

## **LISTO MECHANICAL GREASE PENCILS**

The first Listo essay in this series contains a dedication, some information about the organization and early history of the Listo Pencil Company, how and why I became interested in Listo's pencils, and an indication of some of the parallels between Listo Pencil Company and the Autopoint Company. There's no reason to repeat most of that material here. The first Listo essay in the series is titled "Early Listo Mechanical Lead Pencils", and is also available for your perusal on [vintageautopoint.com](http://vintageautopoint.com).

NOTE BENE: As we move on to review various images of Listo mechanical grease pencils, please note that some of the images are from my personal collection, some images were published in 1923 or prior such that the copyright has already expired, and many images are presented with the written permission of the Listo Pencil Company, the copyright holder. Footnotes have been provided at the end of the essay indicating the various image sources and permissions.

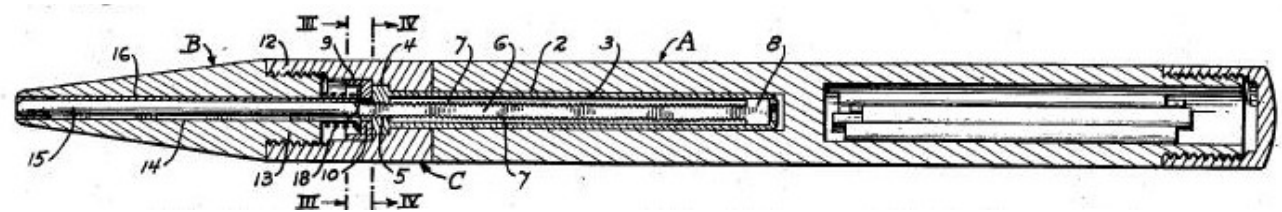
▼ Figure 1 is a list of the Listo patents I found, and some pertinent information about each:

<u>Patent No.</u>	<u>Item/Process</u>	<u>Date Filed</u>	<u>Date Granted</u>	<u>Inventor</u>
US1302999A	Pencil	December 3, 1918	May 6, 1919	Charles E. Wehn
US1388536A	Pencil	February 9, 1920	August 23, 1921	Charles E. Wehn
US1461299A	Shaping Materials	March 4, 1922	July 10, 1923	Charles E. Wehn
US1505452A	Pencil	April 21, 1920	August 19, 1924	Wehn/Larsson
US1541085A	Pencil	July 31, 1923	June 9, 1925	Charles E. Wehn
US 1625513A	Pencil	April 19, 1924	April 19, 1927	Charles E. Wehn
US1826266A	Pencil	February 19, 1929	October 6, 1931	Charles E. Wehn
US1912674A	Pencil	May 25, 1931	June 6, 1933	Charles E. Wehn
US2017555A	Mechanical Pencil	October 30, 1934	October 15, 1935	Charles E. Wehn
US2092037A	Mechanical Pencil	September 9, 1935	September 7, 1937	Charles E. Wehn
US2274311A	Mechanical Pencil	May 5, 1941	February 24, 1942	Charles E. Wehn
US2287364A	Mechanical Pencil	October 6, 1941	June 23, 1942	Charles E. Wehn
US2460323A	Mechanical Pencil	July 6, 1946	February 1, 1949	Charles E. Wehn
US2844125A	Pencil Tip	April 25, 1955	July 22, 1958	Charles Emory Wehn

Note that, in the above table, the founder of Listo - Charles Edwin Wehn - was the inventor for many of the Company's early patents for mechanical lead pencils, but the actual patent documents simply listed the inventor as Charles E. Wehn. Listo's founder died on October 26, 1958. His son Charles Emory Wehn was born on September 16, 1916, and is clearly listed as the inventor on the last patent granted per the above table. I have no way to know which "Charles E. Wehn" filed some of the later "mechanical pencil" patent applications. Also, the earliest patents relate to mechanical lead pencils.

Alas, at least for conventional mechanical lead pencil collectors like me, Charles E. Wehn ultimately started working to develop the mechanical grease pencils we now know and appreciate as the Company's current primary product. Patent No. US2092037A was filed on September 9, 1935 and was granted on September 7, 1937. The second paragraph of that patent application includes: "The object of the present invention is... to provide a pencil which is adapted to receive a removable sleeve containing a lead, crayon, or similar marking material..." Over time the company's production was shifted away from mechanical lead pencils and over to mechanical grease pencils. Its Model 1620 has probably become the current king of grease pencils for popularity and usage. [A trivia note here: I originally thought that the Company's "Model 1620" grease pencil is very simply attributable to the diameter of the leads used in those pencils, based on the Company's "No. 162" leads. But those leads are 0.156" in diameter.]

▼Figure 2. Note 3. The image below is a portion of the patent drawings included in Listo Pencil Corporation's filings for Patent No. US2092037A. While this may look virtually identical to the Listo mechanical lead pencils illustrated in the other Listo essay on [vintageautopoint.com](http://vintageautopoint.com), titled "Early Listo Mechanical Lead Pencils", the old adage that "looks can be deceiving" is certainly true of this image. Note that the diameter of the lead pictured in the image below, does not appear to be nearly as thick as you'd expect for grease pencil lead.



▼Figure 2A. The image below is presented with the permission of Dr. Ibrahim Abou-Saad, Associate Professor of Economics, Lone Star College (TX). I believe this is Listo's "first model" mechanical grease pencil (see further, Figure 2B, *infra*). Dr. Abou-Saad indicates that



the lead in this pencil measures about .153" in diameter (actually .156 per Listo officials).

▼Figure 2B. The image below is also presented with the permission of Dr. Ibrahim Abou-Saad, Associate Professor of Economics, Lone Star College (TX). Here's "proof of the pudding" that this yellow and black Listo mechanical grease pencil is likely the "first model" they produced.



As noted above Figure 2, *supra*, Patent No. US2092037A was filed on September 9, 1935 and was granted on September 7, 1937. And the turning knob on the above Listo mechanical grease pencil is imprinted with both "LISTO 1620" and "PAT. 2092037". So this Listo mechanical grease pencil would probably have been produced c.1937. Note that the ball end pocket clip features "turned down" sides, and is imprinted "Listo" with an underscore, aligned to be read by a left handed user.

▼Figure 3. Note 3. This is likely also a very early Listo mechanical grease pencil c.1937, imprinted "Listo China Marker", "Pencil No. 1620" on the barrel. It has the same "folded over sides" pocket clip as utilized on the yellow and black grease pencil illustrated in Figures 2A and 2B, *supra*, as well as in early Listo mechanical lead pencils. Note that the "turning knob" at the top, just like the yellow and black mechanical grease pencil, is the same diameter as the barrel.




(I simply don't know if the patent number was imprinted on the black turning knob of the above Listo mechanical grease pencil, due to the source of this image.)

▼Figure 4. Note 3. This is also likely a very early Listo mechanical grease pencil c.1937, imprinted “Listo” etc. near the top of the barrel, right underneath the turning knob. This pencil also has the same pocket clip and the same “turning knob which is the same diameter as the barrel”, just like the purple pencil in Figure 3, above. However, the bottom half of the barrel of this grease pencil is black, and appears that it may be detachable from the rest of the barrel, possibly to remove and repair the lead advance mechanism.



▼Figure 5. Note 3. This is what Listo mechanical grease pencils may still have looked like in early 1944, according to an advertisement published in the *Great Falls Tribune*, Great Falls, Montana, on January 22, 1944. Note that the turning knob at the top is the same diameter as the barrel. (Also, a word of caution – clearly advertising “cuts” are probably prepared near or at the start of production of one of Listo’s new grease pencil models. However, as demonstrated for Listo’s earlier mechanical lead pencils, the advertising “cuts” could readily be used even after newer models had been introduced. So a dated advertisement for a specific model of Listo’s mechanical grease pencils doesn’t necessarily reflect a specific year of production, but more accurately, perhaps the year of the middle of production or in fact near or after the end of production.)

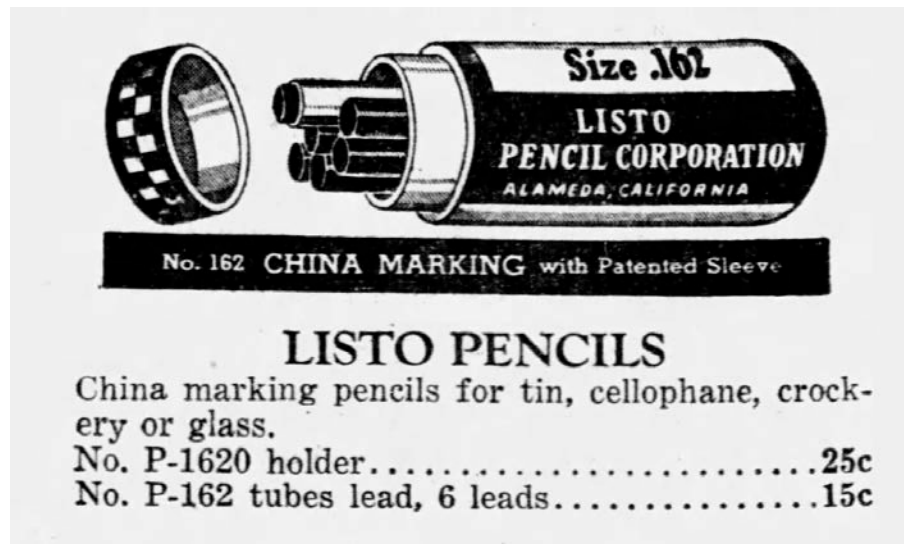


**Listo Pencils**

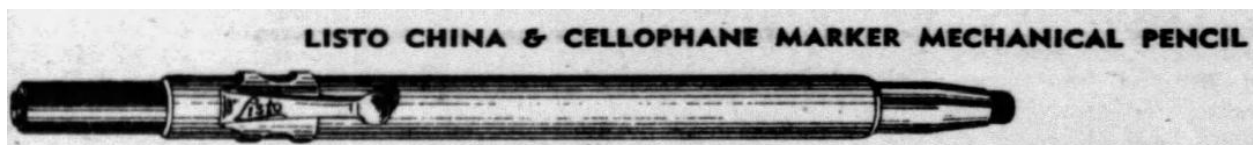
Patented removable sleeve grips leads securely and prevents breaking and waste.  
Used to mark tin, glass, etc.

Price ..... **25<sup>c</sup>**                      Tube, 6 Leads.. **15<sup>c</sup>**

▼Figure 6. Note 3. This is how Listo's mechanical grease pencil lead refills were supplied, according to an ad published in the *Great Falls Tribune*, Great Falls, Montana, on June 17, 1944. These wooden tubes are about 1-11/16" long, and about 3/4" in diameter. Each tube contains 6 leads, and a spare metal compressible "sleeve" which grips the leads tightly, inside the tip of the pencil, so they don't rotate or slide forward or back.

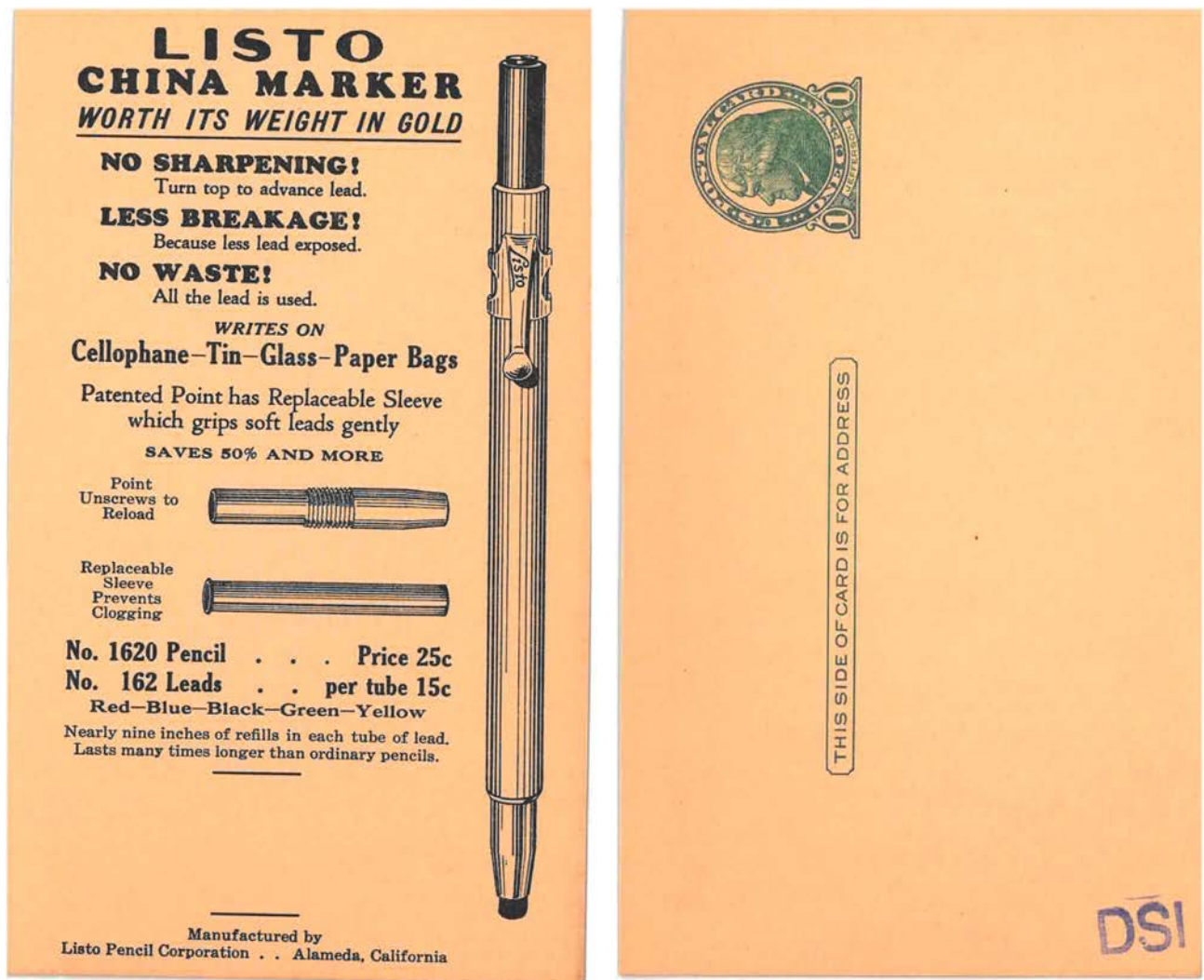


▼Figure 7. Note 3. This is part of an advertisement published in the *Daily World* newspaper, on October 8, 1947, in Opelousas, Louisiana. At that point in time the mechanical grease pencil's turning knob at the top of the barrel has been reduced in diameter, compared to the barrel.

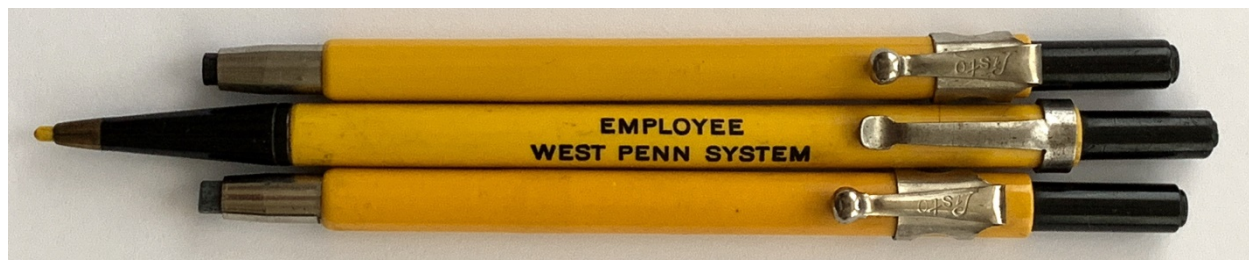




▼Figure 8. Note 1. Below is a U.S. advertising “penny post card”, front and back sides - Courtesy of the Smithsonian Libraries, Washington, D.C., and presented with permission of the Listo Pencil Company, the copyright holder - which, like many other Listo documents, is undated. It features an early model of the Listo “China Marker”, the model “No. 1620 Pencil”. It also features several of Listo Pencil Corporation’s advertising slogans, including “Worth Its Weight in Gold”. Note that the pocket clip pictured below is the “rounded sides” chrome pocket clip which is imprinted with a Listo inscription that is legible for a left handed user, and features a stylized “L” with the “isto” in a smaller font which rests on top of the extended bottom stroke of the “L”. I suspect that this particular pencil was produced about 1947 or so.



▼Figure 9. Note 2. I’m a retired CPA. I live with the assistance of many lists. I prepare the lists with my PC, or with an Autopoint pencil, or with a gel pen. But I cross items off those lists with an early Listo mechanical grease pencil with the thick 0.156” grease pencil “leads”. Below are a few of my favorites, likely produced right after World War II.



As you can see, yellow was a popular color for Listo mechanical grease pencils at some point. The first and third grease pencils are identical at 4-3/4” long and 5/16” in diameter, have the “rounded sides” or “folded over” “underscore Listo” imprinted pocket clips aligned for a left hander, and an all metal writing tip (just like the post card example in Figure 8). The middle pencil is a “heavy lead” mechanical lead pencil of the same barrel diameter, but is just about 5-11/16” long, has a large plastic fingertip section with a metal tip, a substantially different pocket clip, and uses .076 “heavy” or “checking” leads rather than the huge diameter grease pencil leads used on the other two pencils. All 3 pencils are “twist top” models. Note that in the first part of the narrative for Patent No. US2274311A, (part of the drawing for that pencil is reproduced above as Figure 2) the Company said that “This invention relates to a mechanical pencil and especially to a pencil which is adapted to handle *heavy leads, crayons* and the like” (emphasis supplied). The term “heavy leads” was Listo Pencil Corporation’s term for 0.076” diameter leads, also commonly called “checking leads”. So two of the 3 pencils in Figure 9 above utilize “crayon leads”, and the middle pencil utilizes “heavy” or “checking” leads, just as set forth in the patent narrative.

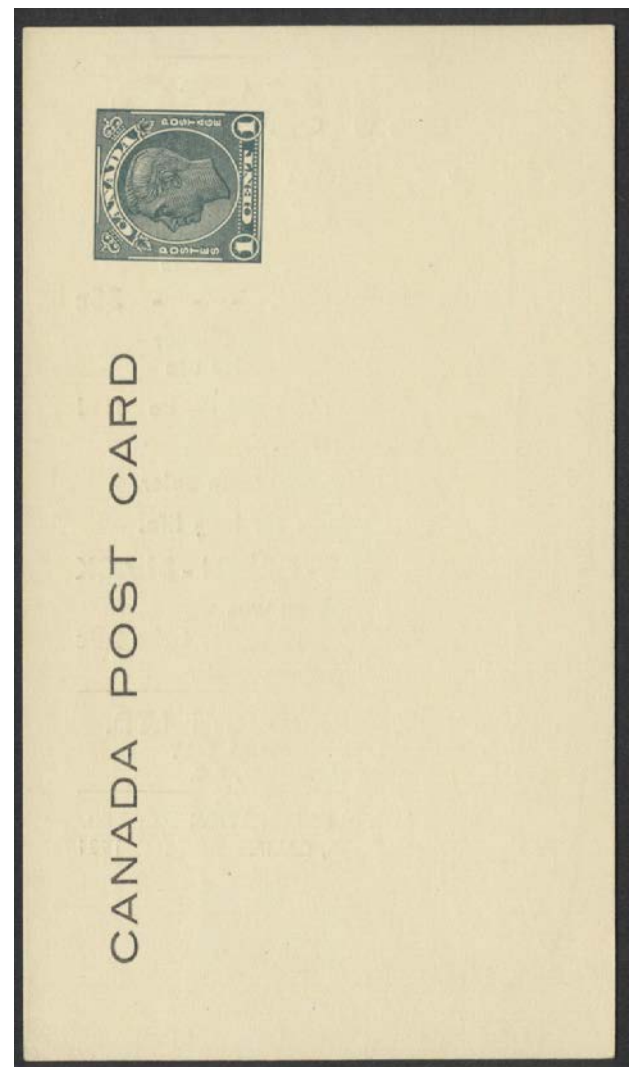
I personally use a grease pencil just like the top one in Figure 9 above, virtually every single day. But the one I use is a “wounded warrior”, not really a collectible. It’s missing the pocket clip, has numerous dents in the top of the barrel due to the now lost pocket clip, and a number of other minor dings and dents. But it still works fine and may last another hundred years.

Trivia note: The writing tip of the top grease pencil above appears to be steel, and is magnetic. The long lead advance rod that goes down through the barrel appears to be made of brass, and is not magnetic. I don’t believe that the turning knob can be removed after the pencil has been assembled, and it is not magnetic.

▼Figure 10. Note 1. As the Listo Pencil Corporation pencil models evolved, the front and rear side of an undated Canada post card from Listo Products Ltd. (Listo Pencil Company's Canadian affiliate) advertises Listo's No. 5 checking pencil, but (to my surprise) has a picture on the left side of the card, of Listo's mechanical grease pencil. Everything on the card relates to Listo's "checking" pencils and their .076" diameter leads, except for the big image on the left side of the card. This model of Listo's mechanical grease pencil barrel has a "fat in the center" shape, and a folded over pocket clip. Based on that picture, I strongly suspect that this grease pencil was produced before 1948. But check out the very next several advertisements.



**LISTO**  
**CHECKING PENCILS**  
*Now Made in Canada*  
**No. 5 PENCIL - - - 35c**  
 A favorite PENCIL for  
 GENERAL office use  
 ✓ "TIP-GRIP" point — no lead  
 wobble.  
 ✓ Pencil Tops indicate color.  
 ✓ Durably built for long life.  
**RED - BLUE - GREEN - BLACK**  
 Refill With  
**No. 1076 LEADS, per tube 20c**  
*Ask Your Dealer*  
**LISTO PRODUCTS LTD.**  
 1716 HASTINGS EAST  
 VANCOUVER, B.C.  
**LISTO PENCIL CORPORATION** Est.  
 ALAMEDA, CALIF. 1921  
 IN  
 U. S. A.





▼Figure 11. Note 3. The ad below appeared in the *Star Tribune*, Minneapolis, Minnesota on February 24, 1947. It's interesting that the mechanical grease pencil lead is now termed "extra large lead", even though the refill container also lists the actual stock number as No. 162, meaning "standard" .156" diameter mechanical grease pencil lead. This grease pencil also has a "folded over" pocket clip, just like the one in Figure 10. And note that the barrel of this grease pencil still has a "fat in the center" shape. This ad includes a number of Listo's advertising slogans. And that this isn't an ad placed by Listo, but by one of their retailers.

**A MILLION USES...**  
**IT WRITES ON EVERYTHING**  
**AN IDEAL GIFT FOR EVERYBODY**

**6 COLORS:**  
BLACK RED  
BLUE GREEN  
YELLOW  
BROWN

**25¢**

**EXTRA LARGE LEAD**

**LISTO LEADS**  
BLACK  
No. 162  
1 1/2"

**15¢**

**LISTO**  
**MARKING PENCIL**

Makes a real mark you can see on News Print, Cellophane, Glass, Wood, Metal, Plastics, etc.

**ORDER BY MAIL**

Please send me.....Listo Marking Pencils at 25c each

☐ Cash ☐ Charge ☐ C.O.D.

Name .....

Address .....

City..... State.....

**Bertelson Brothers**  
120 SOUTH 4th ST. GE. 3671

▼Figure 12. Note 1. This advertisement for Listo Pencil Corporation's grease pencils appeared in the *Locker Operator*, Volume IX, No. 7 for February, 1948, at page 26. The top of this grease pencil looks similar to the top of the checking pencil in Figure 11, but the center of the barrel is more straight than the one in Figure 11, and this one has a completely different style of pocket clip, so this one was likely produced in a similar period of time, but later than the one in Figure 11. Note the many slogans in this ad, including: "Listo marking pencil writes on cellophane writes on metal writes on glass", and "Listo pencil makes a strong, clear mark on locker packages", and "Writes on everything".

about time that somebody found it out.



**LISTO PENCIL MAKES  
A STRONG, CLEAR MARK  
ON LOCKER PACKAGES!**  
*Writes on Everything!*

Smart Locker Operators agree that **Listo Pencil** is the ideal way to clear package identification . . . because it writes on everything: wrapping paper, cellophane, metal, wood, glass or any other surface. And it makes a mark that you can really see. Listos are quick and easy to use . . . always ready . . . no broken leads . . . no wasted stubs. Saves lots of time, too.

It's America's most popular mechanical marking **pencil**.

**SEE YOUR STATIONER OR  
PAPER SUPPLIER**

**LISTO PENCIL CORP. • ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA  
SINCE 1921**

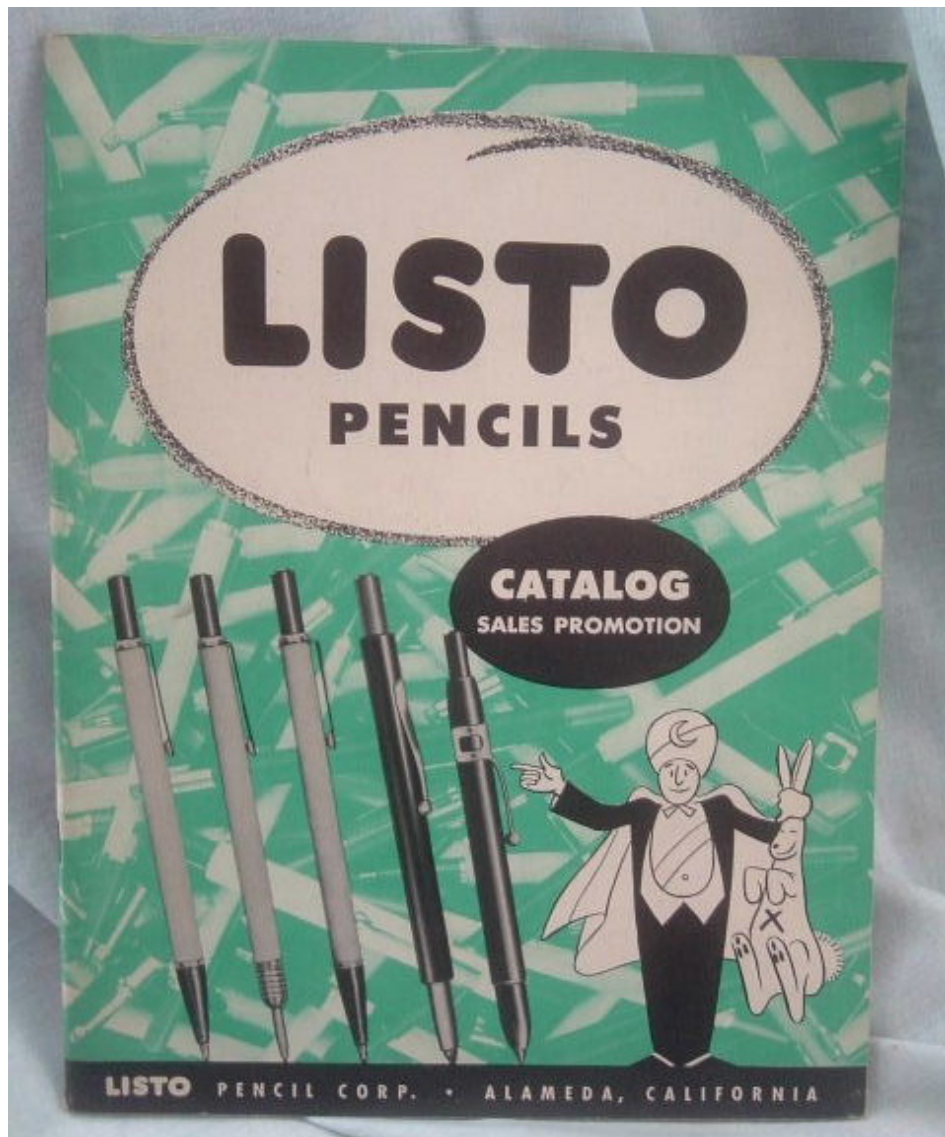


**LISTO MARKING PENCIL**  
WRITES ON *Cellophane*  
WRITES ON *Metal* WRITES ON *Glass*

**EXTRA HEAVY LEADS  
THAT DON'T BREAK  
IN 6 COLORS**  
RED BLUE  
GREEN BLACK  
BROWN YELLOW  
*Single colors to the box*

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(The next several images are sample pages from an alleged 1949 Listo Pencils catalog which, as usual, is undated, at least on these pages. It most likely included some relatively new pencil models, as well as models being phased out but still in stock.) ▼ Figure 13. Note 1. This is the cover of the 1949 Listo Pencils catalog. The mechanical grease pencil which is the fourth from the left side of the page appears to be one of the early, longer “slim size” models, like my yellow one in Figure 9 above, but with a different pocket clip which is firmly affixed to the barrel rather than being an accommodation or removable pocket clip – and is apparently still in stock. In contrast, the mechanical grease pencil on the far right is probably a newer model, and looks identical to the similar grease pencil in Figure 12, above.



▼Figure 14. Note 1. This is another page from the 1949 Listo Pencils catalog. Note that for the group of 5 “imprinted” grease pencils on the right side of the picture, starting from the left hand one imprinted “1890”, and across to the second to last one on the right imprinted “Everybody’s Daily”, all look substantially the same as the grease pencil in Figure 12 above, including the tapered part at the very top of the barrel, although they’ve been made with white barrels to facilitate imprinting. The final mechanical grease pencil on the far right below appears to be one of the early “longer” “slim size” models, like my yellow one in Figure 9 above, but with a different pocket clip which is firmly affixed to the barrel rather than being an accommodation or removable pocket clip – and is apparently still in stock.





▼Figure 15. Note 1. This image, another page from the 1949 Listo catalog, has been expanded as large as possible to best illustrate details of the various types of mechanical grease pencils available in 1949. It is easy to see that this particular period must have been one of transition for Listo Pencil Company, since this catalog featured grease pencils of different barrel styles and different pocket clip styles. For example, each pencil in the first group of 3 thick black mechanical grease pencils on the far left of the page below appears to be very similar to Listo's current grease pencils (less tapered at the top of the barrel than the grease pencil in Figure 12). The third group of 3 pencils from the left side of the page below appear to be the early "longer" "slim size" models, like my yellow one in Figure 9 above, but with a different pocket clip which is firmly affixed to the barrel rather than being an accommodation or removable pocket clip – and apparently still in stock, even in 1949.



▼Figure 16. Note 3. This Listo mechanical grease pencil was apparently a “transitional” model, either produced just before or just after publishing of the 1949 Listo Pencils catalog. For example, it appears to be substantially identical to the grease pencil on the far right of Figure 14 above. However, this grease pencil has the “new style” flatter- faced long pocket clip with the metal washer at the top, as illustrated for some of the mechanical lead pencils in the 1949 Listo Pencils catalog, rather than having the clip fastened directly to the barrel like the mechanical grease pencil in Figure 14.



▼Figure 17. Note 3 (top) and Note 2 (bottom). These are probably more Listo mechanical grease pencil “transitional” models, 5-5/16” long, either produced just before or just after publishing of the 1949 Listo Pencils catalog. For example, both have the same “new style” flatter-faced long pocket clip, as illustrated for some of the mechanical lead pencils in the 1949 Listo Pencils catalog, rather than having the clip fastened directly to the barrel like the mechanical grease pencil on the far right in Figure 14. However, both have a turning knob which is the same diameter as the barrel and has no metal washer at the top at the top of the pocket clip, as illustrated for some of the mechanical lead pencils in the 1949 Listo Pencils catalog. Also, both grease pencils have a completely different metal writing tip, with knurling at the barrel end to make it easier to unscrew the tip and replace the lead. Note that the bottom pencil still has a metal lead advance rod, from the turning knob to the writing tip.



▼Figure 18. Note 3. Here's a "special" type of the Listo mechanical grease pencils. Just like Listo's "mainstream" or "regular" mechanical grease pencils, it is meant to write on odd surfaces, including foil, plastic and glass. For some reason, however, it is a really "transitional" product. It has the "new style" flatter-faced long pocket clip with the metal washer at the top, as illustrated for some of the mechanical lead pencils in the 1949 Listo Pencils catalog. But it also uses unique size crayon leads of about .088" diameter, which were sold in a special small "Freezer-Write" wooden tube marked "(model) no. 100".



▼Figure 18A. The image below is presented with the permission of Dr. Ibrahim Abou-Saad, Associate Professor of Economics, Lone Star College (TX). This possibly new old stock Freezer-Write marking pencil is virtually the same as the one in Figure 18, *supra*. But the blue turning knob at the top of the barrel is the same diameter as the “washer” below it, and that washer isn’t a metallic color, but is the same color as the turning knob. This marking pencil also has a different writing tip – blue instead of bright metal, with a different taper – than the Freezer-Write pencil in Figure 18, *supra*. For those reasons I suspect that this marking pencil was produced later than the Freezer-Write marking pencil above.





▼Figure 19. Note 3. Here's another "special" type of the Listo mechanical grease pencils. Just like Listo's "Freezer –Write" mechanical grease pencil in Figure 18 above, it is meant to write on odd surfaces, including foil, plastic and glass. And it looks virtually identical to that grease pencil. However, this particular mechanical grease pencil and its thinner marking leads were imprinted and marketed for Sears' Coldspot brand refrigerators.



▼Figure 19A. This image is presented with the permission of Dr. Ibrahim Abou-Saad, Associate Professor of Economics at Lone Star College (TX). This Coldspot marking pencil is virtually the same as the one in Figure 19, above. But the blue turning knob at the top of the barrel is the same diameter as the "washer" below it, and that washer isn't a metallic color, but is the same color as the turning knob. This marking pencil also has a different writing tip – blue instead of bright metal, with a different taper – than the Coldspot pencil in Figure 19, above. I suspect that this marking pencil was produced later than the Coldspot marking pencil above.



▼Figure 20. Note 3. Listo has/had a Canadian affiliate. Here's an advertisement from *The Province*, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, published on November 12, 1949, illustrating Listo's mechanical grease pencils made in Canada, which can be imprinted with the purchaser's name on the barrel, indicating that a free sample will be sent if requested via a letterhead. Note that the top of the barrel on the grease pencil pictured is more straight than on the similar mechanical grease pencils in the next two dated advertisements, perhaps indicating that Listo's Canadian affiliate used the advertising "cut" or "paste up" of a more current version of the Company's mechanical grease pencil to feature in this ad. Note also that this mechanical grease pencil looks just like the imprinted grease pencils in Figure 14, which are the 2<sup>nd</sup> through the 5<sup>th</sup> from the right side.

**LISTO** MARKING PENCILS

**ELIMINATE LEAD BREAKAGE**

MARKS ON  
CELLOPHANE  
TIN GLASS  
HIDES  
ETC.

Request on  
Letterhead  
Brings Free Sample

**LOW COST GIFTS**  
WILL LAST YEARS

35c each in lots of 100  
30c each in lots of 500  
28c each in lots of 1000

MADE AND PRINTED IN CANADA  
**LISTO PRODUCTS LTD.**  
1716 HASTINGS STREET EAST

▼Figure 21. Note 3. This ad for Listo grease pencils was published in Collier's for June 2, 1951. Note that this ad shows that the top of the barrel is slightly tapered toward the turning knob, and the pocket clip still has two "straps" at each side.

**LISTO MARKING PENCIL**

**Writes on EVERYTHING!**

Glass • Metal • Cellophane  
Cardboard • Waxed Paper  
Plastics • Porcelain

✓ **for HOMES**  
On Mason Jars and Jelly Glasses, boxes to be stored, packages to ship, bags and cans used for seeds, bulbs, etc., etc.

✓ **for BUSINESS**  
On cans, bottles, jars, boxes, china, and pans, crates, barrels, drums, hardware, etc., shipping tags, newspapers, delivery slips, etc.

**LEADS THAT DON'T BREAK IN 6 COLORS**

BLACK	RED
BLUE	GREEN
BROWN	YELLOW

Solid colors to the box

**LISTO LEADS**  
BLACK No. 162  
15¢

**25¢**

Prices High in Canada

AT ALL STATIONERY, DRUG AND VARIETY STORE

**LISTO PENCIL CORP., ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA**  
In Canada: Listo Products, Ltd., Vancouver, B. C.

Collier's for June 2, 1951

▼Figure 22. Note 3. It isn't known when this ad was published, but it features a similar pencil and price. Note that both ads include a reference to Listo's Canadian affiliate.

write on **GLASS!**  
write on **METAL!**  
write on **CELLOPHANE!**  
with

**LISTO**  
the pencil that  
**WRITES ON EVERYTHING!**

**27¢**

In millions of stores, homes, and factories, Listo has become America's favorite marking pencil. You can find the answer to your marking problem with Listo—the pencil that writes on everything!

**6 COLORS** BLACK RED GREEN  
BROWN BLUE YELLOW

At variety, stationery, and drug stores everywhere!

**LISTO LEADS**  
BLACK No. 162  
15¢

**LISTO PENCIL CORP., Alameda, Cal.**  
In Canada: Listo Products, Ltd., Vancouver, B. C.

**A MILLION USES  
IT WRITES ON  
EVERYTHING**  
AN IDEAL GIFT  
FOR EVERYONE!

Makes a real mark you  
can see on News Print,  
Cellophane, Glass,  
Wood, Metal, Plastics,  
etc.

**6 COLORS:**  
BLACK RED  
BLUE GREEN  
YELLOW  
BROWN

**LISTO  
LEADS**  
BLACK  
No. 102  
1/2" x 1/2"

**25¢**

**EXTRA  
LARGE  
LEAD**

**LISTO  
MARKING  
PENCIL**

**ACME**  
PRINTING AND  
STATIONERY CO.  
211 South Lamine Phone 16

◀Figure 23. Note 3. This (very lightly reproduced Newspapers.com) ad was published in *The Sedalia Democrat*, Sedalia, Missouri on May 25, 1952. It was published 5 years later than the “Bertelson Brothers” ad in Figure 11 above, and several years after the 1949 Listo catalog, but it still utilizes the “fat in the center” shape for Listo’s mechanical grease pencil. Note that it’s been published by one of Listo’s retailers, rather than by the Listo Pencil Company.



# MARKING PENCIL

*Writes on Everything*

Thousands of grocers, druggists, hardware dealers and other retailers use Listo for pricing everything. They buy Listo because it gives them strong, clear, easy-to-read prices on everything in their stores whether it's metal, glass, cellophane...or any other surface!

Cash in on this established market by giving your retailer customers imprinted Listo pencils. For less than 25¢ your sales message will be read 1000 times a day...for months!

Write today for full details!

**EXTRA HEAVY LEADS THAT DON'T BREAK OR FALL OUT**

*Only Listo has the patented "Grip-Type Sleeve" which prevents breakage, keeps leads from falling out.*

**6 COLORS**

BLACK	RED
BROWN	BLUE
GREEN	YELLOW

©1952

**LISTO LEADS**  
BLACK No. 162  
Size 1/16"

**LISTO PENCIL CORPORATION**  
Dept. R, 1925 Union Street  
Alameda, California

Gentlemen:

Please send me full details on how we can put Listo Imprinted Marking Pencils to work for us.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

COMPANY \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_

61

◀Figure 24. Note 1. This is the bottom half of an advertisement for Listo Pencil Corporation's imprinted grease pencils which appeared at page 61 of the October, 1952 issue of *The Rotarian*. They are both mechanical grease pencils due to the description in the ad "...because it gives them strong, clear, easy-to-read prices on everything in their stores whether it's metal, glass, cellophane...or any other surface!" Also they are grease pencils because the Listo Leads in the ad are No. 162, referring to their diameter of 0.156", which are Listo's mechanical grease pencil leads. Note that the sides of both barrels are straight, and that the top of the barrel of the two grease pencils in this ad has "fattened up", or is tapered less at the top of the barrel, just below the turning knob, compared to the similar grease pencil in Figure 20 above. These pencils are 4-9/16" long.

▼Figure 25. Note 1. This is the top half of the ad at left, which provides the slogan for the ad.



▼Figure 26. Note 3. Here's an advertisement from *The Vancouver Sun*, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, published on May 5, 1953 by Listo's Canadian affiliate, which still utilizes the outmoded "fat in the center" shape for Listo's mechanical grease pencil.

USE A

# LISTO

## MARKING PENCIL

**In Your Own Home**

An indispensable "home pencil" for marking freezer cartons (before freezing), preserving jars, garden stakes, bulbs, etc. **WRITES ON GLASS, TIN, TILES, WOOD, CELLOPHANE** and all other surfaces. Used by your grocer to clearly mark your purchases.

**SEASON'S SUGGESTION: Marking Garden Stakes**

Refill leads in 7 colors: **BLACK, RED, BLUE, GREEN, YELLOW, BROWN and WHITE.**

Per pack  
(6 sticks) ..... **20¢**

Made in Vancouver by

## LISTO PRODUCTS

LIMITED

1716 E. Hastings St.

Available at all leading stationers and department stores.

.35





▼Figure 27. Note 3. The ad below appeared in *The Province*, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, and was placed by Listo's Canadian affiliate to celebrate the 41<sup>st</sup> anniversary of one of Listo's Canadian sellers, on October 26, 1953. Many other documents and advertisements illustrate that the "fat in the center" Listo mechanical grease pencil is long gone (see the prior ad at Figure 12, *supra*) by much earlier than 1953. I can only infer that Listo Products Ltd. simply used an already obsolete, older image in this ad since it was cheaper than creating a new image.

*Congratulations are extended to*  
**B & K ECONOMY STORES LTD.**  
On their 41st ANNIVERSARY by  
**LISTO PRODUCTS LTD. makers of**

# **LISTO**

## **MARKING PENCIL**

Used by Grocers to Clearly Mark Your Purchases

A wonderful "home pencil" for marking freezer cartons, preserving jars, garden stakes, bulbs, etc. Writes on glass, tin, tiles and all other surfaces.

SEASON'S SUGGESTION:  
Addressing Gift Parcels,  
Local and Overseas.

Made in Vancouver by  
**LISTO PRODUCTS LTD.**  
1716 Hastings St. East



**LEADS IN  
7 COLORS**  
Black, Red,  
Green, Blue,  
Brown, Yellow,  
White.  
**20c** pkg.

Available at All Stationers and Department Stores

▼Figure 28. Note 3. Here's an advertisement from *The Vancouver Sun*, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, published on April 24, 1956 outlining the 1949 organization of Listo Products of Canada Ltd., how the company has grown since then, and some examples of products it now manufactures in addition to Listo's mechanical grease pencils.

# LISTO PRODUCTS OF CANADA LTD.

1716 E. HASTINGS

VANCOUVER, B.C.

Listo Products of Canada Ltd. was established in Vancouver in January of 1949 under the management of Mr. W. V. Sinitsin to supply the Canadian Market with the Listo Marking Pencil — a pencil that writes on everything — and Listo refill leads. The Company started with two employees and has gradually increased its staff to 15 engaged in manufacturing Listo pencils as well as various other plastic items. In 1950, Listo Products expanded into custom plastic injection moulding and with modern equipment is now capable of giving a complete plastic injection moulding service to industry including re-design, engineering and toolmaking to final mass production. A typical line of products manufactured as shown in the accompanying photograph, depicts the versatility of the injection moulding process. All the intricate moulds are made by skilled craftsmen on the company's premises.



▼Figure 29. Note 1. This image appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* dated 4/23/1955. Note that the tapered top of the barrel of the grease pencil looks more like an older model, like the 1948 advertisement in Figures 21 and 22 above. It is eminently possible that Listo simply saved some advertising dollars by reusing an older image, rather than having to finance new art work.



▼Figure 30. Note 3. This is another advertisement for Listo marking pencils, which was published in 1955. The pencil image still illustrates a tapered top to the barrel.





▼Figure 31. Note 1. This advertising image is dated August, 1956, but it is unknown where it was published. It contains the same slogan or tag line “Listo marking pencil writes on everything”. Note that the tapered top of the barrel of the grease pencil looks more like an older model, like the 1948 advertisement in Figure 12 above. It is eminently possible that Listo simply saved some advertising dollars by reusing an older image, rather than having to finance new art work.



▼Figure 32. Note 1. This image appeared in the *Time Magazine* issue dated May 5, 1958, and also contains the slogan or tag line “Listo marking pencil writes on everything!” Note that the tapered top of the pencil barrel also looks like the 1948 advertisement in Figure 12 above. It is eminently possible that Listo simply saved some advertising dollars by reusing an older image, rather than having to finance new art work.



A vintage advertisement for the Listo marking pencil. At the top left, a cartoon turtle is depicted with a question mark above its head and the word "SPEEDY" written on its shell. Below the turtle, the text "LISTO marking pencil writes on everything!" is prominently displayed. Further down, smaller text describes the pencil's features: "Makes a clean, bold mark on any surface. Refills in black, red, blue, green, yellow, white. At variety and stationery stores everywhere." To the right of this text is a detailed illustration of the Listo marking pencil, which has a dark barrel and a silver-colored clip. Below the pencil is a small box of "LISTO LEADS". At the bottom of the advertisement, the company name "LISTO PENCIL CORPORATION, ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA" is printed. The price "27¢" is shown next to the text "At variety and stationery stores everywhere," and the price "15¢" is shown next to the "LISTO LEADS" box.

**LISTO** marking pencil  
**writes on everything!**

Makes a clean, bold mark  
on any surface.  
Refills in black, red, blue,  
green, yellow, white.  
At variety and stationery  
stores everywhere. **27¢**

**LISTO LEADS** **15¢**

LISTO PENCIL CORPORATION, ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA



▼Figure 33. Note 3. This ad was published in the Journal Tribune, Williamsburg, Iowa on May 28, 1959, and notes that Listo Marking Pencils and Listo Leads are available at the office of that newspaper. Once again, an ad published by a retailer rather than by Listo.

## When In Need Of OFFICE SUPPLIES


Get Them At The

### Journal - Tribune Office

Paper Cement, bottle .....	45¢
Swingline Stapler .....	98¢
File Folders .....	4¢ each
Index Cards, 3x5 .....	25¢
Columnar Pads, 6, 10 and 12 cols. ....	65¢
Ruled Legal Pads .....	25¢
Receipt Books .....	25¢
Order Books .....	50¢
Desk Pads, green, red, brown .....	\$1.60
Blotters .....	25¢
Listo Marking Pencils .....	30¢
Klenzo Ink Erasers, pencil style with brush .....	25¢
Midget Pencil Sharpener .....	\$2.25
Stick Files .....	15¢
Stamp Pads .....	65¢
Typewriter Ribbons .....	\$1.00
Cardboard, 8 ply white .....	25¢
Rubberbands .....	10¢
Clasp Envelopes .....	3 to 5¢
Listo Leads .....	15¢
Mimeograph Stencils .....	15¢
Paper Clips .....	10¢
Ink Eraser .....	85¢
Adding Machine Tape .....	25¢

WE WELCOME SPECIAL ORDERS  
IF WE DON'T HAVE IT, WE'LL GET IT

## JOURNAL - TRIBUNE



▼Figure 34. Note 2. The pocket clip “straps” (or side supports) of Listo’s mechanical grease pencils evolved over time. The easiest way to explain this is 1 - 2 - 3. The pocket clip on the left is the very old “folded over with rounded down sides” pocket clip with 2 “straps” on each side, and the “underscore” Listo logo aligned for a left handed writer. The pocket clip on the right is the current ball end pocket clip, with a huge imprint on the front of the clip and 3 “straps” on each side. The middle pocket clip has the same ball end pocket clip and imprint as the pocket clip to its right, but has only 1 large, full height “strap” to hold it in place. I’d hazard a guess that these pocket clips were used over time, in the same order as left to right below. And all 3 pencils are 4-9/16” long. And of course, the middle Listo grease pencil below shows off one of the nice “marbelized” colors in which they were produced.



▼Figure 35. Note 2. The **IMPOSTER!** Apparently another company named “A & W Products Co, Inc.” attempted to sell mechanical grease pencils and lead refills using the brand name “Sisto”, and very closely copied Listo’s pencils, lead refills and packaging, right down to the size of the lead refills box and the checkerboard band around the top of the box. Their boxes were imprinted “Sisto Leads – Sisto A&W Products Co., Inc. Port Jervis, N.Y. Made in U.S.A.” And



Listo Pencil Corporation sued them, to get an injunction. The United States District Court for the Southern District of New York held that “The identity of defendant’s (A&W’s) packages of leads with those used by Plaintiff (Listo) is so close as to be ludicrous”, and held that “Defendant (A&W) must eliminate the distinctive features of plaintiff’s (Listo’s) pencil or else mark each pencil “Not a Listo Pencil” in letters three-sixteenth of an inch high of a color contrasting with that of the background”. *Listo Pencil Corporation, Plaintiff v. A. and W. Products Co., Inc., Defendant*, 185 F.Supp. 27 (1960). For the moment, I don’t have any Sisto mechanical grease pencils, but this picture illustrates a Listo mechanical grease pencil with an A. & W. pocket clip that was forced upon it.

Figure 35A. Note 2. And in the very back corner of a drawer, I found an “A & W Products Co.” packet of Listo sized leads.



▼Figure 35A. Note 3. The **IMPOSTER** strikes again! This was not a great image when I found it, and making it bigger didn't help. But here's a genuine "hang tag" version of the A&W Products Co., Inc. refills, with two genuine A&W markers to the left.





▼Figure 36. Note 2. Here is a group of large wooden tubes of Listo grease pencil leads. These tubes are about 1-11/16" long, and about 3/4" in diameter. All 3 tubes contain grease pencil leads, and each tube illustrates the checkerboard pattern used at the top of later Listo lead tubes, probably from about 1944. Since none of these wooden tubes has ever been opened, I decided it wasn't important to open one of the tubes to see how many grease pencil leads (and the accompanying replacement metal sleeve) were actually inside.

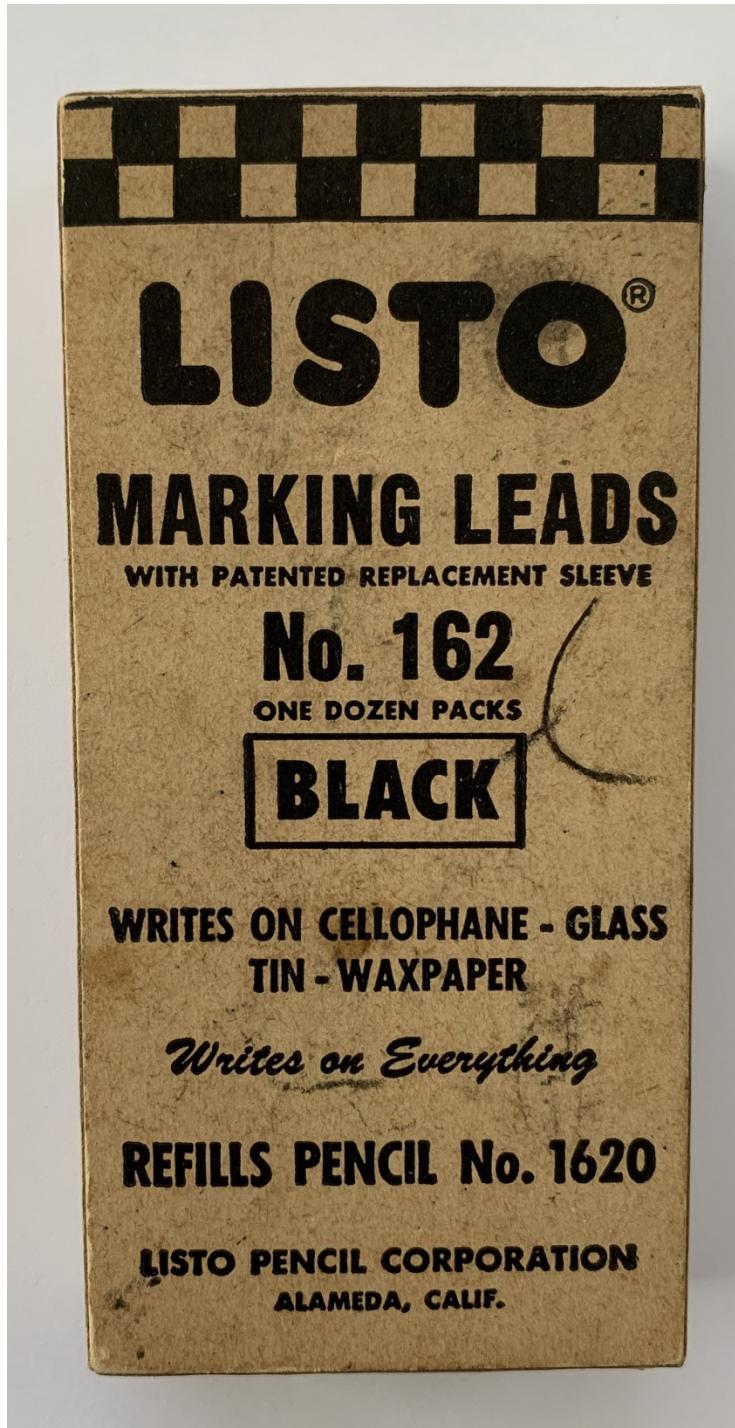


▼Figure 37. Note 3. These are later boxes of refill leads for Listo's standard (lead size .156" diameter) mechanical grease pencils. Each box below contains six refills, one in the metal sleeve and five more loose in the boxes. The box of 72 grease pencil lead refills (12 small boxes of six leads) in Figure 41 *supra* explains why a metal sleeve is provided in each box.





▼Figure 38. Note 2. Here is an early box of 72 grease pencil leads (since the box is undated, I can only suspect that this dates to about 1950 or so). The box top is on the left, below. The instructions for refilling the leads into the grease pencil are on the side of the box, at right below. Both 1620 and 162 refer to the grease pencil lead size of .156”.

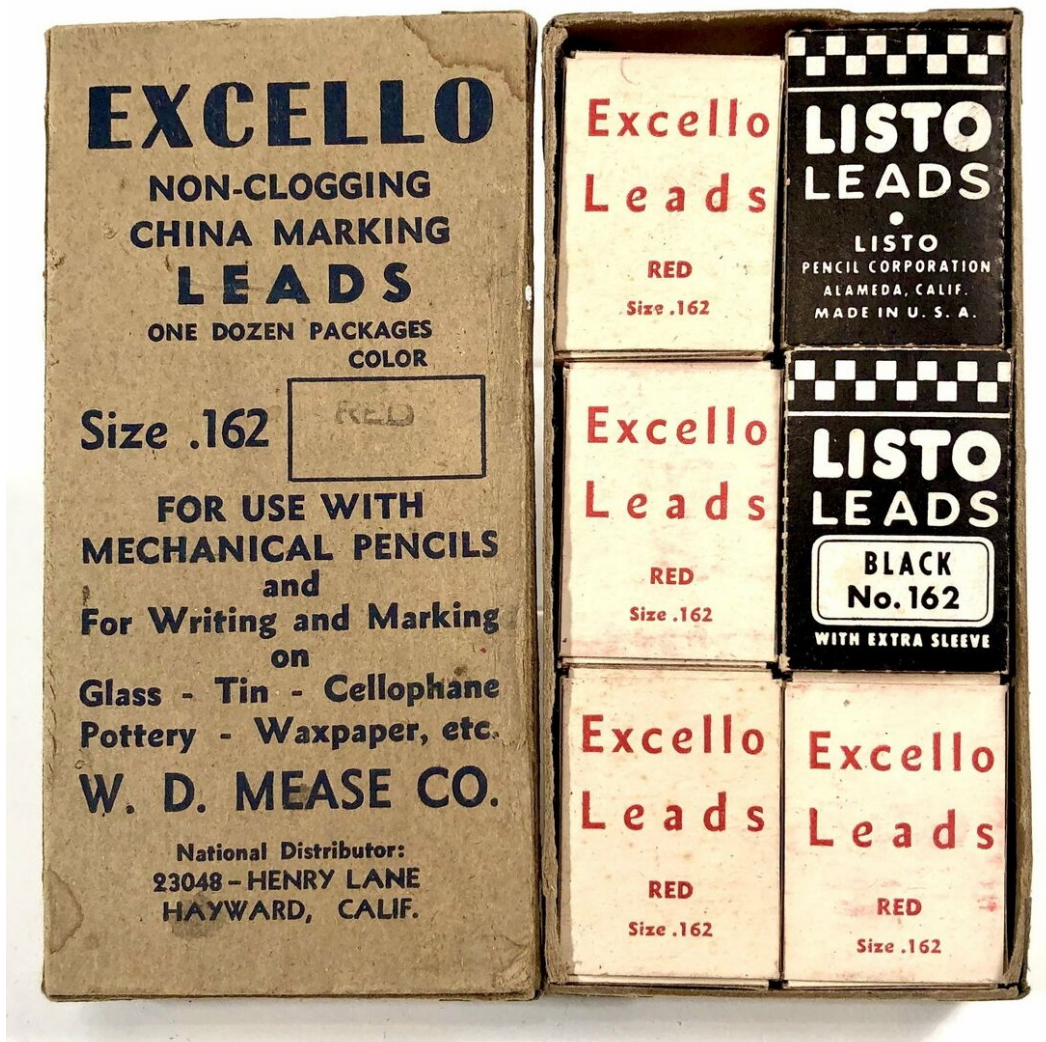


▼Figure 39. Note 2. This is one small pack of 6 leads and a metal sleeve, out of the brown box of 72 leads above, at Figure 38.





▼Figure 40. Note 3. As a counterpoint, Listo did attract some direct competitors. Here's a box lid and partial box of .156" diameter "Excello" leads which clearly fit a Listo mechanical grease pencil, but which were produced and sold by the W. D. Mease Co. in Hayward, California. At some point two of the missing "Excello" packs of lead were replaced with vintage Listo leads, just to fill the box. Mr. Wilbur D. Mease was granted patent number US2492877A for a "crayon holder with screw feed type adjusting means" on December 27, 1949. I found no tangible record of the success or failure of Mr. Mease.



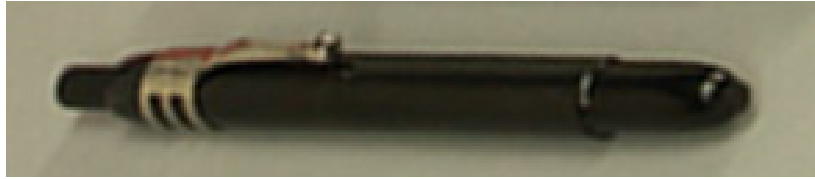
▼Figure 41. Note 2. Here are images of a later but still vintage box of Listo grease pencils (since the box is undated, I can only suspect that this dates to about 1960 or so), based on the “two straps” at the sides of the pocket clip. The front of the box is on the left, below. The rear of the box with the refill instructions is on the right, below. The “No. 162” refers to the grease pencil lead size of .156”.



▼Figure 42. Note 2. However, the grease pencils inside the above box are of later manufacture (perhaps Listo had too many boxes printed, and used them up even when packaging newer pencils). Here is one of the pencils from the box in Figure 41 above. Notice that compared to the pencil on the box, the pencil inside the box appears somewhat less tapered at the top of the barrel, has a metal pocket clip with 3 “straps” on each side, rather than 2 such “straps”, and the front of the pocket clip appears to have more of a sharp bend in the middle.



▼Figure 43. Note 3. For comparison, below is an image of the current model of grease pencil, right off the Listo Pencil Co. web site on 3/30/2020. Although it's pretty blurry, clearly the grease pencil is identical to the one that may date to 1960 or so, per Figure 34, above.



▼Figure 44. Note 3. Below is an image of the current grease pencil box, right off the Listo Pencil Co. web site on 3/30/2020. It is very similar to the earlier box in Figure 41 above, except 1)the pull out tab has is stamped with both the pencil model number and the refill lead model number, 2)the top of the barrel of the pencil on the current web site is “fatter” and less tapered than the earlier box picture in Figure 41, and 3)the pocket clip has 3 “straps” on the side, not 2.





▼Figure 45. Note 3. This is another way Listo's more modern grease pencils were packaged.





▼Figure 46. Note 3. Copied directly from Listo Pencil Company's web site on 3/30/2020, this image shows some of the mechanical grease pencils currently offered by Listo Pencil Company, together with the refill leads for those pencils. Note particularly that the pocket clip still includes three separate "straps" on each side of the pocket clip, presumably to hold the clip more firmly to the pencil, as well as the usual large ball end to the pocket clip. And of course, the Company continues to use as its trademark a somewhat more stylized form of a "typed mark".

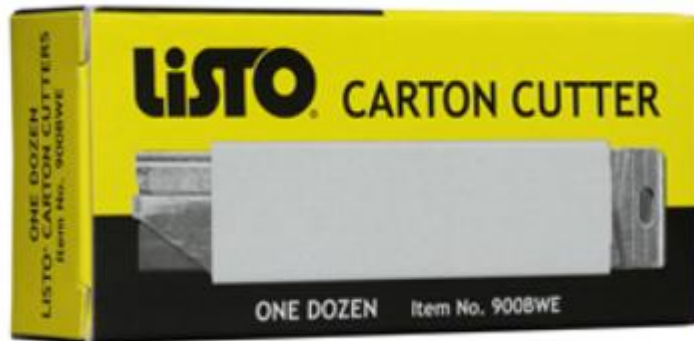


▼Figure 47. Note 3. Future Listo Mechanical Grease Pencil?? The image below is a screen shot from a YouTube video that was posted by Listo on 4/28/2016, along with a narrative describing this prototype of a “Model 1180” mechanical grease pencil. As may be readily observed, 1)the end of the barrel does not appear to be removable to refill the grease pencil lead, 2)the internal mechanism appears to include spiral grooves on the inside of the barrel, so that twisting the top turning knob moves the lead toward the writing tip, and 3)the entire pencil and mechanism appear to be plastic. The prototype pencil also utilizes 0.118” leads, rather than the Company’s usual 0.156” leads. The accompanying narrative indicates that both the barrel and turning knob of the production model pencil will be black rather than transparent.



I believe this development effort was primarily to be able to produce Listo’s primary current mechanical grease pencil product more cheaply, to better compete with other mechanical grease pencils in the marketplace. In fact, this prototype looks eerily similar to Scripto’s mechanical grease pencil which has been marketed for many years. However, I found no evidence that this mechanical grease pencil was ever marketed by Listo.

▼Figure 48. Note 3. Listo also makes a few other products. Pictured below is a box of Listo's carton cutters, and a package containing one of their felt tip markers.



And just like its Canadian affiliate, Listo also offers a wide variety of custom plastic injection molding.

This is just a quick compilation, far from completely researched – particularly due to the relative dearth of available Listo Pencil Company catalogs, advertisements and brochures. I've principally based the above comments and pictures on the various pencils and ephemera in my personal collection, and others I've seen on the internet or personally handled. I'd hope that posting this essay will elicit some additional insight and further evidence of Listo's early mechanical grease pencils. If you have additional information, pictures or ephemera that you'd be willing share so it could be added to the appropriate place in these pages, please don't hesitate to contact me at [jimstauffer@gmail.com](mailto:jimstauffer@gmail.com). I'm always happy to provide proper attribution for material which expands this content. Error correction is also appreciated. Please note that all images, text and other content on these pages are copyrighted, and may not be reproduced in whole or in part without the express written permission of the author. Personal use of this content, however, is absolutely and cheerfully permitted. And you can freely make links to this web site from other web pages.

James R. Stauffer ©5/10/2020

**MANAGEMENT CHANGES** President and founder Charles E. Wehn passed away on October 27, 1958, according to a clipping from the *Oakland Tribune*. He died of a heart attack aboard his boat at Walnut Grove. His survivors include his wife, Mrs. Isabel R. Wehn; two daughters Mrs. Douglas G. Stuart of Alameda and Mrs. William E. Garrison of Healdsburg; a son, C. Emory Wehn of Alameda, and four grandchildren. The current president of Listo Pencil Corporation is Patrick C. "Rick" Stuart, a fourth generation leader of the company whose assistance has been invaluable.

**Footnotes:**

Note 1: Permission to use this image granted by Listo Pencil Company, the copyright holder.

Note 2: This item and its image are from my personal collection.

Note 3: Use of this image is permitted under the "fair use" exception to the United States copyright laws, since presented here for purely educational purposes, and not for profit.

THE NEXT ESSAY IN THIS SERIES IS TITLED  
"OTHER GREASE PENCILS AND MARKERS"  
AND CAN BE FOUND ON THE HOME PAGE OF [VINTAGEAUTOPOINT.COM](http://VINTAGEAUTOPOINT.COM).  
(or just use the "back" arrow/button)