



## GET STARTED LETTERBOXING!

*Try this family fun activity! Get clues to find hidden letterboxes. It is a great, very inexpensive hobby to enjoy!*

### **What is letterboxing?**

Letterboxing is an intriguing pastime combining artistic ability with "treasure-hunts" in parks, forests, and cities around the world. Participants seek out hidden letterboxes by cracking codes and following clues. Small boxes are hidden in various locations--usually outdoors, though many are planted indoors as well--and the creator of the box will release clues so others can go out and find them later. The box is expected to have a logbook that finders can log into and a unique stamp, usually hand-carved, that the finder can stamp into their own personal logbook as a record of all the letterboxes they've found. Most letterboxers have a unique stamp to represent themselves, called a signature stamp, that they stamp into the logbooks found inside letterboxes so others who find the letterbox later know they found it.

### **Where are letterboxes hidden?**

Letterboxes can be hidden almost anywhere. Most are planted in scenic, outdoor areas, but others have been planted in bookstores, libraries, zoos, pubs, coffee shops, cemeteries, and playgrounds. Where one can plant a letterbox is limited to only your imagination, though for legal or security reasons, you should avoid planting boxes in some locations such as national parks or airports and, well, Disneyland.

### **What do I need to letterbox?**

To start finding boxes, all you need is a clue such as those provided on Atlas Quest ([atlasquest.com](http://atlasquest.com)). It's also recommended that you have a signature stamp, a logbook, an ink pad, and something to write with. The signature stamp is what you'll stamp into the logbook you find in the letterbox. Many letterboxes contain ink pads, but you should always bring your own since most do not, and even if they do, the ink pad in the box could be frozen solid, dried up, and otherwise incapacitated. Most letterboxers carry several small ink pads with varying colors. Having something to write with is nice so you can write in the logbook the date and perhaps a comment about the weather or experiences in finding the box. And you'll want your own, personal logbook so you can record all your finds with the stamp found in the letterbox.

Many boxes require a compass to find, so a compass should become part of your regular letterboxing kit. They're cheap and lightweight, and directions for using them can be found in our compass tutorial. You'll find gloves invaluable for those times when you need to reach your hand into deep, dark holes that letterboxes are so frequently found in. Depending on the location and circumstances, you may also want to bring water, snacks, sunglasses, hat, mosquito repellent, cell phone, flashlight, first-aid kit, and anything else that would ensure your safety, comfort, and general well-being.

**Source: Atlas Quest. [www.atlasquest.com](http://www.atlasquest.com)**

You do not need to join Atlas Quest to participate in Eastern Shore Public Library's letterboxing, but you will find more ESVA hidden boxes on the website and have fun finding others when you travel! You can also create your own letterboxes, hide them, and post the clues on the Atlas Quest website for others to find.

# Eastern Shore Public Library's Hidden Letterboxes

***Remember to re-hide the boxes where you find them!***

## **Fisher of Men: Francis Makemie Monument Park**

Francis Makemie (1658-1708), known as the Father of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, was known for winning a landmark court New York case in favor of religious freedom. This is the site of his homestead. You can also visit local churches he established in Onancock, Accomac, and, the first, in Rehobeth, Maryland. Learn more at: <https://francismakemiesociety.org/history.html>

Walking trails of Onancock and Accomac can be found at: <https://espl.org/genealogy/walking-driving-tours/>

This quiet, peaceful site has a lovely view of Holden's Creek, just east of Sanford. A new pier overlook provides great viewing of wildfowl. Picnic tables are available and a large grassy area for gatherings. You will see why Makemie chose to make this place his home!

Consider continuing on to Saxis Island, a short distance east on Saxis Road. Enjoy the Saxis Museum, the historic authentic fishing village, and great crabcakes at local restaurants.

CLUE: Take Saxis Road west to Makemie Monument Park. Park in the park's parking lot. Walk back toward Saxis Road. An arrow is painted on the road. Walk 40 paces to a bend in the road. The box is in a forked tree's hollow in its base. Please cover the box well when you are done as it is viewable from the road.

## **The Annie C.: Ker Place, Onancock**

This magnificent Federal-period Georgian-style house was built from 1799 to 1803 for prosperous merchant farmer John Shepherd Ker; his wife, Agnes Corbin Ker; and their family. It is described by the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission as "the finest and most elaborate Federal mansion on Virginia's Eastern Shore" and "one of the Shore's major architectural landmarks."

The grounds has lots of features such as a herb garden and an elegant walkway in the back of the building. One of the permanent exhibits is the Annie C., on view on the grounds of the property. This 1904 log canoe is instrumental in interpreting the Eastern Shore waterman's history. The Annie C. has been a part of the Historical Society's collection since 1995. This oyster boat, built by hand using an adze to shape it from five pine logs cut down in Sanford, Va., traversed the Chesapeake Bay until the 1960s as a working clam and oyster boat.

To learn more, visit: <https://www.shorehistory.org/log-canoe-annie-c>

A link to a walking tour of Onancock is here: <https://espl.org/genealogy/walking-driving-tours/>

Clue: One the east side of the home is the Annie C. The box is located under a dead crepe myrtle trunk at the bow of the boat.

## **Barrel of Mule: Northampton Free Library, Nassawadox**

Nassawadox was a thriving railroad down and home to the Northampton Lumber Company. Established in 1887, the Company was one of the major producers of the wood barrels used for shipping potatoes, making up to 500 barrels per day. The first building in the complex was built in 1898. The buildings are still being used for their

original purposes, they retain their original detail and design. Take some time and go inside this historic hardware store.

Nearby was a blacksmith shop and a mule barn. Mules were sold to pull the wagons needed for farming and transport.

To learn more, take the Nassawadox Historic Walking Tour, available at this link or inside the Northampton Free Library: <https://espl.org/genealogy/walking-driving-tours/>

Clue: At the back of Northampton Free Library is a StoryTrail and a youth garden. The box can be found underneath the water line access at the back of the building, under the stones.

## **Get Birding At Ned's**

Bring your binoculars on this one! The Edward S. Brinkley Nature Preserve, a Northampton County-owned nature preserve, contains diverse coastal plain habitats and is located adjacent to an old, capped landfill with a renowned birding history. A flat, 1.4-mile mowed out-and-back trail travels east through an open scrub-shrub habitat, eventually leading to a mature woodland with a hard-packed dirt trail. An elevated boardwalk winds through the woodland, terminating at a seaside overlook platform with a view of Brockenberry Bay, a marsh, and mudflats at low tide. A short spur off the main trail, near the parking area, leads to a freshwater pond with a photography blind. (Both the boardwalk and the photography blind have ramp access.) Learn more about birding at <https://www.birdingeasternshore.org/>

Location: Across the street from 20190 Seaside Rd, Cape Charles, VA 23310

From Route 13/ Lankford Highway, turn east onto Cobbs Station Rd/VA-636 and travel 1.6 miles. Turn right onto Seaside Rd/ VA-600. In 0.2 miles, the Preserve will be on the left. Park in the small parking area at the entrance gate.

Letterbox: Start on the trail, heading east, and turn right onto the pond trail (right past two vacant buildings). Continue along the grassy trail, which is on the west side of the pond. You will come to a clearing on the right with a pipe sticking up out of the ground. Stop. Turn left to face the pond. If you draw a line from the pipe to the pond, straight ahead is a small pine. The box is planted at the base.

## **Tabitha's Treasure**

Tabitha Scarborough Smart Browne Custis Hill was quite the colonial dame from the Eastern Shore. She lived at Arlington while married to General John Custis II. There are quite a lot of stories associated with Arlington, the site of Custis Tomb, worth reading:

[https://www.co.northampton.va.us/visitors/tourism/free things to see and do/free history lessons/custis tomb arlington plantation](https://www.co.northampton.va.us/visitors/tourism/free%20things%20to%20see%20and%20do/free%20history%20lessons/custis%20tomb%20arlington%20plantation)

The Custis Tombs are open to the public year round and are located on Old Plantation Creek and Arlington Rd. (State Road 644) 4 miles south of Cape Charles or 2157 Arlington Chase Rd, Cape Charles, VA 23310.

Directions: From U.S. 13 in Cape Charles, travel south for 3.6 miles. Turn right on Arlington Road/ Rt. 644. Follow the signs to Custis Tombs as the road winds for 2 miles (Arlington Rd becomes Custis Tomb Rd). Turn right as Custis Tomb Rd becomes Arlington Chase Rd. Park in the marked parking lot for the Custis Tombs, which is a small, grassy gravel lot bordered by old telephone poles.

Letterbox: Take the meadow trail NE away from Custis Tomb to the NE corner. There is an ungroomed slope down to the creek there. Across from the groomed trail from this slope (turn SW), stands two "Siamese twin" trees, one with a thick vine around it. The box is at the base of the tree.

*If you cannot find a box, please let the library know a.s.a.p.! Someone before you may not have followed directions to re-hide it or may not have realized it is a letterbox.*

Questions? Email [espl@espl.org](mailto:espl@espl.org) or call 757-787-3400 during Library open hours.