

TRAVEL

Book honors Irish-American landmarks

BY ESTHER LITTMANN
SPECIAL WRITER

"Irish-American Landmarks" (Yanbo Ink Press 1995, \$19.95) is what every guidebook should be: informative and entertaining for tourist and armchair traveler alike.

In fact, author John Barnes, son of Irish immigrants, former editorial writer of "The Detroit News" and currently with "The New York Post," has accomplished much more with his first book. Focusing on the contributions of Irish-Americans to their newly adopted country and the sites that memorialize their achievements, Barnes weaves the histories of Ireland and North America into a fascinating

tapestry whose threads are the colorful lives of politicians, clergy, men, soldiers, writers and entrepreneurs who influenced our culture.

Whether Catholic, Presbyterian, or Quaker, many fled from religious persecution. Others narrowly escaped the Great Famine of the 1840s when the potato crop failed. But as immigrants to a land of unlimited opportunity, they recharged their energy and spirit to fulfill what we call today the "American Dream."

In Michigan, for example, there's Frank Murphy, whose famine immigrant grandparents became prosperous dairy farmers. When young Frank left his rural home to earn a law degree

at the University of Michigan, he often supplemented his income with factory labor. This experience taught him compassion for ordinary workers. As governor of Michigan in 1937, he refused to call out the National Guard against the auto strikers, thus paving the way for UAW recognition from General Motors. Today, Murphy's modest home in Harbor Beach is a museum open to the public.

A different kind of home is Fairlane, the former estate of Henry Ford, another famous Irish-American. Lucky for us, young Henry resisted his immigrant father's pressure to become a farmer, instead spending his after-work hours "tinkering with something in the shed."

The Irish in the South were no less idealistic and productive. Louisiana boasts the first American statue to memorialize a woman, that of Margaret Gaffney Haughey. Orphaned at 9, widowed, and bereft of an infant daughter, Haughey turned her own sorrows into service for others. With the profits of a successful bakery business, she established several orphanages and asylums in New Orleans.

Out West there's the Concannon Winery, the oldest continuously operating winery in California. Founder John Concannon was barely 18 years old when he arrived on the West Coast in 1883. Hard work, education, and thrift led him to the purchase of

47 acres of land in Livermore, where he experimented with imported vines from France.

Barnes includes over 300 entries in his 500-page book. Anecdotes abound: Jackie Gleason's famed ability to improvise; Eugene O'Neill's warped home life; the night Ronald Reagan's father slept in his car because he refused to stay in a hotel that prided itself on anti-Semitism. A site index and over 100 photographs suggest some great places to visit: the country's largest railroad museum in Baltimore, Maryland; the Irish-American Heritage Museum in East Durham, New York; the Hermitage, home of Andrew Jackson in Nashville, Tennessee; and our own Denver Island on

Lake Michigan.

Like all guide books, Barnes provides information about sites and exhibits, their location, hours, fees, etc. A 400-year timeline of events and suggestions for further reading enrich an already comprehensive publication. "Landmarks" can be purchased at Borders or by calling 1-(800)-776-0205.

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SPECIAL EVENTS

Southfield hosts 9th folk dance festival Sunday

The ninth annual International Folk Dance Festival at the Southfield Civic Center, 3:30-7 p.m. Sunday, April 14, features nine international dance groups in continuous performances and an ethnic buffet sponsored by area restaurants. Tickets are

\$13.50 in advance, \$15 at the door. Call (810) 354-4854 or (313) 871-8600 for more information.

Headlining this year's event is "Echoes of Ukraine," a group of Canadian and American young people who combine their talents as dancers, musicians and vocal-

ists. They are known for their skillful interpretations of Ukrainian folk dancing and have an unusually large repertoire of regional dances.

"Echoes" choreographies include regional folk dances, ancient ritual dances, royal court

dances, modern dances and historical pageantry, complete with a stunning collection of historic costumes. The group is accompanied by a unique selection of traditional and authentic Ukrainian instruments, including the bandura, sopilka, drimba and tsymbaly.

Also starring in this year's

program is the popular Marin Del Carmen's Grupo España, noted for their precision Spanish and Flamenco dance steps and ornate, authentic costumes.

Joining them will be the Wavel Polish Folk Ensemble, Troupe Taksmilni Middle Eastern Dancers, Sarisan Slovak Folk Ensemble, Hora Aviv Israeli

Folk Dance Troupe, Tagumpay Phillipine Cultural Ensemble, Art of Motion African Dancers, Tim O'Hare's School of Irish Step Dancing and the Vidyajjali East Indian Dancers.

The buffet of international foods by area restaurants, gourmet coffees, and fine wines will be served 3:30-6 p.m.

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Save Energy. Sit In Front Of The TV.

"Our House," a home energy-efficiency show brought to you by Detroit Edison, has some timely suggestions that can help you lower your energy bills. Starting March 17th, watch "Our House," Sundays at 7:00 a.m. on WDIV Channel 4.

Co-hosts Tom Tynan and Paula Engel offer many energy-saving projects for the home and tips to help preserve the environment. You'll see all new shows on energy efficient windows, kitchens and interior designs, as well as building an energy efficient home and conducting your own energy audit. Plus a special show about the Greening of the White House.

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Our House

"Our House," Sundays, 7:00 a.m., WDIV, through June 9th

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