

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 wa-ter flowed
past fields of bla-ckest loam How my heart re-tURNS to the fields I once did
roam, In the green and flow-ing Rock Ri-ver Val-ley Where Black Hawk of old, he
brought his star-ving band Where young Abe Lincoln came to fight and grew to be a man Where the
dreams of a boy soar high a-bove the land In the green and flow-ing Rock Ri-ver
Val-ley.

Lead sheet by Gerry Field

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.

