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Recycling Newspapers

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As long as I can remember my family subscribed to The State Newspaper. It was printed in Columbia and delivered to Conway each morning. The newspaper carrier threw it in our driveway before daylight. By 8:00 AM my parents had scanned the list of obituaries in the lower right hand corner, read whatever interested them, and shared the funny paper with me, so I could read "Dagwood and Blondie."

The newspaper had been read, but it still had use, so we saved it in a cardboard box under the stairs. We put newspaper in our laps when we shelled beans or shined our leather shoes. We crinkled up newspaper in the bottom of the fireplace and placed strips of lightwood on top in order to start a fire. We put newspaper on the kitchen counter when we peeled potatoes, apples, and peaches. We put newspaper on the table when we scaled fish or cleaned crabs. My dad rolled up newspaper and lit one end to make a torch to burn out webs in trees. When plucking chickens my dad was the one who singed the tiny feathers. My mother used newspaper to shine windows. In spite of all the household uses, we still accumulated far more than we could use.

When the cardboard box was filled, my parents encouraged me to sell the old papers to the fish market. I rolled the newspapers into logs, tied them with string, and took them to a small fish market on Laurel Street, across the street from the alley. Fish that had been resting on ice would remain cold for hours when wrapped in layers of newspapers. My newspaper logs were weighed on the fish scale hanging from the ceiling and I was paid maybe 5 to 10 cents per pound. I probably received less than \$2 for my newspapers, but when my allowance was \$1 a week, I considered it a worthwhile project.