

# Historical Clippings

Three Lakes Museum

June 2024

## Three Lakes American Legion Post 431

Solemn Memorials, Sparkling Celebrations and Gatherings of Gratitude

Advocating patriotism and honor, American Legions throughout the United States are the nation's largest veterans service organization supporting veterans, their families, and the military.

As a service to our veterans, our country and our community, American Legion Post 431 has been a standard in Three Lakes for almost 80 years.

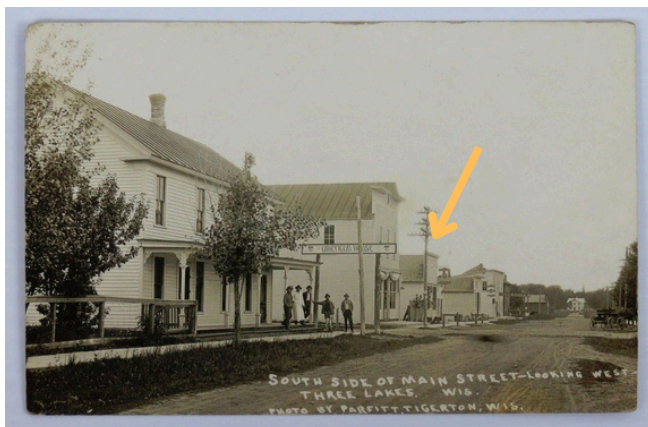
For all but a few of its earliest years, the Olkowski family and business occupied this location until World War II when its purpose became to serve Three Lakes veterans.



John Olkowski Sr., born in 1867 in Poland came to the United States around 1890 with his wife Agnes (Semiatkowski). John Sr. worked in Chicago for five years and then moved the family to a farm in Three Lakes. Five years later he moved into town, purchasing an established saloon, adding a meat market. This is the property on Superior Street just to the west of the Dobbs building occupied today by the American Legion.

Far left is the Gorski store (later Dobbs). The Olkowski market is next to it, about 1902 when they purchased it.

The children John Sr. and Agnes Olkowski raised in Three Lakes were John Jr., Frank, Harry, Alex, Edmund, Annette (Helmick) and Stacey (Matawitz). John Jr., born in 1898, married Gladys Marie Gehrke and early in 1923 they took over the operation of the meat market and tavern. The business and building expanded and became the tallest building on Superior Street..



The store and tavern were operated by John Jr. and Gladys from 1923 to 1943. John Jr. died in 1934 at the age of 37. The business was then run by Gladys from 1934 until 1943. Olkowski's tavern originated the Friday fish fry in Three Lakes and in the 1930's people came from miles around on Friday evenings to eat Lake Michigan perch filets, coleslaw, dill pickles and rye bread, all served for a price of 10 cents.



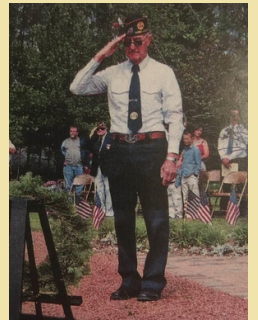
Unlike the Dobbs building to the east and the Hanson building to the north, the Olkowski building suffered minimal damage from the cyclone of September 1924.

In 1944 the John C. Jr. and Gladys Olkowski Store and Bar Room, owned by Alex Olkowski Sr., John Sr.'s brother, became the new Post 431 of the American Legion when Alex Sr. sold the building to the group. This building was torn down in 1965 and replaced with the present building.



In *The Pine the Plow and the Pioneer, vol.1*, Frances Olkowski Osuchowski wrote the following

*It was getting to be about that time I would call "High Noon" or mid-year of 1944, when the United States of America was fighting two wars, one in each direction, on opposite ends of the globe. It was at that time that this small but strongly enthusiastic, patriotic community of Three Lakes, Wisconsin organized a Legion Post. There was hardly a family in Three Lakes that didn't have a Service Flag hanging in the window with one or more stars on it, which told the world that someone in that household was serving his country in the military service in either the "European War Front" or the "Pacific Japanese War Front". Some of our military personnel were returning home when a meeting was called at the Town Hall on August 28, 1944, for the purpose of organizing a Legion Post in Three Lakes. Twenty-three veterans attended. Harry M. Olkowski was appointed temporary chairman; Oscar Lawonn was temporary secretary and a group of five others was appointed to investigate the possibility of an appropriate building for the Post. A building known as the John C. and Gladys Olkowski Store and Barroom, owned by Senior Alex Olkowski...was purchased and recruitment of members was made. Thus, the new Post 431 of the American Legion was formed. Having just returned from military service myself, I was approached to sign up as a charter member of this new post, and I signed up without hesitation.*



*Three Lakes  
thanks you*

Memorials  
Celebrations  
and  
Gratitude

# Three Lakes American Legion Post 431 Charter Members

In 1984, Frances Olkowski Osuchowski was honored along with her brother, Lucian W. Olkowski and Henry Dobbs, for 40 years of continuous membership.



Anderson, Merritt  
Anderson, John  
Bogusewski, Harry  
Burmester, Edward  
Brockhous, Ernest  
Brockhaus, Herman  
Corning, Elmer  
DeSimons, Waldemar  
Dinkleman, Harry  
Dobbs, Henry  
Ellner, Ralph  
Epler, Edward  
Estes, Marjorie  
Fraser, Lawrence  
Framke, Alvin  
Godlewski, Frank  
Godlewski, Hubert  
Hanson, Dean  
Helmick, Gaylord  
Korzilius, Henry  
Kotarski, John  
Lange, Otto  
Lawonn, Oscar  
Marty, Carl, Jr.  
McLellan, Frank  
Michalski, John  
Meyer, Welcome  
Murray, Arthur  
Nelson, Arthur  
Neu, William  
Newhouse, J.A.  
Olkowski, Lucian  
Olkowski, Frances  
Paffrath, Herman  
Peterson, Thomas  
Quinn, Herbert  
Repa, Frank  
Schoenfelt, William  
Small, Glen  
Stoneking, Clark  
Taylor, Bradley  
Tryczak, Otto  
Ujazdowski, Frank  
Wykowski, John