

SPYING ON A MEMORY

FACE OF THE MARKET



Stephanie, Flower Row, 2009

PHOTOGRAPHS AND MEMORIES OF
THE MARKET IN SEATTLE
BY RON HAMMOND

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My 2013 book *REGULAR CUSTOMER* contains nearly 300 photographs of Seattle's downtown farmers' market taken over 50 years — from 1963 to 2013. The metaphor for the book was a stroll through the Market looking both at how it is today and how it looked *before*. Of course there were people in these photographs — what fun would the Market be without people? However, the emphasis was on the *place* and the people — customers, tourists, vendors, (me) — *in the environment*. This book is a revisiting of my negatives from the Market that emphasize the *faces of the people* I saw there — a lot of them over many years. Some I knew by name and regarded as friends, others only by sight, a few that I only saw once.

I am not interested in momentous events or spectacular places. Instead, I want to show the joy and beauty of what is all around us every day. I work mostly locally on open-ended projects; they occasionally pause in interesting places for a show or a book — this is one of them.



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Andy Padua
Low Stalls, 1966

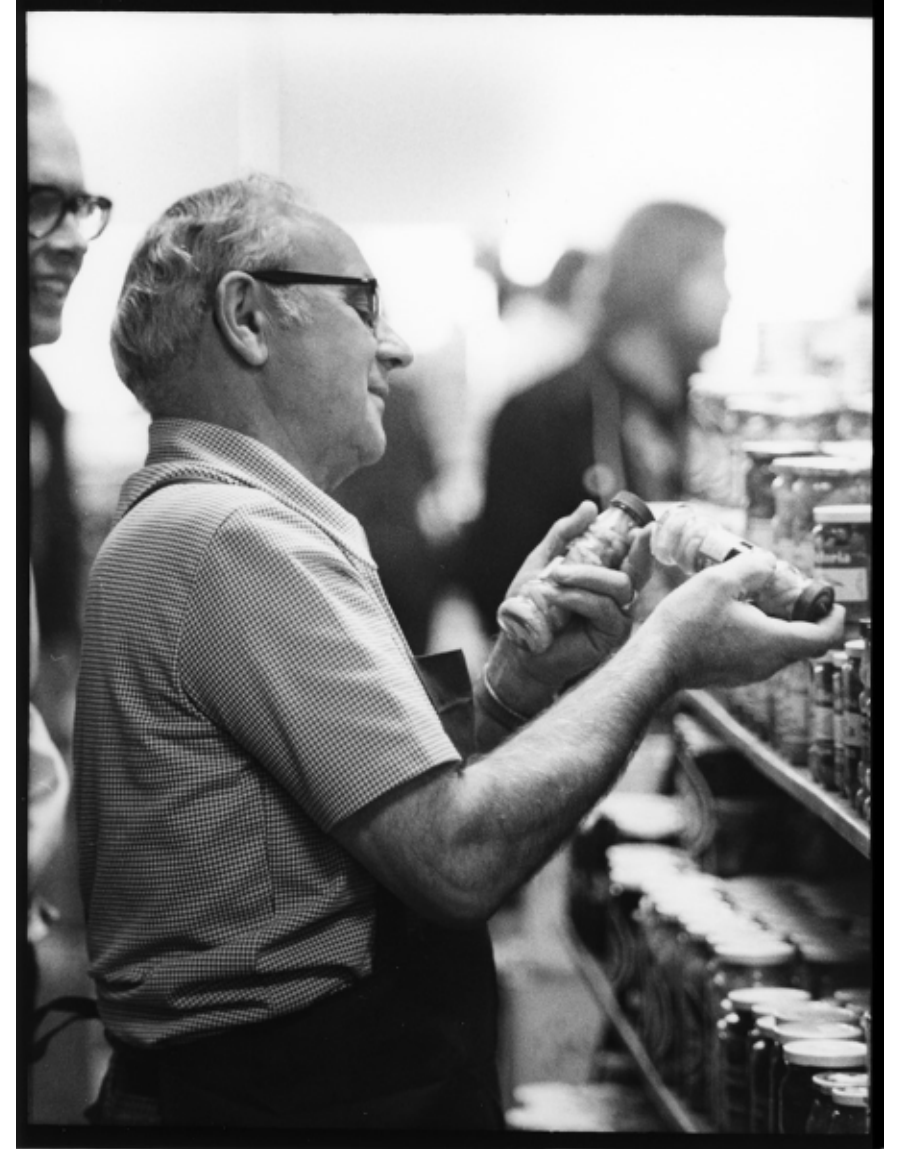
The “low stalls” along the Market arcades were originally for day use by farm-to-market vendors like Andy. Many of them now are occupied by craft vendors.

There were a good many Filipino farmers at the Market. Andy was one of them. The barely visible cigar in his mouth was one of the little crooked stinkers that many of the farmers favored (remember this was in the 1960s). It was a good job that the Main Arcade had adequate ventilation.



Pete Delaurenti
Delaurenti's Italian Market
Down Under, 1975

Pete was a young clerk in the Italian grocery in the lower level of the Market (Down Under) in the '20s. He wound up marrying the boss's daughter, Mae, in 1930. In 1946 they bought the business, and it became Pete's Italian Grocery until their sons took over and moved to larger quarters on the main level. Mae was very camera shy and I never succeeded in getting her to agree to my taking her photograph. Pete, on the other hand

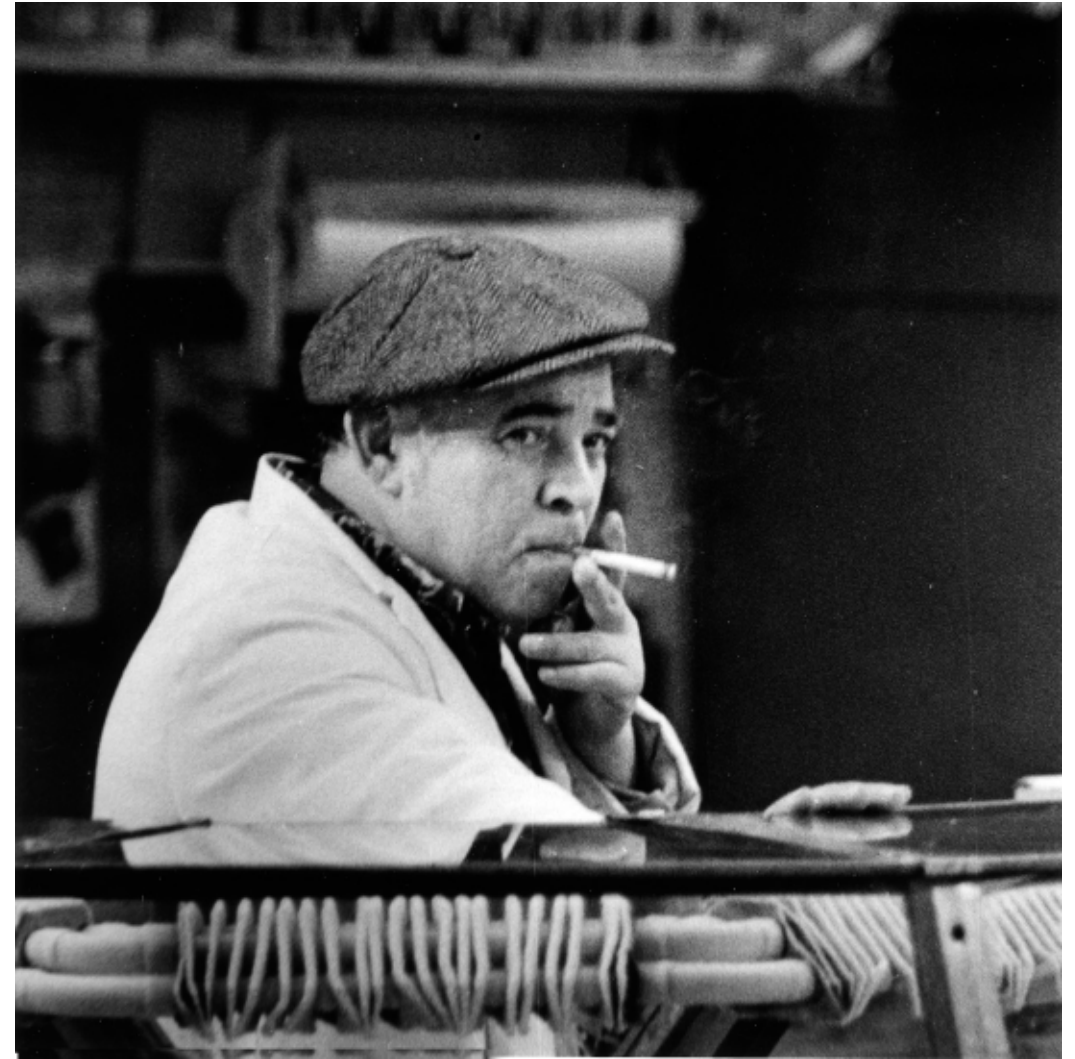


Carlos (Shalom) Hano
Pike Place Fish, 1976

Carlos was one of the many Sephardic Jews at the Market. A Holocaust survivor, he had the camp tattoo on his arm. Belying his dour countenance, he was a cheerful, light-hearted man.

He sold us our very first fresh salmon and, with enthusiasm and a lot of waving of arms, told us in great detail about how it should be prepared. He also demanded that we tell him how we liked it on our next visit — and asked about it when we did.

He spoke most of the languages of eastern Europe and addressed his regular customers in their native language.

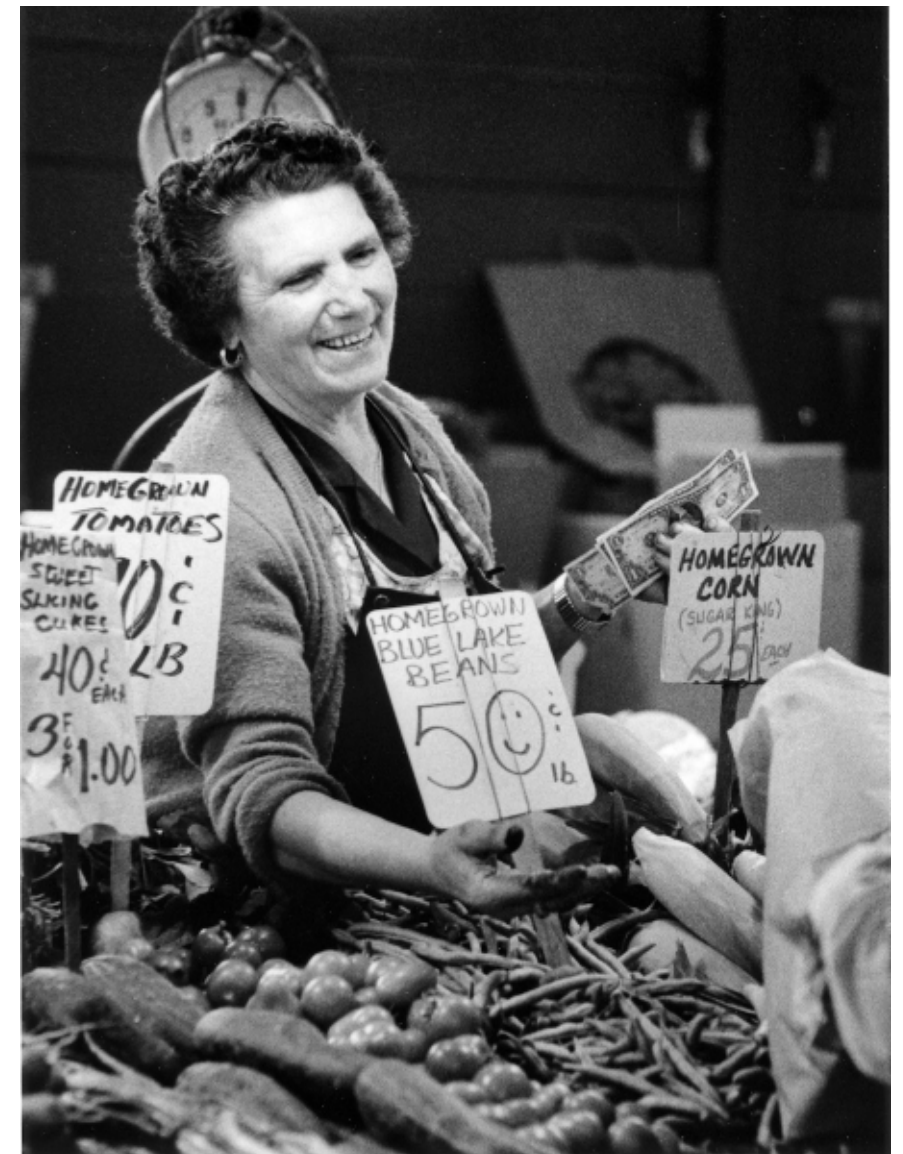


Pasqualina (Queen of the Market) Verdi
Main Arcade, 1979

Pasqualina was a war bride from Tuscany. Her first husband was killed in WWII, leaving her in poverty with an infant son. She met an American, Dominic Verdi, through his brother who was still in Italy. She and Dominic eventually married. They had a truck farm in the Green River valley and then in South Park. They opened their low stall at the Market in the middle '50s. This photograph is how I remember Pasqualina — hearty, cheerful, laughing.

By 1990 Pasqualina's younger son Mike and daughter-in-law Sue were taking care of the business, but that didn't keep her away from the Market. Pasqualina died about a year later.

After Sue's untimely death in the mid '90s, their South Park farm, the last working farm in the Seattle city limits, went to an NFP, Seattle Youth Garden Works. I'm proud that this photograph of Pasqualina now hangs in their office.



**Pinhas (Pinky) Almeleh & Colleague
Hasson Brothers, 1987**

Pinky was another of the many Sephardic Jews that were stalwarts of the Market community for decades. He was from the Isle of Rhodes. He would gladly show you how to pick out ripe grapefruits or would wax poetic about the merits of sweet grapes and feta for breakfast — and tell you where in the Market you could find them.

We met him the first time we went to the Market in 1961. He immediately took a pair of farm-town kids from the Midwest under his wing, and we were customers and friends for many years. Somewhere between 1963 and 1974 he closed his stall (where the Art Stall is now) and retired. He decided that retirement was boring and went back to work part-time at Hasson Brothers (now Socio's) stall on the Main Arcade. He retired again but decided it was still boring, so went back to volunteer at Hasson Brothers a couple of days a week — when I took this photograph. Pinky died in 1993.



Christine
Socio's 1998

Christine worked at Socio's and across the street at Corner Produce for a decade or so. She eventually moved to Boston to go to college.

After her junior year in college, Christine came back to Seattle for the summer and resumed her place at Socio's. She still remembered our names and the photographs I had taken of her.

After finishing college, she moved back to Seattle permanently and started her own freelance graphic design studio. She still works at Socio's during the busy summer season just *"to keep in touch with her Market mojo."*



The Girl with Flaxen Hair
Low Stall Vendor, 2000



And 23 more

SPYING ON A MEMORY FACE OF THE MARKET POSTSCRIPT

There were two major renovation projects at the Market. The first saved the Market from destruction in the early '70s, and the second brought the infrastructure and earthquake resistance up to contemporary standards. Both of these left the Market looking unchanged but, as one of the vendors told me, "*The plumbing works.*" A major construction project, "Market Up," added a snazzy, tourist-friendly façade to the slope west of the Market that was opened up by demolition of the viaduct.

But I somehow thought that the, well, personality of the Market would remain even if the old faces were gone. Alas, it has not. Skyrocketing rents have driven out a great many of the marginal, funky shops on the lower levels and even some of the landmark businesses. The latest to fall is the newsstand, First & Pike News (aka Read All About It).

The tidal wave of tourists from the cruise ships that dock on the waterfront just north of the Market is driving it to be more like Faneuil Hall in Boston — a tourist destination that kind of looks like a market.

So think of these portraits as a requiem for its past — spying on my memories.

P.P.S. Everybody in the Seattle area knows the name of the Market. You may notice that I have not used it anywhere. The name is a trademark and I could not use it without paying a hefty fee for a two-year license, obtaining liability insurance to indemnify the trademark holder in case of disputes about my doing so, and