

**Commercial Signs in Hangeul
and Transliterated Korean
from Tappan New York to Closter New Jersey**

A Catalog by Charles Turner

Summer 2018

*Commercial Signs in Hangul and Transliterated Korean
from Tappan New York to Closter New Jersey*

With heartfelt thanks to my wife Alexandria.

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ISBN:

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Introduction

Bergen County New Jersey, which lies west and north of New York City, is home to the largest concentration of Koreans in the United States. Of the top ten U.S. municipalities with Korean-American populations, all can be found in Bergen County. Palisades Park is the largest, and Fort Lee is perhaps the best known. Of the other communities in this catalog, Norwood is fourth with a 24% share of its population, Closter ranks fifth with 22%, and Northvale is 18% Korean-American, making it ninth. Old Tappan is 12% at fifteenth.

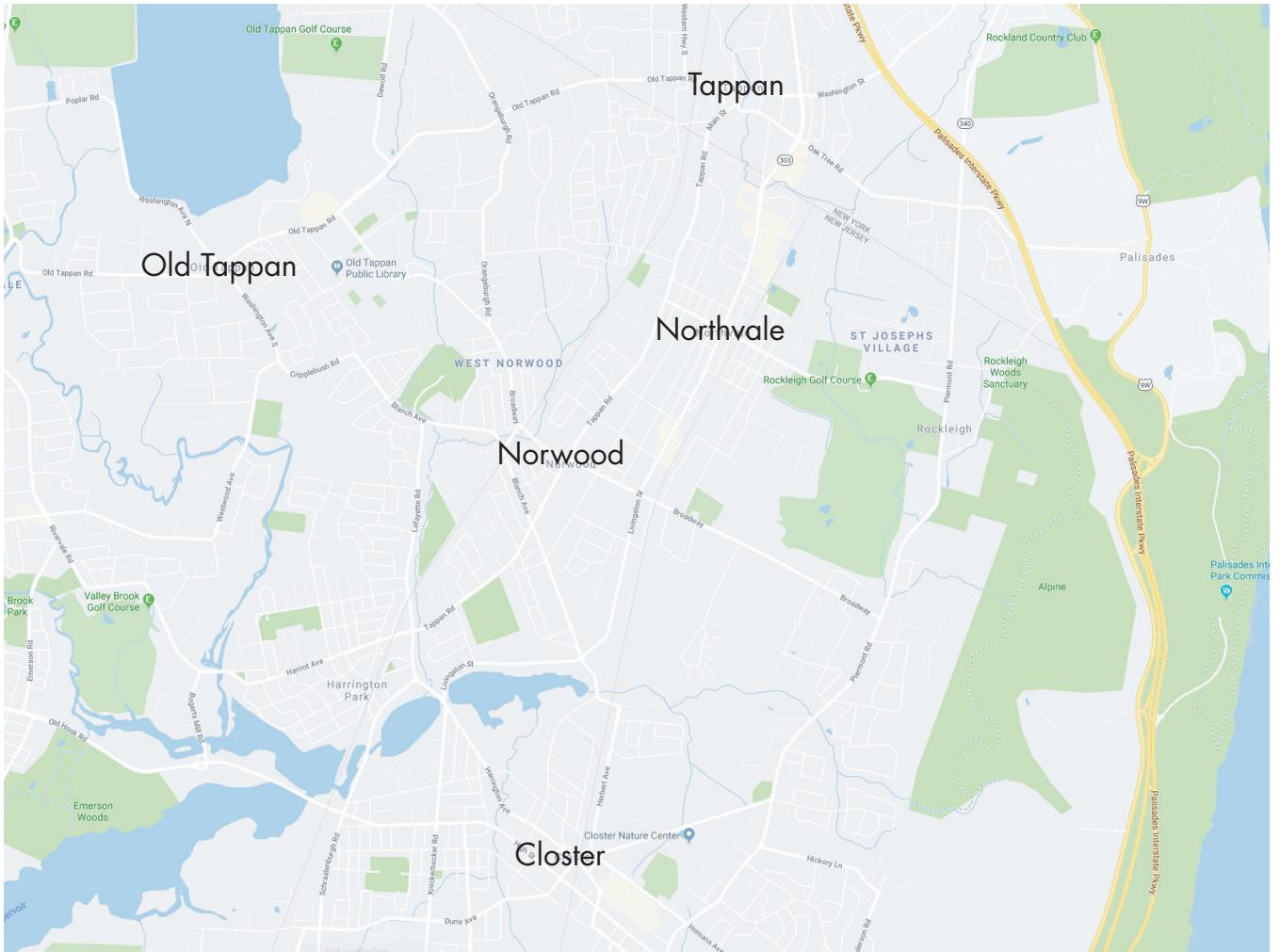
From 1986 to 2004, I lived in Rockland County New York, which lies just above Bergen County, and begins New York State's turn westward. In the early 1990s, I had discovered a Korean supermarket affiliated with the Independent Grocers' Association (IGA) in Northvale, which was a fifteen minute trip by car south from my house. In the intervening years, smaller Korean markets and caterers opened shop in Northvale, but by the turn of the millennium, the IGA had gone, and perhaps these other businesses headed south to Norwood, whose business district is currently undergoing a renovation, as can be seen by the front and back cover photos of this catalog. Rockland County might mark the northernmost reach of Korean communities in the New York area, as it begins to approach the 45-minute commute circle from Manhattan. Tappan, just across the state line from Northvale for example, has only 4% of its population claiming Korean ancestry. Leaving Bergen County New Jersey also means leaving its excellent public school system.

Signs exhibit strong force in the landscape. Especially in the urban environment, our eyes are so often led down the street by signs which bear commercial or regulatory messages. These signs collapse our perceptions of space, landscape and architecture to literate dimensions, capturing our attention without regard for our interest. The landscape so often becomes a reading experience.

Signs have been a point of contention in Flushing Queens New York, a topic which has been covered by the *New York Times* since about 2001. Originally complaints arose from the earlier White residents, who felt that Korean business signs' use of Hangul excluded them from Flushing's shopping district. Laws exist in New York State that require English on signs, but given that Korean businesses largely rescued Flushing from its derelict state in the 1980s, these laws go mostly unenforced. Additionally, the laws don't appear to address the issue of transliteration, which would qualify as readable English, but would be hardly any more understandable to the wider public. These language issues also cast wide net, and draw sympathy from those who recall similar discrimination with regard to Yiddish signs on the Lower East Side of Manhattan in the early 1900s, or contemporaneously, in Brighton Beach Brooklyn with its Cyrillic signs advertising the Russian businesses there.

The suburban environment of Bergen and Rockland counties, home to U.S. headquarters for the likes of Samsung, LG Corporation and Hanjin Shipping, is by contrast more relaxed and affluent. My selection of signs is not exhaustive. Sharp observers will note the absence of Korean church signs, and the many business signs that give no clue to their Korean proprietorship. I have not scoured the landscape for every Korean business, but have concentrated on the ones most visible on the main roads running through these counties. In another sense, it's the auto route I travel twice a week from my home in Manhattan, and these signs greet me along the way.

The requirement for inclusion in the catalog was the display of Korean characters (Hangul), or transliterated Korean that either named or described the business. Local U.S. commercial properties, building practices and sign fabrication methods are certainly different in character from those in Korea, and it is in the use of the Korean language on signs that sets the businesses in this catalog off from the rest. This is—to my mind—the strongest mark of Korean culture on this North American suburban landscape.



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Pulmuone Wildwood Incorporated
30 Rockland Park Avenue
Tappan, New York 10983



Bulkwang Zen Center
104 Route 303
Tappan, New York 10983



Woori America Bank
234 Closter Dock Road
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Woo H T, CPA
550 Durie Avenue
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Woo "Michelle" Choi - Realty7 L.L.C.
41.02260, -73.96055 Old Tappan Road
Old Tappan, New Jersey 07675



Dr. Chung's Medical Office
469 Livingston Street
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



Bo Orthodontics
269 Livingston Street
Northvale, New Jersey 07647



Crystal Dental
474 Livingston Street
Norwood, New Jersey 07648

Wee's Physical Therapy & Pain Clinic
474 Livingston Street
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



ARTCOM Art School
450 Livingston Street
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



Beautiful Hair Club
463 Livingston Street
Norwood, New Jersey 07648

One Art Studio Art School
463 Livingston Street
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



Ewha Music School
3 Lewis Street
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Hyun Music School
251 Closter Dock Road
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Tae Poong Tae Kwan Do
216 Old Tappan Rd
Old Tappan, New Jersey 07675



Yong In Elite Tae Kwan Do
553 Livingston Street
Norwood, New Jersey 07648

To Sok Chon Korean Food Specialists
559 Livingston Street
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



Sae Shim Kumdo Academy
540 Livingston Street
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



Kumdo Academy Sung Moo
570 Piermont Road
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Poochie Pet Spa
463 Livingston Street
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



deWet Water Supplier
565 Livingston Street
Norwood, New Jersey 07648

Jeong Beauty Salon
567 Livingston Street
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



Nou Belle Collections
466 Livingston Street
Norwood, New Jersey 07648

Lucy Hair
464 Livingston Street
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



Forever Young Cosmetics
463 Livingston Street,
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



KaKa BoKa Beauty Salon
257 Closter Dock Road
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Hye Kim Hair
536 Livingston Street
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



Dong Yang Barber Shop
570 Piermont Road
Closter, New Jersey 07624



BoBo's Hair Salon
247 Closter Dock Road
Closter, New Jersey 07624



New Hair Event Salon
227 Closter Dock Road
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Kahee Beauty Salon
570 Piermont Road
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Woori Mart Supermarket
206 Pegasus Avenue
Northvale, New Jersey 07647



[Um Ni] Umny Market
571 Livingston Street
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



Doorebak Caterers
218 Closter Dock Road
Closter, New Jersey 07624



[Nulboneh Banquet] Young's Foods
461 Livingston Street
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



Dduk Bo Ne
563 Livingston Street
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



Gateaux Bakery and Café
570 Piermont Road
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Yedang Traditional Confections
570 Piermont Road
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Cocohodo Walnut Pastry Café
255 Closter Dock Road
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Tappan Sushi & Sashimi
205 Oak Tree Road
Tappan, New York 10983



Ewha Won Chinese Korean Restaurant
570 Piermont Road
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Go Ba Woo Korean Barbeque
4 Route 303
Tappan, New York 10983



Spring Korean Restaurant
221 Closter Dock Road
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Garden [Banquet] Kitchen Restaurant
542 Livingston Street
Norwood, New Jersey 07648



Hwe Sarang Sushi
209 Closter Dock Road
Closter, New Jersey 07624

Kulpi Chicken Restaurant
211 Closter Dock Road
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Homung Nangmyun Cold Noodle House
570 Piermont Road
Closter, New Jersey 07624



Myung Ga Tofu Restaurant
 570 Piermont Road
 Closter, New Jersey 07624

