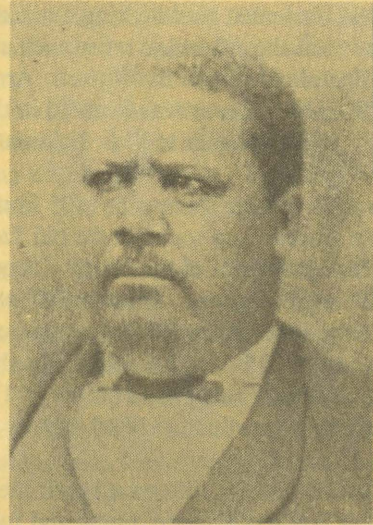

Seattle

The earliest Black urban pioneer, Manual Lopes, was born in Africa in 1812 and was believed to have been kidnapped and enslaved before arriving in Massachusetts. He probably worked as a sailor in New England before making his way to Seattle. Lopes arrived in Seattle in 1852 and promptly started a barbering business, complete with the first barber chair brought to Seattle via Cape Horn. He also operated a restaurant in the same building that housed his barber shop on First Avenue South. Well known for his generosity toward working men, Lopes often gave them meals and lodging even if they were unable to pay.

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 of 1880. William Grose was one of those Black emigrants.

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 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 that had traveled to Panama via the Underground Railroad.



William Grose, Urban Pioneer