

The Long Cabin History

60 County Road 403, Cuchara, Colorado 81055



Centuries before this cabin stood in the Cuchara Valley, the surrounding land had already accumulated a long and complex history. Indigenous peoples traveled, hunted, and lived throughout the region, while later nations and governments repeatedly redrew its political boundaries. The history of this cabin therefore begins not with its construction, but with the land beneath it.

Five Flags Over Cuchara

Long before roads were cut into the mountains, the Cuchara Valley formed part of the seasonal hunting grounds and traditional homelands of the Ute, Apache, Comanche, and Puebloan peoples. The Mouache band of the Ute regarded the Spanish Peaks as sacred landmarks, and archaeological materials found throughout the region reflect a presence extending back many generations.

In the late 1500s, Spain claimed the region as part of New Spain, administered from Santa Fe. Spanish influence remains visible in southern Colorado through its language, religion, place

names, and architecture. When Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821, the region passed under the authority of the Republic of Mexico, although direct governmental control remained limited on this remote frontier.

From 1836 through 1845, the Republic of Texas existed as a sovereign nation and claimed an enormous northern territory that included the Cuchara Valley, although it never established effective control there. Texas joined the United States in 1845, but the boundaries of its western claims remained disputed until 1850.

The Mexican-American War ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. Mexico relinquished its claims to the Cuchara Valley and other portions of present-day Colorado, bringing the region under undisputed United States authority. For the next two years, the Cuchara Valley remained within unorganized federal territory while Congress determined how the newly acquired western lands would be governed.

In 1850, Congress organized much of the newly acquired Southwest as the Territory of New Mexico. Its northern boundary followed the 38th parallel, placing the southernmost portion of present-day Colorado, including the Cuchara Valley, within the new territory.

On February 28, 1861, Congress created the Territory of Colorado by combining portions of the New Mexico, Utah, Kansas, and Nebraska territories. The Cuchara Valley was transferred from New Mexico Territory into the newly established Colorado Territory, where it remained for the next fifteen years. On August 1, 1876, Colorado was admitted to the Union as the 38th state, placing the Cuchara Valley within the political boundaries it retains today.

By the time Colorado achieved statehood in 1876, the Cuchara Valley and the land that is now Pinehaven had passed under five different flags, each representing another chapter in the region's evolving identity.

Homesteading the Future

One of the earliest documented chapters in Pinehaven's history began with Union Civil War veteran John L. Powell. Born in Pennsylvania in 1834, Powell served with the 8th Kansas Infantry during the Civil War. In 1896, he and his family crossed the Great Plains by covered wagon and settled in the Cuchara Valley.

Under the Homestead Act of 1862, Powell established a claim to 160 acres just north of Cuchara. The law allowed settlers to obtain ownership of federal land after living on it, improving it, and meeting other requirements established by the government. Powell fulfilled those obligations, and on September 11, 1905, the United States issued him a land patent granting legal title to the property.

That homestead would later become part of the land from which Pinehaven was developed. Powell died in 1920, leaving the property to his children and beginning the chain of ownership that eventually led to the mountain community known today as Pinehaven.

The Birth of Pinehaven

In 1943, John L. Powell's son, Charles R. Powell, 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 placed his dream in capable hands.

Those hands belonged to Steve Pierotti, a native of Huerfano County and close friend of Vories. Pierotti had endured a difficult childhood. Orphaned by age nine, he managed service stations as a teenager and later worked 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 the money 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 undeveloped mountain land into a mountain neighborhood. Steve Pierotti's son, Bob, then carried his father's work forward by leading Pinehaven's expansion up the mountain and helping ensure that its growth was thoughtful and sustainable.

With steady leadership, Bob 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, property owners organized formally, establishing the Pinehaven Owners 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.

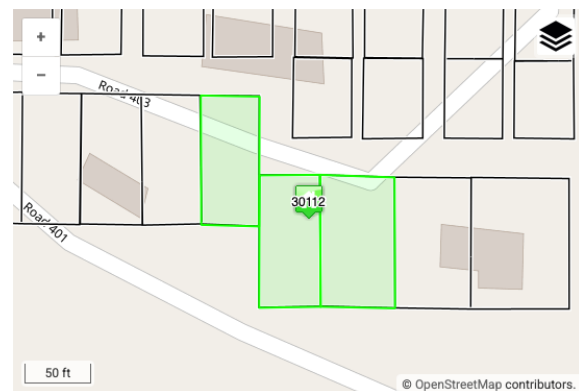
History of Ownership

Unlike most properties in Pinehaven, what is now 60 County Road 403 consists of three separately platted parcels recorded as Lots 7, 8, and 9 in Block 11 of Pinehaven Resort. Before Ralph and Elva Harmon brought the three lots under common ownership in 1990, each lot followed a different chain of ownership. The land beneath the cabin therefore has an unusually complex history.

- 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 Pierotti (Pinehaven developer), 1947–1968
- Steve Pierotti (Pinehaven developer) created lots 7, 8, and 9

1968-2001: The history of each individual lot is as follows.

- **Lot 7.** On October 28, 1968, the Pierottis sold Lot 7 to Joe and Emma Feiccabrino. Then on September 14, 1990, the Feiccabrinis sold Lot 7 to Ralph and Elva Harmon.
- **Lot 8.** Albert and Emma Pazar owned Lot 8 by September 16, 1980, when they transferred it to Pinehaven Inc., the Pierottis' development company. Unfortunately, County records do not appear to show when they originally purchased it from Steve Pierotti. Then on August 28, 1989, Pinehaven Inc. sold Lot 8 to Ralph and Elva Harmon.
- **Lot 9.** John and Mary Pazar owned Lot 9 by September 16, 1980, when they transferred it to Pinehaven Inc., the Pierottis' development company. Unfortunately, County records do not appear to show when they originally purchased it from Steve Pierotti. Then on August 28, 1989, Pinehaven Inc. sold Lot 9 to Ralph and Elva Harmon.
- **Consolidated Trust Transfer.** On May 17, 1993, the Harmons transferred the three lots into a trust arrangement.



1989 – 2001 Ralph and Elva Harmon owned the property, acquiring Lots 8 and 9 in 1989 and Lot 7 in 1990.

2001 – Present. Karen Long Trust: On August 16, 2001, the Harmon trustees sold all three lots and the cabin to the Karen Long Trust.

Long Cabin History

The cabin now known as “Long Time Coming” began with Ralph and Elva Harmon of Tulsa, Oklahoma. After visiting Pinehaven as guests of the Whiteside family, the Harmons were captivated by the quiet mountain setting, the deer among the trees, and the view toward the Spanish Peaks. They contacted Bob Pierotti, purchased three adjoining lots, and decided to build a cabin of their own.

The Whitesides’ son-in-law prepared the plans, and Bud and Paul Neldner began construction in 1991. Building in the mountains required patience. The Harmons lived temporarily in a La Veta motel with two cats and a dog while making repeated trips to La Veta, Pueblo, and Colorado Springs for materials. As they later recalled, “The keyword to describe any such project in a mountain town is compromise. And we soon learned.” They moved into the completed cabin in 1991 and added a dog yard and attached garage in 1994.

After enjoying ten summers in Pinehaven, the Harmons sold the cabin in 2001 to Ron and Karen Long of Richardson, Texas. The Longs were already deeply familiar with Cuchara. They had vacationed throughout the valley, rented cabins in several locations, and explored other Colorado resort communities, yet they continually found themselves drawn back to Cuchara and its welcoming people. They had even admired the Harmon cabin before it was placed on the market. When it became available, they knew they had found the mountain home they had been seeking.

Over the years, “Long Time Coming” has become a gathering place for the Long family and their friends. Their daughter Melissa and her family, along with siblings, nephews, and many guests, have developed their own attachment to the cabin and to Cuchara. Rain, sleet, deep snow, and the long drive have never diminished the pleasure of stepping onto the deck and taking in the surrounding mountain landscape. For the Long family, the cabin has become far more than a vacation property. It is a place of shared memories, family connection, and lasting gratitude for their time in Pinehaven.

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