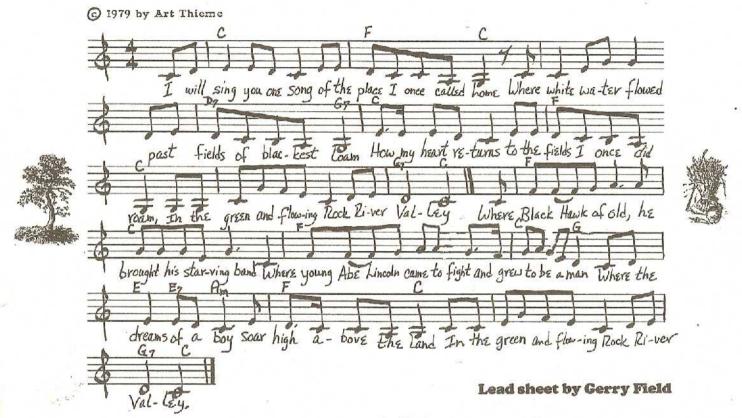
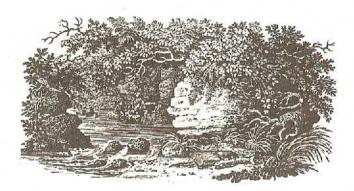
Rock River Valley by Art Thieme

Bet you didn't know that Art Thieme, traditional interpreter par excellence, is also a songwriter. He does keep it too much of a secret, but Art has penned a piece or two during his folk music career. An Illinois native, Art wrote this paean in honor of the heartland country where we live. Of the song, Art says, "It's a hodge-podge of images from my childhood, tied in with some references to the infamous Black Hawk War of 1832. Abraham Lincoln served as a captain in that war, although he never saw any of the fighting. His horse was stolen near Blackhawk Island at the junction of the Rock River and Lake Koshkonong (the site of the present-day town of Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin), and he had to walk all the way back to New Salem, Illinois. Chief Black Hawk's band, who had returned to their original homeland east of the Mississippi River, were massacred by the U.S. Army while trying to escape back across the river. The massacre site, just below the mouth of the Bad Axe River in Wisconsin, is known today as Battle Hollow." Art recorded the song on SONGS OF THE HEARTLAND, which will be released by Kicking Mule Records this summer.

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I will sing you one song of the place I once called home, Where white water flowed past the fields of blackest loam, How my heart returns to the fields I once did roam In the green and flowing Rock River Valley.

Chorus:

Where Black Hawk of old, he brought his starving band; Young Abe Lincoln came to fight, and grew to be a man. Where the dreams of a boy soar high above the land, In the green and flowing Rock River Valley.

It was there I lay in my warm bed on starry winters' nights,

With goblins all around me and my head tucked in so tight, And I heard the squealing, screaming freights running westward in their flight

Through the green and flowing Rock River Valley.

Well, when I am far away from Koshkonong's green tide, I'll think of all those pretty gals that walked there by my side.

And the summer bee-buzz pollen days of memory that glide

Through the green and flowing Rock River Valley.