

# Press Release

April 26, 2011

THE OREGON ENCYCLOPEDIA



[www.oregonencyclopedia.org](http://www.oregonencyclopedia.org)

*A partnership of Portland State University, the Oregon Historical Society, and The Oregon Council of Teachers of English*

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## **“Roll On, Columbia”: Woody Guthrie & the Columbia River Songs (film)**

The Oregon Encyclopedia (The OE) continues its monthly series of History Nights at McMenamins pubs. At each History Night, The OE will look back at the seminal people and events that have shaped our communities. Visit [www.oregonencyclopedia.org](http://www.oregonencyclopedia.org) for History Night locations and more details.

### **“Roll On, Columbia’: Woody Guthrie & the Columbia River Songs”**

**A film presented by Michael O’Rourke, featuring Bill Murlin.**

**Tuesday, April 26, 2011**

**6:30 p.m.**

**McMenamins Edgefield, 2126 SW Halsey St., Troutdale, Ore.**

**Free and open to the public**

Seventy years ago, folksinger Woody Guthrie spent one month in the Northwest traveling up and down the Columbia River writing songs for the Bonneville Power Administration. The songs he wrote during that short stay in 1941 still resonate in the Northwest and compel us to claim Guthrie for our own. While his most famous song from that time, “Roll On, Columbia,” is Washington State’s official folk song, many of the songs Guthrie wrote while he was in Portland were lost to the public for many years.

In the mid-1980s, BPA employee Bill Murlin rediscovered Guthrie’s Columbia River songs and worked with oral historian and producer Michael O’Rourke to create a radio documentary for OPB, broadcasting many of the songs for the first time. O’Rourke turned this radio documentary into a film, including interviews with people who knew and worked with Guthrie. That film will be debuted publicly at The Oregon Encyclopedia History Night on Tuesday, April 26, 6:30pm, at the McMenamin’s Edgefield Power Station. Bill Murlin will be on hand to talk about his discovery of the lost songs and to play his guitar.

Please join The Oregon Encyclopedia to commemorate the 70th anniversary of Woody Guthrie’s month in Portland with this tribute to a man who put the Columbia River and the Northwest to music.

Free and open to the public, all ages welcome. Food, beer, and wine available during the film and performance.

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The OE is an online resource for information on the state’s significant people, places, events, institutions, and biota. Over 800 entries and essays have been published online and new entries are added every day. For more information visit [www.oregonencyclopedia.org](http://www.oregonencyclopedia.org).

The OE is a partnership between Portland State University, the Oregon Council of Teachers of English, and the Oregon Historical Society. The OE has received support from a collaborative of the state’s five cultural partners—the Oregon Arts Council, Oregon Council for the Humanities, Oregon Heritage Commission, Oregon Historical Society, and the State Historic Preservation Office—with funding from the Oregon Cultural Trust. The Oregon Council of Teachers of English, the Oregon Heritage Commission, the Oregon University System, Willamette University, and private donors have provided additional support.