



Photo courtesy Fort Worth Star-Telegram

The Paynes pose with what they believe is the world's largest ball of barbed wire.

MADE OF 70 MILES AND 12 TONS OF WIRE

“World’s Biggest” Ball Of Barbed Wire

The Guinness Book of World Records recently turned down a request to include a huge ball of barbed wire put together by a Texas rancher over the years.

But J.C. Payne and his wife Elsie Ruth of Valley View, Texas, aren't upset.

“The Guinness people don't have a ball of barbed wire in their book and they said they weren't interested in having one,” says J.C. “But we know ours is the biggest ball of barbed wire anywhere in the world.

“A friend of mine, Lyle Lynch, at Mesa, Ariz., made a roll that was 7 ft., 3 in. in dia. Ripley's bought it for \$5,000 and it's in Ripley's (Believe It Or Not) Museum in Orlando, Fla.”

At the time of submission to Guinness, Payne's ball of barbed wire measured 11 ft., 6 in. in dia. and stood two stories high. It's made up of some 70 miles of wire and Payne estimates it weighs around 12 tons.

Payne, 76, is no stranger to world class achievements. Several years ago, he beat out the previous ball-of-twine world record

holder with his own 13-ft., 2-in. dia. ball of bale twine, which he eventually sold for \$21,000 to Ripley's Museum in Branson, Mo.

“I started collecting barbed wire in 1966. About three years ago, I began rolling all I had into a big ball after I'd sold my ball of twine,” explains Payne. “I get wire from anywhere they're tearing out fence, once traveling 180 miles to get a lot of large spools.”

He keeps the big ball of rusted wire out behind the barn at Elsie Ruth's request.

He regularly adds to the ball by having his wife pull him around it with a garden tractor. He mounts the wire in a trailer with a telescoping spindle to accommodate different size rolls.

To keep the ball symmetrical as it grows, Payne uses a Kubota 4-WD tractor to turn it.

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A Second Set Of White Mules

“I enjoy FARM SHOW very much and was especially interested in seeing the picture of a team of white mules in a recent issue. As the article stated, they are quite rare. I happened to be at an auction some time back when a pair of white pony mule colts came through. I bought them and now they are old enough to drive a little buggy. They are a real joy. I drove them in our annual Terry Fox run that raises money for cancer research.”

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Some of Frank DeBolle's 50 makes of fly traps, most of them glass container-type.

FROM BEAR TRAPS TO FLY TRAPS

Trap Collector Loves His Unusual Hobby

After spotting a “Traps Wanted” ad in a regional farm newspaper, FARM SHOW tracked down Frank DeBolle of Rochester, Mich., who told us his want ads are an important part of his unusual hobby.

He hopes people will see the ad and realize there's a market for very old traps they may have laying around.

DeBolle collects all kinds and sizes of traps, and he's been doing it for 15 years. His collection includes everything from large bear traps to small bird traps, glass fly traps, porcelain insect traps, wire snare traps, and mechanical fish hook traps.

His oldest trap is a mouse trap made about 1790. His largest trap is a no. 6 bear trap that's 44 in. long, 17 in. wide when the jaws are open, and weighs over 50 lbs. “As far as I know it's the largest commercially made leg-hold trap in the world,” says DeBolle. “It was designed to catch Polar, Kodiak, and Alaskan brown bears as well as lions, tigers, and elephants which it caught by the trunk. It's now outlawed throughout most of North America and in many other countries.”

A couple of his traps are hand-forged and more than 150 years old. One is a wolf trap with a round base, two long springs, and a chain with a 3-pronged drag. “The drag allowed the trap to be used wherever the ground was too rocky to drive a stake,” says DeBolle. “Eventually the drag caught on something which stopped the wolf.” His other hand-forged trap has a spring under the pan. “It's the only trap I have like it. I got it from a preacher in New York,” says DeBolle.

DeBolle says that during the past 200 years more than 150 U.S. companies have made traps, along with unknown numbers of blacksmiths. One company called Triumph Trap Co., which went out of business about 70 years ago, made more than 300 different kinds of traps. “My goal is to even-

tually own at least one trap from each company.”

His interest in traps traces its beginnings to the early 1950's when he was a teenager. “My cousin gave me a muskrat trap that he had found and I figured out how to set it. Then an old friend of mine who had trapped as a teenager during World War I taught me how to trap rats and other animals. He also gave me some of his old traps, and later I started collecting them.”

DeBolle buys most of his traps at flea markets and farm auctions. He has purchased traps from 30 different states and bought others sight-unseen from Canada, Europe, and Australia. “I generally don't buy more than a few at a time. However, once I bought 764 traps from a deceased trapper's estate. When I buy traps in bulk I usually keep only a few of them for my collection and sell the rest. I'll sometimes trade one for a trap that I don't have.”

He has 50 some different makes of fly traps, most of them glass container models made around the turn of the century. “They're difficult to find because most people don't realize what they are and they break easily. People in Europe still use glass container fly traps extensively.”

He has porcelain insect traps. “They look like ordinary pottery if you don't know what they are,” he says.

His collection even includes a rare fish hook trap. “When the fish grabs the bait a spring-loaded mechanism drives hooks into its head.”

DeBolle says he's willing to show his collection to anyone who's interested, and he'd like to hear from anyone with traps for sale.

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More of DeBolle's traps, largest of which is a bear trap that weighs over 50 lbs.