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The Early Angling and Hunting Information about Tim Pond, Maine

William B. Krohn, University of Maine

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A Partial Bibliography of Early Fishing and Hunting Information about Tim Pond, Maine

Compiled by William B. Krohn
Emeritus Professor of Wildlife Ecology
University of Maine, Orono
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Tim Pond, a headwaters pond west of Eustis, Maine, has been known for its exceptional fly fishing for brook trout over 140 years. With the establishment of a set of crude, but comfortable log cabins in the late 1870s, this pond and its brook trout and big game, attracted anglers and hunters from Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and beyond.

Brook trout caught in Tim Pond during early July 2011. This pond has a population of brightly colored, self-reproducing “Spectacled Beauties,” as brook trout were commonly called in the 1800s. No records have been located documenting that Tim Pond was ever stocked with fish from other waters. Author’s photograph.
In the 1880s, Arthur W. Robinson of Boston published at least three editions of a guidebook entitled *Sportsman’s and Tourists’ Guide Book to the Dead River Region of Maine* (see below for years and titles). This booklet was printed in both hard- and soft-cover formats, and was updated and re-printed three or more times during the 1880s. Because each edition was apparently printed in small numbers, original copies of this booklet are today exceedingly rare. Regardless of the numbers published, Robinson’s Dead River guides are packed with detailed information including descriptions of the sporting camps, how to travel to these camps, and what each camp offered in the way of accommodations and sport. While Robinson described the buckboard ride into Tim Pond as “one of the pleasing novelties of the trip,” others disagreed. But before a dissenter speaks, one needs to picture the logistics of getting to Tim Pond in the late 1880s. Considered the following 1887 map from George H. Haynes’ “*Sportsmen’s Paradise*” – Rangeley Lakes, Parmachenee, Kennebago, and Seven Ponds:

![Map of Rangeley Lakes, Parmachenee, Kennebago, and Seven Ponds](image)

The buckboard trail (i.e., dashed line) from Kingfield to Eustis, as well as the trail off to the west to Smith’s Farm, was regularly travelled throughout the year and hence reasonably well maintained. From Smith’s Farm to Tim Pond, however, was a seasonal trail with limited use and upkeep. Fly Rod Crosby (a.k.a., Cornilia Thurza Crosby), Maine first registered guide and outdoor writer, described her ride into Tim Pond in September 1894:

*We decided to stay the night at the Star House, Eustis, and were ready for a buckboard ride of ten miles early the next morning. But how shall I describe the buckboard ride? One must travel over just such a road in order to comprehend it. It would almost seem as if rocks and stumps could not have been left in such a*
confusion, and right in the middle of the road for the horse to climb over, while you hold on, wondering how you will ever get there, and yet thinking of fun. Thirty-one times did we ford Tim brook.

As difficult a ride it was, the “fun” apparently over-rode the pain because Fly Rod fished Tim Pond at least five times, first visiting the pond in 1882, when the trail in was conceivably even in worst condition. Fly Rod published a number of articles about her Tim Pond experiences, giving us today a picture of what the fishing, the camps, the guides, and the conditions were like. After fishing Tim Pond for almost a decade and a half, Fly Rod summed-up her feelings about this body of water in the 1896 Christmas Issue of Shooting and Fishing:

Two thousand feet above the sea level and far from civilization, is one of the most beautiful sheets of water – Tim Pond – where there has never been known a day during the season that the trout, although not huge in size – averaging about ten inches in length, always gamy and ready for a fight, and most delicious eating – refuse to rise to a fly.

Interesting, the above description is strikingly similar to a 1900 description penned by a writer for the Maine Central Railroad (although this time the trout were a little smaller, and closer to what anglers catch today):

This is one of the most beautiful sheets of water in Maine, covering about a thousand acres. It is ten miles from Eustis and over two thousand feet above sea level. The waters are cold, giving fly fishing all through the season.

The camps, twelve or fifteen in number, are built upon an elevation on the north side of the pond; there are several stone fireplaces, which add to the charm of log-cabin life. The proprietor, Mr. Julian K. Viles, gives his guests every attention. Although thousands of trout are annually taken on the fly at Tim Pond, they seem to be as large and numerous as ever; the trout average about nine inches in length. Are very gamy, and most delicious food.

Like Fly Rod, many anglers and hunters who returned again and again to Tim Pond. One regular visitor to Tim during the 1880s was J. Warren Tuck of New Britain, Connecticut. Tuck, a native on Maine, ran a “large business” and when he went on vacation, returned to his home state. Tuck noted that through the years “Tim Pond and Seven Ponds became my Mecca.” J. W. Tuck published so many articles in Forest and Stream magazine about his “Mecca,” that one has to consider whether he was in fact an official advertising agent for Tim Pond.

Not only was Tim Pond noted for it’s trout fishing during the open water season, but in winter when the pond was covered with ice, woodland caribou could regularly be found on the pond’s snow-covered ice. Caribou regularly travel on ice-covered lakes because of the ease of travel, and the greater visibility (compared to moving through forests) that allows them to avoid
predators. By the 1890s, however, winter caribou observations at Tim Pond became less regularly reported in outdoor sporting publications.

For additional views about Tim Pond, and the Seven Ponds to the northwest, during the 1800s, see the following published materials:

Books

Bishop, H. 1887. *Guide Book to the Megantic, Spider, and Upper Dear River Regions of the Province of Quebec and the State of Maine: Including a Description of All the Lakes and Rivers in the Region, Under Lease to the Megantic Fish and Game Corporation*. The Official Guide Book of the Megantic Fish and Game Corporation. Self published, Boston, Massachusetts. 212 pp. [Fold-out map in the middle of the book shows trail from Tim Pond to Big Island Pond. Only a few, scattered mentions of Tim Pond. The 1886 edition of this book has a nice advertisement for Tim and The Seven Ponds from Julian K. Viles, Smith’s Farm, Stratton, Maine].


Ingersoll, E. 1887. *Down East Latch Strings; or Seashores, Lakes and Mountains*. Passenger Department, Boston & Maine Railroad, Boston, Massachusetts. 256 pp. [Fold-out map on page 80 shows the locations of fishing and hunting resorts in Maine, including Tim Pond Camps].

Marbury, M. O. 1892. *Favorite Flies and their Histories with Many Replies from Practical Anglers to Inquiries Concerning How, When, and Where to Use Them*. Houghton & Mifflin, Boston, Massachusetts. [Numerous references to the early flies that were successfully used at Tim Pond (e.g.; p. 103, p. 110). This book gives the history of The Tim wet fly, and gives the legend about how Tim Pond was named (pp. 203-204)].

Robinson, A. W. 1884. *Sportsman’s and Tourists’ Guide Book to the Dead River Region of Maine, Including a Description of Tim, Seven, Chain, Alder Stream, Flagstaff, Jim, Spectacle, King and Bartlett, Spencer, Carrying Place, and Other Ponds, Rangeley Lakes and Lakes Megantic and Spider in Canada*. Self published, Boston, Massachusetts. 184 pp. [Woodcut of “Tim Pond as frontis. Chapter III is entitled “Tim Pond and Vicinity.” Large, fold-out map show trails to Tim Pond, among other camps in the region].
Anonymous. 1889. Notes from Maine. *Shooting and Fishing*, 5(17): 334 (February 21). [K. Smith & J. K. Viles petition the Maine legislature to close Round Mt. Pond and Tim Pond, respectively, to ice fishing. These waters, to this day, remained closed to angling through the ice.].


C.J.C. 1885. Tim Pond, Maine. *The American Angler*, 8 (15): 232 (Oct. 10). [A short note from the *Boston Herald* touting the fine fishing experienced by C. J. Connelly, his brother, and friend on a recent trip to Tim Pond. “Brown Hackle, Professor and Silver Doctor were the [flies used on one] cast” that took three trout.].

Davis, E. W. 1883. Caribou at Tim Pond. *Forest and Stream*, 19(24): 469 (Jan. 11). [Kennedy Smith, his son, and a hunter counted 25 caribou on Tim Pond in late December 1883. Five of the animals were shot.].
Fly Rod [a.k.a., Cornilia Thurza Crosby.]. 1894. Notes from Maine camps. Dead River. *Shooting and Fishing*, 16(23): 446 (September 27). The buckboard ride into Tim Pond. She first fished Tim Pond 12 years ago [1894-12 = 1882].

______. 1895. Dead River notes. *Shooting and Fishing*, 18(23): 454 (September 26). [Fly Rod fished Tim Pond in 1886, 1893, & 1894 as well as 1895 [and later]; she carved her name in a log of one the camps.]

______. 1901. In the Dead River region. *Shooting and Fishing*, 30(17): 327 (August 8). [Fly Rod and other notables at Tim Pond. She caught 23 trout in one evening, averaging half a pound each.]


Gordon, T. 1903. Jottings of a fly-fisher. – II. *Forest and Stream*, 60(13): 247 (Mar. 28). [“In 1885, Tim Pond, in Maine, was so crowded with small trout of one-fourth to three-fourths of a pound that anyone could take them, …”].

Greenwood, R. 1894. Greenwood gleanings. *Shooting and Fishing*, 15 (14): (Jan. 25). [This death notice states that Kennedy Smith died on 15 January 1894. It also mentions Smith’s “battles and struggles” and “disappointments and mistakes,” but praises Kennedy Smith as “the most gentle of men.”]


Hawley, W. H. 1889. Tim Pond notes. *Shooting and Fishing*, 6(4): 67 (May 23). [Ice went out on May 4 and anglers had arrived. Biggest trout caught were 2 ½ lbs. and 1 ½ lbs. The author caught 45 trout in one hour on May 5. Exceptional fly fishing for this early in the season].
Howard. F. 1894. Reminiscences of Dead River, Maine. *Shooting and Fishing*, 16(17): 327-328 (August 16). [An interesting article with information about Kennedy Smith and his road to Tim and Spencer ponds.].

Leo. 1891. Dead River as a hunting region. *Shooting and Fishing*, 10(3): 48 (May 14). [An overview of hunting the Dead River country, with a mention of Tim Pond.].


Simpson, W. 1895. Tim Pond trout. *Forest and Stream*, 45(10): 208 (Sept. 7). [Simpson writes that “Tim Pond is the best place I ever saw for August fishing with a fly. We took an average of thirty trout a day, running from 6 oz. to 12 oz. each.”].

Simpson, W. 1913. Recreation, sport, and other uncertainties. *Forest and Stream*, 80(21): 649- (May 24). [Simpson and his wife spent two weeks at Tim Pond, noting that the pond “contains a great many small bright-colored trout from a half to one and a half pounds each.”].

Smith, K. 1882. Tim Pond and Seven Ponds (Maine). *The American Angler*, 2 (2): 24 (June 30). [Kennedy Smith, owner of Tim Pond and Seven Ponds camps, briefly discusses the start of the 1882 fishing season.].

_____. 1883. Big game at Tim Pond. *Forest and Stream*, 19(23): 447 (Jan. 4). [Four caribou observed near the Hack Inlet; one was shot.].


_____. 1884. Maine game. *Forest and Stream*, 23(17): 327 (Nov. 20). [Four caribou and one deer shot near Tim Pond in early November 1884].


more than a quarter of a pound, but are of excellent flavor, and contain more magnetism than any fish I ever saw. … largest weighing 2 1/2 pounds …”].


Stanley, Mrs. F. E. 1908. Beautiful Tim Pond. *Maine Woods*, 31(5): 5 (Sept. 2). [This article is from a “recent issue of the Lewiston Journal.”]

Tuck, J. W. 1880. Tim Pond. *Forest and Stream*, 15(9): 165 (Sept. 30). [First visited Tim Pond in 1878 when Kennedy Smith had only one log cabin at the pond for sports.].


_____. 1881. Tim Pond and the Seven Ponds. *Forest and Stream*, 17(11): 211-212 (Oct. 13). [Tuck describes in detail his fourth trip to Tim Pond and then north to the Seven Ponds.].

_____. 1881. Tim Pond and the Seven Ponds. *Forest and Stream*, 17(17): 328 (Nov. 24).

_____. 1881. Tim Pond and the Seven Ponds. *Forest and Stream*, 17(2): 32 (Aug. 11). [Short note on accessing the Seven Ponds.].

_____. 1882. Tim Pond and the Seven Ponds. *Forest and Stream*, 19(1): 6 (Aug. 3). [There were 8 cabins at the pond in the summer of 1882].

_____. 1883. Big game at Tim Pond. *Forest and Stream*, 19 (12): 228-229 (Oct. 19). [Tuck visited Maine in August with his family, and took a trip to Tim Pond. “The largest number who registered at the Seven Ponds in one week was forty-five, at Tim Pond fifty-six.”].

_____. 1883. Big game at Tim Pond. *Forest and Stream*, 19(23): 447 (Jan. 4). [Kennedy Smith wrote Tuck a letter which was quoted in full. Four caribou were on the ice at Tim Pond, and one buck was shot.].

_____. 1886. Tim and the Seven Ponds. *Forest and Stream*, 26(16): 309 (May 13). [Describes the work being done to prepare for the upcoming fishing season.]

McKer, A. G. 1886. Two weeks with a fly-rod. *Forest and Stream*, 26(1): 10-11 (Jan. 28.). [“Tim Pond is a splendid fishing in September.”].


**Railroad Pamphlets**  
(only a sampling of the railroads pamphlet that mention Tim Pond)

Anonymous. 1900. *Big Game Hunting and Fishing in Maine Reached by the Maine Central Railroad*. Maine Central Railroad, Portland, Maine. 53 pp. [Quote used above came from p. 17].

__________. 1907. *The Fish and Game Country of Northern New England*. Boston & Maine Railroad, Boston, Massachusetts. 80 pp. [This railroad typically made only a few sentence statement regarding Tim Pond.].

__________. 1918. *Fishing and Hunting. The Beautiful Rangeley Lakes and Dead River Regions*. Published by the Sandy River and Rangeley Lakes Railroad, Portland, Maine. Unpaged. [The Tim Pond section reads: “A buckboard trip of a few hours from Stratton takes one to the well-known Tim Pond Camps. The water here is so cold that trout rise to the fly from May to October, and throughout those months they are served at every meal. There is good hunting also in the fall.” Color fold-out map at back shows roads and trails in the region, including around Tim Pond.]

Haynes, George H. 1887. *Sportsman’s Paradise: Rangeley Lakes, Parmachenee, Kennebago, and Seven Ponds, via Boston & Maine, Maine Central Railroad, and Sandy River Railroad.* Journal; Press, Lewiston, Maine. 79 pp. [Fold-out map at front shows trail from Smith’s Farm to Tim Pond. Surprisingly, no text is devoted to Tim Pond.]

**Photographs**

At the turn-of-the-century, professional photographer Edwin R. Starbird (1853-1921) visited the Tim Pond Region and took an interesting series of pictures. At the time, Starbird lived in Farmington, Maine where he operated a photographic studio. Consider, for example, the following Starbird photograph (measuring 8 ½ X 5 ¼ inches) entitled “Tim Pond, from Hack Inlet, showing a Sportsman in the act of taking a Trout”:

An enlargement of the above photograph showing in detail the angler netting his trout from an anchored canoe. In these days, Rangeley boats were also used at Tim Pond (note the two men in background):
Entitled “Tim Pond, Camp Tarapam,” this Starbird photograph shows the type of log cabins, clothing, and fishing equipment used at Tim Pond in the late 1880s. (Both photographs from author’s collection).
The legend on this E. R. Starbird stereoview reads: “A Three Days’ Catch – In June 1885, two sportsmen from New Hampshire, spent three days at the Seven Ponds [about 12 miles northwest of Tm Pond]. The catch, mostly from L Pond, hangs upon the rude logs of the cabin, ready for packing, while the jolly sportsman stands near by.”
(Author’s collection.)
In the 1880s, woodland caribou could be regularly found, and hunted, on Tim Pond. This illustration was modified from a 1901 cover of *Collier’s Illustrated Weekly*; drawing by A. B. Frost. (Author’s collection).

The above photograph was part of the last set of photographs published by E. R. Starbird before he retired to Florida. “The Woods of Maine” series, which included the above recently shot woodland caribou, was printed when Starbird lived in Brunswick, Maine. (Author’s collection).
The following listing of photographs in Starbird’s “Views of Tim Pond and the Seven Ponds.” Additional information about E. R. Starbird, and his Maine woods photographs (including examples from Tim Pond), can be found in Hunter and Shettleworth (2000) [full citation in Books above]. E. R. Starbird published two sets of stereoviews that included Tim Pond. The earliest, which included only a few Tim Pond stereoviews, is entitled “The Dead River Region, and Scenes along the Way.” The stereoview of the dead fish shown above is from this series. Starbird’s second Tim Pond series is shown below (back of a stereoview):

**STARBIRD’S**

**Views of Tim Pond and the Seven Ponds.**

**KINGFIELD.**

Kingfield Village, from Stanley Hill.
- Hotel Winter.
- R. R. Buildings, and E. S. Winter’s Wholesale Store.
- View towards Mt. Abram, from Cupola of Hotel Winter.
- View up the Jerusalem Valley, from Hotel Winter, Mt. Bigelow in the distance.
- A Scene on the Franklin & Megantic Railroad.
- The Bluff, in Jerusalem Valley.

**SMITH’S FARM.**

Smith’s Farm House.
- A Characteristic Scene at Smith’s Farm.
- Mt. Bigelow from Smith’s Farm.
- Fine Grove, on the Eustis Road.

**TIM POND.**

A General View of the Camps, from the Shore of the Pond.
- Tim Pond, from the Beaver Dam.
- Tim Pond, from Hack Inlet, showing a Sportsman in the act of taking a Trout.
- Tim Pond, from the Beach above the Outlet, showing Tim Pond and East Kennebec Mountains.
- The Cascades.
- Speckled Beauties.
- Camp Ronald, or the Dining-room.
- Cook’s Cabin (Arrival of the Buckboard).
- Roaring Ranch.
- Camp Tararam.
- Half Ranch, Poker Flat, etc.
- Camp Carlou, or the Davis Camp.
- Camp Aiken.
- Lake View.

**SEVEN PONDS.**

The Seven Ponds Camps, Big Island Pond, and the Boundary Mountains.
- Big Island Pond, from the Boat Landing.
- View of the Camps from the North-eastern Shore of Big Island Pond.
- Snow Mountain, from the Outlet of Big Island Pond.
- Cook’s Cabin (Departure of the Buckboard).
- Hermit’s Camp.
- Wahoo Wigwam.
- Camp Frank and John.
- Camp Surprise.
- Rest for the Weary.
- Kennedy Smith and Son, Founders of Tim Pond and Seven Ponds Sporting Resorts.
- On the Road to Seven Ponds—a piece of Corduroy.
- Track of the Hurricane of 1883.
- Mason’s Camps, at the North-eastern end of Big Island Pond.
- Interior of Mason’s Camp.
- Looking out upon the Lake, from Mason’s Camp.
- Rock Pond and Snow Mountain.

**BIG NORTH-WEST POND.**

Camps at Big North-west Pond (from Wharf).
- " " from the South-east Shore, showing a section of the Pond, and the Boundary Mountains.
- View across the Pond from the Camps.
- Taking them by Pairs and Triples.

The subject on this card is underlined.

Published by E. R. Strauss, Portrait and Landscape Photographer, Farmington, Maine.
Tim Pond Camps, like many remote camps in Maine during the late 1800s through the early 1900s, had its own post office as can be seen by the post mark below. Dated 14 September 1915, the message of the left side of this post card indicates that the out-of-state angler was enjoying Tim Pond. (Author’s collection).

A special thanks to Jerry Girard for providing me citations from the early volumes of THE AMERICAN ANGLER. Jeff Knapp reviewed an earlier version of this bibliography. The author/compiler would appreciate learning of any errors, or omissions, in this bibliography (wkrohn@maine.edu).