

Beloved "Golden Girls" star had strong ties to Aurora



Photo by Thomas J. Watson

Betty White, the beloved actress and animal rights supporter, died in Los Angeles on New Year's Eve, less than three weeks before her 100th birthday.

The many accounts of The Golden Girls star's life which have appeared since that day fail to mention her Canadian, let alone her specifically Auroran, roots.

One of Ms. White's great-grandfathers was Horace Dean Lundy of Aurora.

He had various occupations over the years, including operating an acetylene gas plant which supplied lighting for the Methodist (later United) Church and several merchants in Town.

The plant was located on the property of the Lundy home at the south corner of Yonge and Reuben streets. An explosion in 1910 fortunately left the house undamaged and it still stands, although greatly altered.

Mr. Lundy served as Mayor of Aurora for three terms, from 1889 to 1891.

Horace Lundy and his wife, Catherine, had five children. One of their daughters, Ettie, was born in 1863 and lived from infancy until her mid-twenties in the Yonge Street house.

Somehow, she met Christian Hans White, a Dane who had emigrated to the United States in 1880 ? and probably changed his surname. Ettie and Christian were married about 1891. Although they lived elsewhere in the early years, they spent most of their married life in the Chicago area.

The younger of the Whites' two children was Horace, clearly named for his maternal grandfather.

He would grow up to become an electrical engineer and worked as a salesman in that field.

He and his wife, Tess, whose mother also hailed from Canada, and their only child, Betty White (born in 1922) moved to Los Angeles when their daughter was a toddler.

Young Betty was in the perfect location for her future career in show business.

It is not known that Betty White ever visited Aurora. She did not have close relatives here. But there are stones for her grandparents, Ettie and Christian, in the Aurora Cemetery. (See Gallery Below)

The Mary Tyler Moore Show star would have turned 100 years old on January 17.

By **Jacqueline Stuart**



Ettie Lundy White, paternal grandmother of Betty White, was born in Aurora and laid to rest in the Aurora Cemetery following her death in Illinois.



Her paternal grandfather, Christian Hans White, is laid to rest in Aurora Cemetery alongside his wife.



The long-time home of Betty White's paternal grandmother still stands at the corner of Yonge and Reuben Streets.

Photos by Brock Weir