



House of Missionary Morris: The Oldest Building in Yonsei University (Built in 1918 and Designated as Registered Cultural Heritage No. 701)

Sung Ku Ahn¹, Sang Baek Koh², Solam Lee^{1,2}, and Jong Won Yoon³

Departments of ¹Dermatology and ²Preventive Medicine, Yonsei University Wonju College of Medicine, Wonju; ³Purchasing and Property Management Team, Wonju Severance Christian Hospital, Wonju, Korea.

OVERVIEW

Wonju district was a mission site of the North Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in 1907 and the North Methodist Episcopal Church in 1909. Initially founded by the South Methodist Episcopal Church, the Wonju-eup Church became a mission site through a comity agreement. Although the North Methodist Episcopal Church purchased the land property comprising an area of about 20000 pyeong (66115 m²), no missionary settled down in Wonju at the time. Consequently, by 1916, the mission had been carried out by administrative missionaries (Deming, Beck, and Noble) who traveled from Gyeongseong (present-day Seoul) to Wonju once or twice a year. Eventually, a medical missionary named Albin Garfield Anderson (A.G. Anderson) founded the Swedish Methodist Hospital in 1913 and became the first settler in Wonju. By 1917, Charles David Morris (暮理是), a salvationist, was dispatched to Wonju as a Methodist district superintendent.¹

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

The following are the architectural characteristics of the House of Missionary Morris building based on the 2013 Safety Assessment Report and the 2016 Cultural Heritage Inspection Report:^{2,3}

Received: April 27, 2021 **Accepted:** May 4, 2021

Corresponding author: Sung Ku Ahn, MD, PhD, Department of Dermatology, Yonsei University Wonju College of Medicine, 20 Ilsan-ro, Wonju 26426, Korea.
Tel: 82-33-741-0621, Fax: 82-33-748-2650, E-mail: ahnsk@yonsei.ac.kr

•The authors have no potential conflicts of interest to disclose.

© Copyright: Yonsei University College of Medicine 2021

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0>) which permits unrestricted non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

“House of Missionary Morris is a two-story building with an area of 86.47 m² and a height of 6.44 m, including the basement. Its masonry structures were built using a Dutch method to pile up bricks. With the middle floor and roof of the building both made of wood, the best characteristics of the house include the outer walls of the living room and parlor protruding in a half-hexagonal shape from the exterior of the red brick walls, the belt course between floors acting as a single decorative layer, the round windows vertically lined up on the side-walls near the entrance, and the flat arch on the upper part of the walls” (Fig. 1).

BIOGRAPHY OF MISSIONARY MORRIS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE BUILDING

Charles David Morris was born in Ireland in 1869, and he migrated to the United States of America in 1888. After graduating from the Drew Theological Seminary (currently Drew University), he was dispatched on a mission to South Korea as a member of the North Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States in 1900. In 1903, he married Louise Ogilvy, who was the first teacher of American missionary children in Pyeongyang, and they gave birth to two children in Joseon. From 1900 to 1916, he served as a salvationist across Yeongbyeon, Hwanghae-do, and Pyongyang, devoting himself to preaching the gospel and educating others. He was then assigned to Wonju as a salvationist, given how his predecessor, Bak Wonbaek, decided to take time off from work. Since he was not yet given a formal residence, he lived in the house (built in 1913) of the medical missionary, A.G. Anderson, who took a sabbatical during that time. The House of Missionary Morris was then built in October 1918. As a missionary, Morris served in the areas of Gyeonggi-do (Icheon, Yeosu, and Janghowon), Chungcheong-

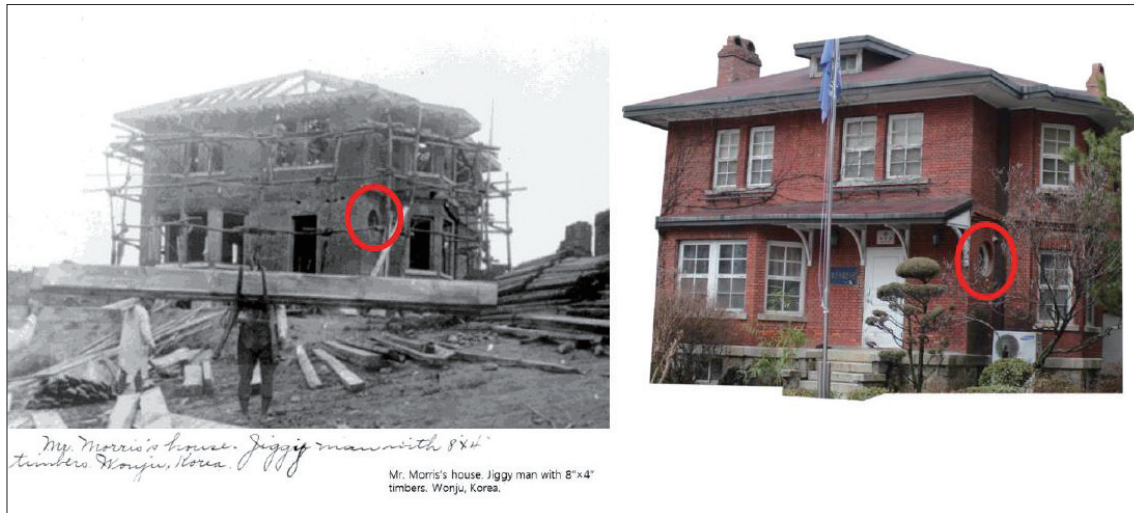


Fig. 1. The House of Missionary Morris under construction (left) and its present-day appearance (right). Note that the circular windows (red-highlighted) and the other windows are identical in the both picture.

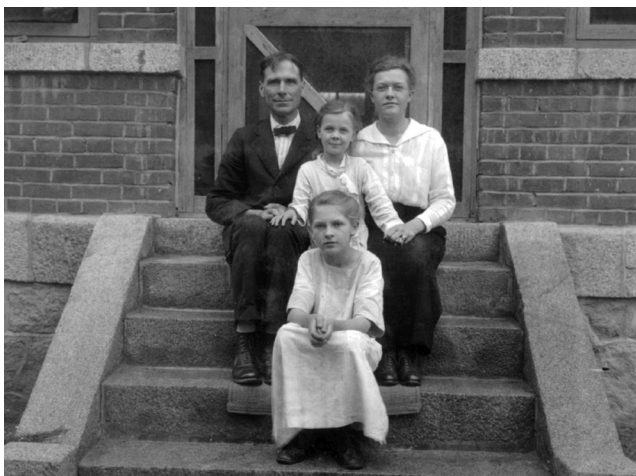


Fig. 2. A family photo of Missionary Morris (taken in 1917 at the entrance to the house of A.G. Anderson).

do (Jecheon, Chungju, Mokgye, and Danyang), and Gangwondo (Wonju, Munmak, Hoengseong, Yeongwol, Pyeongchang, Gangneung, and Samcheok). Swamped with heavy workload, he was later diagnosed with stomach cancer. He underwent surgery in Severance Hospital and died in January 1927. Morris's final resting place is in Yanghwajin. Even after her husband's death, Mrs. Morris (暮邊儀, Louis Ogilvy, on a mission from 1900 to 1940) led the missionary work as a kindergarten and Christian Women's Hall director. She also acted on behalf of a local pastor. In 1940, she returned the United States after having a farewell party at Wonju-eup Church (Fig. 2).

Since Morris's death, the House of Missionary Morris has been used as a gathering place for members of the Wonju-eup Church (Table 1). After the Korean War, it was used as a private residence for missionaries, hospital presidents, deans, and professors. In 2005, it was transformed into the Ilsan Museum

Table 1. Functions of the House of Missionary Morris

1918–1927:	Used as a house by Missionary Morris
1928–1940:	Used as a place for bible study, residence for believers, and a kindergarten
1956–1970:	Used as a house for Missionary Jack Aebersold
1978–1980:	Used as a lounge and a residence for guest lecturers when Wonju College of Medicine, Yonsei University was founded
1981–1995:	Used as a house for hospital presidents, deans, and professors of Wonju College of Medicine, Yonsei University
1999–2002:	Underwent repair and renovation
2005–Present:	Used as the Ilsan Museum of Historical Records

of Historical Records (Fig. 3).

DESIGNATION AS A REGISTERED CULTURAL HERITAGE

Dr. Sung Ku Ahn, a dermatologist from Yonsei University Wonju College of Medicine in 1991, became curious about the house of missionary Morris when he was still a student intern in pediatrics and OB/GYN until he became a resident in anatomical pathology and dermatology. He lived on the first floor (built with a round window) of Yeongbingwan Hall (present-day House of Missionary Morris) for 3 years when he served as a research lecturer of dermatology in 1991.

By the mid-2010s, neither the university and hospital staff nor the Wonju First Methodist Church members knew about the origin of this building. Dr. Ahn came across A.G. Anderson's photographs of the round windows, lumber lengths, building shape, etc., as well as his letter to Dr. F.M. North (Fig. 4),⁴ the director of finance of the North Methodist Episcopal Church, as he collected materials for a book published in 2013 to celebrate the 110th anniversary of the Swedish Methodist



Fig. 3. The house of missionary Morris being used for various church events and gatherings.

Hospital. He also found several photos of the building with round windows from a photographic collection commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Wonju First Methodist Church.¹

<https://doi.org/10.3349/ymj.2021.62.6.475>

Dear Dr. North

Wonju, Chosen

Nov. 8th, 1918

We wish we could tell you how much it means to have Mr. and Mrs. Morris with us in the work here. They have both taken hold of the work with vigor and have already accomplished a good deal, which is a matter of great encouragement to us in our work, and then of course the social side of it is a blessing to us. The residence for Morris' is completed now, and they have a very satisfactory building. The work is well done, and the appearance of the house is very good, and the accommodations and comforts are very satisfactory. The only fault to find, if any, is that the study is rather small, and that perhaps is not a serious matter. The extra money you sent for the building was surely worth while, and has been well spent. Without that money, things that were really necessary would have been lacking, and Morris' appreciate that fact, too. Personally, I am glad that Wonju is still on the map of Methodist Missions, and I hope it will continue to be.

Very cordially yours,

A. Asfield Anderson

Fig. 4. A.G. Anderson's letter to Dr. F.M. North (written in November 1918).

In 2015, it was proven that the building was constructed in 1918 with an inspection by the Cultural Heritage Administration, as well as through the collection, analysis, and discussion on cadastral maps from 1916 and 1945 in collaboration with Bak Jongsu (Division of Culture and Art, Wonju City), Seo Gyoha (Architect), and Yun Jongwon (Corporate Relations Department). After being recognized for its value as a modern Korean cultural heritage, the house was officially designated as Registered Cultural Heritage No. 701 (residence for Wonju Medicine Missionaries) in 1917. The House of Missionary Morris is the oldest existing building in Yonsei University.⁵

Year of construction: Stimson Hall (1920), Pinson Hall (1922), Appenzeller Hall (1924), Underwood Hall (1925), Underwood House (1926)

ORCID iDs

Sung Ku Ahn <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0978-9426>
 Sang Baek Koh <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5609-6521>
 Solam Lee <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6458-9449>
 Jong Won Yoon <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9528-3186>

REFERENCES

1. Choi HY. Photographic collection to celebrate 110 years of Wonju First Methodist Church. Wonju: Wonju First Methodist Church; 2015.
2. Hong IS. An experimental study on Ilsan Museum of Historical Records, Wonju College of Medicine, Yonsei University. Wonju: Wonju city; 2016.
3. Yonsei University Wonju College of Medicine. A detailed safety assessment report on Yeongbingwan Hall, Wonju College of Medi-

- cine. Wonju: Hankook Consulting Structural Engineers; 2000.
4. Anderson AG (Severance Union Medical College, Wonju, Chosen). Letter to: Dr. F.M. North (director of finance of the North Methodist Episcopal Church, New York, USA). 1918 Nov 8.
 5. Ahn SK, Lee I. Connect truth and freedom through life. Wonju: Yonsei University Wonju Museum; 2019.