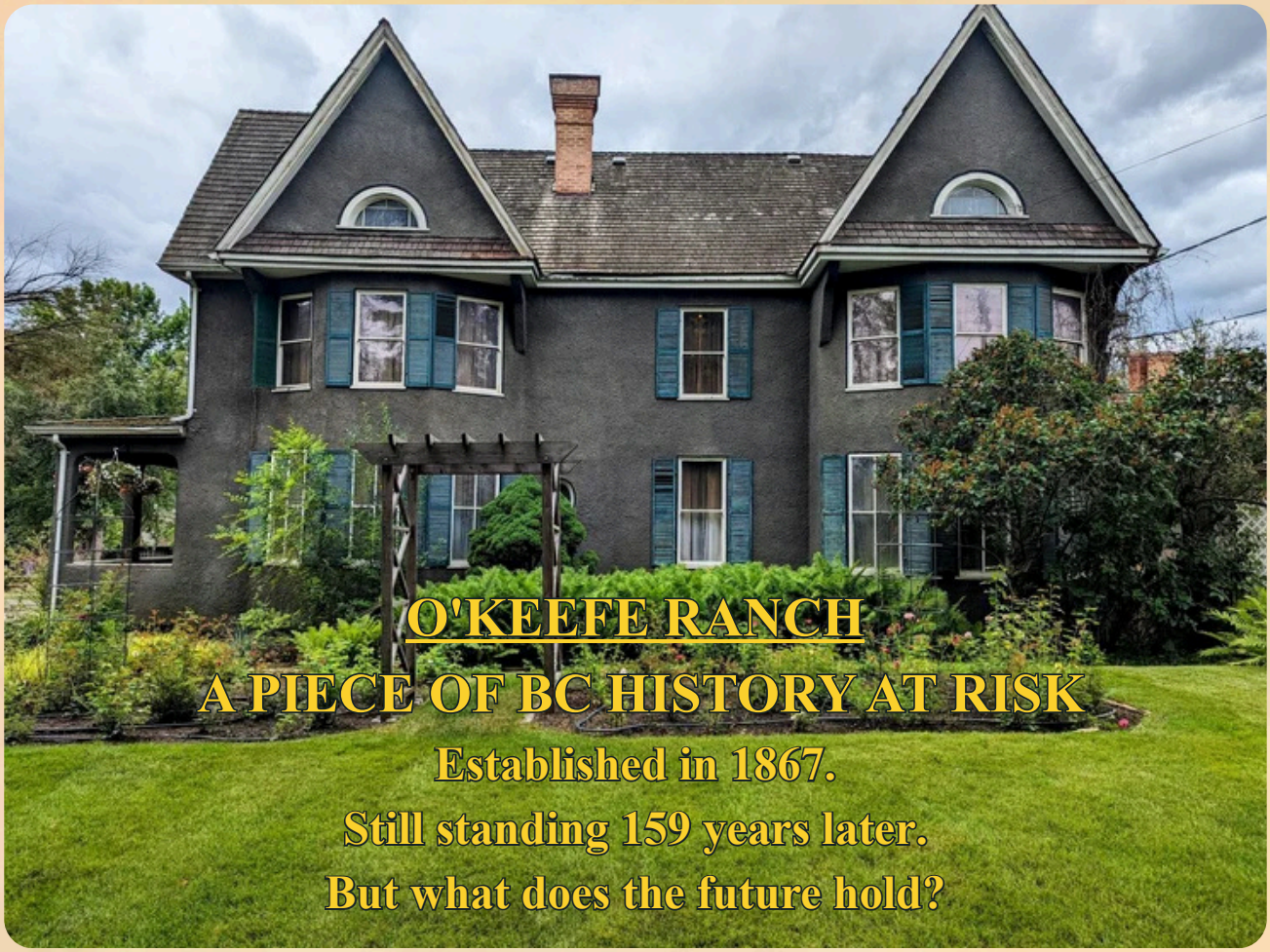
Dan & Carm
Monthly Newsletter
Volume 2 | November, 2026
BEYOND THE MAP MEDIA
ADVENTURE | HISTORY | STORIES WORTH FINDING
www.beyond-the-map-media.ca

WE REMEMBER



What Is Vernon City Council Doing?

Vernon City Council has unanimously decided not to renew its lease with the Historic O'Keefe Ranch & Interior Heritage Society when the agreement expires on March 31, 2027. The City, which owns the property, cites ongoing financial challenges, mounting maintenance costs and an estimated $2.875 million in repairs needed over the next decade. The Heritage Society disputes some of the City's financial figures and believes alternatives have not been adequately explored. While the City says it is considering future options for the property, it has not publicly confirmed what those plans involve, leaving the future of this historic landmark and its public access uncertain.

But what does this decision really mean for O'Keefe Ranch? What will happen to its historic buildings, artifacts and the generations of history they represent? And what can be done to ensure this remarkable piece of British Columbia's heritage is not lost?

On the next page, we take a closer look at the challenges facing O'Keefe Ranch, the efforts underway to preserve it, and how you can help protect this important piece of British Columbia's history.

CLICK HERE

Historic O'Keefe Ranch: The Facts the Public Deserves to Know

Respectfully Submitted by Douglas MacGregor, President, Historic O'Keefe Ranch & Interior Heritage Society.

I simply cannot sit back and allow the Mayor of Vernon to continue making statements about the future of O'Keefe Ranch that, in my opinion, rely on inflated figures and raise serious questions about the accuracy of the information being presented to the public.

Throughout our conversations, the Mayor has made his opposition to the continuation of O'Keefe Ranch very clear. He has been quite vocal in expressing his position that he does not support keeping the Ranch operating.

Yet the Mayor and Council encouraged us to continue operating and asked the Society to submit a one-year proposal that might allow the Ranch to remain open until 2028. We did what they asked. However, we heard nothing further from Council regarding our proposal until we were informed that our contract would not be renewed.

We advised the City that this decision would leave the Society with little choice but to dissolve and consult with our membership about its future. Whether the City chose to make its decision public before the Society could communicate with the community is something only the City can answer.

What is particularly disturbing is the Mayor's continued use of the figure of $350,000 per year to maintain O'Keefe Ranch. The public deserves a clear explanation of where this figure originated and exactly what it includes.

For the past two years, the City has provided approximately $10,000 per year toward the Ranch, along with approximately $40,000 per year for insurance. The insurance protects a property owned by the City, and the City is the primary beneficiary of that coverage, rather than the Society.

Furthermore, the Society had two years of its $10,000 annual payment withheld, requiring us to continue operating without those funds.

To my knowledge, the City has not been spending $350,000 annually to maintain the property. If it had, it is difficult to understand how the buildings and infrastructure could have deteriorated to their present condition.

It appears to me that these figures are now being used to justify a decision already made by seven members of our community, without meaningful consultation with the community they were elected to represent.

The Society submitted a proposal to the City that would require a maximum contribution of approximately $150,000 per year, based on hiring a couple of staff members to support daily operations.

With this staffing in place, we could operate the Ranch five days a week instead of relying so heavily on weekend activities and volunteers. Longer operating hours would provide more opportunities to generate revenue and potentially reduce the amount the City would need to contribute.

We also made it clear that any income remaining after operating expenses would be directed toward repairing the City's buildings and infrastructure.

With a long-term agreement in place, the Society could once again approach local businesses, community supporters, and potential donors to help restore the buildings one at a time over a number of years.

To contuniue reading please click this link to main source

A RANCH THAT HELPED SHAPE THE NORTH OKANAGAN

Established by Cornelius O'Keefe and his partners, the ranch became an important stopping place along the historic wagon road into the Okanagan Valley.

Over time, it developed into a thriving community with a general store, post office, blacksmith shops, church, cemetery, agricultural operations and other essential services.

Long before Vernon developed into the city we recognize today, O'Keefe Ranch was part of the transportation, commerce and settlement networks that helped establish the North Okanagan.

Of course, the history of this land reaches much further back. The Syilx (Okanagan) people have lived throughout this region since time immemorial. O'Keefe Ranch represents a significant chapter in the area's later ranching and colonial settlement history.

What makes the ranch particularly special is that so much of its physical history remains. Its original buildings, historic furnishings, artifacts and surrounding landscape provide a connection to the past that simply cannot be replicated. The main mansion is still there, the original church, a graveyard and notably the Shubert House was moved to the property.





EFFORTS TO SAVE THE RANCH

The news has prompted an outpouring of concern from people who recognize the ranch's historical and cultural importance.

Petitions have been launched calling for its preservation, including a federal petition supported by Vernon–Lake Country–Monashee Member of Parliament Scott Anderson.

The federal petition asks the Government of Canada to work with Parks Canada, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, the City of Vernon, the Syilx (Okanagan) Nation and heritage organizations to assess the ranch for National Historic Site designation and explore ways to support its long-term preservation.

National recognition would be an important step, although designation alone would not guarantee continued operations or funding.



WHY THIS MATTERS TO US

Dan and I recently visited O'Keefe Ranch again, exploring the historic mansion, general store and other buildings that make this place so special.
Walking through those buildings is a reminder of why we started Tracks, Trails & Forgotten Tales.
History is more than dates in a book or photographs in an archive. It is found in the places where people lived, worked, raised families and helped build communities.
We have spent years exploring forgotten towns, abandoned mining camps, historic railways and places where little remains of what once stood.
O'Keefe Ranch is different. It is still here.
We still have an opportunity to preserve it.
Through Beyond the Map Media, we hope to help bring greater awareness to the ranch's situation and support those working toward a sustainable future for this extraordinary historic site.





HOW YOU CAN HELP

If preserving British Columbia's history matters to you, we encourage you to learn more about the situation and consider supporting the preservation efforts already underway.

- Sign the petitions calling for the ranch's preservation and consideration for National Historic Site designation.
- Share the story with friends, family and others who value Canadian history.
- Contact elected representatives to express your support for preserving the ranch and maintaining public access.
- Stay informed through updates from the Historic O'Keefe Ranch & Interior Heritage Society.

We believe that preserving our history is a responsibility we share.
Once these places are gone, future generations may never have the opportunity to experience them as we can today.
O'Keefe Ranch has survived for 159 years. Let's do what we can to ensure its story continues.

TO SIGN THE PETITIONS CLICK THE LINKS BELOW

CHANGE.ORG PETITION

HOUSE OF COMMONS PETITION

FROM OUR BOOKSHELF

The O'Keefes of O'Kanagan: The Families of O'Keefe Ranch
By Ken Mather | Heritage House Publishing, 2025

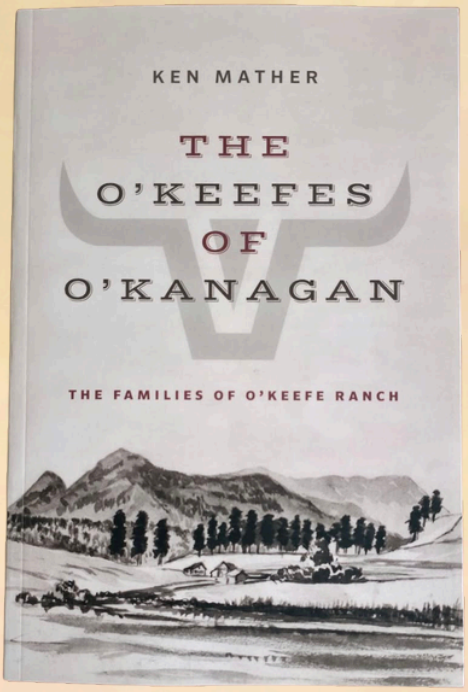
Few people have a deeper connection to Historic O'Keefe Ranch than historian and author Ken Mather. Having served as the ranch's manager and curator for nearly three decades, beginning in 1984, Ken has dedicated much of his life to researching, documenting and preserving the remarkable history of the North Okanagan. His years spent working among the ranch's historic buildings, artifacts and archives have provided him with a unique understanding of the people and events that shaped this important part of British Columbia's past.

In The O'Keefes of O'Kanagan: The Families of O'Keefe Ranch, Ken takes readers beyond the familiar story of Cornelius O'Keefe and explores the generations of whose lives became intertwined with the ranch. From its beginnings in 1867 to its development into one of the region's most prominent ranching operations, the book offers a fascinating look at the people, relationships and circumstances that helped shape the North Okanagan.

More than simply a history of ranching, this book brings attention to the personal stories behind the historic property. It explores family relationships, hardships, achievements and the changing circumstances of life in the Okanagan. Particularly important are the stories of the women of the O'Keefe family, whose contributions to family life, business and the development of the ranch deserve recognition alongside those of the men whose names are more familiar in historical accounts.

Through years of research and historical documentation, Ken helps readers appreciate that the ranch was far more than a collection of buildings and agricultural operations. It was home to generations of people, a gathering place for travellers and an important part of the social and economic development of the region.

Today, with the future of Historic O'Keefe Ranch facing uncertainty, this book carries an even greater significance. The buildings that remain standing are tangible connections to the lives and stories documented within its pages. They allow us to experience history in a way that photographs and written accounts alone cannot fully capture.



TO PURCHASE YOUR OWN COPY CLICK THE LINK BELOW

HERITAGEHOUSE.CA

While books preserve the stories of our past, historic places allow us to walk through them. Both are essential to keeping our heritage alive.

This month's On Our Bookshelf selection is more than a recommendation. It is an opportunity to recognize the dedication of historians like Ken Mather, whose research ensures that the people, places and events that shaped British Columbia are not forgotten.

As discussions continue about the future of O'Keefe Ranch, we encourage our readers to discover this remarkable book, learn more about the families who called the ranch home, and reflect on the importance of preserving the historic places that connect us to our past.

After nearly 160 years, O'Keefe Ranch still has a story to tell. Thanks to the work of Ken Mather, many of those stories will continue to be shared for generations to come.

LOVE WHAT WE DO?

HELP FUEL OUR ADVENTURES & STORIES

Your support helps keep us exploring, researching, and sharing the forgotten stories and hidden history of British Columbia and beyond.

Every contribution and purchase, big or small, helps keep the stories alive — thank you for being part of our journey!

YOU CAN SUPPORT THROUGH → Buy me a coffee

OR YOU CAN PURCHASE

OUR HISTORY HUNTERS STICKER COLLECTION



Discover the history waiting at the end of the trail!
This 3.5-inch vinyl sticker celebrates forgotten mining sites, hidden places and the adventure of exploring BC's past.



Adventure begins where the pavement ends!
This 3.5-inch vinyl sticker celebratesbackcountry exploration, hidden history and the thrill of taking the road less travelled



Every old railway has a story to tell!
This 3.5-inch vinyl sticker celebrates BC's abandoned railways, forgotten communities and the history that remains along the tracks.

Click here to Buy your stickers

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Thank you
Dan & Carm

EPISODE SHOWCASE

EXPLORING DIRT
With Dan & Carm



CLICK HERE TO WATCH EPISODE

From Rails to Trails
The Columbia & Western Rail Trail

In this episode of Exploring Dirt, we team up with Mud Sherriff Overlanding and Canyon Overland to travel the historic Columbia & Western Railway grade between Christina Lake and Castlegar, British Columbia.

Once part of an important railway route through BC's rugged mountains, this historic grade now offers an incredible opportunity to explore a piece of our province's transportation history.

Along the way, we cross historic railway trestles, travel through old train tunnels, and experience one of the highlights of the journey, the legendary Bulldog Tunnel, stretching more than 900 meters through the mountain!

We know plenty of people have travelled this route before, but have they experienced it with its very own soundtrack?This adventure features our own original music! Turn up the volume and enjoy the ride.

TRACKS, TRAILS & FORGOTTEN TALES
TTFT



CLICK HERE TO WATCH EPISODE

We Remember | A Remembrance Day Tribute 🇨🇦

This Remembrance Day, we honor the generations of Canadian men and women who answered the call to serve. From the First and Second World Wars to Korea, peacekeeping missions, Afghanistan, and those who continue to serve today, their courage and sacrifices will never be forgotten.
In this special episode of Tracks, Trails & Forgotten Tales, we remember those who never returned home, those whose lives were forever changed, and the families who carried their stories forward.
Behind every uniform was a person. Behind every photograph is a story worth preserving.
We invite you to watch, remember, and share your family's story.
Lest We Forget.