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ORIGIN OF BARREN FORK.

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There has come down from the past an interesting story which gives particulars concerning the origin of the term, "Barren Fork", the largest tributary of the Illinois river of the Cherokee hills.

In the year 1841 a disastrous and protracted drought prevailed, as severe, in probability, as the drouth of 1936. In course of weeks and months vegetation withered and died, the grass became dry and lifeless and the water courses ran low, many of them completely failing. The Illinois river was dry all the way across in places, and eventually the stream which was referred to as the "fork of the Illinois", though a tributary, became as "dry as a bone" from source to mouth. One could drive the entire length of the bed of the stream in a vehicle, or ride along the bed on horseback. All grass, vines and wild shrubs along the banks of the stream became dry and brown, so did the foliage of the numerous trees, large and small, along the stream. The scene was one of desolation. It was

at this time that someone, whose name is not now remembered, referred to the dried-up water course as the "Barren Fork of the Illinois". Thereafter the stream was called by that name. With the coming of the autumnal season the drought still prevailed in severity but there finally came a day when clouds rolled up along the horizon and soon copious rainfall began, continuing until the ground was well saturated and the long dry water courses running bank full. Again the Illinois River flowed in swollen volume and the Barren Fork roared and tumbled on its way, sending its racing waters into the Illinois, and the great drought of 1841 became an event of the past.

In these twentieth century days the name of the Barren Fork is often mis-spelled. Some think the name is Baron Fork, others Barn Fork, and yet others, Barron Fork. In the latter instance the supposition seems to be that the name was given for an individual of the name of Barron. A railway station near the upper portion of the stream is incorrectly called Barron, and that name

is often seen in print. But as old maps, documents and newspapers reveal, the correct name of the winding stream is Barren Fork - in full, the Barren Fork of the Illinois.

The Barren Fork was during many years one of the most famous fishing streams in the Cherokee Nation. A number of the pioneers of the old Indian Nation built their homes near the banks of the stream in various localities, some of them in the early thirties of the nineteenth century and others at the beginning of the forties.
