



HAWTHORNE

Fine Art

IDA H. STEBBINS (b. 1851)

View of South Pond, New York 1879

Oil on canvas

23 x 33 ½ inches

Signed and dated, lower left

Ida H. Stebbins was born in January 1851 in Chelsea, Massachusetts to Mary and Isaac Stebbins, a teacher. Though scant records remain of Stebbins' artistic training or career, various personal details of her life have been gleaned from contemporary newspapers and federal documents.

By the time *View of South Pond, New York* was painted in 1879, she was living in Boston. Like many artists of her generation, Stebbins likely traveled throughout the Northeast region, gaining inspiration for her paintings from the landscape of New England and New York. Stebbins was likely visiting upstate New York when she painted this sweeping view of South Pond and the surrounding mountains near Long Lake in the Adirondacks just south of Deerland. Here, Stebbins captures the stunning vermillion, burnt orange and brown tones of the autumn landscape with the style and precise rendering often seen in paintings produced by the Hudson River School.

Shortly after the completion of *View of South Pond, New York*, Stebbins married Frank H. Slack, a clerk, in her hometown of Chelsea on December 14, 1881 at the age of thirty. The couple moved to Hotel Comfort in Boston, where their son, Roland Stewart Slack was born on May 22, 1883. It seems likely that her husband died in the mid-1880s since on December 3, 1889, records indicate that Ida and Roland changed their last name back to her maiden name of Stebbins.

Roland Stewart Stebbins (1883-1974) inherited his mother's interest in art, studying at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Columbia University in New York, and the Art Students League of New York. He also studied at the Académie de la Grand Chaumière and the Munich Academy of Fine Arts. Today, he is remembered for his marine and genre paintings and for his legacy as a respected professor of art education at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

On January 1, 1890, Ida married her second husband, Timothy Jarvis, in Somerville, Massachusetts. Their daughter, Ida Hazel Jarvis, was born soon after in 1893. However, the child suffered paralysis from a brain tumor and died tragically at the young age of thirteen in Newton, Massachusetts. Ida would eventually also lose her second husband, Timothy, presumably around 1907 when she sold her estate on Central Avenue in Auburndale, Massachusetts. Widowed, Ida would keep the name "Ida H. Jarvis" for the remainder of her life and would spend the remainder of her years traveling the world and producing artwork. A 1907 Boston business directory lists "Mrs. Ida H. Jarvis" as a "China Decorator," a common occupation for women artists working in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹ During her global travels, Ida would visit zoos and aviaries, collecting feathers which she would bring home and assemble into intricate landscape arrangements. According to a 1948 newspaper article, Stebbins was "the first to make feather pictures of landscapes, so she was

¹ "Auburndale-Cambridge," *The Boston Globe* (Boston, MA), May 3, 1907, p. 13.



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able to have them copyrighted.”² She filed a patent on January 17, 1921, which was approved on November 1, 1921. In honor of his mother, Roland would arrange an exhibition of twenty-four of these small feather landscapes at the Wisconsin University Club in 1948.

Unfortunately, little is known of the circumstances surrounding Ida’s death, which occurred sometime before the 1948 exhibition of her work.

² “Unique Exhibit at University Club,” *The Capital Times*, (Madison, WI), Mar. 10, 1948, p. 10.