

## **The Old Shimomura Family Residence**

Judging by the use of nails in the structure, the Old Shimomura Family Residence was most likely constructed late in the Edo period (1603–1867).

The residence is one of only a few in Shiotatsu built in the *kudozukuri* style, characterized by a thatched roof shaped like a C when viewed from above. The front of the building facing the main road is relatively narrow because facades taking up less frontage resulted in lower taxes for the resident. Instead, the building extends lengthwise. The C-shaped design, built around a small garden in the middle of the property, allows light to enter the long-narrow structure.

The building started out as a *konnyaku* (konjac) shop before being converted to a shipping business during the Taisho era (1912–1926), and finally to a bicycle store in the Showa era (1926–1989).

Shimomura Ryukichi, the patriarch of the Shimomura family, was revered in Shiotatsu for devising a system to secure a source of drinkable water and transport the water to residents, a service of particular importance in an era when personal hygiene was a challenge. A monument was erected in honor of his achievements in 1955.

The building was donated to the city of Ureshino in 2007 and is currently used as a place for cultural exchange related to Shiotatsu. It was designated an Important Cultural Property of the city on July 1, 2008.