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RIMJ Associate Editor **Kenneth S. Korr, MD**, checks the latest issue of the Journal at Jones Beach State Park on the south shore of Long Island, NY, in front of the famous Boardwalk Music Shell.

JONES BEACH STATE PARK, WANTAGH, NY

The RI roots of Jones Beach

Jones Beach State Park has Rhode Island roots stemming back to Colonial days. Capt. Thomas Townsend, a trader, Portsmouth resident and sheriff, acquired land in South Oyster Bay, Long Island, in 1688.

Two years later, Thomas Jones, a privateer, left Ireland and landed in Rhode Island. Here he became acquainted with Capt. Townsend, and met and eventually married his daughter, Freelove. While his future son-in-law was absent on the high seas for three years, Townsend moved to South Oyster Bay with Freelove and deeded the land to his daughter and son-in-law after their marriage in 1695.

Among his many commercial endeavors, Jones set up a whaling station near the present state park in the early 1700s. The land was eventually ceded to the Long Island State Park Commission by his descendants.

Jones Beach State Park opened to the public in August 1929 in the presence of lead developer Robert Moses and then NY Gov. and future President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. It is the most visited oceanfront state park on the East Coast, with over six million visitors a year.



RIMJ Managing Editor **Mary Korr**, and her brother, **James Thornton**, on the Jones Beach boardwalk, which stretches 2.5 miles along the Atlantic Ocean beachfront.

Jonesy the Whale, a 32-foot metal sculpture, looms in front of the Beaux Art East Bath House. The mesh giant, installed several years ago, is designed to educate the public on the consequences of ocean pollution. Jonesy "gobbles" up plastics and debris during beach clean-up days.



Vintage postcard of the water tower. [BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY]

Water tower modeled on Venetian campanile

The brick and sandstone Jones Beach water tower was built in 1930, and designed to reflect the bell tower of St. Mark's Basilica in Venice. It encases a 315,000-gallon steel tank, which stores water from three 1,000-foot-deep wells. The tower provides all the fresh water for the park. It received a \$6.2 million upgrade in 2010.



The iconic water tower seen from the boardwalk at Jones Beach State Park. [PHOTOS: MARY KORR]



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