

Lopes was unique in Seattle even by official standards — the 1860 census listed him as the sole black resident of King County. But his personality was also unique. Lopes was known to be a devoted snare drummer who announced mealtimes at his restaurant with drum solos. Even though he was foreign born, he was an avid patriot. He was renowned for his Fourth of July celebrations, where he and a fife player named Kelly marched around town playing patriotic tunes. In 1859 Lopes sold his business to Dexter Horton and moved to Port Gamble, where it is assumed that he lived until his death.

More blacks moved to Seattle during the next two decades, increasing King County's black population to 22 according to the census in 1880. William Grose was one of those black immigrants.

William Grose was nicknamed "Big Bill the Cook," an apt description as he was 6 feet, 4 inches tall and weighed close to 400 pounds. In spite of his bulk, he led a very active and adventuresome life prior to arriving in Seattle. He served in



William Grose, Urban Pioneer

the Navy for four years, traveling to Japan and taking part in a rescue mission in the Arctic. He went to California to join the Gold Rush and formed a west coast branch of the Underground Railroad. Because he spoke Spanish, Grose was sent as a delegate to Panama to persuade the governor there to halt the return of escaped black slaves who had traveled to Panama via the Underground Railroad.

In 1860 Grose and his wife Sarah arrived in Seattle. He worked at the trade he knew best — cooking. In 1876 he opened his own business, a combination inn and restaurant named "Our House." In 1883 he expanded his business by building a three-story hotel on Henry Yesler's wharf. Grose also bought 12 acres of land from Yesler for \$1,000 in gold. This land was rolling farmland in what is now the Central District.