

## **Former Nagasaki Customs, Miike Branch**

In the late 1800s, coal from Miike Coal Mine was carried to ports in Nagasaki and Kumamoto, then exported to Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Singapore. When Mitsui Group opened its own port in Miike in 1908 to ship coal directly, a branch of the Nagasaki Customs Office was established at the new port to expedite the export process.

The customs building is a one-story, 124.4-square-meter wooden structure with a hip-and-gable roof. Inside is a reception area, main office, guest room, and filing room. After customs operations moved to a new building in 1965, the building was used as a port office; it was later sold to a private company and became a warehouse.

The building was derelict when the city of Ōmuta acquired it. In 2012, it was completely dismantled and rebuilt using as much of the original materials as possible. The chandeliers are period-appropriate replicas. The

building has been repainted in its original colors of white and blue.

The former customs house has been designated a Tangible Cultural Property by Fukuoka Prefecture, and the land it stands on is a National Historic Site. It is open to the public on weekends and public holidays. In 2015, it was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site as part of Miike Port.