

Panama to persuade the governor there to halt the return of escaped black slaves that 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 one thousand dollars in gold. This land was rolling farmland in what is now the Central District.

It may be hard to imagine farmland in what is definitely the urban area now, but many parts of Seattle in Grose's day were isolated rural communities, inhabited by wild animals such as bears. Black urban pioneers settled all over the city, from Queen Anne to Green Lake, and very often they had cows, chickens and

large gardens to sustain themselves. The most urban part of Seattle was the Pioneer Square area, and many black families started out there. Later on, particularly after the fire of 1889, black families bought land in the heavily wooded and undeveloped outlying parts of Seattle.

William Grose followed this same pattern, first buying a lot on Sixth and James and developing it, and later buying the acreage from Yesler in what would become the Central District. He became a prosperous rancher as well as a restaurateur. Despite the fact that the fire of 1889



*The Grose family home, around 1893.*

destroyed his restaurant and hotel, he still remained a wealthy man. In 1891, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* reported his assets at two hundred fifty thousand dollars.