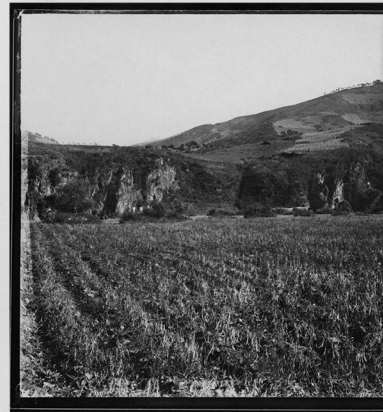
According to the map I found today there are no place that matches to the detail drawn in the map he drew for me. Why are the locations of houses drawn on the map different from those in the current satellite images? There must be reasons for that. 11/22/20



ected information, it seems like I can make four scenarios of a journey he had, departing from his house to an abandoned house in the mountains.

out some possible traces I drew on the map. **Fig. 6**

GED-OUT.....



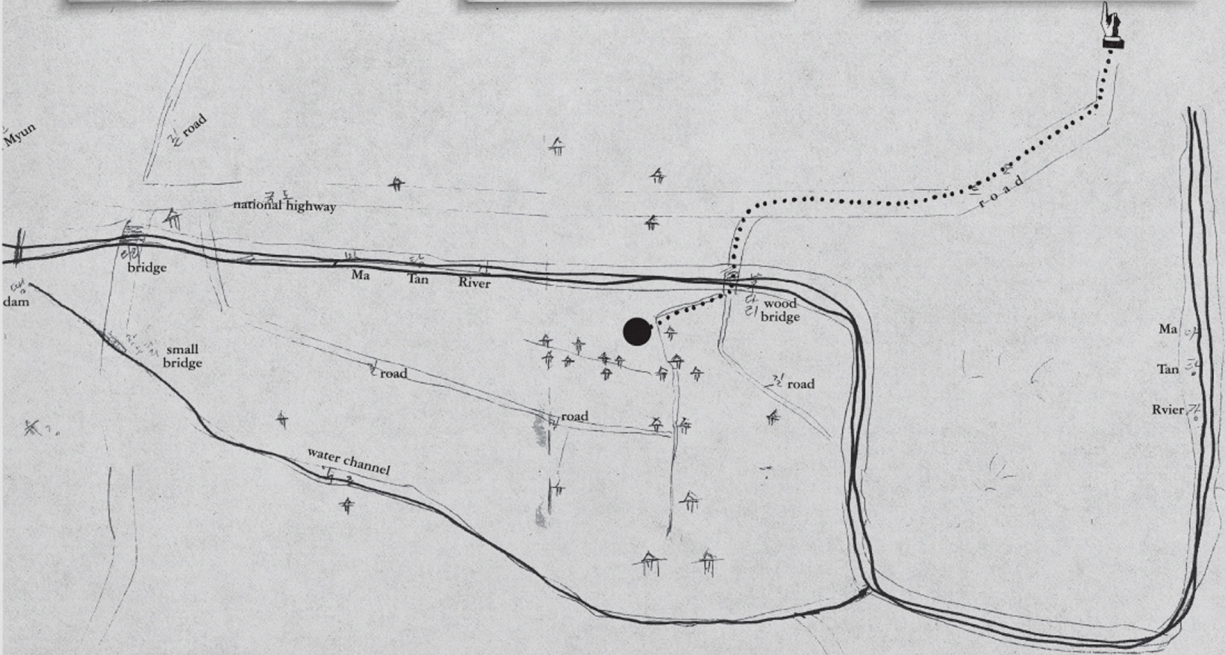
Was there a post-war recovery...

What happened on the day he

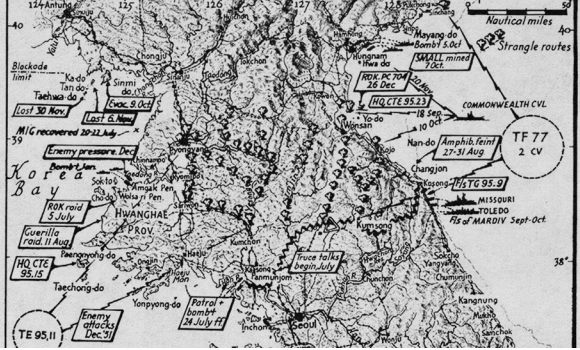
My grandfather (1928-2022) was in the twenties, the country was not yet a family in the small town he lived his life before some events happened

Actually, maybe I'm over-assuming. The country was under Japanese control. I was born in an unknown place in South East Asia. I was raised from his brother, and his father's brother's draft, letters from which made the family assume that he had overcome the shock, and had passed

Soon after, he became the head of the family. His mother died. As I have never seen him, he passed away or didn't have a chance to grow their faith,



25 THE ISLAND WAR - July 1951 - Feb. 1952



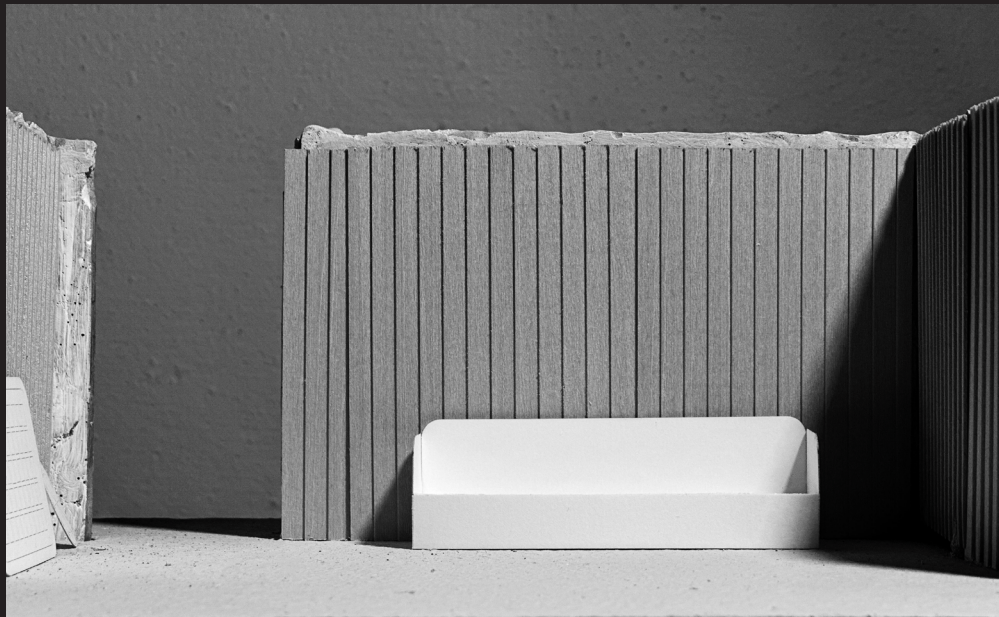
left his home?
born and raised somewhere in North Korea. Before his
divided into two. He was the second son of the richest
lived, and he seemed to have a pretty happy and stable
ened to the country, the Korean war.
...ing he had a happy life. Maybe he didn't. As the coun-
...l, his older brother was drafted to war and sent to an
...sia. My grandfather said he had been receiving letters
...ily always waiting for letters. Few months after his
...his beloved brother didn't reach the family anymore,
...his death. His mother, my great grandmother, couldn't
...passed away soon after.
...d of the household to her younger siblings after her
...heard of my great grandfather, I guess maybe his father
...good relationship with him. His priority was to lead his
...but the Korean War resisted him to pursue his role.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	7
INTRODUCTION	13
THE QUESTION	23
REBUILDING	29
REBUILT SPACE-AND-STORY	53
EPILOGUE	67
BIBLIOGRAPHY	73
APPENDIX	77

01

INTRODUCTION



The First Talk (2018)

I can't forget the day I chatted with my grandfather a few years ago. It was in summer, 2018. We spoke at his house on a sunny Sunday morning. I remember our family wanted to have lunch at his go-to restaurant, Woo Lae Ok. He said they have the best North Korean style cold noodles. We were sitting on a couch. He was having a coffee. My grandfather was a man of few words. He almost never initiated a conversation. I was delighted when the old man started talking to me. He asked me what I have been doing recently. I said I'm planning to apply for architecture school. He asked me what architecture school teaches. I replied, "Learning how to build things...?". He asked, "what kind of things?", and I said "anything". I joked he shouldn't ask me more, as I didn't know what architecture school can teach.

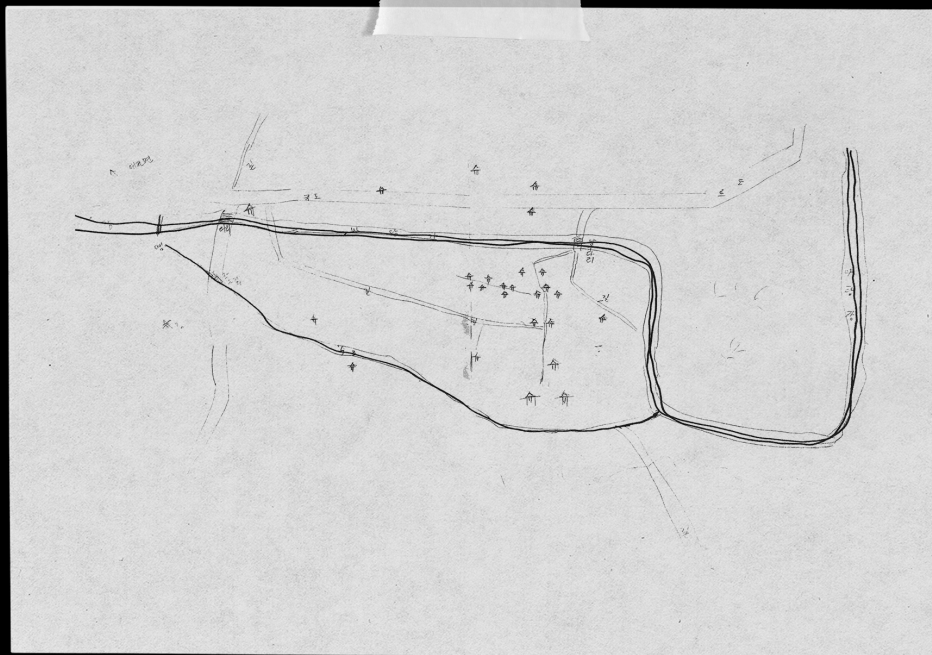
Shortly after, he seemed to think for a while and came back to me with the question: **Can you rebuild my hometown?** I knew this would be a challenging task, because I knew this place was in North Korea. I didn't know what ways he wanted to see the town. I asked him if he wanted me to make a model for him or rebuild it real. He copied exactly what I said, "just anything."

Our collaboration with the search began by opening a file he had. I was surprised to see he kept maps and documents about this place. We were first looking for the location. My mom and I were helping him to recall his memories when we were looking at the map together. My grandfather said the name of his hometown was Maengsan, and the village name was Songam-ni, which could be interpreted as Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge. We couldn't find the name on the map he had. He was so sure he kept murmuring why the map did not show the name. He kept saying, "this isn't right."

My grandfather then grabbed a paper and pen to draw a map from his memories of the town. I compared his map to satellite images, but there was no match. The name of his hometown did not appear on any of the maps I could find. As we struggled to locate the town, my mother interrupted us and said it was time to leave. I closed my laptop, unsure of where to start in rebuilding my grandfather's hometown.

Figure 1.

An interior view of my grandfather's apartment, highlighting the couch where we had our conversation.



Below is a transcript of an interview I recorded back in 2018. The conversation started right after he drew a map for me, explaining what he remembers in his memory.

Y: Interviewer (me)

GF: Interviewee (my grandfather)

Y So tell me. What's the name of the place?

GF The town was called Songam-ni. There was a river above the village. It was the upstream of the Dae-dong river. And there was a bridge when entering the village. You can't come in unless you cross the bridge. That was probably a concrete bridge. If you look around the village, it was all surrounded by mountains.

Y Then was the village in a mountain?

GF No, no. It was on a plain, surrounded by mountains, and the houses were all Giwa Houses¹ in the village.

Y Weren't Giwa houses where rich people lived in?

GF No, it kind of changed. Giwa houses were no longer houses for high social class people.

Y How many houses were there?

GF Around 30 houses. My grandfather was the principal of a Confucian school. We called it Hyang-gyo². So we had the biggest barn in the town.

Y What was in the village?

GF Across the bridge into the town, there was a cemetery.. a cemetery. We needed to pass that cemetery to get into the village. They were all Hanok houses built during the Japanese colonial period. Houses below the mountains. Giwa tile was like... The ones you can find now in Korea University now. It's the same style.

The time I left the town was a year and a half after the liberation day. Maybe I was 18. I left the town with my cousin³. I've been

Figure 2.

A map drawn by my grandfather in 2018 based on his memories of his hometown.

1

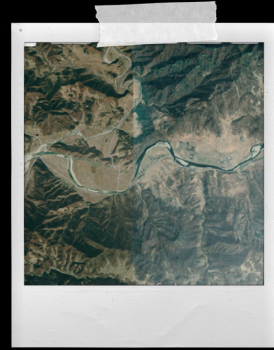
The use of giwa roof tiles gave hanok, the traditional house of Korea, a distinct shape.

2

A hyanggyo was a government-run provincial school and Confucian temple that existed throughout Korea during the Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392) and Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910). Accessed January 3, 2023. <https://www.theseoulguide.com/yangcheon-hyanggyo/>

3

Later, I learned my grandfather's cousin and he left the town separately and reunited in South Korea after the ceasefire of the Korean War. Perhaps, what he meant in this conversation was that they were the only family members who left the town.



SATELLITE IMAGES
AROUND SONGAM-NI

through a lot since then. At that time, I was the only men in the family. My family told me to hide first for about a week. I endured the whole week with only potatoes at an abandoned house in a mountain. Later, I ended up getting caught.

I almost died. I was lucky. The gun was out of bullets. I still remember there was a moment of silence. I snapped out of it, pushed back the guy, and left the house right away. I just ran.

Then I arrived at Sinuiju. That's where I got caught by the US troop.

Y That's how you landed to Geoje Island?

GF Right.. because I was a captive.

(the end of the interview)

Figure 3.
Songam-ni, Maengsan,
North Korea, *Google
Earth*, 2020.

The Call (Summer, 2022)

It has been four years since I made any progress, and my grandfather's health has recently taken a turn for the worse. My mom informed me that he had been hospitalized after falling and breaking his hip joint, and that he was not recovering well. The doctors even mentioned the possibility of an emergency operation. A few days later, I got another call. My mom told me that he was experiencing delirium⁴ and crying out for us to "let him go." I asked her what he meant, as if I were trying to deny the gravity of the situation. She told me that the doctors had given a terminal prognosis. I realized that it was time for us to prepare for his farewell. I felt guilty that he had not yet had the chance to return to his beloved hometown. I asked myself why I had stopped working towards rebuilding it.

4
Delirium is a worsening or change in a person's mental state that happens suddenly, over one to two days. The person may become confused, or be more confused than usual. Accessed Dec 29, 2022. <https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/daily-living/delirium>



His Passing (November, 2022)

It has been a few months since I resumed my rebuilding project, which I had originally started with the intention of sharing it with my grandfather and getting his perspective on whether it matched his memories of the place. However, he passed away. I started rebuilding for him, but he is no longer here. I took a break from the project for a week as I tried to figure out how to move forward.

His passing may have changed my motivation for the project, but I eventually realized that I could continue the project as a way to honor his memory through the work I was doing. By collecting stories, photos, and researching the history of the town, I was not only creating my own perspective of it, but also preserving the memories of my grandfather and others who have a connection to the place. It was a way to keep the history and memories of the town alive, even if he is no longer with me. It may be a challenging and emotional process, but it can also be a rewarding way to connect with my family's past and honor my grandfather's memory.

Figure 4.

A photograph of my collection of research materials, including vintage maps and photos.

02

THE QUESTION

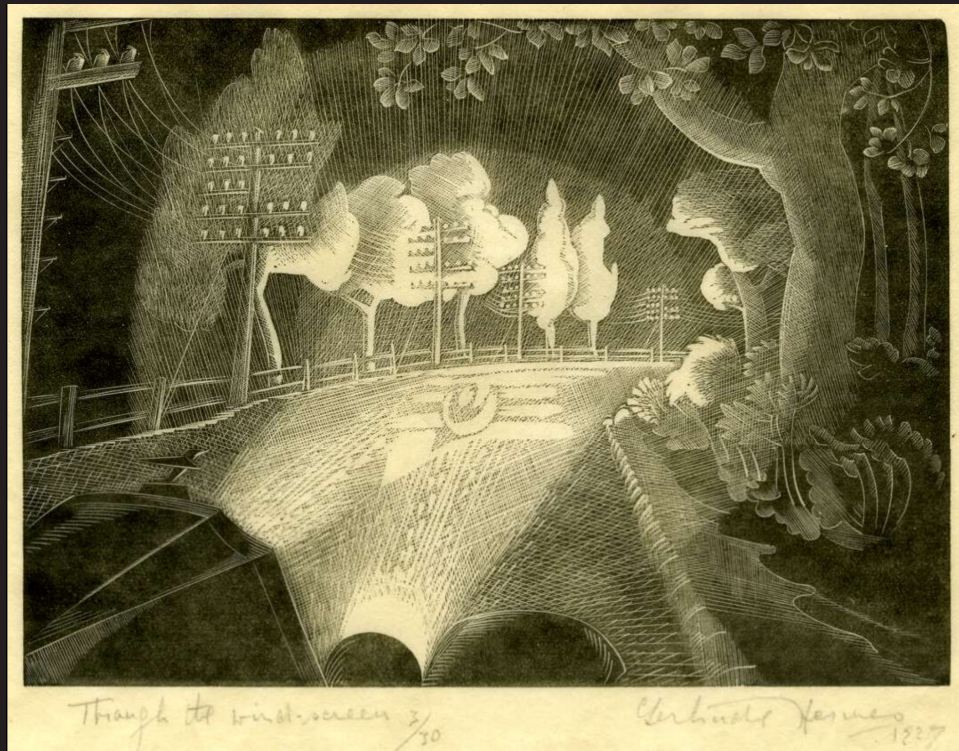


Figure 5.
Gertrude Hermes,
*Through the
Windscreen*, 1929,
drawing, The Trustees of
the British Museum

WHAT IS REBUILDING?

Unlike building, which involves constructing something new, rebuilding involves constructing the past, which requires understanding someone's memories. However, it is impossible to perfectly recover memories because we cannot return to the exact moment when a memory occurred. Additionally, if we rebuild without the original creator of the memory, it becomes even more difficult to know if our rebuilding accurately reflects the person's memory. This is my current situation, as my grandfather passed away while I was rebuilding his hometown. It is therefore very difficult to understand what a person might have seen or felt in the past unless we are in the same environment at the same time and looking at objects that are in the same composition.

The success of rebuilding will be determined by how well the mediums or approaches used help the person relive the past experience in the space. This is a highly subjective criterion, as people place different value on different elements of memory. For example, some people may prioritize visual clues while others may prioritize other elements. The goal is not to establish a universal, absolute criteria for evaluating the success of rebuilding, but rather to explore different approaches and elements that can be used, with the focus on recreating the experience rather than just recreating the appearance.⁵ As Walter Benjamin points out, even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking one element: its presence in time and space, its unique existence in the place where it happens to be, which Benjamin refers to as the "aura."⁶ Therefore, rebuilding may involve recreating the experience or aura by bringing back objects and scenes from memories.

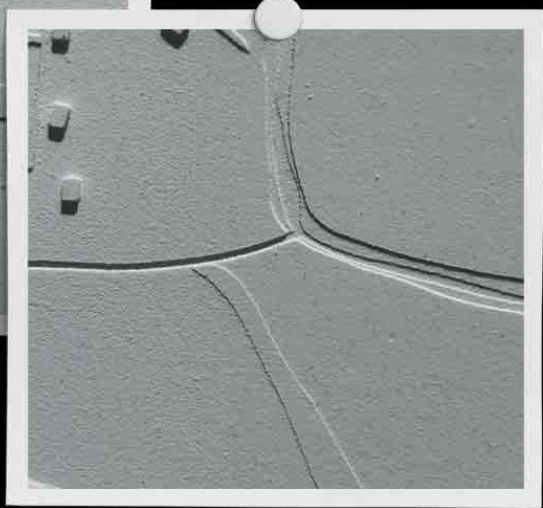
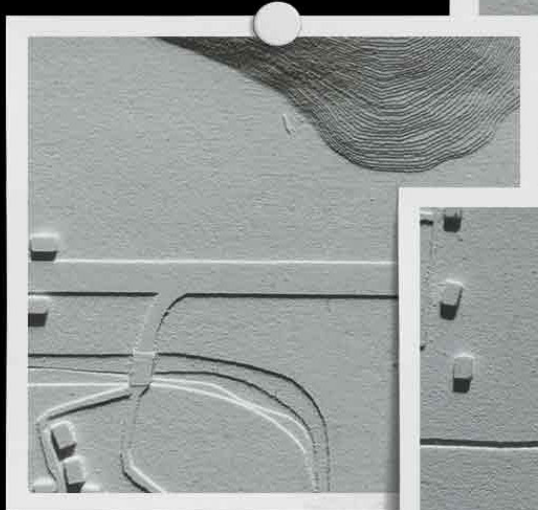
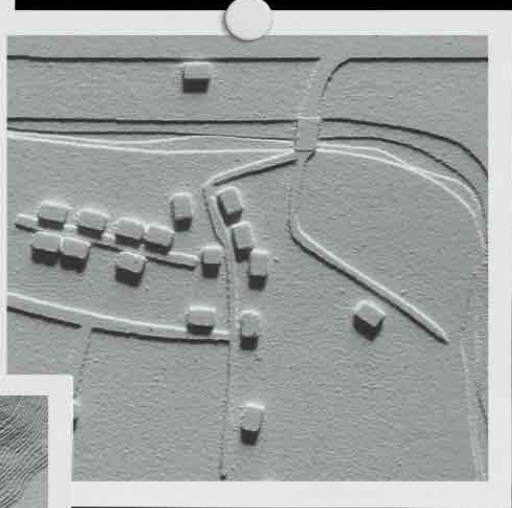
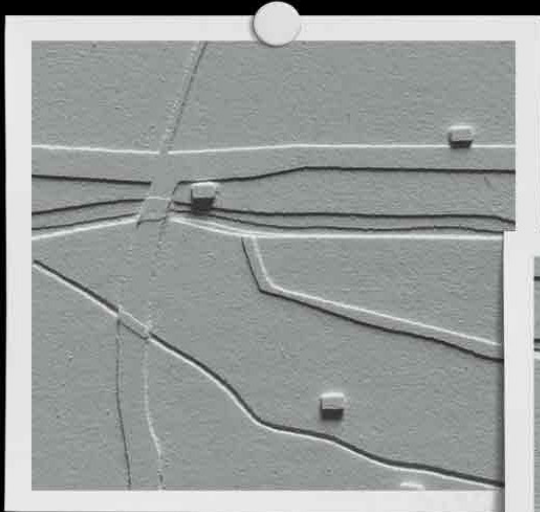
I try to create experiences by stimulating our senses. For example, let's say there is a memory of an "earthen floor." The "earthen floor" starts with imagining "dirt" and includes other elements like "the color of ocher," "rough surface," "looking down," "gravel," and so on. When we actually create these properties, we have a multi-faceted understanding of the earthen floor through our senses and by recalling our memories of the earthen floor, just as we would touch, see, and hear the sound of stepping on it. I want to use our knowledge of experiences that our bodies already know to recreate the experiences that might have occurred in someone's memory in the past. "Through the Windscreen," a work by Gertrude Hermes, is a wood-engraving that shows a view at 2am from the passenger seat of a car on a tree-lined road at night (see fig. 5). It brings to mind a scene in which the driver is carefully pressing the accelerator and relying only on the car's headlights on an empty road in the darkness. The tense atmosphere of the driving experience

5

DeSilvey suggests that "we need to find meanings in transition, transience, and uncertainty." The stories contained within objects from the past may not be visible, audible, tangible, or accessible to us in the present, but they can be shared and brought to life by future generations who are aware of the past. See Caitlin DeSilvey, "Postpreservation: Looking Past Loss," *Curated Decay: Heritage Beyond Saving* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 1-22.

6

See Tate Museum's description of the term, "aura". <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/a/aura>



becomes one of the stories I can imagine while looking at this work. If we had a device that could reproduce the same sense of darkness depicted in this view, it might be possible to get closer to the experience the driver may have felt in this scene. And I believe such device is an imaginative story.

Rebuilding involves more than just recreating the objects that appear in memory. It also evokes the stories or events that the objects can suggest.⁷ In that sense, I find that writing a story centered around an object helps me to connect past experiences to the present. Instead of simply depicting an object that appears in a scene from memory, the object becomes the focus of the story and allows me to explore the memories and emotions associated with it. This can help to bring these past experiences to life and make them more meaningful in the present. This is a process of creating a new world from my own perspective by piecing together fragments of memory, even if the original creator of the memory is not present.⁸ This process involves making assumptions and, in a way, it is a process of mystifying rather than clarifying a memory, and creating another world or dimension within someone's memory. Although my grandfather is no longer with me, I find enjoyment in continuing to rebuild with the experiences I know.

Therefore, rebuilding is not about locating the physical place. It is not about making it look exactly as it did originally. Instead, it is about understanding where his nostalgic impulse comes from. It is about uncovering hidden artifacts or scenes that trigger nostalgia. In order to delve into the mysterious place that my grandfather shared with me, I will use a story he told me as a starting point. I will delve further into this in the next chapter.

7

Toni Morrison notes "What makes it fiction is the nature of the imaginative act: my reliance on the image - on the remains - in addition to recollection, to yield up a kind of truth. ... I simply mean "picture" and the feelings that accompany the picture." See Toni Morrison, "The Site of Memory", in *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*, 2d ed., ed. William Zinsser (Boston; New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1995), p.93 p.92

8

Jorge Otero-Pailos also highlights, "In our own time, preservation is undergoing a fundamental transformation, emerging as a renewed discipline, with new purposes and means, through experimental practices that are broadening the established boundaries of knowledge." See Jorge Otero-Pailos, "Atmosphere as a Cultural Object," *Climates: Architecture and the Planetary Imaginary*, (Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, Lars Muller Publishers, 2016), p.248

Figure 6.

A selection of architectural models of my grandfather's hometown.

03

REBUILDING



Figure 7.
A collage of Maengsan black pine forest and a written account of the day my grandfather left his hometown.

BUILDING A STORY

I was able to gather data through an interview with my grandfather and a map he drew for me. During the interview, he described his hometown while drawing a map that showed the locations of physical landmarks such as houses, a river, bridges, roads, and alleys. He also told me the name of the town, which was important for me to find visual materials like maps and photos. However, it was challenging to uncover specific memories that he had held onto for a long time, which can reveal more than just visual memories, like anecdotes. Thus, identifying what he cherished in his memory was not successful since the original author of the memory was absent.

I tried to think what I wanted to know the most. One thing that particularly interested me about my grandfather was the story of the day he left his hometown. It was about the day, which was supposed to be a seven-day hideout, ended up turning into a 75-year leave. This story included important events that not only influenced his life, but also led to my own existence. The more I tried to understand what happened to him on that day, the more I got curious and eager to know his past thoughts, behaviors, and the spaces he had been in the past; his hometown.

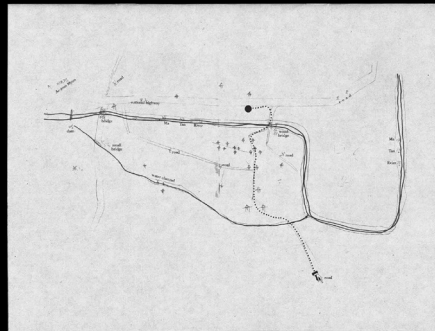
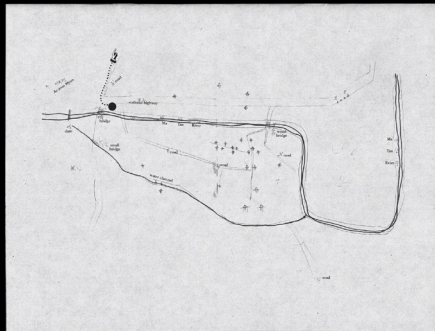
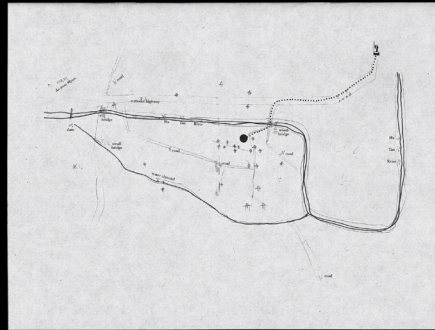
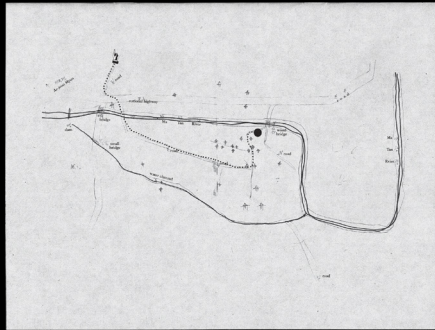
There were many physical landmarks mentioned in my grandfather's story. Using these landmarks as a guide for rebuilding, I looked for any information that connected to the information he shared with me, particularly information that gave a sense of what the past may have been like. This allowed me to envision stories that may have occurred at specific locations, using the map he drew for me as a reference. I began to consider what information to include in the representation I was creating. My imagination of this place felt as though I was walking alongside him on the day he left his hometown.

At that point, I started to see myself as an architectural detective, searching for spatial elements that were important to my grandfather's last journey in his town. I didn't feel the need to rebuild everything he remembered, but rather focused on what I am currently interested in learning. This includes going back to his hometown and searching for the places where the unexpected events had occurred, which had previously prevented him from reuniting with his family. This helped me to uncover the mysteries of this enigmatic place.

Yet, the information I use to rebuild my grandfather's hometown vary in terms of detail. The more specific the data is, the more I can say about

9

"What makes it fiction is the nature of the imaginative act: my reliance on the image - on the remains - in addition to recollection, to yield up a kind of truth. ... I simply mean "picture" and the feelings that accompany the picture." p.92



the past, which makes it easier to recreate. On the other hand, more abstract data requires more guessing, leading to more speculation about the past. As a result, I recreate the past that I still doubt and do not fully understand, which I refer to as the "assumed past."⁹ The assumed past I design does not distinguish between truth and fiction¹⁰. The process of "assuming that this was in the past" is the design, and the combination of assumptions becomes my version of the past, a curated version.¹¹

These are recorded in a "log book" that I keep for my own record, where I write down my questions, research findings, and assumptions.¹² While I recognize that some of these may be true and some may be false, the log book provides a record of my assumption-building throughout the rebuilding process. In the context of rebuilding, if the original memory is the answer we are seeking, then rebuilding may be the process of finding that answer. In that sense, my rebuilding may be an ongoing process of seeking the answer, even though I may never fully know it. Nonetheless, the method of rebuilding will remain consistent: collecting fragments of memories, making assumptions, and designing the assumed past. This is because my goal is not to perfectly reconstruct the space, but rather to reconstruct the experience. Since these two are interconnected, I believe this project can ultimately contribute to spatial reconstruction.

10

Toni Morrison notes that "Fiction, by definition, is distinct from fact. Presumably it's the product of imagination - invention - and it claims the freedom to dispense with "what really happened," or where it really happened, or when it really happen, and nothing in it needs to be publicly verifiable, although much in it can be verified. See Toni Morrison, "The Site of Memory", in *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*, 2d ed., ed. William Zinsser (Boston; New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1995), p.93

11

Toni Morrison notes that "But memories and recollections won't give me total access to the unwritten interior life of these people. Only the act of the imagination can help me." *Ibid*, p.92

12

Log books can be found on page 34-41.

Figure 8.
Map drawings illustrating my grandfather's potential journey in the past.

LOG BOOK

This is a log book where I write down my questions, research findings, and assumptions of my grandfather's last journey in his hometown. Some might be true, some might be wrong. Whenever I encounter new information, I place a black dot, and label it as "Information IN". I sometimes find or fail to answer my questions. However, I eventually end up making assumptions, which are the key ingredients of rebuilding. As similar to what I do for labeling new information, I place a black dot and indicate assumptions as "Information OUT".

Author

Yoonjae Ob

Contributors

*My grandfather, my grandmother, my mom, my uncle,
my grandfather's cousin, a friend from his town, the Maengsan Korean Association*

Sources

Korean Integrated Newspaper Database System, Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Culture, National Memorial Museum of Forced Mobilization under Japanese Occupation, Institute for Peace Affairs, Integrated information system for separated families by the Ministry of Unification, Records of the U.S. Department of State(Korea:1930-1963), Harvard-Yenching Library, Library of Congress, Digital archive @MIT Libraries, Digital archive @University of Texas Libraries, Digital archive @McMaster University

(probably) FACTS & ASSUMPTIONS
 Rebuilding Journey #1 - Before his departure

No. 1

No.	INFORMATION		Notes
	IN	OUT	
		LOGGED-IN.....
1	●		He said he remembers he left his hometown two years after Japanese rule over Korea ended. <i>Two years after Korea's liberation year is 1947.</i> <i>..? This is something wrong.</i> <i>He said he had to leave his hometown because of the Korean War.</i> <i>Maybe, he is mistaking with the year. It makes more sense saying two years after the Korean War broke out.</i>
2		●	I'm pretty sure it was 1952. <i>What was the world like around 1952?</i>
3	●		(searching relevant history)
4		●	Check out the timeline I made.
		LOGGED-OUT.....

(probably) FACTS & ASSUMPTIONS
 Rebuilding Journey #1 - Before his departure

No. 2

No.	INFORMATION		Notes
	IN	OUT	
		LOGGED-IN.....
			<i>The place where his journey starts might have taken place at his house.</i>
5	●		He said his house was in front of the river. <i>According to his map, there are four houses that are in front of the river.</i>
6		●	I have highlighted a few houses on the map. Possibly, one of these was his house.
7	●		He said his town was surrounded by mountains. He also told me the name of the town was Songam-ni in North Korea.
8	●		(searching for satellite images of Songam-ni) <i>As I look at the satellite images, it seems like any direction would have led him to the mountains. Maybe I can draw some of the ways/paths that my grandfather might have taken in the past.</i>
9		●	Based on collected information, it seems like I can make four scenarios of a journey he had, departing from his house and arriving to an abandoned house in the mountains. Check out some possible traces I drew on the map.
		LOGGED-OUT.....

According to the map I found today, there are no place that matches to the detail drawn in the map he drew for me. Why are the locations of houses drawn on the map different from those in the current satellite images? There must be reasons for that. 11/22/2022

Was there a post-war recovery construction plan going on?

No.	INFORMATION		Notes
	IN	OUT	
		LOGGED- IN.....
10	●		He mentioned he decided to hide himself in the mountains for a week. <i>How was he so sure that it would take a week for him to hide?</i> <i>Perhaps, he had prepared for his hide in advance.</i> <i>If so, what did he prepare for his one-week secretive stay in the mountains?</i> <i>Did he have a map?</i> <i>What kind of maps were out in 1952?</i>
11	●		(searching for old maps made in between 1920s-1950s)
12	●		Searching for Songam-ni map of the 1950s wasn't successful. In general, there was no granular map data available to draw townable maps I could find so far. <i>Maybe he didn't carry a map...</i> <i>or had a simple map drawn by himself..</i> <i>or perhaps, he had a large scale map?! e.g. national scale map</i> I'm going to assume he had a self-drawn map. <i>Okay, next. Did he have foods?</i> <i>What kind of foods could he find back then?</i>
13	●		Corn is the basis of grain production, and rice, beans, and potatoes are also grown in this area. Since there are many mountainous areas around, it was a difficult area to grow rice. Paddy field consists 9.7% in Maengsan county. <i>Speaking of potatoes, I actually remember he said he had potatoes. He told me that his mother prepared for him.</i> <i>I would say this is a pretty clear memory. I'll take it.</i>
14	●		Possibly, he carried some potatoes. 20 potatoes..? <i>A potato per meal. Three meals per day... 3x7=21.</i> <i>He might wanted to carry maybe a range of 20-25 potatoes.</i>
		CONTINUES →

11/22/2022
 yesss! I found the most detailed map.
 This is the only map that indicates
 the name of my grandfather's town.
 As this map contains topographical
 data in great detail, maybe I could
 model this place if needed.)

the map will be helpful

(probably) FACTS & ASSUMPTIONS
 Rebuilding Journey #1 - Before his departure

No. 4

No.	INFORMATION		Notes
	IN	OUT	
			<i>How many potatoes would he have carried?</i>
			<i>Would he have carried a bag or backpack to store the potatoes?</i>
			<i>What kind of bags people used back then?</i>
15	●		(searching for bags)
16		●	I'm assuming he used a wrapping cloth to use as a messenger bag. It's the most efficient bag to carry in the mountains.
			<i>What time did he leave the house?</i>
			<i>To avoid being found, he might have wanted to leave during night.</i>
			<i>He could have woke up earlier than usual.</i>
			<i>But, did he have a clock or an alarm? I guess no..</i>
			<i>How did people check time back then?</i>
17	●		Pocket watch was available in the 1920s-1930s. Watches were luxury goods imported from abroad, especially Switzerland.
			<i>Pocket watch do not have an alarm function.</i>
			<i>I guess he heard the birds chirping or roosters crowing.</i>
			<i>When do birds start chirping?</i>
18	●		Birds wake up so early, and every morning, 30-90 minutes prior to sunrise.
19		●	Birds wake up as they sense daylight. I guess he might have heard birds singing.
20	●		If we look at the sun graph of this place, 5:53am seems to be the earliest when sun rises.
21		●	Let's say birds woke up around 4:20am. <i>It must have been pretty dark outside.</i>
22	●		His town is the area with the largest number of fogs among the town's province, Pyeongannam-do.
		●	Maybe the morning was either foggy or misty.
23			
		CONTINUES →

(probably) FACTS & ASSUMPTIONS
 Rebuilding Journey #1 - Before his departure

No. 5

No.	INFORMATION		Notes
	IN	OUT	
			<i>What else.. how did he knew the year he left his town?</i>
			<i>Was there a calendar at his house?</i>
24	●		It was not until the 1930s that the modern calendar with Arabic numerals was fully distributed. There are 12 months in each sheet, and both the daily calendar that you take off one sheet every day and the monthly calendar that you take off once a month appear during this period. Since then, in the 1950s, free calendars for corporate publicity began to come out, and almost each house had a calendar.
25		●	Perhaps, there was a calendar in his room. <i>What could have been the last look of his house before he left?</i> <i>Did his family see him out?</i> <i>Because it could have been such an early morning, maybe they might have been all sleeping.</i> <i>Wouldn't the roof tiles of his house look blurry on a dark morning?</i>
26		●	I guess the last look of his house was only showing the silhouette of the house. LOGGED-OUT..... <p style="text-align: right;"><i>12/9/2022</i> <i>I heard from my mom that my uncle is attending to a meeting hosted by the Maengsan Korean Association. I know that my grandfather was the first president of this organization long time ago. It says this association was founded in 1978.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>12/10/2022</i> <i>My grandfather's cousin says Maengsan was rumored to be one of the most remote places in Korea, but his village was the only place where people could eat rice, which was rare in this area. His family owned most of the rice paddy fields in the town.</i></p>

(probably) FACTS & ASSUMPTIONS

No. 6

Rebuilding Journey #2 - On his way to the mountains

No.	INFORMATION		Notes
	IN	OUT	
		LOGGED- IN.....
27	●		He said the mountains were hard to climb, and heard tigers living in the woods.
28	●		I searched the mountains. It is said Maengsan is known for the Black Pine Forest, which is currently one of North Korea's natural heritage sites.
29		●	He probably thought the forest was the best place to hide, as it surrounded the village like a folding screen on the mountain behind his birthplace.
			<i>What was he thinking as he was about to leave his house?</i>
			<i>He often emphasized mental strength by saying an old proverb.</i>
30	●		"Though taken by a tiger, if one gathers his wits, he can live." <i>I heard this from my grandfather so many times.</i> <i>I think the proverb is descending over generations.</i>
31		●	He might have left the house promising to stay strong under any circumstances.
			<i>What was the scenery that he would have faced as soon as he left the house?</i>
			<i>I guess the paddy fields.</i>
32	●		I know that his family owned most of the rice paddy fields in the town. About ten years ago, my mother met one of his locals, and she heard the family owned a farmland the size of Boston Common.
33		●	He probably had to walk a long way to get out of his family's farmland.
34	●		Vintage photos of the 1920s-1950s tell a lot how towns looked like in the old days. <i>I can tell many houses must have had fences either made out of stones or rice straws.</i> <i>I guess also might have passed the fences of his house or his farmland.</i>
35		●	I guess he must have passed the fence Maybe it was a straw-made fence.

(probably) FACTS & ASSUMPTIONS

No. 7

Rebuilding Journey #2 - While his way to the mountains

No.	INFORMATION		Notes
	IN	OUT	
36	●		He said there was a cemetery close to the village's outskirts. <i>Walking across the cemetery on a spooky morning, he must have felt he wanted to get out as soon as possible.</i>
37		●	He might have wanted to rush out from the graveyards.
38	●		He said there was a river that was flowing along the village, the Matan river. <i>What was the size of the river?</i>
39	●		It looks dry and narrow when I look at the satellite images. He said the river was like his playground. Children used to skate and spin tops in winter.
40	●		He said he had to cross the river to get out of the town. He told me there were two bridges, a concrete one and a wood one. <i>Which one? It must have been so dark outside. He might have not wanted to trip off his steps in the dark.</i>
41		●	If I were him, I would head to the concrete bridge not to risk falling in the dark.
42	●		<i>Getting out of the town means there is a high possibility of encountering village totem poles, Jangseungs.</i> Jangseung is a guardian totem protecting the village from evil spirits. Many have creepy faces. It was almost like a must-item in every village back in the old days.
43		●	Some of them must have been standing somewhere, watching him. <i>What would be the next scene? Maybe he is almost approaching to the woods.</i> <i>It must have been so scary being in the dark forest. Almost nothing can be seen in the dark.</i> <i>The forest must have been so quiet that he was sensitive to every sound.</i>
44		●	In this mountain, where tigers are said to live, I bet he hurried to find a shelter.
45	●		He mentioned he found a cottage. <i>Would he have went inside as soon as he found the house?</i> <i>I guess no. He must have been very cautious as he didn't want to be caught.</i> <i>What if a soldier is hiding inside?</i>
46		●	I guess he could have decided to observe the house nearby for a few minutes.

.....CONTINUES →



ARCHIVES

Rebuilding involves shared authorship. As I learn more about my grandfather's memories, they become part of my own memory. For instance, the map he drew for me¹³ is a highly personal document that reflects his way of representing things. As I examine and refine the map, it evolves into a new version that incorporates my interpretation of it, including my understanding of the symbols and the addition of terrain contour lines, etc. As a result, the map becomes less my grandfather's and more my own.

The transition of authorship is a crucial moment when my imagination is sparked, and it is essential to document this process. Archiving involves leaving a record of the evidence that demonstrates the world created by my imagination. Therefore, as shared authorship becomes more prevalent, the importance of preserving all records of the transfer of authorship becomes apparent.

The value of the archive lies in its ability to provide direct access to my thoughts and emotions as I reconstruct the story of the past. The objects contained in the archive provide context for the spatial relationship between my grandfather and his hometown, offering background information and history that helps me understand and become familiar with the past I am trying to uncover. In addition to their storage function, archives also serve as a guide, helping me to create linear stories while navigating the nonlinear process of organizing temporary or ephemeral data.

To that end, I have created three "houses" which serve as metaphorical archives. These houses contain my grandfather's memories, particularly those related to his final journey in his hometown, as well as my own memories from the rebuilding process and my assumptions about his past. I chose to focus on houses because they were the places my grandfather visited on his journey. I believe that his life underwent significant changes every time he moved from one place to another, and these houses could symbolize the different chapters of his life.

The houses contains visual clues that provide context for the story and the spaces. Whenever I come across new information about a past event, I revisit my visual clues and revise my assumptions. These houses serve as a repository of information that I use to gather evidence and inspiration as I reconstruct my grandfather's hometown. They include the house he used to live in, the abandoned cottage where he took refuge, and the apartment where he passed away. The exterior of the

13
See figure 2

Figure 9.
The house he used to live(left), the abandoned cottage where he hid(middle), and his apartment where he closed his eyes(right). Model photo by ©Andy Ryan



houses represents the overarching story, while the interior is filled with details and artifacts that represent specific times and places. Together, the exterior and interior create a complete narrative, with the exterior serving as the foundation for the story¹⁴.

14

The story inserted into each house can be found on page 46-51.



Figure 10.
House One and visual
assumption cards.
Model photo by
©Andy Ryan



HOUSE ONE (1928-1952)

The house he used to live in

My grandfather(1928-2022) was born and raised in a place called Songam-ni, which is now known to be located in North Korea. He was the second son of the richest family in the small town where 50-60 people lived, and he seemed to have a pretty happy life before the Korean War.

Actually, maybe I'm over-assuming he had a happy life. Maybe he didn't. As the country was under Japanese rule, his older brother was drafted in WW2 and sent to South East Asia. My grandfather said he had been receiving letters from his brother, and his family always waited for the letters. Few months after his brother's draft, the letters from his beloved brother didn't reach the family anymore, which made the family assume his death. His mother, who is my great grandmother, couldn't overcome the shock, and had passed away soon after. He became the head of the household after his mother died. His priority was to lead his family and grow their faith, but so many things were happening during that era.

Two years after the country declared independence, he felt obnoxious tension happening in the country - yes, the Korean War broke out. His town was not a great place for battles, as the place was a very mountainous area. Even the town's name meant the Fierce Mountains. But soon, he got a news from his neighbors that young men were being called from the Korean People's Army(North Korean military). He decided to hide himself in the near small mountain. I think he was worried of his sisters if he get drafted in the war. Or perhaps, he didn't want to bring pain to his family anymore. He decided to hide for a while, and avoid the chance of being drafted.



HOUSE TWO (1952-1953)

The abandoned cottage where he hid in the mountains

He said he found an abandoned cottage in the mountains and decided to hide in there. Sustaining himself with the minimum food he can chew for 7 days, he thought he was almost succeeding in hiding eyes from his unwanted guests, the soldiers.

Yet, his fear became reality. Two soldiers opened the door of the cottage he had been hiding for days. He said there was a very unpleasant silence between him and the soldiers, elevating the tension. The uncertainty of him to survive from that situation forced him to run to the soldiers before they fired the gun towards him.

One of the soldiers pulled a trigger. He told me that he thought this was it, the end of his life. He was just looking at the soldier's eyes. He was not bleeding, but he said he thought he was fainting. But it was too strange to feel nothing, like literally nothing was hurting at all. As soon as acknowledging that this strange feeling was actually not coming from the aftermath of the gunfire, but from the fact that nothing had happened to him, he knew it was a false fire.



HOUSE THREE (1953-2022)

The house where he closed his eyes

This is the apartment where he told me the stories. Later, I found out that the story I've heard from him might be different from the true story. My mom says he was caught by the soldiers right away. She said he told her that he volunteered to be part of the North Korean army. What I heard from him was that he ran away as soon as he encountered the soldiers, and landed on a harbor where the UN troops were camping. That's where he got caught. To them, he was suspicious enough to be suspected as an enemy. He soon became a prisoner-of-war(POW) and later sent to an island in South Korea, the Geoje POW camp.

What's going on? I'm confused. My story, my mom's story, and his story are all mixed up. What is the true story? Well, does it actually matter?

After the ceasefire in 1953, my grandfather decided not to return to the north. I still don't know why. I suppose this means I can build another house, that represents the POW campsite he refused to speak about . The only thing he told me about this place was that it was a living hell. When the lights were turned off at night, it was a place where death lurked.

75 years have passed, and he still couldn't get back to his hometown. He closed his eyes in his apartment in November, 2022.

04

**REBUILT
SPACE-
AND-STORY**

PROLOGUE

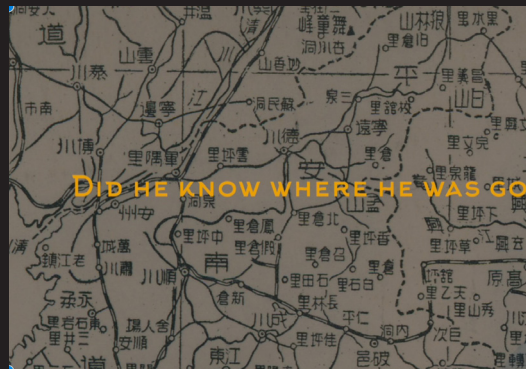
The story is based on my imagination of my grandfather's final journey in his hometown, as if I am following him on the day he left. It is important to note that this is purely fictional and may not be entirely accurate. The story takes place on a summer day in 1952.



Figure 11.
Landscape models
produced for story-
telling. Model photo by
©Andy Ryan



1952



BACKGROUND

He said he left in 1952 . He was 24, and alone. The Korean War had reached a stalemate at the 38th parallel. None of the UN, South Korean, Chinese, or North Korean troops could gain an advantage. My grandfather's hometown was distant from the battlefield. Maengsan, meaning the Fierce Mountains, was a small village by the river . But it was a neighborhood that could be war-torn at any time. He said he left his hometown to hide as the war was escalating.

Why did he want to hide? I needed to know. He said his plan was to hide in the woods for seven days . Why seven days? I had the feeling that he had prepared his hideout in advance. I learned that there was a military mobilization order going on. If he did not follow the order, it was clear he would be killed as an anti-communist. He had siblings to take care of in the absence of his parents. He decided urgently to hide somewhere.

He said the mountains were hard to climb. I searched the mountains. It is said Maengsan is known for the Black Pine Forest, which is currently one of North Korea's natural heritage sites. He probably thought the forest was the best place to hide, as it surrounded the village like a folding screen on the mountain behind his birthplace.

When did he leave the house? He may have wanted to leave at night or early in the morning, to avoid being seen. He could have woken up earlier than usual. But, did he have an alarm? I guess no. How did people check time back then? I guess he heard the birds chirping or rooster crowing.

I researched the birds. Birds wake up early, like 90 minutes before sunrise. If we look at the sun graph of this area, it seems birds could have woken up around 4 or 5 a.m. It must have been dark outside. Or maybe he didn't sleep at all and waited until the sun slightly raised its head.

What did he bring with him? Definitely, food. He said he carried potatoes . How many? I think 20 sounds good enough to survive for a week. Perhaps his bag was big enough to carry 20 potatoes. Did he know where he was going? Did he have a map? I searched for vintage maps that he might have owned at the time, but I couldn't find town maps. In fact, there is one, this US Navy map , but he didn't own that for sure. Maybe he didn't carry a map.

Figure 12.

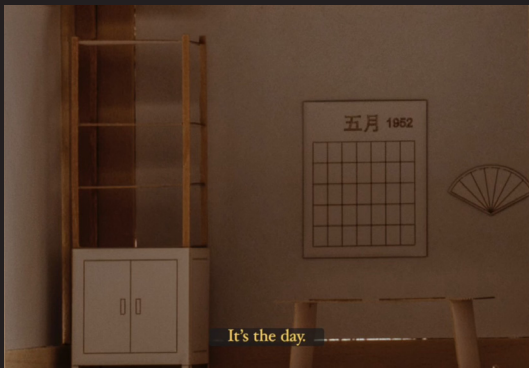
A film was produced for the reconstructed story. This figure shows a few scenes presented in the "background" part of the movie.



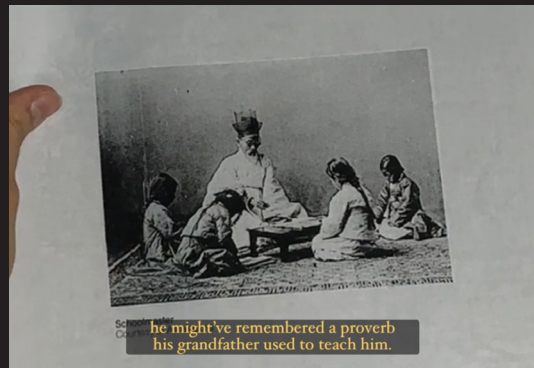
THE DAY



Just so you know, it might be not quite right.



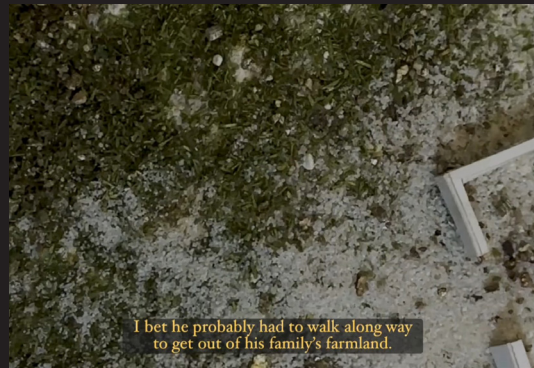
It's the day.



So he might've remembered a proverb his grandfather used to teach him.



My grandfather's cousin says Maengsan was rumored to be one of the most remote places in Korea,



I bet he probably had to walk along way to get out of his family's farmland.



As he passes the field and straw-made fences,



he looks back as if he is promising he would return soon.

SCENE ONE

It's the day. Birds are chirping. He packs his potatoes. While he was packing, he might have remembered a proverb his grandfather used to teach him: "Though taken by a tiger, if one gathers his wits, he can live." I remember my grandfather always emphasized to be strong at any circumstances quoting this proverb. I think the proverb is descending over generations. But why tigers? I'm sure he knew there were tigers living in the Maengsan mountains.

My grandfather's cousin says Maengsan was rumored to be one of the most remote places in Korea, but his village was the only place where people could eat rice, which was rare in this area. His family owned most of the rice paddy fields in the town. My mom heard that the family owned the size of Boston Common. I bet he probably had to walk a long way to get out of his family's land.

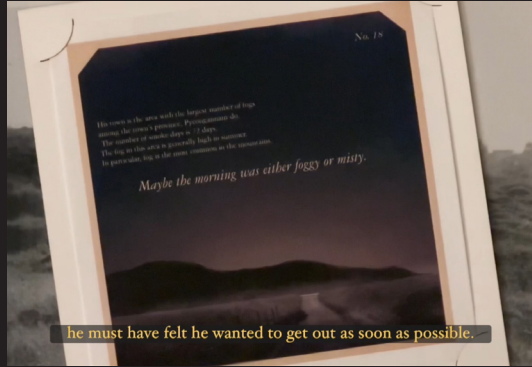
SCENE TWO

As he passes the field and straw-made fences, he looks back as if he is promising he would return soon.

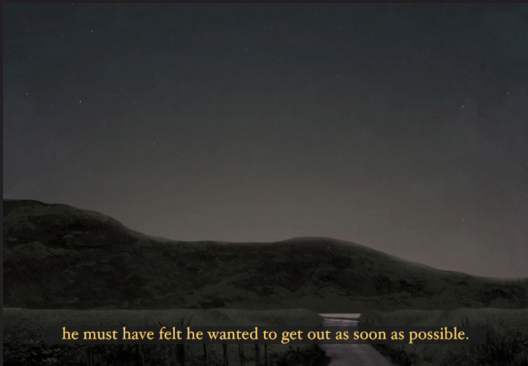
Figure 13.
Selected scenes from
the film, ranging from
scene one to scene two.



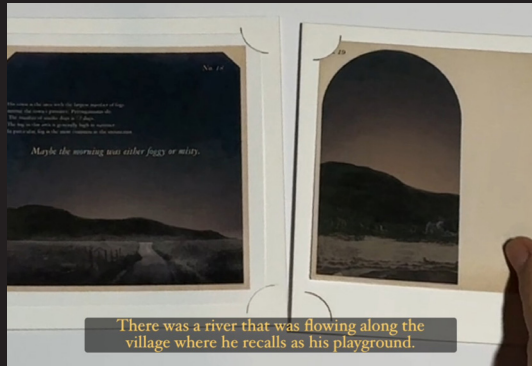
He said there was a cemetery close to the village outskirts.



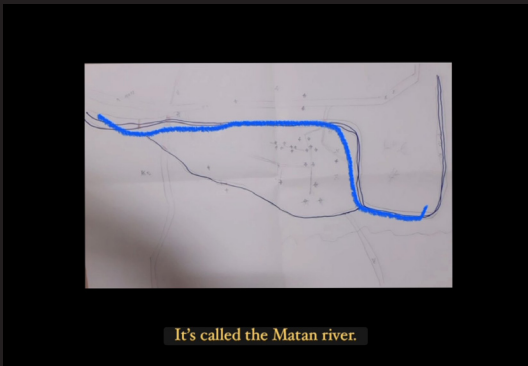
he must have felt he wanted to get out as soon as possible.



he must have felt he wanted to get out as soon as possible.



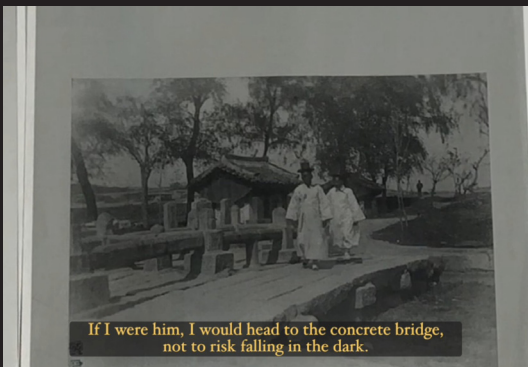
There was a river that was flowing along the village where he recalls as his playground.



It's called the Matan river.



He told me there were two bridges, a concrete one, and a log one.



If I were him, I would head to the concrete bridge, not to risk falling in the dark.



I hope he had the same thought.

SCENE THREE

A grave-yard catches his eyes as he walks. He said there was a cemetery close to the village's outskirts. Walking across the cemetery on a spooky morning, he must have felt he wanted to get out as soon as possible. It seems like he's quickly walking towards a river.

SCENE FOUR

There was a river that was flowing along the village, where he recalls as his playground. It's called the Matan river. It looks dry when I look at the satellite images. He had to pass the river to leave the town, but I'm sure he had to decide which bridge to cross. He told me there were two bridges, a concrete one and a log one. Which one? If I were him, I would head to the concrete bridge not to risk falling in the dark. I hope he did.

Figure 14.

Selected scenes from the film, ranging from scene three to scene four.



Jangseung is a guardian totem believed to protect the village from evil spirits.



But I know that Jangseungs were traditionally placed at the edges of villages.



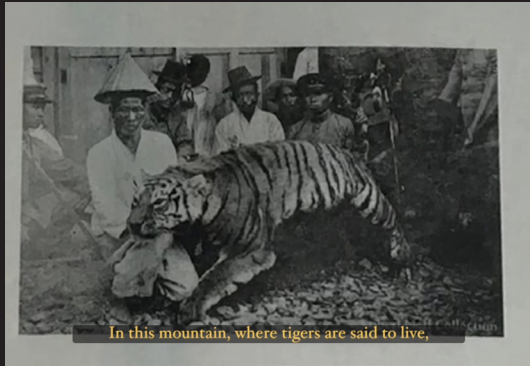
He is standing in front of the forest.



Nevertheless, he cannot hesitate.



It is so silent that he is sensitive to every sound,



In this mountain, where tigers are said to live,



he raises his ears and hurries his steps, wondering where to hide.



he raises his ears and hurries his steps, wondering where to hide.

SCENE FIVE

As he crosses the bridge, Jangseungs are looking at him. Jangseung is a guardian totem believed to protect the village from evil spirits. Many have creepy faces. He didn't tell me he saw Jangseungs, but I know that Jangseungs were traditionally placed at the edges of villages. Some of them must have been watching him.

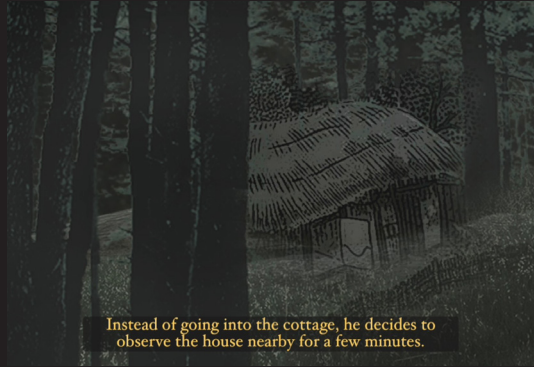
SCENE SIX

He is standing in front of the forest. Inside, it looks dark. Nevertheless, he cannot hesitate. The sun is rising. It's quiet. It is so silent that he is sensitive to every sound, like the sound of the trees rustling in the breeze. Or is it an animal? In this mountain, where tigers are said to live, he raises his ears and hurries his steps. Where to hide?

Figure 15.
Selected scenes from
the film, ranging from
scene five to scene six.



He finds a cottage. It was in the distance.



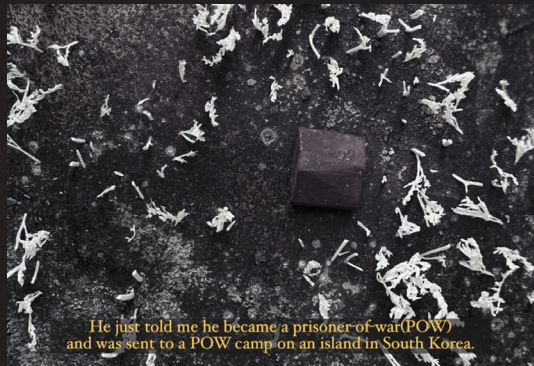
Instead of going into the cottage, he decides to observe the house nearby for a few minutes.



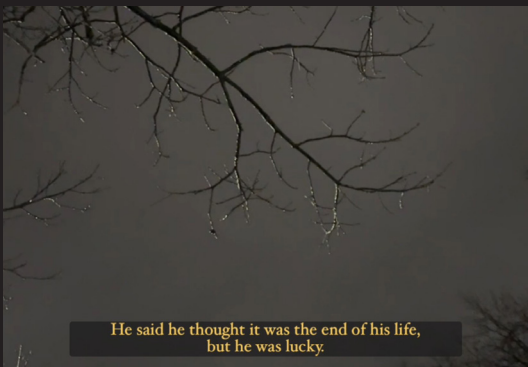
Sunlight hits the ground over the branches.



He roughly sweeps the dust on the floor, and sits on a corner.



He just told me he became a prisoner of war(POW) and was sent to a POW camp on an island in South Korea.



He said he thought it was the end of his life, but he was lucky.



I still don't know why.

SCENE SEVEN

He finds a cottage. It was in the distance. Instead of going into the cottage, he decides to observe the house nearby for a few minutes. Maybe he is wondering if someone is in there.

SCENE EIGHT

The sun comes into the woods. Sunlight hits the ground over the branches. He grabs a dull branch and approaches the house as quiet as possible. It's tricky to see the interior of the house, but no one seems there.

SCENE NINE

Fortunately, no one. Not bad to stay for a week. He roughly sweeps the dust on the floor and sits on a corner. He decides to hang in there until the potatoes run out.

SCENE TEN

Two soldiers came in. One of them pulled a trigger, but the bullet falls on the floor. He said it was the end of his life, but he was lucky.

UNFINISHED SCENES

I don't know where he went after. He just told me he became a prisoner-of-war(POW) and was sent to a POW camp on an island in South Korea. After the ceasefire in 1953, my grandfather decided not to return to the north. I still don't know why. He didn't really want to speak about the campsite. The only thing he told me about this place was that it was a living hell. When the lights were turned off at night, it was a place where death lurked.

Figure 16.
Selected scenes from
the film, ranging from
scene seven to the end.

05

EPILOGUE



Epilogue (2023)

This is where I am so far. I'm still rebuilding, and repairing my memories, and his memories. Recently, my mom told me my story doesn't make sense. What she heard from her father doesn't match with my story.

According to her, my grandfather told her that the government had a strained relationship with his family after the country's liberation and implemented land reform, taking all of their farmland. Additionally, the fact that his brother was forced to join the Japanese army during Japan's occupation of the country caused the government to view their family unfavorably, even though his brother had no choice in the matter. These circumstances caused my grandfather's family to live with uncertainty and fear about their social status, which also put pressure on my grandfather to enlist in the army. My mom told me that my grandfather volunteered to join the North Korean military, which contradicted the story I had pieced together. It's possible that there could be different perspectives or details that could help explain the discrepancy between the two accounts.

Still, the idea of rebuilding my grandfather's hometown has provided me with a deeper understanding of his life. Without his legacy and the pieces of his memories, I may never have learned so many stories about him. Even the fact that his entire family was purged by the country after the ceasefire. None of his family is left in his hometown. It is unclear if he knew about this. One thing for sure is that he was a survivor.

Figure 17.
The ending scene of the film.

All images and text by the author, unless otherwise stated.
The work was produced for the Master of Architecture Thesis
at the MIT School of Architecture and Planning.

To view the video presented in the final review,
please use the following link:
<https://youtu.be/0RLZ9dQAhbc>

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Morrison, Toni. "The Site of Memory." In *Inventing the Truth: The Art and Craft of Memoir*. Edited by William Zinsser. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998.

Otero-Pailos, Jorge, Erik Langdalen, and Thordis Arrhenius. *Experimental Preservation*. Zürich, Switzerland: Lars Müller Publishers, 2016.

Otero-Pailos, Jorge. "Creative Agents." *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2006): ii–vii. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25834981>.

Otero-Pailos, Jorge. "Atmosphere as a Cultural Object," In *Climates : Architecture and the Planetary Imaginary*. Edited by James Graham, Caitlin Blandfield, Alissa Anderson, Jordan Carver, and Jacob R. Moore. New York: Columbia Books on Architecture and the City, 2016.

DeSilvey, Caitlin. *Curated Decay: Heritage beyond Saving*. University of Minnesota Press, 2017. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctt1kgqv5>.

Dooren, Van Thom. "Care | Environmental Humanities | Duke University Press," May 1, 2014. <https://read.dukeupress.edu/environmental-humanities/article/5/1/291/8194/Care>.

Allais, Lucia. *Designs of Destruction: The Making of Monuments in the Twentieth Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018: 1-31.

Allen Stan, "Besides, History (2018): Book Review," *Drawing Matter*, 2018, accessed September 20, 2022, <https://drawingmatter.org/besides-history/>.

Nigro, Georgia, and Ulric Neisser. "Point of View in Personal Memories." *Cognitive Psychology* 15, no. 4 (October 1983): 467–82. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0285\(83\)90016-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/0010-0285(83)90016-6).

Clare Jonas, "Why We Sometimes See Ourselves from Outside in Memories," *That Thinking Feeling*, June 27, 2022, <https://www.thatthinkingfeeling.co.uk/blog/memory-perspective-see-from-outside>.

Birtle, A. *The Korean War: Years of Stalemate, July 1951-July 1953*. University of Michigan Library, 2000.

Nalty, Bernard C. *Stalemate : U.S. Marines from Bunker Hill to the Hook*. Washington, DC: U.S. Marine Corps Historical Center, 2001.

Kim, Oan, Bouillot, Brigitte, director. *The man who paints water drops*. Paraiso Production, 2021. <https://paraisoproduction.fr/film/the-man-who-paints-water-drops/?lang=en>. (accessed December 20, 2022).

"Korea AMS Topographic Maps - Perry-Castañeda Map Collection - UT Library Online," accessed via: <https://maps.lib.utexas.edu/maps/ams/korea/index.html>.

Field, James A. *History of United States Naval Operations, Korea*. Electronic ed. Washington DC: Dept. of the Navy, Naval Historical Center, 2000.

The Library of Congress. "About This Collection | Korean Rare Book Digital Collection | Digital Collections | Library of Congress," accessed via: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/korean-rare-book-collection/about-this-collection/>.

Project, Korean War. "AMS L751 Topographic Maps - Korean War Project," accessed via: <https://www.koreanwar.org/html/korean.war.topo.maps.html>.

Digital Archive @ McMaster University Library. "Korean War Topographic Maps," accessed via: <https://digitalarchive.mcmaster.ca/islandora/object/macrepo:66650>.

"Encyclopedia of Korean Folk Culture," accessed via: <https://folkency.nfm.go.kr/en/main>.

"Internet Archive Search: The Digital Library of Korean Classics," accessed via: <https://archive.org/search.php?query=The+Digital+Library+of+Korean+Classics>.

"National Memorial Museum of Forced Mobilization under Japanese Occupation," accessed via: <https://www.fomo.or.kr/museum/eng/Main.do>.

"North Korean Human Geography," *Integrated information system for separated families* operated by South Korea's Ministry of Unification and the Korean Red Cross. Accessed via: <http://www.cybernk.net/>.

"Stories from the families separated by the Korean War," accessed via: <https://reunion.unikorea.go.kr/reuni/home/brd/storyinfo/list.do?mid=SM00000139>

Hae Chang, Jung. *Photographs from retrospective exhibition of Jung Hae Chang held at the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea*. Accessed via: <https://easygoingway.tistory.com/706>.

Neff, Robert. "Frozen in Time: Pictures Tell Colorful Story of the Past." *Koreatimes*, December 13, 2020. <http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2020/12/721.300702.html>.

Shepherd, Roger. "Matan river, South Pyongan Province, North Korea," September 2, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pVpN5asLZ-E&feature=youtu.be>.

National Archives. "Korean War Records," January 23, 2017. <https://www.archives.gov/research/military/korean-war>.

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig 1. An interior view of my grandfather's apartment, highlighting the couch where we had our conversation
- Fig 2. A map drawn by my grandfather in 2018 based on his memories of his hometown
- Fig 3. Songam-ni, Maengsan, North Korea, Google Earth, 2020
- Fig 4. A photograph of my collection of research materials, including vintage maps and photos
- Fig 5. Hermes, Gertrude. Through the Windscreen. 1929. Drawing. The Trustees of the British Museum. <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P-2003-0602-10>
- Fig 6. A selection of architectural models of my grandfather's hometown.
- Fig 7. A collage of Maengsan black pine forest and a written account of the day my grandfather left his hometown
- Fig 8. Map drawings illustrating my grandfather's potential journey in the past
- Fig 9. The house he used to live(left), the abandoned cottage where he hid(middle), and his apartment where he closed his eyes(right). Model photo by ©Andy Ryan
- Fig 10. House One and visual assumption cards. Model photo by ©Andy Ryan
- Fig 11. Landscape models produced for story-telling. Model photo by ©Andy Ryan
- Fig 12. A film was produced for the reconstructed story. This figure shows a few scenes presented in the "background" part of the movie
- Fig 13. Selected scenes from the film, ranging from scene one to scene two
- Fig 14. Selected scenes from the film, ranging from scene three to scene four
- Fig 15. Selected scenes from the film, ranging from scene five to scene six
- Fig 16. Selected scenes from the film, ranging from scene seven to the end
- Fig 17. The ending scene of the film

APPENDIX

A COLLECTION OF FRAGMENTS OF MEMORIES	76
SELECTED VISUAL ASSUMPTION CARDS	80
FINAL REVIEW	96



Walking farmer with his cow 1957
Photographed by Jung Hee Chang (1907-1986).



Leftan basket
This is a leftan basket he may have used to store potatoes. At the time, this is the most commonly used basket in households.



1900s Traffic Map of Korea 1904
The map shows an arterial road network crossing by my grandfather's hometown, Mungyeong. It is unlikely you will widely used for transportation. Cars, which were the exclusive property of the imperial family or high-level politicians, have gradually spread to the rich, landlords, businessmen, and missionaries since 1910.



Tiger 1949-1950
My grandfather told me that he never saw a tiger in his life but he said he heard tigers lived in the mountains. He could have worried about encountering a tiger during his hide-out in the mountains. A photo of a Korean tiger in the early 20th century. © Dana Hays Collection



A woman walking in a rural town 2003
Although not a street in my grandfather's hometown, this photo gives me an idea of what might grandfather's hometown stream might have looked like.



Log Bridge 2003
This is a scene from a video taken by New Zealand mountaineer Roger Allen Shepherd climbing the main Korean mountain range. Along the mountains, he found you can see Chae-Ong Mountain near my grandfather's hometown. Perhaps, the bridge shown in the above photo might resemble a wood bridge he drew in the map he drew for me.



Farmers walking with a cow on a dirt road
Cauterized Lorn (green dots) at small, conscription-adopting sites, and alert nonmilitary risk-averse (red dots) of former soldier (green dots) and Lorn (green dots) of small, conscription-adopting sites, and alert nonmilitary.



Thatched Houses 1945
A typical Korean middle to lower class house style in the 1950s characterized by ice straw roof. Imagine the house my grandfather had in the mountains would be similar to this.



A prisoner of war deciding where to stay after the war 1953
Upon the ceasefire in 1953, my grandfather decided not to return to the north. I guess he learned something during his stay in the Gap-ri POW camp, and he might have feared for his life after returning to the north. Instead, he chose to stay in the South, although I guess not his hometown. He might have wanted to stay in the South temporarily as he had hopes for Korean unification, which eventually didn't happen before his death.



Repatriation screening of POWs 1952
The United Nations began to screen all of its prisoners to identify those who wished to return to their homelands after the war and those who did not. The screening process approached tensions inside the POW camps, which were already the site of frequent altercations between pro- and anti-Communist prisoners. © National Archives



Q&A for the Joseon Mobilization 1944
It is a question-and-answer manual to calculate the forced recruitment of Koreans, and it is a manual booklet of public officials in charge of conscription published in Japanese and Korean in March 1944 (The Korea Daily News) in February 1944. The question "What is conscription?" and the answer "It is to work according to the order of the state for the Emperor." My grandfather's brother was also a victim of forced conscription, so I think he probably had this booklet at home. © National Memorial Museum of Forced Mobilization under Japanese Occupation



1800s Antique Map of Korea 1800
This is a scarce hand-drawn map of Korea. The map covers all of peninsula Korea including North and South Korea. It notes several geographical features, including Taebaek, Taebaek mountains, islands, etc. My grandfather's hometown's name is also written in the Chinese characters. © 2011, The World Translated by "Trans Mountain"



Napalm Attack in a nearby village May 10, 1951
Napalm, an incendiary weapon, being dropped in Heilsheim town, a village about 25 miles southwest from my grandfather's village. A village with a thatched house and a large field was quickly devastated by the attack.




An aerial view of a typical village with houses and farmland 2000
This is a view from a video taken by New Zealand mountaineer Roger Allen Shepherd climbing the main Korean mountain range. My grandfather's hand-mentioned family owned a sizable rice paddy field around his house.



North Korean prisoners of war with UN soldiers Aug 28, 1950
My grandfather was also a prisoner of war, and thus, I imagine he experienced similar situation as with this photo.




An aerial view of a traditional Korean house 1950-55
Photographed by Han Yongsoo (1933-1999) © Han Yongsoo Foundation




Postcards 1910-1940

My grandfather's brother exchanged postcards with his family while he was in forced conscription. All postcards from forced mobilization areas had to be censored, remember my grandfather telling me that the censors did not speak much about the difficult circumstances or conditions about living in the field. My grandfather didn't even know where the letters were coming from. The photo above shows letters received by a family member in a similar situation from grandfather. I think my grandfather would have received this type of letter.



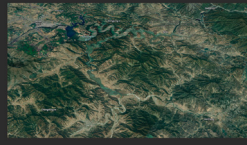
Pumping water 1840-1920

In the map my grandfather drew, there was a ditch. He didn't talk much about it but I guess the scenario that could have happened in a ditch could be something like shown above. A photo of feet farmers pumping water in the early 20th century. © Robert Laiff Collection




Giwos houses around Chokong mountain 2020

This is a scene from a video taken by New Zealand mountaineer Roger Allen Shephard climbing the Maekwan mountain range. Among the mountains he filmed, you can see Chokong Mountain near my grandfather's hometown. Perhaps, the houses shown in the above photo might resemble the houses he lived in the past.




Satellite image around his hometown 2022

This is a satellite image of the location of my grandfather's hometown. Needless to say, it is a mountainous area. Retrieved from Google Earth.




A view of a river village with thatched houses 1920

My grandfather emphasized there was a river flowing along the village. This photo captures what possibly could have been the landscape in my grandfather's hometown.




A bird's eye view of a village from Chok-ong mountain 2020

This is a scene from a video taken by New Zealand mountaineer Roger Allen Shephard climbing the Maekwan mountain range. Among the mountains he filmed, you can see Chok-ong Mountain near my grandfather's hometown.



Day-to-day life of villagers in the 1950s

This photo captures two different types of houses using different roof material. Also, it captures day-to-day life of villagers living in the 1950s.



A winter mountain landscape 1920

Photographed by Jung Hae Chang (1907-1968).




Calendar 1920

During the Japanese colonial period, the solar calendar was implemented more strongly. However, the private sector still preferred the lunar calendar to the solar calendar. The culture of counting the solar and lunar calendar together was strong enough to last until after liberation. My grandfather used the lunar calendar, and sometimes asked me to convert a date on the solar calendar to the lunar calendar. It was always confusing to me.



A vintage map of Maengsan 1920

This map provides an old information on approximate locations of key streets, rivers, and landmarks.




Stone bridge 1920

My grandfather mentioned there were two bridges. One made out of wood, another made out of concrete. This photo shows how bridges in the 1920s looked.




Maengsan Black Pine Forest 1910

Black pine forest is a natural heritage site in North Korea. Around my grandfather's hometown, there is a forest of black pine trees about 200 years old. The height is about 25 m and the diameter about 1 m. The bark is slightly red at first, but as it grows, it gradually becomes grayish brown or greenish black.




Shallow river winding its way through the valley 2020

This is a scene from a video taken by New Zealand mountaineer Roger Allen Shephard climbing the Maekwan mountain range. Among the mountains he filmed, you can see Chokong Mountain near my grandfather's hometown. I think the image of the Maekwan River in front of my grandfather's house was similar to the picture above.




Traditional Education 1920

The course of study in these schools is on a religious foundation. The Korean scriptures—that is, the Confucian Classics—are the chief text-books, and though a woman may come from these schools knowing very little of arithmetic, geography or history, he does know the sagacious faith of his people, and how to conform to its requirements.



Geographical location 1920

My grandfather's hometown is located at 32°51'–32°47' and 127°24'–32°57' north latitude, with an area of 1530 km² and a population of about 10200 (1944-present).



A view of a wood bridge 1920

My grandfather mentioned there were two bridges. One made out of wood, another made out of concrete. This photo shows how bridges in the 1920s looked.



A view from Cheolung mountain 2023
This is a scene from a video taken by New Zealand mountaineer Roger Allen Shepherd climbing the inner Korean mountain range. Among the mountains he filmed, you can see Cheolung Mountain near my grandfather's hometown.



Walking farmer with his cow 1953
Photographed by Jung Hee Chang (1903-1968).



Jungsung (village guardian)
A Jungsung or village guardian is a Korean term pole usually made of wood. Jungsungs were traditionally placed at the edge of villages to mark village boundaries and frighten away demons. They were also embedded as village boundary poles.



North Korean prisoners of war captured by the UN forces Sep 23, 1950
My grandfather was also a prisoner of war, and thus I imagine he experienced similar situations as with this photo.



A group of young girls standing nearby a stream 1953
This is a picture of children and a woman who seemed to be her mother taken by a stream in Mangyong. The woman is washing vegetables, and the children are looking at the camera tentatively.



Map 5 - Hungnam Region, Korea AMS Topographic Map
Prepared by the Army Map Service(P/W), Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army, Washington DC. The original scale of this map is 1:200,000. It is the only map where the name of the hometown and the name on the map match what my grandfather said. It is the only source that can know the location of my grandfather's hometown the most accurately.



Beeper wired basket 1950-1953
During the Korean War, household goods were produced using military waste. The beeper line refers to a military field telephone line, and was used for various living tools such as clothes, baskets, bags, and baskets.



An aerial view of a house from Cheolung Mountains 2023
This is a scene from a video taken by New Zealand mountaineer Roger Allen Shepherd climbing the inner Korean mountain range. Among the mountains he filmed, you can see the site of house currently owned by my grandfather's hometown.



A view of a river village 1953
My grandfather emphasized there was a river flowing along the village. This photo captures what possibly could have been the landscape of my grandfather's hometown.



Family picture 1953
This is a family picture of my grandfather, grandmother, uncle, and my mom. This picture has the youngest son of my grandfather, born possibly 20 years after he left the POW camp.



Pyongyang cold buckwheat noodle (Naeungmyeon)
Naeungmyeon translated as cold noodles in Korean, is my grandfather's favorite dish. He even asked my mom to pick up a cold noodle a few days before he passed away. The dish originates from North Korea, and he said it reminds him of his hometown. He was so picky that he always ordered from one of the best Pyongyang cold buckwheat noodle restaurants in the city, Myon Loo Cha, opened in 1948. He said this place has the closest taste of cold noodles he had back in the days in North Korea.



A notice of repatriation after ceasefire 1953.11.01
The notice posted in Geomje POW camp after the armistice asking the prisoners to decide whether they want to return to the North, or stay in the South, or go to a third country.



Maengsan Black Pine Forest 1953
Black pine forest is a natural heritage in North Korea. Around my grandfather's hometown, there is a forest of black pine trees about 300 years old. The height is about 20 m and the diameter about 1 m. The bark is slightly red at first, but as it grows, it gradually becomes greyish brown or greyish black.



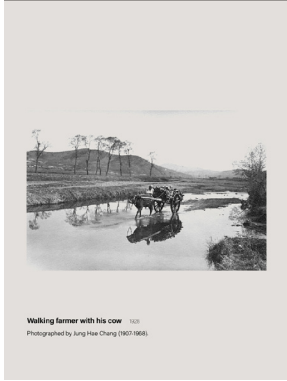
A man with his fish net 1953
This photo shows a tool people used to fish in the 1950s. As my grandfather's hometown also had a river, I believe he would have utilized similar tools to catch fish.



1920-1930s watches in Korea 1930
Watches were luxury goods imported from abroad, especially from Switzerland. In the 1930s, watchmakers were popular as pocket watches, but there were also products that showed their origin to be made from Japan or produced in foreign countries, offering a sense of luxury. As watches became recognized as luxury goods, their popularity increased. A 1922 watch advertisement for "The Swiss Watch Company" made "Watches in Korea" increased sales by stating that "Watches and glasses are not luxury goods, but valuable daily necessities." Watches were luxury goods until 1948.



Crop production
Since there are many mountainous areas here, the agricultural land of Maengsan-gun is mainly fields. The field is 77% and the rice field is 27%. Corn is the basis of grain production, and rice, beans, and soybeans are also grown. The above picture is a picture of rice paddies and fields in Maengsan-gun taken in 1951.

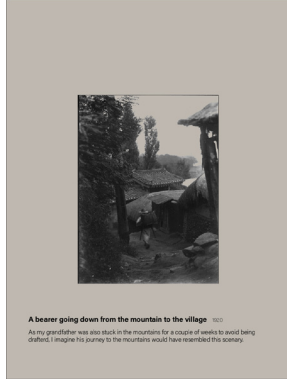


Walking farmer with his cow 1923
Photographed by Jung Hee Chang (1927-1966).

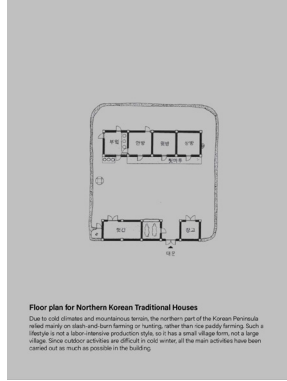


Scene from the documentary "The Great East" made by the City Wall of Lugo.

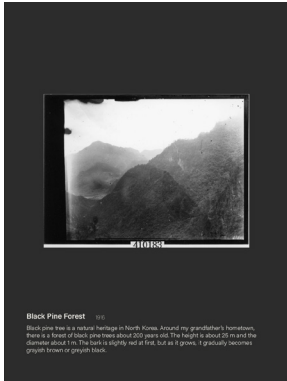
Native Grave Yard 2023
Native grave yard indifferently arranged outside the city wall of Kaifu, known as Gyo-ri-gyeong during the period of Japanese occupation of Korea, now modern city Seoul. My grandfather mentioned there was a grave yard when entering the village.



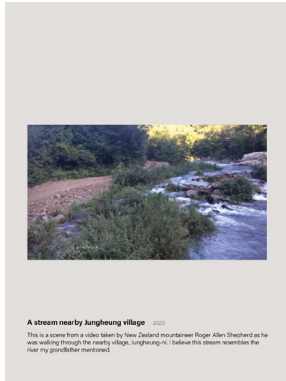
A beaver going down from the mountain to the village 2023
As my grandfather was also stuck in the mountains for a couple of weeks to avoid being drafted, I imagine his journey to the mountains would have resembled this scenery.



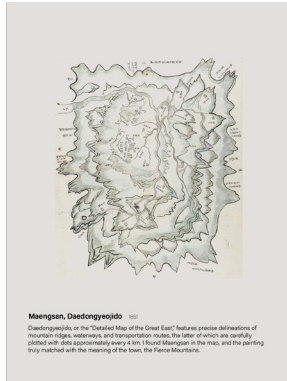
Floor plan for Northern Korean Traditional House
Due to cold climate and mountainous terrain, the northern part of the Korean Peninsula relied mostly on slash-and-burn farming or hunting, rather than rice paddy farming. Such a lifestyle is not a labor-intensive production style, and has a small village form, not a large village. Since outdoor activities are difficult in cold winter, all the main activities have been carried out as much as possible in the building.



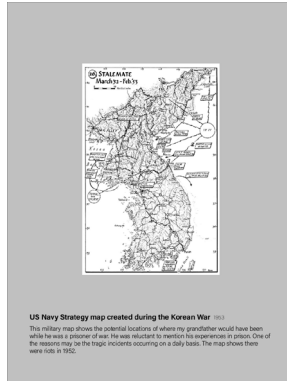
Black Pine Forest 2023
Black pine tree is a natural heritage in North Korea. Around my grandfather's hometown, there is a forest of black pine trees about 200 years old. The height is about 20m and the diameter about 1m. The bark is slightly red at first, but as it grows, it gradually becomes green. Forest of growth back.



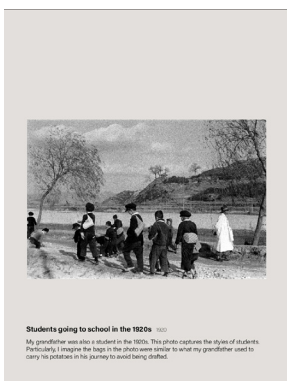
A stream nearby Junghyeung village 2023
This is a scene from a video taken by New Zealand mountaineer Roger Allen Shephard as he was walking through the nearby village, Junghyeung-in. I believe the stream resembles the river my grandfather mentioned.



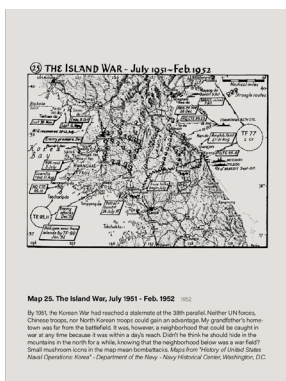
Maengsan, Daedongyejido 2023
Daedongyejido, or the "Detailed Map of the Great East," features precise delineations of mountain ridges, watersheds, and transportation routes, the latter of which are carefully plotted with 0.5km approximations every 1 km. I found Maengsan in the map, and the painting truly captured on the meaning of the term, the Famine Mountains.



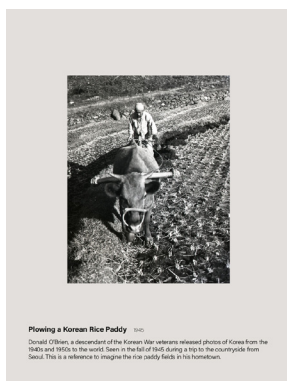
US Navy Strategy map created during the Korean War 1953
This military map shows the potential locations of where my grandfather would have been while he was a prisoner of war. He was reluctant to mention his experience in prison. One of the reasons may be the tragic incidents occurring on a daily basis. The map shows there were lots in 1952.



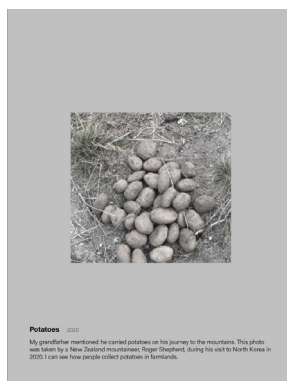
Students going to school in the 1920s 2023
My grandfather was also a student in the 1920s. This photo captures the styles of students. Particularly, I imagine the bags in the photo were similar to what my grandfather used to carry his potatoes in his journey to land-clearing drafted.



May 25, The Island War, July 1951 - Feb. 1952 2023
By 1951, the Korean War had reached its stalemate of the 38th parallel. Neither UN forces, Chinese troops, nor North Korean troops could gain an advantage. My grandfather's hometown was far from the battlefield, now, however, a neighborhood that should be caught in war at any time because it was within a day's reach. Didn't he think he should hide in the mountains in the north for a while, knowing that the neighborhood below was a war field? Small mushroom icons in the map mean bomb attacks. Maps from "History of United States Naval Operations Korea", "Department of the Navy - Navy Historical Center, Washington, D.C."



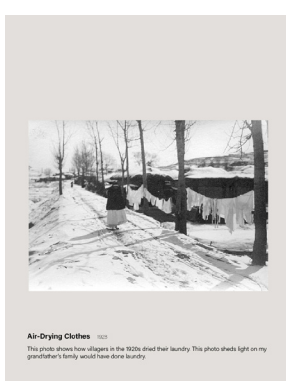
Plowing a Korean Rice Paddy 2023
Donald O'Brien is a descendant of the Korean War veterans released photos of Korea from the 1940s and 1950s to a woman in the fall of 1945 during a trip to the countryside from Seoul. This is a reference to imagine the cow plows fields in his hometown.



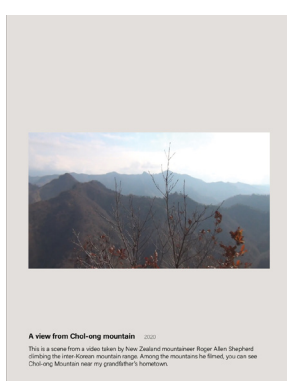
Potatoes 2023
My grandfather mentioned he carried potatoes on his journey to the mountains. This photo was taken by New Zealand mountaineer Roger Shephard, during his visit to North Korea in 2003. You can see how people collect potatoes in mountains.



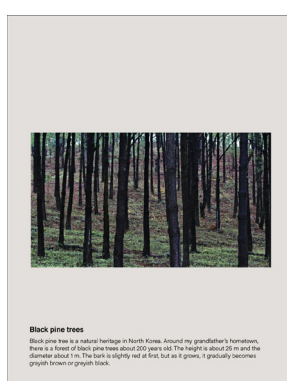
A view from Cholong mountain 2023
This is a scene from a video taken by New Zealand mountaineer Roger Allen Shephard climbing the main Korean mountain range. Among the mountains he filmed, you can see Cholong Mountain near my grandfather's hometown. The steepness tells his journey to the mountains in the past might have been pretty challenging.



Air-Drying Clothes 2023
This photo shows how villagers in the 1920s dried their laundry. This photo sheds light on my grandfather's family would have done laundry.

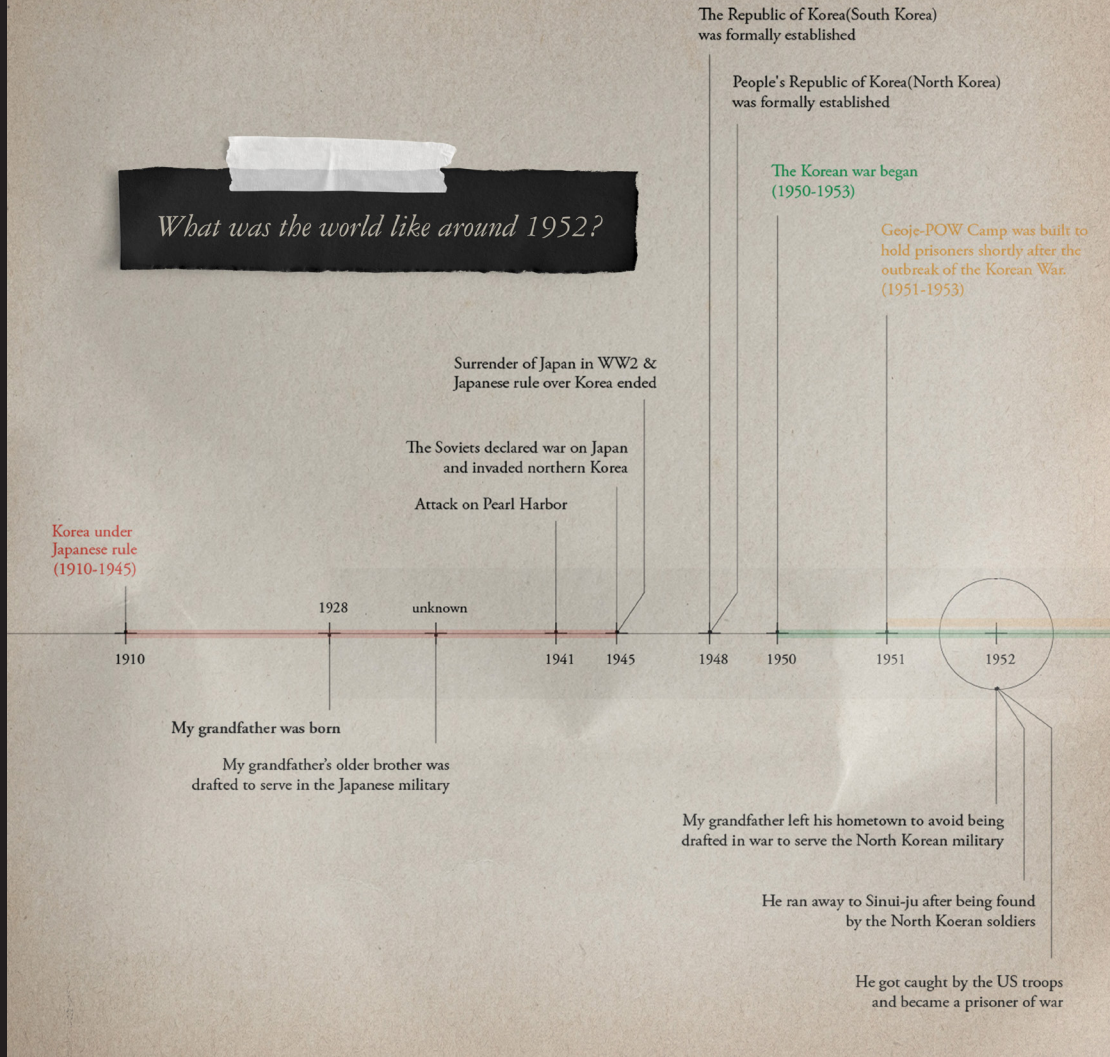


A view from Chol-ong mountain 2023
This is a scene from a video taken by New Zealand mountaineer Roger Allen Shephard climbing the main Korean mountain range. Among the mountains he filmed, you can see Chol-ong Mountain near my grandfather's hometown.



Black pine trees
Black pine tree is a natural heritage in North Korea. Around my grandfather's hometown, there is a forest of black pine trees about 200 years old. The height is about 20m and the diameter about 1m. The bark is slightly red at first, but as it grows, it gradually becomes green. Forest of growth back.

What was the world like around 1952?



No. 5



*The place where his journey starts might have taken place at his house.
He said his house was in front of the river.
According to his map, there are four houses that are in front of the river.*

No. 6



Possiblty, one of these was his house.

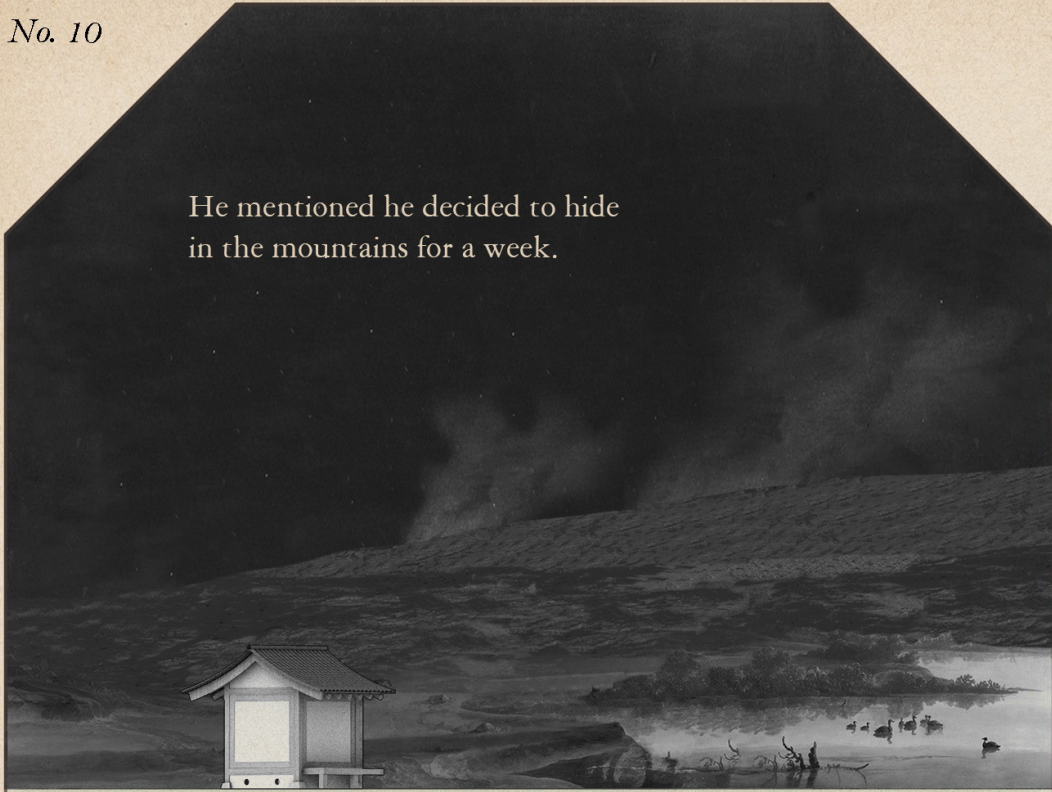
He said his town was surrounded by mountains.

As I look at the satellite images, it seems like any direction would have led him to the mountains.

Maybe I can draw some of the ways/paths that my grandfather might have taken in the past.

No. 10

He mentioned he decided to hide
in the mountains for a week.



How was he so sure that it would take a week for him to hide?

Perhaps, he planned his hide-out in advance.

No. 17 -1

The journey
heading
to the
mountains

What time did he leave the house?



No. 17-2

*The journey
heading
to the
mountains*

*To avoid being seen, he might have wanted to leave during night.
Or perhaps, early in the morning.
He could have woken up earlier than usual.
But, did he have a clock or an alarm? I guess no..*



No. 18-1

How did he wake up?

By any chance, did he have a clock?

Pocket watch was available in the 1920s-1930s. Watches were luxury goods imported from abroad, especially Switzerland.

But, pocket watches do not have an alarm function.

I guess he heard the birds chirping or roosters crowing.

roosters?



birds?



No. 18-2

*When did he
wake up?*

*If birds or roosters
were waking people up,
maybe he left
during the sunrise..*

When do birds start chirping?

Birds wake up so early,
and every morning,
30-90 minutes prior to sunrise.



No. 19

*When did he
wake up?*



Birds wake up as they sense daylight.
I guess he might have heard birds singing.

No. 21

It must have been pretty dark outside.



No. 22

Maybe the morning was either foggy or misty.



No. 26

*The moment
he was about
to leave
his
house*



What was the last look of his house?
He must have turned on the light...? Perhaps there was no electricity.

No. 40



*He said he had to cross
the river to get out of the town.*

*He told me there were two
bridges, a concrete one and
a wood one.*

*Which one? It must have been so
dark outside. He might have not
wanted to trip off his steps in
the dark.*

No. 44-1

Heading to
the Black
Pine
Forest

What would be the next scene?

*Maybe he was approaching to the woods.
It must have been feared to walk into the dark
forest. The forest must have been so quiet that
he was sensitive to every sound.*



No. 44-2

In the woods



*In this mountain, where tigers are said to live,
I bet he hurried to find a shelter.*

No. 45



*He mentioned he found
an abandoned cottage.*

*How did he know it was
abandoned?*

