

When i was a kid, my Mom used to work at a car dealer. She was the one in charge of inventory, and obviously, back then, there wasn't any computerized system to keep track of all the parts in stock, those selling, and those possibly ending on the floor. Everything was done on hand written cards. Yeah, that sounds like a lot of work. It was.

Yearly inventory

Every year, there was a massive task to complete: compiling the whole inventory of the stockroom and totaling the value of it. My Mom would work a lot of overtime hours, at home, in the evenings. For a couple of weeks, she would come home with boxes of small cards. Each card had a part number, a price and a number. Everything had to be calculated on another sheet for each stack.

Helping Mom

As i was probably about 13 or 14, my Mom would let me help her. Adding the numbers on an adding machine was easy, even though it was tedious so it was a task i was able to do. I was so proud to work with my Mom. It was even better when, one year, she said she would pay me to work! Yes, i was getting a whole 50 cents per hour. I know for sure that the minimum wage was still much more than that, but even 50 cents was a bonus for me and working an average of 20 hours in that short time period meant a nice pay for me.

Year after year

I don't remember exactly how many years i got that "salary" but one particular year, as i was working, like the previous year, my Mom came home with an envelope for me. It was just a blank envelop so i didn't know what it was for. When i opened the envelope, i found a check. A real check for \$105! As i looked at my Mom, puzzled, she said that they decided to pay me the minimum wage and since i worked 21 hours that year, at \$5/hour, that was my pay. I cried.

This is a first

That was my very first pay check EVER. I didn't really want to cash it because i wanted to frame it instead, but of course, i could not get the money if i kept it in a frame. So my Mom agreed to make a photocopy of it. I have not seen that copy in many years, but it might be tucked away, somewhere. It would be fun to find it!

What about you? Have you ever worked for pennies? Do you remember your first check? What can you tell about that event? Share your story in the comments below.