

# Sauk County's Claim to Time Magazine Covers

## *Tales of Earlier Days*

By Bob Dewel

Consider for a moment, if you will, the following seemingly unrelated statistics:

For 90 years Time magazine has chronicled the affairs of the country and the world. In its early years it was famous for its weekly selection of a significant person for the cover of the magazine. Since there have been 4730 covers since 1923, it would be very generous to say that 2/3 of those covers showed a single person, or 3159 covers. It is surely far less, but let's use that figure.

There are 3147 counties in the United States of which Sauk County is one. On average, therefore, our county should have had at the most, hardly one Sauk-related person on a Time magazine cover. The fact is, however that we in Sauk County have had at least two on Time covers. This is more than double our share even using the generous estimate of 3159 person-only covers.

### Men on Time Magazine Covers

One Sauk County person hardly needs a mention, for John Ringling occupied the cover on April 6, 1929. The Circus King of the World by that time, no one could have predicted his rapid downfall both in power and wealth following his buyout of nearly all of the American circus industry just before the Depression. John of course was a Sauk County product—one of his teachers was Baraboo's Belle Case LaFollette, who came close to being appointed the first female United States Senator.

We're stretching the point a bit when we include the other Time cover person, Frank Lloyd Wright. Actually he resided only about a mile over the border in Iowa County, but Spring Green in Sauk County was his town. Somewhat a controversial character in his time, Wright remains the most celebrated and imitated architect of the early Twentieth Century. His Time cover was issued January 17, 1938.

Wright is one up on Ringling also, for there is a postage stamp for Wright, and apparently none for Ringling. The Wright stamp was issued June 8, 1966. There are several first covers associated with the stamp, combining it with such Wright landmarks as the Guggenheim Museum, The Falling Waters estate, Wright's birthday, and a special issue for Spring Green.

There is not room here to record Wright's rather tumultuous life, but our story begins in 1914, at the first Taliesen. Wright was separated from his wife and family, but could not obtain

a divorce. Though Wright was away from Taliesen that fateful day, the lady in his life at the time was present.

There were several other persons and students gathered in the dining room when tragedy struck. A disgruntled servant poured gasoline under the entrances to the dining room, and set them ablaze. As the terrified guests tried to exit, they were bludgeoned as they passed through the fire.

The above is a brief summation of the events which lead up to the next story. A young student, Herbert Fritz dared to escape by exiting a window and dropping eighteen feet to the ground. Though he suffered a broken arm, he managed to roll down the hill and escape the inferno.

Time went by, and Fritz continued his training at Wright's Taliesen school of architecture. As young men do, Herbert Fritz courted and married a local young lady, Mary, from the Larson family. It is the result of that union which will be the subject of our next article, a story his daughter Barbara will share with her noted husband.



John Ringling April 6, 1929

Frank Lloyd Wright

Jan. 17, 1938

