

First Church History Fact Sheet: Hannah Shuttleworth

Hannah Shuttleworth was the daughter of Jeremiah Shuttleworth, the first postmaster for Dedham. He kept the post office in his general store for more than 40 years at the junction of High and Church Street. Hannah was born in 1800 and at 16 years of age she was taken in by her uncle and godfather Dr. Nathaniel Ames. She lived with Nathaniel as a companion to his wife and a housekeeper until his death in 1822. After he had provided for his wife, Nathaniel left the bulk of his fortune to Hannah.

Hannah invested the her inheritance wisely and devoted herself to helping needy neighbors. She became interested in Dedham history by reading Dr. Ames' diaries and joined the Dedham Historical Society when it was founded in 1855. When she died at the ripe age of 88 years, she bequeathed the Shuttleworth house, land and \$10,000 to establish the Dedham Historical Society in 1886. She also gave her collection of historical books, pamphlets and documents that became the basis of the Dedham Historical Society's archive. In addition, Hannah willed \$10,000 to build the main branch of the Dedham Public Library. The remainder of her estate was given to the town as a fund for the poor. The Shuttleworth fund still gives out funds to the needy, for example to families facing homelessness.