

village view

by Andrea Leonard

Some people believe it's okay not to pay taxes at all, arguing that because our dollar is no longer backed by gold and silver it's nothing more than a note and the law prohibits attachments of promissory notes.

Some people believe it's okay not to pay taxes if you don't get caught; the law permits avoidance of taxes but a person who evades taxes is liable to prosecution.

Some people believe it's their accountant's responsibility to insure their taxes are paid.

There are some people who believe evasion of taxes or failure to pay taxes due is out-right thievery, a crime against every law-abiding tax-paying citizen.

What is taxation? What responsibility has an individual or business to pay local, state or federal governments assessed taxes due? What happens when a person or business fails to pay them?

The United States Constitution gives Congress the power to lay and collect taxes; a tax is a charge imposed by legislative or other public authority upon persons or property for public purposes; taxes are a forced contribution of wealth to meet the public needs of a government.

Taxes pay not only for operation of the government at all levels but also for schools, roads, police protection, defense, health and welfare programs, and much much more. These services are instigated at the behest of voters. Voters elect representatives to pass legislation and to allocate and appropriate tax dollars for the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

Nobody likes paying taxes, but our system of government is based on the principle that its support is every citizen's responsibility. Funds collected are earmarked for purposes to benefit all the people.

While many tax dollars are spent for projects you and I may not believe are in the best interests of the greatest number of Americans, we have recourse at the polls.

As the law is written, it is not an individual's prerogative to decide when or whether to pay taxes.

If we, the people, don't approve of the law, we collectively hold the power to change it and make new rules, rules we like better.

By law, a proprietor of a business must - not may - collect from his customers an additional amount of money on certain

sales, a specified percentage of that sale; and by law he must not may- turn that money over to the appropriate department of government.

It's not his money; he simply collects it and passes it along. It is your money, just as the money you deposit at the bank is yours. When you put money in the bank, you can withdraw it in dollars and cents. When you pay taxes, you're entitled to the governmental services that money's intended to supply.

The money a businessman collects from from you as taxes on sales, or withholding taxes on your wages, remains yours. You are, after all, the government.

You're entitled to a credit for those unseen dollars when you file your income tax returns. The businessman has an advantage over you in that he's permitted to hold those funds in his bank account until they are due and payable. If his account pays interest, he's entitled to keep that interest. It may partially compensate him for the collection service he is required to provide.

The dollars he collects are comingled with his own money, his capital, his income and profit from sales. Those dollars are in no way segregated until he remits to the tax man.

When you deposit money in a bank, the bank makes use of your money in a similar fashion. Banks loan money to their customers based on the amount of total deposits. A bank, however, is almost always prepared to return on demand the precise amount you deposited, plus interest. If it cannot, the bank fails.

If you leave your car at a service station to be repaired and the proprietor sells it and spends the proceeds, you've been cheated. You'll take him to court.

If when purchasing property you deposit a down payment with a real estate agent, and he spends the money for new office equipment and can't come up with that cash at the time of closing, you'll see the agent's license is revoked. He'll be out of business.

If we pay taxes and receive no governmental services in return, we'll soon overthrow the government. We may not approve of all the ways our taxes are spent; most of us have objections to at least some of the programs our tax dollars support. But we do have recourse. We do have opportunities to vote for or against those who vote for or against appropriations.

We have, collectively and individually, the means to influence how our elected officials spend our money.

When any person, businessman, elected official, representative, or corporate entity legally removes a percentage of your worldly goods, as custodian, and then fails to turn over to the government that cash, he robs you.

It may appear to be a victimless crime. You may think you hardly notice the difference. You may even sympathize with the swindler because you're neither richer nor poorer, it seems, no matter where those dollars have gone.

And perhaps there's a certain unholy satisfaction when someone seems to turn the tables on the Internal Revenue Service or the Department of Corporations and Taxation, and for a time- gets away with it.

Those dollars, however, will eventually be collected. The government service you paid for once, and for which the money has been appropriated, will be delivered. And you'll pay for it. Again. Twice.

Not only, therefore, does the person who doesn't pay that tax steal your money and use it for his own benefit; he costs you, as an individual, more taxes.

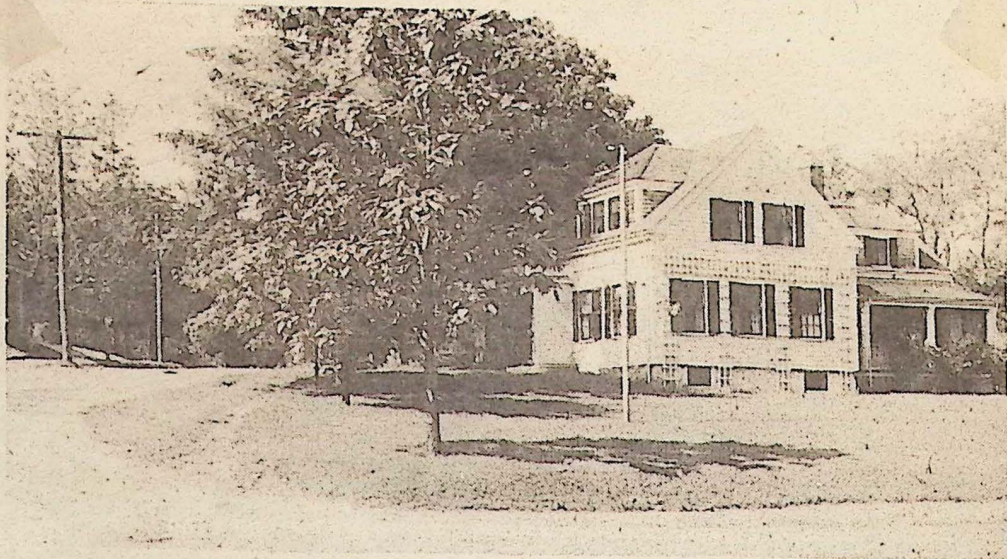
Whether he's a personal friend, a guy you like, or a company you've always enjoyed doing business with, is beside the point.

Whether you believe an accountant is, or should be, responsible for his client's financial delinquency is beside the point, too. The law holds each person and corporation- not their accountants- responsible for payment of taxes due.

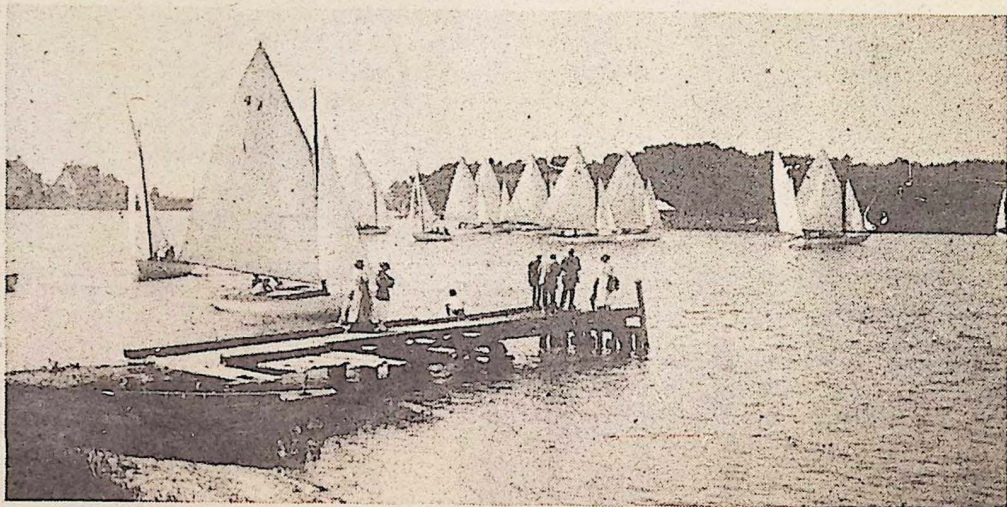
If the nation is to survive, it's vital that the majority of its people be capable of distinguishing between right and wrong, and that they be guided by conscience as well as by an understanding of how the system works and why, and that they be motivated to choose to do what is right.

There are only two questions anyone need ask himself when facing temptation: "Is it mine?" and "Is it honest?" When the answer is "yes", what he does is his business.

It would be good to see more people capable of making the distinction between right and wrong.



Only a step to the eastward, along Main Street, was Dr. Kinney's corner. Horizon's occupies the building today, and the photographer was standing just outside what is now Wimpy's.



In the opposite direction from the center of the village, at the foot of Bay Street, was the coal dock where the coasting schooners unloaded their cargoes to fuel the stoves of Oster-ville residents.

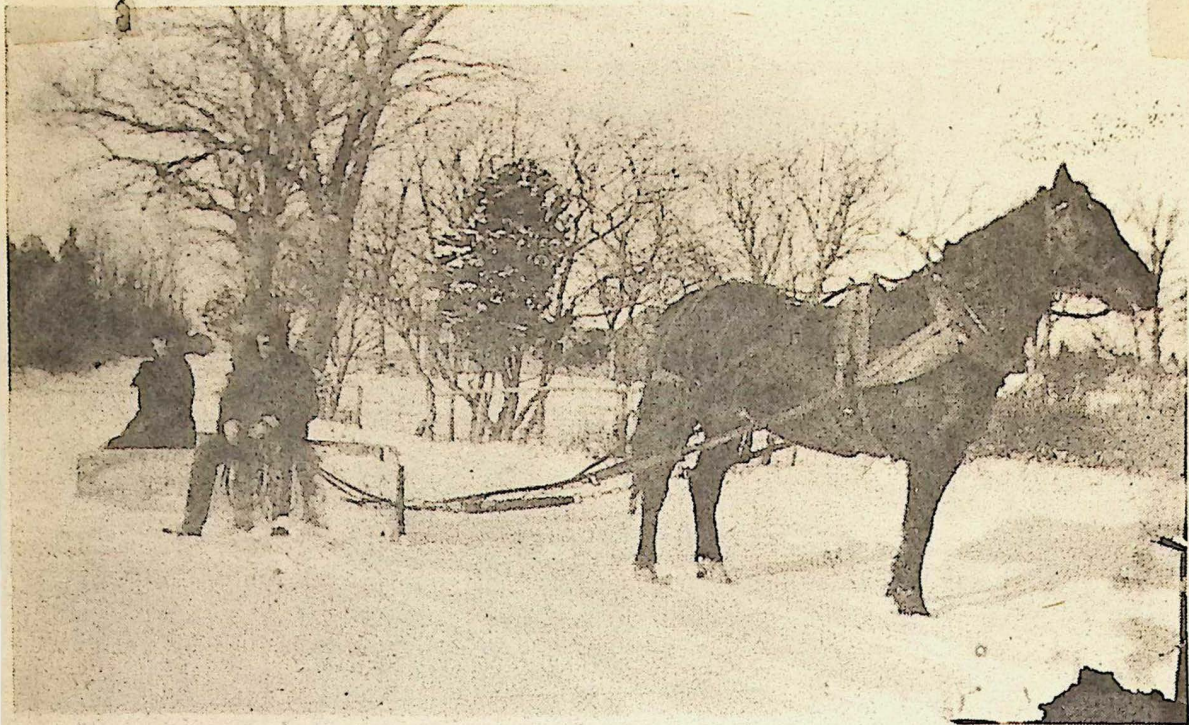
Then as now, on warm sunny mornings the bay was busy with boats. But what a difference! There were no motors in boats in those days, the gaff-rigged cats tacking up into North Bay all carried jib sails.

Wouldn't it be fun to know what brought the cluster of people down to the shore to stand on the dock and watch the boats? It looks as though there's a race about to start; perhaps the men and boys in the boats were being cheered on by their loving relatives.

Behind the sails at the far left can be seen the buildings then known as Breezy Bluffs. Here came, during summer months, children from orphanages in the city, brought to the seashore to escape the heat.

The bridge to Oyster Harbors is hidden behind the main-sail of the boat in the foreground; also hidden by sails are the sheds of Crosby Yacht Building and Storage which stood on the edge of the bay along the far shore.

Who of those living in Osterville seventy-five years ago could have dreamed their sleepy little village would become the bustling shopping area it is today?



Shades of winters past. This photo, circa 1900, shows a “one horse power” snow plow on the snow covered streets of Osterville. Warren Codd is the plow driver;

the passenger (name unknown) supplied extra weight for the plow. (Photos from the Chesbro Collection, courtesy of the Osterville Historical Society)