

# Walk through the past in a visit to a Victorian village

By Phyllis McCrossin

Special to Senior Times

Imagine stepping back in time to an era when opulence was the norm. A time when it was considered fashionable to flaunt one's wealth. This was the standard during the Victorian Era -- from 1837 to 1901 -- the time Queen Victoria ruled England.

And it was during this era that some of Muskegon's most distinguished homes were built. Today, many of these homes can be viewed on Muskegon's Walking Tour, one of the new guided tours of homes in the country.

The tour, sponsored by the non-profit Women's Division of the Mus-

kegon Chamber of Commerce, shows visitors some of Muskegon's most historic homes. Guides, hostesses and assistants, dressed in Victorian attire, take guests through an English garden and into two of Muskegon's most famous mansions -- the Hackley and Hume homes. Most of the homes on the tour were built during the days when Muskegon was known as the "lumber town." Those were the days when fortunes were made quickly, in fact, according to our tour guide Florence Bright, in 1880 Muskegon's population had reached 10,000 and could boast 12 millionaires.

"The Victorian era was known as the time of the 'newly rich poor,'"

explained Bright. "It was a time when the middle income person could acquire wealth more easily."

Bright, who researched the history of each of the homes included on the tour, offers a wealth of information on Muskegon's history.

Some of the homes' original owners, she notes, include such Muskegon "well knowns" as John and Cornelia Hume, Dr. Samuel and Edith Oliver, Charles and Julia Hackley, Willia and Anne Rutherford, Joseph and Salina Hackley and many, many more.

The tour starts at the Muskegon County Museum, on the corner of Fourth and Clay Streets and includes 24 homes and sites along Clay and Webster Streets. Stops include a delightful tour of an English Garden and guided tours through the Hume and Hackley mansions. These two homes offer stunning displays of Victorian elegance. The Hackley mansion is presently undergoing an extensive preservation project, but offers a very distinct view of life during the Victorian era. The Hume mansion was a part

of Muskegon's Symphony Showcase and has been exquisitely decorated.

Ending the tour is a delightful Victorian tea at the Bright Mansion.

The tour takes approximately two hours. Donations per person are \$5 for adults and \$1.75 for school age children (5 to 8). An additional \$2 is required to tour the Hackley-Hume site. Group rates are available upon request.

The tour donation will be used by the Women's Division to promote and support many worthwhile endeavors in Muskegon.

"We are hoping to add four more tours in the future," explained Ann Eichmann, publicity chair for the tour. These tours will include an adventure tour, an architectural tour, fine arts tour and horticultural tour.

Tour busses are always welcome, but a two week reservation is requested.

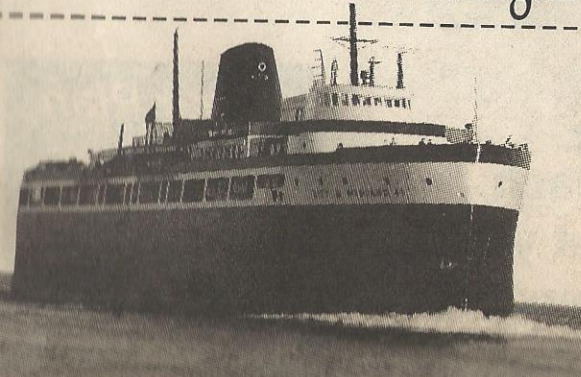
Tours are held 1:30 p.m. every Wednesday and Sunday through the end of October. Call (616) 728-4393 for more information.

SEASON EXTENDED

## Cruise Coast-To-Coast This Fall.

Add a cruise on the S.S. Badger to your Midwest color tour or mini-vacation. Our round trip carferry service between Manitowoc, Wis. and Ludington, Mich. operates daily through Sept. 14, then Thursday-Monday through Oct. 12. And, seniors can cruise for less starting Sept. 1.

Don't Miss The Boat. Lake Michigan Carferry. 1-800-841-4243.



**SAVE 10%.**

From Sept. 1 - Oct. 12, seniors (65 and up) can save 10% off regular adult fares for one-way or round trip passage on the Lake Michigan Carferry. Present this coupon at time of ticket purchase. Good for maximum of four adults in party. Discount does not apply to vehicle fares. Not valid in combination with any other offers.

