

William Grose and his family played a key role in the black middle class in the late 1890's. Their house was the center of social life, and Grose sponsored the first black grand ball. In their leisure time, members of the black middle class participated in musical programs, picnics, barbecues, balls and excursions. An all-black performance of Shakespeare's *Richard the Third* and *Macbeth* was presented at the Seattle Opera House. While some members of the white community were experiencing the age of opulence, wealthier blacks were also enjoying luxuries and entertainment.



John Edwards Hawkins

William Grose appreciated the finer things in life, but his concern for those less fortunate remained. Like Manuel Lopes before him, Grose never turned away a person in need. Legend has it that Grose sold his restaurant business to two young men just prior to its destruction in the fire of 1889. The business was uninsured, and the two men would have been instantly bankrupt had Grose not quietly returned the purchase money to them and sustained the loss himself.

The love and respect his fellow men held for Grose were clear when he died sometime around 1898. It is reported that so many people attended his funeral that sixteen carriages were insufficient to carry all of them to his burial plot at Lakeview Cemetery.

The first blacks who arrived in Seattle worked mainly as barbers and restaurateurs. Towards the end of the 19th century, the fields of law and journalism opened up to them. One of the most unique lawyers of the time was John Edwards Hawkins.

Born in Galesburg, Illinois, in 1866, Hawkins came to Seattle in 1890. He immediately started work as a barber in a building which housed many lawyers. Perhaps he was influenced by his customers, but he soon became determined to become a lawyer through diligent study. After working on his feet six and a half days each week, ten hours a day,