

SCARLET OAK TAVERN, HINGHAM, MA: Thursday, March 22, 2018

For the first time since 1992 (as far back as the Class luncheon records go), a Class luncheon was NOT scheduled in either January or February -- just too many weather issues combined with we're not getting any younger. Irony on two counts: the prediction of severe weather discouraged a few classmates, disrupting the "oh-so-wise" plan (of holding off until March 22) AND the "severe weather" turned out to be a dud!

Fifteen (15) Harvard '60 classmates attended the luncheon at the Scarlet Oak Tavern in Hingham on Thursday, March 22, 2018. Another five (5) who had made a reservation did not get there. Those in attendance included Bob Adams, Ralph Dormitzer, Hank Keohane, David Kopelman, Gerry Levenson, Henry Marcy, Ken Marshall, Tare Newbury, Peter Papesch, Don Quinn, David Ries, Richard Saval, Jack Scullin, Lionel Spiro, and David Wizansky.

Why the Scarlet Oak Tavern? During the summer of 2017, Henry Marcy bicycled on the south shore -- Hingham, Cohasset, Scituate, Hull -- with the Charles River Wheelers (CRW). After the ride, someone suggested getting a beer (it was a beautiful, hot, sunny day) and something to eat at the Scarlet Oak Tavern. Henry was immediately sold on the place when he looked at the menu and discovered that they served Avery White Rascal, a beer made in Boulder Colorado at Avery Brewery where one of his grandsons worked. On the lookout for a suitable place for a luncheon on the south shore -- quite a few H'60 classmates live in the area --, Henry inquired about function rooms, etc. and, ushered in from the patio, was given a tour.

The Scarlet Oak Tavern was built in 1757. So, it is quite the historical building, but with interesting refurbishment incorporating the old in the new. The North Creek room on the second floor (serviced by elevator as well as by stairs) was a delightful venue.

The home of Scarlet Oak Tavern, 1217 Main Street, has a rich history dating back to 1640 when the land was granted to Robert Peck. Daniel Whiton bought the property in 1748 and built his fine Georgian house in 1757. The property remained in the Whiton family until 1916. The Whitons were wealthy farmers, carpenters, and served the town as constables. Two Whitons fought in the Revolutionary War.

Joseph Jacob Whiting, Daniel's eldest great-grandson and successful Boston clothing merchant, died without issue, so his brother Amasa, inherited his Boston and Hingham properties valued at as sizable \$159,000 in 1863. (This would be the equivalent of nearly \$3,000,000 in today's currency!) Amasa served as state senator, member of the school committee, and trustee of the library. Amasa's wife, Hannah (Fearing), owned the property after his death. She lived until age 85 and her travels between Boston and Hingham were newsworthy for the Hingham Journal. Ada Bacon, Hannah's daughter, eventually sold the property out of the family.

In 1939, Otto and Herberta Kley bought 1217 Main Street and established the Country Fare Restaurant. The Country Fare was a Duncan Hines recommended restaurant and served Hingham for over 40 years. During that time Otto and Herberta lived upstairs on the second floor. They were very helpful in times of trouble and were known to deliver food to the neighbors as gifts.



Country Fare Restaurant Hingham, MA

Subsequent owners changed the name to the Whiton House, which operated for 16 years. In 1997 it became Siros, and in 2003, the Blackfin Chop House and Raw Bar, which closed its doors in mid-2005.

Current owners, the Webber brothers, Joshua and Jed, opened the Scarlet Oak Tavern in June 2007. The 250-seat restaurant is so-named because there was once a large grove of scarlet oak trees on the Whiton House property, some of which still survive today. The Webbers also operate the Gibbet Hill Grill in Groton, MA on the site of a preserved historic farm and the Bancroft in Burlington, MA.