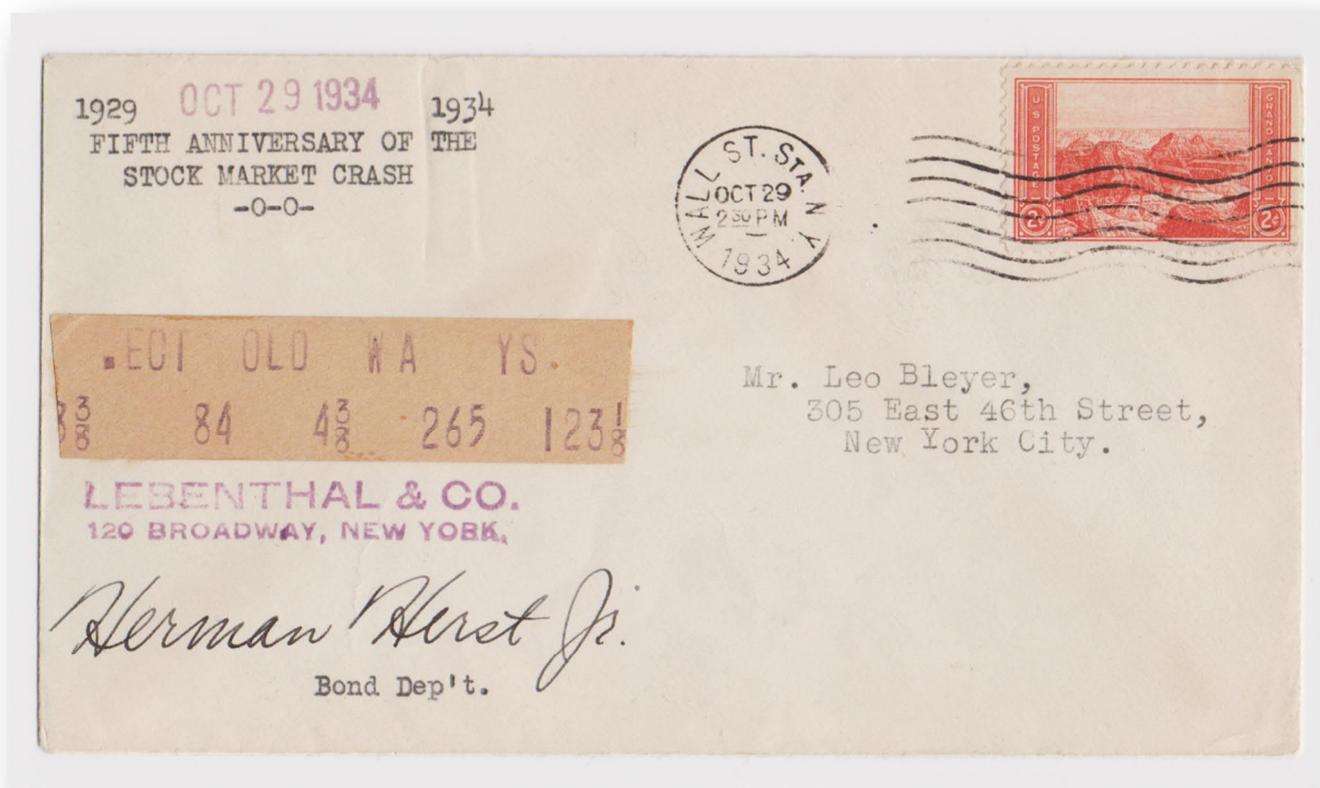


## Herman Herst and a ticker tape

The legendary stamp dealer Herst (1909-1999) works as a bond trader on Wall Street/New York in the 1930s and at the same time consistently expands his stamp trade. His friends call him "Pat". The envelope discussed here is signed by him.



The envelope dates from 1934 and commemorates the great stock market crash of 1929. Postmarked 29 October 1934 by Wall Street Station and a machine cancel. There is also a company cancellation on the front by the Wall Street brokerage firm Louis S. Lebenthal a Company in New York. There is a cut-out of a ticker tape on the cover.

It looks to be a ticker tape dated October 28, 1929, as ECT - Electric Storage Battery Corp. was trading for nearly \$84 and YS - Youngstown Sheet and Tube was trading near 123 1/8 on that date. WA and OLD abbreviation is unknown to me. [Ticker tape (Ticker-Tape): was the earliest electric dedicated financial communications medium that transmitted stock price information over telegraph lines and was used from about 1870 to 1970. It consisted of a strip of paper run through a machine called a stock ticker, which printed abbreviated company names followed by numerical stock transaction prices and volume information. The term "ticker" comes from the sound the machine made when printing (Wikipedia)].

There exists in collector circles a second letter with the same strike and a similar-looking ribbon, which can clearly be attributed to 28 October 1929. The end of October 1929 has burned itself into the collective memory of stock market traders. It has been described in the literature on the Great Crash that this **Monday, 28 October 1929** (Tape Day), was another "terrible" day. The volume of shares traded was 9.25 million shares. On this day, prices fell more than in the previous weeks. The ticker tape fell back. In the last hour of trading on 28 October 1929, 3 million shares changed hands at rapidly falling prices. This day was the largest volume traded on the New York Stock Exchange for decades.

The following 29 October 1929 was the blackest day on Wall Street and is considered the day the world financial system collapsed. The stock market treadmills were delayed for several hours that day. (Sources speak of a delay of 2 hours 23 minutes at the close of trading). The tickers that ran out that day were several kilometers long. It is said that more than 8,000 ticker machines were in use. By the time unsettled investors learned the prices on the ticker tapes that day, the prices were already much lower, which contributed significantly to the panic and led to more and more selling. Selling at all costs. Stocks en bloc. There was an eerie roar and roar of the crowd on Wall Street at the time. Many books have been written about the great crash of 1929. There is a fascinating elaboration on the subject of **papers that changed the world**. It describes how it came that the **late ticker tapes** led to uncertainty, fear, and panic and thus to the Big Crash.

A ticker tape from October 1929 is an unusual document which at the same time documents and was the cause of an event. There are pictures on the internet showing how the tapes were swept up with a broom. On that day, it was easy for far-sighted traders (Herst was a stockbroker as well as a stamp dealer) to take an original ticker tape with them. He was guaranteed to have the foresight that such clippings would one day become a historical highlight.

Why should he use a later tape for his cover when he could have the originals, especially as he was building his reputation as a stamp dealer? Nothing special at the time - today an extremely rare paper in financial history. **The end of an era.**