

attracting official attention. In 1981, the House Bill No. 1053 added "Grand" to the name, making it "Grand Lake O' The Cherokees." But neither the Oklahoma Board nor the U.S. Board on Geographic Names was notified of the change, so the lake had an official State name and a different official federal name. But local people continued calling it by a third name, "Grand Lake."

In 1995, the Oklahoma Board recommended "Grand Lake O' The Cherokees" as the official name for both State and federal use, with "Grand Lake" to be the official short form for use on maps and in other publications. However, the Oklahoma and federal boards were not the only boards to have to rule on the case. The waters of the reservoir back up into the State of Missouri, therefore, the Missouri Board was also asked for a ruling. Eventually, all agreed on the official name, "Grand Lake O' The Cherokees" (Fig. 21).



Figure 21 (question 59). Photograph of Grand Lake O' The Cherokees, Delaware County, Oklahoma. (Photograph courtesy Fred W. Marvel, Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department.)

60. Where did this place name come from?

George Shirk's *Oklahoma Place Names* (1974) describes the origins of many town and city names.

This question translates to, "How did any given name come into common use in Oklahoma or anywhere in the world?" There are many books on place names that you can refer to. For most of the towns, cities, and major features in Oklahoma, refer to George Shirk's *Oklahoma Place Names* (1974); however, more in-depth research generally uncovers additional answers.

Consider the Cimarron River. In American Spanish, *cimarrón* means "wild, unmanageable," a good meaning for a word whose origins have been conspicuously intractable. In New Mexico, the place name *Cimarron* was applied first either to the Cimarron Mountains in northeastern New Mexico or to the river originating in them; in either case, the name was used later for other features. The Cimarron River itself heads at the junction of the Dry Cimarron River and Carrizozo Creek in Cimarron County, flows from Oklahoma into Kansas and back into Oklahoma, eventually joining the Arkansas River near Tulsa.

The most widely accepted explanation attributes the name to a sheep that was once abundant in northeastern New Mexico and there called *canero cimarrón*, meaning "wild sheep." Over time, wild horses and cattle began to be called *cimarrónes*. Another plausible explanation is that the name comes from the wild red plum that grew profusely along the river and was called *ciruela cimarróna* by local people. Similarly, the wild rose is called *rosa cimarróna*. Also, in New Mexico, *cimarrón* was used to refer to fugitive Indians. Finally, there is the story of a cowboy cook who, when checking his cooking pot and finding the beans still hard, exclaimed, "Simmer on!" (Julyan, 1996).

61. I'm testing a new Global Positioning System receiver and need to know my exact latitude and longitude. Where am I?

The latitude and longitude of any location can be interpolated from the USGS 1:24,000-scale topographic maps. Note that your GPS unit may use UTM coordinates, which also can be read off topographic maps (see questions 9 and 12).