102 County Road 407, Cuchara, Colorado 81055

What if you stood in the Cuchara Valley centuries ago? The air would still smell of pine, but no cabins or roads would break the silence. You'd see Ute hunters on horseback, Spanish explorers pushing north, or maybe hear the distant clink of miners' tools — depending on which flag was flying that decade. If the mountains could talk, they'd tell stories no textbook ever could.

Five Flags Over Cuchara

Long before cabins and roads dotted the Cuchara Valley, this land lay within the seasonal hunting and sacred grounds of the Ute, Apache, Comanche, and Puebloan peoples. The Capote band of the Ute considered the Spanish Peaks sacred, and even today arrowheads surface in the soil after rains, whispering of their long presence. In the late 1500s, Spain claimed the region as part of New Spain, governed from Santa Fe, leaving a cultural imprint in language, faith, and architecture that endures in southern Colorado. When Mexico gained independence in 1821, the land shifted again, though Mexican influence in the remote frontier was limited. Lawlessness and conflict marked the era. From 1836 to 1845, the Republic of Texas claimed the Cuchara Valley in its ambitious northern reach, though it never truly governed here. Still, the ties with Texas remain—many Texans still own cabins in the valley, escaping summer heat for mountain air. Finally, after the Mexican-

American War, the United States claimed Colorado in 1848. By 1876, Colorado became the 38th state. The Cuchara Valley, with its Spanish Peaks rising above, had already passed under five different flags, each leaving fingerprints on its evolving identity.

Homesteading the Future

One of the earliest written chapters of Pinehaven's story began with Union Civil War veteran John L. Powell. Born in Pennsylvania in 1834, Powell marched with the 8th Kansas Infantry through the hardships of the war. Afterward, like many veterans seeking renewal, he moved west. In 1896 he and his family arrived in the Cuchara Valley by covered wagon. In 1905, under the Homestead Act of 1862, Powell secured 160 acres just north of Cuchara. The Act required settlers to live on the land, cultivate it, and build a home; in return, they received ownership. Powell's homestead fulfilled these requirements, and his perseverance planted the seed of what would one day become Pinehaven. He lived out his years in La Veta until his death in 1920, leaving the land to his children.

The Birth of Pinehaven

In 1943, Powell's son Charles sold the family land to John C. Vories, who dreamed of transforming the rugged property into a mountain resort. With vision but limited resources, Vories named the land "Pinehaven" and began designing cabin lots along what would become Road 402. He saw the forest as "heaven among the pines," and his plans laid the foundation for the community's identity as a retreat in the high country. Health challenges eventually forced Vories to leave Colorado, but before he did, he passed his dream into capable hands.

That man was Steve Pierotti, a native of Huerfano County and close friend of Vories. Pierotti had grown up tough—an orphan by nine, managing service stations as a teenager, and later working in the coal mines. His tireless work ethic made him one of the largest coal dealers in the county. When Vories offered him Pinehaven for $3,700, Pierotti borrowed from a friend and seized the opportunity. Through sheer determination and charisma, he sold lots, encouraged building, and helped bring Vories' dream to life. Under Pierotti's influence, Pinehaven became a thriving cabin community. Steve lived there until his death in 2017 at the age of 99, and his family remains part of Pinehaven today.

Building a Community

From Powell's homestead to Vories' vision and Pierotti's energy, Pinehaven grew from wilderness into a neighborhood. Steve Pierotti's son, Bob, carried his father's vision forward by leading Pinehaven's expansion up the mountain and ensuring its growth was both thoughtful and sustainable. With steady leadership, he guided the development of new roads, utilities, and infrastructure, while championing compliance with modern standards.

His pivotal role in integrating Pinehaven into the Cucharas Sanitation and Water District secured reliable water and sanitation for generations to come. From community planning to the creation of the Pierotti Pavilion, Bob's quiet dedication laid the foundation for a resilient mountain community whose strength endures to this day

Cabins rose among the trees, families returned each summer, and traditions took root. Eventually, homeowners organized formally, creating the Pinehaven Homeowners' Association to care for roads, shared spaces, and community life. The Pierotti Pavilion, named in honor of Bob's contributions, became a gathering place where neighbors celebrated the very community he helped establish.

Today, Pinehaven stands as more than a scattering of mountain cabins. It is a close-knit community, bound together by its layered history, its natural beauty, and its people's love for the land. The Spanish Peaks still tower over the valley, silent witnesses to centuries of change—from the passage of flags and empires to the persistence of families who found here not just land, but home.

Our Cabin

Built in 1985 by the Perroti family, the cabin at 102 County Road 407 quickly became part of Pinehaven's evolving story. Rising among the pines, its design blended modern construction with touches of mountain character, including a fireplace and hearth built from local stone. That hearth, carved from the very geology of the valley, remains a centerpiece of the cabin—a place where warmth, conversation, and memory converge.

The cabin's earliest chapter began with the Mayfield family, who first owned it. Like many who sought the Cuchara Valley, the Mayfields came in search of respite from the ordinary grind of life. In 2005, Jeff Malkiewicz purchased the cabin from them, ushering in a new era of stewardship. Renovation followed in 2007, when both the interior and exterior were updated to ensure comfort, durability, and a welcoming aesthetic. Those efforts reflected a philosophy carried forward by its owners—to create a home that felt as inviting as the valley itself.

Used primarily as a summer getaway from the Texas heat, the cabin became more than shelter. Its deck, admired for its design, inspired many other remodels throughout Pinehaven. In that way, the cabin influenced not only its own inhabitants but also the broader character of the community. Even in small ways, its presence rippled outward.

Though Jeff did not inherit the property from earlier generations, he approached ownership with the same spirit of legacy. He and his family committed to making the cabin comfortable, functional, and welcoming. Their vision was not one of grandeur but of hospitality—a retreat where family and friends could gather, recharge, and enjoy the high-

country beauty of Cuchara. The absence of lawn work became a celebrated reprieve from daily obligations, reminding its owners that mountain life is meant to be savored, not maintained.

Like the valley itself, the cabin has weathered the passing decades with resilience. Though not tied to legendary floods or fires, its story is one of quiet persistence—renovations completed, decks admired, and countless summer evenings spent beneath the shadow of the Spanish Peaks. Its owners envision future generations remembering the cabin as a place of comfort and welcome, where the door was always open and the hearth always warm.

The cabin at 102 County Road 407 is a reminder that history is not only written in wars or landmark legislation but also in the quiet, steady devotion of families who choose to build, renovate, and preserve a corner of the valley. Through their efforts, the cabin has become part of the broader Pinehaven story—one that began centuries ago with the first people of the valley and continues today through every family who finds in Pinehaven not just a place, but a home.

In many ways, the cabin at 102 County Road 407 mirrors the spirit of Pinehaven itself—a place shaped by resilience, tradition, and the desire to create a home in harmony with the mountains. To read more about the history of Pinehaven, visit www.cabininthepinescuchara.blogspot.com

* This summary condenses five centuries of history; full research notes, sources, and citations can be found at www.cabininthepines.org