

HeadWaters or VerITAS CAput

(1983 Single Track Recording Uploaded January 4, 2005)

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HeadWaters was composed over several winter months in 1978-9 Ann Arbor when I was working as a carpenter by day and working on music and writing at night. Its original working title was drawn from this evocative verse of an old Ojibway poem: “The Leaves Windblown Can Open My Spirit”. By October 1983, when I taped it on a dual-cassette boombox, it had become a kind of distillation of those many progressions, techniques and licks I’d discovered since 1973 when I first picked a guitar up with some ambitious semblance of serious intention. The deteriorated “underwater” quality of this recording, however souped-up by modern software, doesn’t capture what it really sounds like to the live ear, alas. I’d love to hear a professional classical or jazz guitarist give it an interpretation someday but since that’s not likely to happen I’m left with uploading this magnetic tape-to-mp3 transfer as I neither have the time nor finger flexibility to relearn and record a better rendition of it.

The photo above is not the Mississippi Headwaters aka VerITAS CAput, which Schoolcraft pinched from a Latin phrase meaning “Truth Head” after being led to the source of America’s greatest and most musically celebrated river by the Indian scout

Ozawindib. It's actual naming is chronicled here from his 1832 paper "THE DISCOVERY OF THE SOURCE OF THE MISSISSIPPI IN LAKE ITASCA":

"I inquired of Ozawindib the Indian name of this lake; he replied *Omushkös*, which is the Chippewa name of the Elk. Having previously got an inkling of some of their mythological and necromantic notions of the origin and mutations of the country, which permitted the use of a female name for it, I denominated it Itasca."

Veritas is the "Goddess of Truth" who lives at the bottom of Democritus's Well, the "Mother of Virtue" in Greek myth, and the "Daughter of Time, not of Authority" as Francis Bacon wrote centuries later.

Two years after camping out at Itasca State Park on my 50th Birthday in July 2001 for the purpose of an informal non-denominational baptism swim, this small unnamed Wisconsin lake, pictured above, caught my eye while driving north after an ice-storm to the belated funeral gathering for a good friend who'd died unexpectedly while cross-country skiing. It was snapped in early April 2003 about 20 miles west of Clam Lake along Highway 77 in the Chequamegon National Forest and whatever wintry feeling *Headwaters* now retains from its initial creation, this photo seems to capture it.

Truth and *Omushkös*,
Havrylak Kern