

# 1921 Payne Fish Trap

by William Blausen

This trap, which was invented and patented by Samuel Payne of Oxford, Kansas on August 16<sup>th</sup>, 1921, and which was later improved by him with a later patent in 1929 when he was then residing in Quincy, Illinois, is indeed a fine example of American ingenuity and mechanical genius.

This trap is designed to be sprung by either a fish or animal pulling down on the bait hook.....or sprung by pushing up on the lower circular plate through which the bait hook is attached to the trap.....as would occur when dropping it onto a frog (as stated in the patent text)..... or dropping it onto a dead animal or bird that may have fallen into a water well (which would of course need to be removed to prevent it from polluting the drinking water if left there to decompose), which is also clearly stated in the patent. A trap that is designed to accomplish the latter is known among collectors as simply a “well trap”. Therefore, Samuel Payne’s invention can most accurately be described as a Combination Fish-Game-Frog and Well Trap, the likes of which had never been patented before or since (from the collection of William

Blauser).

From the patent text: “for catching animals, fish, frogs, etc” .....”and will instantly kill the same in a humane manner.”

Shown below in the set position. Note the depressed central “plunger”, which is necessary to set the trap.



Shown below in the sprung position with a tube of Chap Stick for scale, which is 2.5" inches in length.



The Payne Trap as seen from underneath. Note the circular plate through which the bait is attached which springs the trap shut when pushed upward.



Patent date of Payne's Trap cast into the aluminum housing....which reads "PAT. 8-16-21". Also stamped into the housing is the date of this, his Improved Model...which reads "IMP. 5-6-'29"



Another view of the Improved 1929 Payne Combination Fish-Animal-Frog and Well Trap.

