

The Boyle Cabin History

168 County Road 406, Cuchara, Colorado 81055



Centuries before cabins appeared in the Cuchara Valley, this mountain corridor was an untamed expanse of pine forest and open meadow. The Mouache and Capote bands of the Ute Nation hunted here seasonally and regarded the twin summits of the Spanish Peaks as sacred landmarks. Over time, explorers, settlers, and governments each claimed and redefined the land, leaving layers of cultural and political history that still shape the region today.

Five Flags Over Cuchara

Long before Pinehaven cut roads into the mountain, this land lay within the seasonal hunting and sacred grounds of the Ute, Apache, Comanche, and Puebloan peoples. The Mouache band of the Ute considered the Spanish Peaks sacred, and even today arrowheads surface in the soil after rains, reflecting 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 northern reach, though it never exercised effective governance here. After the Mexican-American War, the United States claimed Colorado in 1848. By 1876, Colorado became the 38th state. The Cuchara Valley had already passed under five different flags, each shaping its evolving identity.

Homesteading the Future

One of the earliest documented chapters of Pinehaven's story began with Union Civil War veteran John L. Powell. Born in Pennsylvania in 1834, Powell served with the 8th Kansas Infantry. In 1896, he and his family arrived in the Cuchara Valley by wagon. In 1905, under the Homestead Act of 1862, he secured 160 acres just north of Cuchara. The act required settlers to reside on and improve the land in exchange for ownership. Powell fulfilled those requirements, establishing a homestead that would later form the foundation of Pinehaven's development. He died 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 envisioned a mountain retreat community. Vories named the land Pinehaven and began subdividing lots along what would become Road 402. Health challenges eventually required him to leave Colorado, and he transferred the project to Steve Pierotti. Pierotti, a Huerfano County native and experienced businessman, purchased Pinehaven for \$3,700. Through persistent effort, he marketed lots and encouraged construction, transforming Pinehaven into a viable cabin community. He remained connected to the area throughout his long life, passing away in 2017 at the age of 99.

Building a Community

Under subsequent leadership, including that of Bob Pierotti, Pinehaven expanded thoughtfully. Roads, utilities, and infrastructure improved over time, including integration into the Cucharas Sanitation and Water District. The establishment of the Pinehaven Owners Association formalized shared stewardship of roads and common areas. The Pierotti Pavilion became a central gathering place, reflecting Pinehaven's transformation from isolated lots into an organized mountain neighborhood. Today, Pinehaven remains a close-knit community shaped by layered history and careful management.

History of Ownership

County property and deed records trace the ownership of 168 County Road 406 through several families and legal transfers, revealing how the property passed from its earlier owners to those who hold it today.

- John L. Powell (original homesteader), September 11, 1905 – 1920
- Charles R. Powell (son of John L. Powell), 1920 – 1943
- John C. Vories (founder of Pinehaven), 1943 – 1947
- Steve and Anna Mae Pierotti (Pinehaven developer under whose ownership individual lot sales began), 1947–1979
- S. Ito and Marian Perl, 1979 – 2010 (cabin built in 1983)
- Robert and Michelle A. Boyle, 2010 – Present

Boyle Family Ownership (2010–Present)

Some people stop for ice cream and leave with nothing more than a sweet memory and a few extra calories. Micki and Robert Boyle stopped for ice cream in La Veta and wound up making a decision that would change their lives.

Their cabin story began in July 2010, when the Boyles were traveling through southern Colorado on their way home to Amarillo, Texas. They decided to spend the night before continuing home.

With time available, they walked past the storefronts and stopped to look at photographs of cabins for sale posted in the window of the Bachman Real Estate office. A realtor noticed them and asked whether they would like to see properties. Micki and Robert looked at each other and whispered, “We’ve got a day to kill, so why not?”

It sounded harmless enough.

The realtor showed them five homes. Then they saw the cabin at 168 County Road 406. Something changed. The cabin was neither grand nor elaborate. It had no fancy bells and whistles, yet something about it and its setting among the pines captured their hearts.

By the next day, Micki and Robert had gone from having a day to kill to making an offer on a cabin. Unfortunately, the owners did not accept their offer.

The disappointment followed the Boyles all the way back to Amarillo. Micki cried during the drive home, convinced they had lost the cabin almost as quickly as they had found it. Robert was more hopeful. “Don’t worry about it,” he told her. “They will change their mind.”

Three days later, the telephone finally rang. Robert had been right. The Perls had reconsidered and wanted to accept the offer.

The Boyles closed on the cabin in August 2010. The Perls asked if they could remain through the end of the month, and the Boyles agreed, so Micki and Robert did not take possession until Labor Day weekend.

The entire experience became one of those family stories that improves each time it is told. Micki and Robert joke that it can take them two months to decide which tennis shoes to buy, yet they managed to buy a cabin in twenty-four hours. In this case, the quick decision proved to be the right one.

During their first years of ownership, the cabin became a welcome escape from life in Amarillo. From 2010 until May 2016, Micki and Robert spent long weeks there whenever they could. The drive brought them from the activity and distractions of a larger city to a place where life felt quieter and less demanding. The cabin did not need elaborate features to make those visits special. Its greatest offering was the opportunity to slow down.

That sense of rest is what makes life at Pinehaven different from everyday life elsewhere. There are fewer distractions, fewer demands competing for attention, and more room simply to enjoy being there. What might appear modest on a real estate listing became exactly what the Boyles needed: a comfortable retreat where the pace of life could ease and the outside world could feel a little farther away.

In May 2016, their pattern changed. The long visits grew into full summers, generally lasting from May through September. The cabin was still a seasonal getaway, but it was no longer a place visited only for an occasional week. It became home for an entire season each year.

Spending several months at the cabin allowed Micki and Robert to know it in a different way. A short vacation is measured by how quickly the days disappear. A summer gives time for ordinary routines, unhurried mornings, and the comfort of knowing there is no immediate need to pack for home. Each May brought a return to Pinehaven, and each September closed another chapter of summer life beneath the pines.

Over time, the cabin became more than a private retreat. Its history reached beyond its walls and into the life of Pinehaven itself. For Micki and Robert, owning a place beneath the pines also meant helping care for the larger community around it.

Since 2013, Micki has served Pinehaven's Owners Association as a director, secretary, vice president and member of the Picnic and Nominating Committees. Robert has served as president and contributed his experience to the Architectural and Nominating Committees. Their years of volunteer leadership have added another chapter to the cabin's story, one defined not only by living in Pinehaven but also by helping preserve its character, strengthen its community, and steward its future.

The Boyles' service reflects the same quality that has shaped the cabin's history from one owner to the next: care. The cabin's previous owners also gave their time to the Owners Association, leaving a legacy that reached well beyond the cabin itself. A cabin may belong to one family at a time, but the way its owners participate in the life around it can become part of its lasting legacy.

The ice cream that started everything has also become part of Micki's Pinehaven humor. Today, when she sees people eating ice cream outside Charlie's, she sometimes offers them a playful disclaimer. She warns that Charlie's ice cream can result in the purchase of a cabin in Pinehaven, one they will never regret.

It is a funny warning because it is also true to her experience. One ice cream cone led to a walk down the street. The walk led to a real estate window. The window led to a five-house tour, and the tour led to a cabin in Pinehaven that has been part of Micki and Robert's lives for more than fifteen years. Charlie's may sell ice cream, but on at least one July afternoon, it also helped sell a future.

The story of the cabin at 168 County Road 406 rests in the people who have loved it, the unexpected way Micki and Robert found it, the summers of rest it has given them, the lasting friendships they have formed, and the years they have invested in Pinehaven. Although Micki describes the cabin as modest, it has woven an extraordinary thread through the history of the Pinehaven Owners Association, with one owner after another stepping forward to lead.

What began as an unplanned afternoon became a lasting home beneath the pines, proving that some of life's best decisions are the ones no one expected to make.

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