

## Hampden County Registry of Deeds

The Hampden County Registry of Deeds is a recording office for real estate instruments affecting title to property located in the five cities and eighteen towns of Hampden County. The main purpose of recording is to protect prospective purchasers by providing a means of establishing the status of title to real property.



### ABOUT HAMPDEN COUNTY REGISTRY OF DEEDS

- Real estate instruments recorded in the Registries include deeds, homesteads, liens, mortgages, takings, etc.
- The total amount of money spent on real estate in Hampden County in 2005 was \$1,970,601,690.00— an increase of 14.2% over the prior year.
- The total number of documents recorded in 2005 was 122,837
- The amount of fees collected was \$22,213,594.00

The State of Massachusetts has taken a proactive interest in records digitization. The state set aside funding that can be allocated for projects targeted for scanning. Hampden County Registry of Deeds presented a proposal and the funding was secured to digitize their archived records. They leased the Kirtas APT BookScan 1200 through a preferred leasing company that is pre-approved by the State, which helped to streamline the acquisition process.

Prior to the acquisition of the APT BookScan 1200, Hampden had been using flat bed scanners to capture and archive bound documents, which was time consuming and laborious. "What used to take three days now takes one," according to Donald Ashe, the county's Register. "In just three short weeks the operation of the Kirtas APT BookScan 1200 has already demonstrated its ability to streamline our book scanning requirements. Our error ratio has decreased from 5 percent to less than 1 percent while our efficiency has increased by 75 percent."

Ashe continues, "With thousands of older documents that must be scanned into our database, the advanced page turning technology of the APT BookScan 1200 will substantially reduce our costs while dramatically decreasing the time it takes to achieve our document imaging needs."

Hampden County has slated approximately 20,000 bound documents for digitization. These include deeds and other real estate related documents dating back to 1636. And while OCR conversion of these documents is possible, with Kirtas BookScan Editor, the robust image processing software that is bundled with the robotic scanner, the ability to create a comprehensive indexing scheme makes document acquisition quick and efficient.

Once Hampden County's backlog of documents is digitized, the Registry of Deeds plans to offer the service to other municipal departments within the county, which will further increase Massachusetts' return on investment.



Springfield, in Hampden County, Massachusetts at the turn of the last century. The Hampden County Registry of Deeds is helping to bring Springfield and its four other cities and eighteen towns into the next century— at least as far as accessing real estate instruments affecting title to property is concerned.

