



Hampden (Images of America)

Evelyn Griggs Schoolcraft

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Originally part of Springfield's outward commons, Hampden was called Wilbraham and then South Wilbraham until it was incorporated as Hampden in 1878. Its main street parallels the peaceful Scantic River, surrounded by mountains that lend a sense of mystery to this lovely New England village. By harnessing the Scantic's energy, this farming community became a booming mill town in the 1800s. When plans to build a railroad for transporting products from mills and quarries failed, industry collapsed. The town reverted back to farming and later became a bedroom community.

Hampden brings readers back to the days when world-renowned Thornton W. Burgess wrote his Peter Rabbit books beside Laughing Brook and when Maude Tait, pioneer aviatrix whose speed record beat Amelia Earhart's, taught school in Hampden. The book tells the exciting stories of the people and places that formed the town, such as the early workers, businessmen, preachers, and teachers. Included in Hampden are early photographs of parades and plays, picnics and personalities, and the way of life before the advent of modern transportation, communication, and manner of business.

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