Kumamoto University Memorial Museum of the Fifth High School exhibits documents concerning the Fifth High School’s history, education, student life, and graduates. The present museum building was constructed in 1889 as the Fifth High (Higher-Middle) School’s main classroom building. In 1969, the museum building was designated as a national important cultural property, together with the chemical laboratory and the front gate.

About the Fifth High School

From 1886 to 1887, Japan was divided into five school districts, each of which established a state-run higher middle school bearing its school district number as its name. In 1894, these schools became high schools. The high schools aimed to provide preparatory education to boys advancing to imperial universities and to give specialized education in medicine, law, and engineering. The combined enrollment capacity of the imperial universities was almost equivalent to that of the high schools. Following the educational system reforms in 1950, old system high schools were merged into imperial universities and other higher education institutions to form our present-day universities, thus ending their long history.
History of the Fifth High School

1887  April  Kumamoto is chosen as the site of the Fifth Higher Middle School.

1887  August  The Faculty of Medicine is established in Nagasaki.

1890  November  The first entrance ceremony is held.

1890  September  Kazuhisa Akizuki begins teaching Japanese and Classical Chinese Literature.

1891  October  The grand opening ceremony of the school is held.

1891  August  Ministry of Education Councillor, Jigoro Kano, the founder of judo, is appointed the third principal.

1894  November  Lafcadio Hearn begins teaching English and Latin.

1896  September  The school is renamed the Fifth High School.

1896  April  Natsume Kinnoike (Natsume Soseki) begins teaching English.

1897  April  The Faculty of Engineering is established.

1901  April  The Faculty of Medicine becomes autonomous and is renamed the Nagasaki School of Medicine.

1906  March  The Faculty of Engineering becomes autonomous and is renamed the Kumamoto Higher Technical School.

1921  April  Graduation procedures are revised to March and admissions to April.

1937  October  The school celebrates its 50th anniversary.

1943  October  A send-off party for 47 students departing for the war front is held.

1945  August  World War II ends.

1948  March  The final announcement of the examination results. Four female students are admitted for the first time.

1950  March  The Fifth High School is officially abolished.