128 County Rd 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.

Ownership History

When we strip away the book numbers and recording codes, the story of 128 County Road 407, Lot 22 in Pinehaven #2, becomes surprisingly human. The recorded deeds show that on October 16, 1978, Alice L. Cribbs and William D. Cribbs sold the property to Bob L. Barnes. That is the first clearly documented transfer in this record set. Ten years later, on October 31, 1988, Evergreen Ltd sold the property to Donald G. Popejoy and Susan C. Popejoy, suggesting that somewhere between 1978 and 1988 the property changed hands again through a transaction not fully shown in this abbreviated list. On December 14, 1992, Bob L. Barnes conveyed the property to the Berg Family Cabin Partnership, marking a shift from individual ownership to a family-held partnership. The property remained in long-term hands until June 4, 2021, when Richard J. Greenwood conveyed it to Anne E. Oxler and Douglas V. Oxler, who are the current owners of record.

In simple terms, Lot 22 passed from a private couple in the late 1970s, to individual ownership, through a corporate entity in the 1980s, into a family partnership in the early 1990s, and finally back into private ownership in 2021. Each deed marks not just a legal

transaction, but a change in stewardship — new families, new seasons of use, and another chapter in Pinehaven's continuing story.

Ownership Timeline (Simplified)

- Alice L. Cribbs & William D. Cribbs → prior to October 16, 1978
- Bob L. Barnes → October 16, 1978 – prior to late 1980s transfer
- Evergreen Ltd → prior to October 31, 1988
- Donald G. Popejoy & Susan C. Popejoy → October 31, 1988 – prior to December 14, 1992
- Berg Family Cabin Partnership → December 14, 1992 – prior to June 4, 2021
- Richard J. Greenwood → prior to June 4, 2021
- Anne E. Oxler & Douglas V. Oxler → June 4, 2021 – Present

Our Cabin

Nestled among the pines of Pinehaven the cabin at 128 County Rd 407 carries with it both the mystery of its origins and the warmth of its present caretakers. When Doug and Anne Oxler purchased the property in May 2021, they stepped into a story that now blends their personal memories with the long arc of Pinehaven's history.

Unlike some cabins in Pinehaven with known dates of construction or detailed accounts of their builders, this cabin's earliest story is obscured. And yet, that very uncertainty adds to its mystique. What is clear is that the cabin fits seamlessly into the rugged yet welcoming character of Pinehaven. Its walls, while not hand-hewn logs or marked by elaborate masonry, are now filled with treasures that reflect the Oxlers' lives, friendships, and memories.

Upon purchasing the cabin, Doug and Anne began establishing traditions that root their presence in Pinehaven. One of the most charming customs is a visitor's book, where family and friends inscribe reflections of their stays. These entries have become snapshots of joy, laughter, and shared time in the mountains, making the book itself a kind of living history. Future generations who open its pages will see not just names and dates, but glimpses of life as it was lived—stories of coffee on the back deck, of hummingbirds flitting at sunrise, and of laughter echoing through the trees.

Nature plays a starring role in the Oxlers' cabin life. From the deck, mornings begin with steaming cups of coffee and the company of hummingbirds, whose wings beat like tiny drums in the cool air. Wildlife encounters have etched themselves into family memory: flocks of wild turkeys moving across the yard, and the unforgettable day when two bears ambled up from the road below. Such moments tether the cabin experience to the wilderness around it, reminding all who visit that Cuchara is as much about the untamed as it is about the cultivated.

The cabin has absorbed the quiet transformation of becoming a seasonal getaway—a retreat from the pace of everyday life. For Doug and Anne, the greatest distinction lies in the nightly ritual of sleeping with the windows open, letting in the mountain air. This simple act of breathing in Cuchara's coolness ties them to the centuries of travelers, hunters, and homesteaders who once found respite in the same valley breezes.

Personality, too, has been woven into the cabin's interior through memory and inheritance. A dear friend of Anne's, who has since passed away, invited her to pick through a Kansas hunting cabin filled with relics of outdoor life. From that visit, Anne brought back objects that now inhabit the Oxler cabin: a fly-fishing basket, a print of three pheasant heads, a wicker seat chair. Each piece carries the spirit of friendship, memory, and continuity, so that even absent voices feel present within the cabin's rooms.

Although the Oxlers have not lived in Pinehaven long enough to chart sweeping changes in the community, their presence links to a longer memory. Doug recalls visiting Cuchara as a child when his parents came to see the Vickery family, whose cabin along Highway 12 still remains. Buying their own place was, in part, a way of keeping those childhood impressions alive—a continuity that binds past to present in ways no blueprint ever could.

In its essence, the cabin at 128 County Rd 407 is not just a structure of timber and stone, but a vessel for memory, heritage, and fellowship. Though its early story remains partly unwritten, its current chapter is one of welcome, warmth, and fun. Doug and Anne's wish is that future generations will remember the cabin as a place filled with joy—where the beauty of the mountains meets the laughter of family and friends.

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