113 County Road 405, 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. 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

The story of 113 County Road 405 begins in 1997, when Charles and Linda Chauvin built a log home that would become a cherished retreat for decades. Choosing the site for its magnificent, unobstructed view of the West Spanish Peak and the Devil's Stair Steps dyke through a gap in the Dakota Wall, they created a cabin that captures both grandeur and intimacy. Built as an Air Lock log home kit, its full pine logs and stone foundation tie it naturally to the mountain landscape. The Santa Fe–inspired swirl-cut porch posts and trim reflect the Chauvins' love for Santa Fe and infuse the home with a warm, southwestern spirit.

Construction itself became a community effort reminiscent of a traditional barn raising. Neighbors Skip Johnson, Don Brown, Leon Skaggs, and Don Pike all lent their hands, with Paul Neldner serving as builder. Together, they stacked the logs and shaped a dwelling that would be far more than shelter—it was a statement of friendship and shared endeavor. The cabin became a place where memories flourished. Charles and Linda often hosted family dinners and New Year's Day gatherings, filling the home with warmth, laughter, and tradition.

In 2023, after decades of ownership, the Chauvins sold the cabin to Steve and Bridget Johnson, who knew the property well and had admired its beauty. When the time came, they asked Charles directly if the cabin was for sale, and soon they became its next caretakers. For the Johnsons, the transition was seamless, grounded in a desire to continue the legacy of hospitality and celebration that the Chauvins began. They now gather with family and friends on the deck, watching sunsets over the West Spanish Peak, and have established their own tradition of spending Christmas in the cabin each year.

The cabin holds countless moments of wonder. From its deck, the Johnsons once watched for three days as a bear fed on a deer below, a reminder of the raw wilderness that surrounds Pinehaven. Their cameras have also captured mountain lions, bobcats, and bears, while autumn paints the valley in fiery colors. Renovations in 2024 refreshed the interior, blending modern updates with the cabin's timeless character. Every detail, from the Santa Fe–style trim to the southwest-inspired fixtures, tells a story of care and character.

The cabin has always been a seasonal retreat, most often enjoyed between May and October, though the Johnsons make it a point to return in December for Christmas. It remains a place where the beauty of the Spanish Peaks is ever-present, and where wildlife, weather, and wonder intertwine. The story of 113 County Road 405 is not just about a structure—it is about the people who poured themselves into its making, the neighbors who raised it, and the families who have filled it with laughter, celebration, and quiet moments of awe.

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