

Camp Tahosa - Legend of the Purple Bishop

During the late 1800's and early 1890's, when silver was the latest boom in Colorado mining, Ward was a large center of activity. The people of Ward were accustomed to seeing many strangers pass through town. One day, however, a most unusual man came to Ward. He rode in a large covered wagon, the cloth canopy not white, but purple, pulled by one very large and powerful black horse. The man driving this wagon was clothed in a long, flowing purple robe with a hood covering his face.

In Ward, the man stopped at the hardware store, buying lumber, nails and tools, paying with gold coins. As he left the hardware store, a townsman bumped into him, glimpsing into this strange man's hood. The townsman fell back, his face paralyzed in fright. The mysterious man in the purple robe quickly left in his purple covered wagon. The next morning, the same man who had looked into the strange man's purple hood had vanished, with no trace except the clothes he had been wearing, folded and covered with a purple cloth.

The men of Ward had seen enough. While they had no proof, they felt that the strange man in the purple robe had been responsible for their friend's disappearance. They intended to drive him away; this man in the purple robes they called the Purple Bishop. The people of ward had heard rumors that the Purple Bishop was living a few miles north of the town near a small lake. Twenty men hiked through the mountains until they reached a small lake, now known as Tumblesom Lake. At dusk on the west edge of the lake, they saw an eerie light glowing through the trees.

Upon reaching the site they found a huge cabin, newly built, with tremendous rafters inside. They found no one inside; in fact there was no sign of anyone nearby. The men eventually decided to burn the cabin down. They thought this might convince the Purple Bishop to leave the area. The flames from the cabin burned a deep purple as they danced through the night sky. The men from Ward never returned home the following day. That night something horrible and very strange occurred in Ward that people still talk about.

Camp Tahosa - Legend of the Purple Bishop

It was the night of a full moon. A light covering of clouds gently drifted across the summer skies, yet you could see the moon and stars. Suddenly, lightning streaked through the sky, bolting through the hills, changing night into day. Soon the entire town of Ward was ablaze, the flames a deep purple. Deep purple smoke and organ music lingered in the air. Soon afterward, a small group of men went searching for the Purple Bishop to gain revenge. They hunted throughout the forest north of Ward for the man in the purple robe. Finally, they found the burnt remains of the Purple Bishop's cabin.

Further down that valley a large barn was discovered. Behind the barn the men found twenty slabs of quartz rock, but this was not ordinary quartz. It was a brilliant white luster, but this quartz had vivid purple stripes running throughout it, like veins filled with purple blood. The man quickly set fire to the barn, and watched as its purple flames spread to nearby trees. They continued down the valley until they came to another cabin by a small marsh. Outside the cabin was the large, jet black horse standing by the purple covered wagon. The men slowly moved toward the cabin. Inside they heard organ music and saw the figure of a man in a purple-hooded robe.

Quickly the men loaded their rifles and fired upon the building. For half an hour, they continued their assault on the small log cabin. Finally, when they stopped, the men of Ward set fire to the cabin, burning it until nothing remained of it but ashes. They were certain that the Purple Bishop could not have escaped. And yet these men never returned. Over the years, there have been many reports of purple lights flickering through the forest, and organ music, echoing across the lake at night, seemingly coming from nowhere. And to remind us of his presence, you will always see purple licks of flame around every campfire burned at Camp Tahosa.