

Goshen, Indiana: From ‘Sundown Town’ in 20th Century to ‘Resolution’ in 21st Century

PowerPoint presentation by Dan Shenk at Goshen Art House for Goshen Resilience Guild—October 11, 2018

[Begin PowerPoint video; transcript below by Dan Shenk]

Dan Shenk

It’s great to be here. And thanks for coming out on this chilly evening. Fall has arrived, after summer just a couple days ago.

Lee Roy Berry and I very much appreciate the opportunity to make this joint presentation regarding “sundown towns,” which would be a lamentable legacy of Goshen and **thousands** of communities across the United States the past 100-plus years—especially the first two-thirds of the 20th century, but still persisting today in some places. Thank you, Phil, for inviting us, and we’re grateful for your creative work with the Resilience Guild.

As the program indicates, I’ve titled the PowerPoint presentation “Goshen, Indiana: From ‘Sundown Town’ in 20th Century to ‘Resolution’ in 21st Century.” I put the word “resolution” in quotes, because even though the Goshen City Council took a very significant step 3½ years ago to unanimously **pass** a resolution acknowledging this aspect of Goshen’s history, we as a community and as individuals are still a work in progress as we seek **resolution** regarding racial issues. By no means have we **arrived**.

There’s a **lot** that could be said about sundown towns, so I decided to write out most of my comments in order to focus on the most pertinent. After an interview, Lee Roy and I look forward to questions, discussion and your own stories that you might share with us a bit later. I would note that I’m indebted to my high school

classmate, Carol Helmuth Honderich, for about a dozen of the following slides. A decade ago she had taken Damascus Road anti-racism training, read Jim Loewen's book (that we're going to see here in a moment), and she put together her own PowerPoint.

1—I first heard about Dr. Loewen's 2005 book on sundown towns, including Goshen, approximately eight years ago when Annette Brill Bergstresser told us about it at the church that she and I attend, Faith Mennonite. I borrowed the book from Annette for about a week, as I recall. And, by the way, you might detect a pattern here: first, Carol Honderich's pivotal role, now Annette's. Indeed, at least a half-dozen different women played significant roles in this effort the past few years.

OK ... who wouldn't want to visit a "sundown town"? You know, what a great place to hang out, right?! That tranquil-sounding expression, however, cloaked a nationwide chamber of horrors for African Americans during most of the 20th century.

Dr. Loewen defines a sundown town as any organized jurisdiction that for **decades** kept African Americans or other groups from living in it. I would add: or even staying **overnight** in it. Call it ethnic cleansing, American style. Also affected were Jews, Chinese Americans, Mexican Americans, Native Americans, but **African** Americans bore the brunt of the practice for at least two-thirds of the 20th century. The civil-rights movement of the '60s and '70s was instrumental in finally starting to turn the tide and erode the power that most such towns had over people of color. But **vestiges** of this reality still linger **today** in pockets of intolerance across the United States.

2—James W. Loewen is a Harvard-trained sociologist and retired professor. Now in his 70s, he continues to speak and write.

In addition to his book, Dr. Loewen has an extensive website in which he lists nearly 10,000—**ten thousand**—towns, cities, suburbs and even **counties** throughout the U.S. as "surely," "probable" or "possible" with that designation,

including more than 250 in Indiana. And about 400 in Illinois, for example, where **he** grew up. Simply Google “list of sundown towns,” and a map of the 48 contiguous states comes up.

Out of curiosity, I began checking a number of states—like Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Kansas and Oregon, as a Mennonite myself—and found at least a dozen so-called “Mennonite” communities that Loewen has on his list. So Goshen is not unique by any means, but I focused on Goshen because it has been my home for more than 40 of the last 50 years, and it’s the community I know best.

3—I show this slide primarily because it has Marian Anderson pictured. That’s how all this got started for me just over five years ago. Briefly, this is what happened:

In early September 2013 the *Goshen News* published a letter I wrote in which I said, among other things, that Marian Anderson, an internationally renowned African American singer, “needed to stay at the Hotel Elkhart” after performing at Goshen College in 1958 because of the “‘sundown law’ tradition” of Goshen. That was in my letter to the *Goshen News*.

Within 24 hours two retired GC faculty members—first the late Harold Bauman, and then Ervin Beck—set me straight, clarifying that in the late ’50s **all** of the college’s honored guests in its Lecture-Music Series, regardless of race or ethnicity, stayed at the Hotel Elkhart because it was the best in the area.

I decided to write another letter to the *Goshen News* acknowledging my historical error, but also to say a bit more about why I and many others, including Dr. Loewen in his book, made this mistake about Ms. Anderson in light of Goshen’s bigoted backstory. That 300-word letter soon morphed into a thousand words—and, eventually, forty-three hundred words. ... More about that later.

The fact that Goshen systematically excluded African Americans for much of the 20th century is not in question. My research confirms this fact, as does the

research of many others, including Dr. Loewen; Ruth Eigsti and Les Zook, Goshen College students in '51 and '81, respectively; Steve Nolt, a former GC history prof; Joe Springer, curator of the Mennonite Historical Library at GC; Mike Puro, mayor of Goshen, from '88 to '97; and a 2012 GC class called Reporting for the Public Good.

4—So how did these jurisdictions *become* sundown towns? Signage at the city limits was one way, as shown here. But I could find no evidence that this was ever the case for Goshen. Former Mayors Mike Puro and Allan Kauffman told me the methods used in the Maple City for the first two-thirds of the 20th century were largely “social and cultural.” ... I’ve heard from many African Americans and others that Goshen long had a reputation for being hostile to people of color. An African American pastor, Robert Hunt of Elkhart (now in his 70s), told me his parents always told *him*: “Don’t let the *dark* catch you in Goshen!”

The sundown-town phenomenon developed after the Civil War Reconstruction in the late 1800s as many African Americans were leaving the decimated South to find work and a new beginning. Many settled in the big cities of the North, but they often had less success finding homes and a sense of welcome in smaller municipalities. That’s when the children and grandchildren of Northern Civil War veterans, who had fought to *end* slavery, found numerous ways to *exclude* African Americans from their communities.

There’s some *19th-century* background for Elkhart County—and Goshen. The first African Americans to live in Elkhart County, which was established in 1830 (Goshen in 1831), were Robert Cyprus and an unnamed female in the 1830s, according to the 1840 U.S. Census. The 1860 census reveals no fewer than **11** “black and mulatto persons” living in *Goshen*.

In light of Goshen’s “sundown town” history, some are surprised to learn that Elkhart County, and especially Goshen, was an *abolitionist* stronghold in the late 1830s and early to mid-1840s. The editors of both Goshen newspapers—Charles Murray and E.W.H. Ellis—were abolitionists. Murray *personally* sheltered runaway slaves at his property in Jefferson Township, just north of Goshen. A key

route of the Underground Railroad came through Goshen in the 1840s—through Fort Wayne, up through Bristol and into Michigan from ... a Quaker community in Richmond, then another Quaker community up in central Michigan. Indeed, Elkhart and LaGrange counties were two of only four of Indiana's 91 counties at the time to vote against an 1851 law that tried to make Indiana a "sundown **state**." The 1851 referendum vote statewide was 84% to keep Negroes from settling in Indiana, but in **Elkhart County** only 38% supported the new exclusionary law.

So it's both ironic and disturbing that about 60 years later Goshen was well on its way to becoming one of the most **notorious** sundown towns in Indiana. In 1890 there were **21** Negroes in Goshen, according to the census; by 1910 (20 years later) that number had dropped to **2** where it remained in single digits into the 1940s. The number rose to **11** in 1950, so in an amazing coincidence, it took 90 years for Goshen to come full circle: **11** African American residents **once again**. Dr. Loewen has told me personally that, of all of Indiana's sundown towns, he has more information about Goshen than any other city besides Martinsville, which is between Indy and Bloomington.

5—Regarding this slide, use your **imagination** as to why many different communities would have a black donkey painted on rocks and signs at the city limits. In his book, Dr. Loewen says this "donkey" was photographed in Tennessee in 2003.

This symbol relates to exclusion methods by sundown towns, which included:

- Violence
- Threats of violence
- Racist verbal harassment—by local police and others
- Profiling and arrest by police
- Restrictive property deeds
- Social ostracism, especially from schools, churches and community clubs
- Refusal of service in commercial establishments, such as hotels, motels and restaurants

- Ordinances, which also was **not** Goshen’s method of exclusion; Mike Puro went back all the way to the 1830s to check all the ordinances, but he never found anything, even in the 1890s and early 1900s, to his surprise
- And finally, signage at city limits

Five years ago when I was talking about all this to the Kenyan-born manager of a Goshen eatery on College Avenue, another man at the counter spoke up. Now of Mishawaka, he said he grew up in Kokomo and recalled traveling as a 10-year-old with his father south through **Elwood**, just northeast of Indy, in the early ’60s. At the city limits was a sign that clearly barred Negroes. He asked his dad about it, and the two then had quite a conversation about **race**.

6—More later on restrictive covenants, **Goshen** style, but here’s a 1919 example from Salt Lake City by “land merchant” Kimball & Richards. So they weren’t too subtle about it.

In the 1901 newspaper headlines from Evansville, Indiana, note the strident “editorial” tone—on the right there: 1901. And this wasn’t the editorial page.

7—The three signs above and the one below leave little to the imagination:

- “We want this [n-word] ... **moved**”
- “We intend too [sic] keep this neighborhood white!” (notice they couldn’t spell “to”; I noticed that as a copy editor)
- “Out with NAACP”
- And below: “Father Groppi rest in hell” [A white Catholic priest was urging fair housing in Milwaukee in the late ’60s.]

A **Goshen** version of the **top** photo occurred in the early 1950s. A son of Rollin Roth, Goshen’s Republican mayor in the late ’40s and early ’50s, called me to say that when his dad (after some of my stuff was in the *Goshen News*) ... he called to say when his dad was mayor a Negro family moved to Goshen. He said his father took “all kinds of grief” about it, but he recalled his dad telling his critics, “It’s a free country” and reminding the callers that in 1948 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that restrictive housing covenants were “unenforceable.” I asked Mr. Roth what

happened to the family. **“Oh, they didn’t last long,”** he said. The neighbors saw to that, harassing the newcomers so unmercifully that the family soon moved out of the Maple City.

8—Tulsa, Oklahoma, May 31 and June 1, **1921**. On June 1st whites tried to make Tulsa a sundown town (this is from Dr. Loewen’s book). He said, “As part of the attack, deputized white men raided a munitions dump, commandeered five airplanes, and dropped dynamite [and incendiary fire bombs] onto the black community ... Like efforts to expel blacks from other large cities, the Tulsa mob failed; the job was simply too large.” From 39 to 300 African Americans died (along with about 10 whites) in the racially motivated attack on “Black Wall Street,” likely the wealthiest black community in the United States at the time. An estimated 10,000 African Americans were left **homeless** by raging fires that destroyed 35 city blocks. Many of the city’s black-owned businesses also were destroyed. Loewen says this was the first time there was aerial bombardment of the continental United States. The second time was 9/11.

Most cities and towns in the South already had large populations of African Americans—separate and **unequal**—but still coexisting in the same community. Early in the 20th century the racism of the Midwest and even points farther north began manifesting itself.

9—Milo, Maine, is about as far north as you can get. This **daylight** KKK parade was in 1923. Dr. Loewen says Milo listed its first African American household in the **2000** U.S. Census.

10—But **Klan** activity in Indiana—I’m sorry, in **Indiana** also was very prominent, especially in the 1920s, but throughout the **entire 20th century** (Goshen had a Klan rally at the courthouse as recently as 1996; some of you probably remember that). My second son Jason of Elkhart discovered the following startling facts. In 1925, guess what percentage of the native-born white males of Elkhart County were members of the Klan ... Any guesses? How many? [80 percent] Not that many, thank goodness. **26%**. One-fourth. One-fourth of all the white males were **members** of the Klan. He found out also that two-thirds of the national Klan

lecturers were Protestant **ministers**. That was 1925. In Indiana—and that percentage was Elkhart County: 26% in Elkhart County of the males.

I received this two-sided flier after having a letter to the editor of the *Elkhart Truth* in the early 1970s about a diversity issue. The Klansman's prayer contains this line: "Father, negroes have fallen for this communist mess, And put America in a state of unrest." Does this remind anyone of 1930s **Nazi** propaganda about the Jews? When all else fails, scapegoat a **group**.

And now, on the left, according to the KKK, the **Bible** says this about **race** in Acts 17:26: "From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them **and the exact places where they should live.**" That was probably their favorite part of the verse. This Klan flier came to me from Greenwood, Indiana, with a stamp for Osceola, Indiana, on it.

11—Here's a letter I had in the *Elkhart Truth* October of '72 (this is another letter), a year after I had started working at Mennonite Board of Missions in Elkhart and covering, among other things, the Minority Ministries Council. When a half-dozen of us (a mixed racial group) went to Shakey's Pizza Parlor for lunch one day, a highly racist film very quickly came on the screen overhead. I was upset. I protested to the manager, then wrote a letter about it. Yeah, I got some "fan mail" again, this time from the National Socialist Party of America out of Chicago, complete with swastika.

12—Slide 6 was an example of **print**-related racism. Now we're at slide 12. Here's another example—and now we're back in **Goshen**.

The page here in front of you is from an undated publication called *Goshen*, which was a PR piece which was produced by the City Utility and the Mayor's Office, in the mid-'30s, probably '36 or '37. Clell Firestone was mayor at the time. In the Public Health and Safety section of the booklet are these words: "Contributing in a large measure to the absence of crime is the character of the population of Goshen. Nationalities are 97.5% native born white, and 2.5% foreign born white.

There is no negro population.” They were very close to right—because I think in 1930 there were 2 on the census; in 1940 it was up to 6.

This booklet served as a template for Mayor’s Office publicity about Goshen for the next 15 years, through 1951, then for the newly minted Chamber of Commerce in 1953. The racist language was finally removed from the Chamber material, from publicity materials, in, again, guess what year? When did they finally take the language ***out***? Any ideas? 1978 ... 1978. Fifteen years after Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. So 19—I’m sorry, ’79. It was still in in ’78. ’79 I looked, and it wasn’t there finally. For the final 15 years that they had this language (’64–’78) the “no Negro population” wording had been changed to .5% ***non-white***.

13—My research evolved throughout the fall of 2013. At one point I got a call from Joe Springer of the Mennonite Historical Library at GC. Joe was researching the origins (in the late ’20s) of the Redskins name for Goshen sports teams. He said he also had something ... he had ***seen*** something at the Goshen Public Library about a ***minstrel*** show in Goshen in ’56. He wondered if I was interested. And I said I was!

I went to the library a day or two later and found this photograph. It was from a ***1990 Goshen News*** column called “Looking Back”—to 1956 when the ***12th annual*** (you can’t see it very well on the left there, but it got cut off there) ... the 12th annual Goshen Minstrel Show took place. You might be able to see that nearly half the people—of ***all ages***—in this photo are in “blackface.” The event took place on the stage of Goshen High School; this was a ***community*** event. It was not just high school students.

You can also see there’s a long caption listing all 1956 ***participants***—around 75 total. As I read through the names (and Joe hadn’t pointed this out), I was amazed to read the following: “Accordian [sic] solos by Allen [sic] (right in the middle there), by Allen Kauffman, Kathryn Detweiler and Charles Amadeo Jr.” I soon ... I soon called the mayor of Goshen, who was supportive of my research. I asked him if that was ***he*** in 1956. Allan ruefully said, yes, he was 7 at the time. “I was so

young,” he told me. “Whenever there was a musical program, my mom would trot me out to play the accordion, which I had learned to play at age 5. As a child, it never occurred to me that we were making fun of a race of people.” Allan pointed out that he was *not* in blackface; but there he is in the center. See the guy in the tie? Allan is just to the right of the guy in the tie in the center.

An Internet definition of minstrel shows reads as follows: “Minstrel shows lampooned black people as dim-witted, lazy, buffoonish, superstitious, happy-go-lucky and musical. The minstrel show began ... in the early 1830s and [often starred a white man in blackface calling himself Jim Crow] ... and survived as professional entertainment until about 1910; *amateur* performances continued [well] into the 1960s in high schools [*like Goshen*] and [in] local theaters.”

The Goshen community was not alone, of course, in producing these shows. I found a 1953 *Goshen News* item about a *Nappanee* minstrel show. The *mayor* was listed as giving the welcome and the introduction.

14—And it wasn’t just Goshen and Nappanee in this area. Et tu, *Goshen College*?! In another interesting find, Joe Springer sent me this from 1935—a program by the Adelprians, one of the literary societies at GC. Joe found these pages on a Southern-themed soiree that evoked some of the stereotypes of the minstrel show of that era ...

15— ... including solos by Atlee Beechy, a future church leader in peace and justice, and Harold Buzzard, blind Elkhart businessman who lived at Greencroft in the ’70s. I soon called the late Evelyn Kreider at Greencroft, who in ’50—I’m sorry, in ’35 was a student at the college. She didn’t remember that particular program, but she said something like: “We were *very* insulated in those days; we had a lot to learn.”

The first African American student at GC was Juanita Lark, a senior in the fall of 1942. She had spent her junior year at Hesston College in Kansas. The Welcome Center at Goshen College was recently named after her. Willis Johnson was the first African American student at Eastern Mennonite College (now University) in

Virginia in 1948. New president John R. Mumaw from Ohio angered some members of the EMC Board of Overseers in '48 when he personally broke the college's color barrier by inviting Johnson, a Harrisonburg resident, to enroll. Then 14 years later a young Floridian named Lee Roy Berry also enrolled at EMC.

The second or third black student at GC in '45 was Pennsylvania's Florence Baynard, mother of Daniel Grimes, Goshen's first black City Council member, serving from 2000 to 2007. He was actually ... He said his mother [who married Asa L. Grimes Sr. in 1947] wanted to go to EMC, but a Pennsylvania bishop said, "Don't even bother trying, but **Goshen** might take you." [Daniel Grimes told me in early December 2018 that "The bishop's statement was more declarative"—that she "**could** go to Goshen instead."] Goshen is now 3–4% African American (about 1,000 residents) and at least 35% **Latino** (about 12,000 residents). José Ortiz was Goshen's first Latino elected official of **any** office; he began serving on the Goshen School Board in 2015.

16—Former mayors Puro and Kauffman both told me about Goshen's history of restrictive property deeds and covenants. Puro said **Jews** also were excluded in some of them. Here's one from the Fidler Addition in 1946. No. 5 (I have the arrow there) says: "No person of any race other than the **white** race shall use or occupy any building or any lot ..." though domestic servants were allowed. Similar language appeared for the Carter Road and Martin Manor subdivisions just south of Goshen College.

17—Here we see that Cripe Title (now Stewart Title) was crossing out the offensive language by the early to mid-1980s, partly to ward off possible legal action. But my friend Jim Ingold, former president there, said it's very difficult legally to get such language changed—so it gets crossed out or ignored.

I would note, however, that during the same era (Mother's Day 1982) an interracial Goshen couple (black husband, white wife)—not Lee Roy and Beth!—living just east of downtown Goshen had their car doused with gasoline and torched one night. The car, which was parked close to their house, was a total loss. If a neighbor walking her dog late at night hadn't seen what was happening

and alerted them and called the fire department, their house might have burned down. 1982.

18—My research also found stirrings of *change* in Goshen in the '50s and '60s. This is page 1 of a seven-page document that came out of an April 1955 conference at GC, an event that led to a churchwide statement in August of '55 titled "The Way of Christian Love in Race Relations." Guy Hershberger, a GC sociology prof, also had a churchwide role, and more than a half-dozen African Americans *and Africans* joined 20 whites at the April conference.

19—The church*wide* efforts of the mid-'50s, however, didn't do much filtering down to most grass-roots Mennonite churches. An *exception* from the late '50s to the mid-'60s—and probably beyond—was Eighth Street Mennonite Church. Already in the late '50s Eighth Street was taking leadership in race relations in Goshen, as evidenced by multiple *Goshen News* articles on cross-cultural events and discussions about racial issues at the church during that era.

Pastor at Eighth Street starting in '63 was J. Herbert Fretz (some of you probably knew him—recently passed away, I believe; am I right? yeah, OK, a few years ago), also a member of ... he was a member of the ecumenical Goshen Ministerial Association. In 1964 the GMA adopted a "Civil Rights Statement" publicly calling on Goshen to open itself to housing and residence by members of *all* races. The Eighth Street newsletter ran the entire text of the GMA statement on page 1, May 6, of '64, newsletter. A portion of the statement reads as follows (I don't know if you can read it; I'll just highlight what stood out to me):

Why does the GMA feel that our community has a problem in race relations when people on all sides say, "We have no problem because we have no Negroes"? The problem lies in the fears which characterize many people of Goshen. ... Along with other problems in human relations, for example, integrating white immigrants from southern states into our community, these fears cry out expressing the needs of Goshen. On the basis of the historic American guarantees of equal opportunity, the fears are

regrettable. But on the basis of our Christian *faith*, they represent a tragedy.

20—Another sign of progress was the stands taken by young Mennonite leaders like J. Lawrence Burkholder and Victor Stoltzfus. Both men in the mid-'60s went south and took part in civil-rights actions—and both later became president of Goshen College.

This is page 1 of a memorial service April 9, 1968, for Dr. King at Harvard Divinity School where Burkholder taught at the time. J. Lawrence gave the final eulogy. In it he said (and I got this information from J. Lawrence's daughter Myrna who is here this evening; thank you for coming), "Like the prophets who reminded Israel of its covenant, Dr. King reminded [us] of the ideals upon which this democracy was founded—equal opportunity for all, freedom, justice and brotherhood."

21—... Amid all this necessary heaviness, a brief interlude. Yes, that was yours truly (lower photo in glasses) in the spring of '69. I was a first-year student at Goshen College and was asked to cover a Black Youth Rally for *Gospel Herald*, the churchwide Mennonite publication. At upper right is a young gentleman named Lee Roy Berry who a few months later would start a 40-year career teaching political science and history at GC. That may have been the first time that we met. I think it was.

22— So ... what can we do in the face of systemic—and individual—racism we still encounter *today*? Here are some ideas from Carol Honderich and me:

- Speak up and challenge it
- Write letters to editors
- Teach children about diversity issues
- Recognize that "humor" can sometimes be a cover for racist attitudes
- Cultivate cross-cultural friendships
- Financially support interracial causes
- Vote on the side of justice
- Celebrate diversity—in Goshen and beyond

And this takes us back to Goshen once again.

23—Someone who *did* speak up was John Stith, Goshen’s straight-talkin’ postmaster for about 15 years from the late ’70s to the early ’90s. This is an article I did for the *Elkhart Truth* in January ’87 (less than a year after I started working there) in connection with a Dr. King Day speech that Stith gave at the Goshen Noon Kiwanis Club. And he was a member of that club, along with Allan Kauffman and many others.

I thought Stith showed remarkable courage that day in front of an all-white audience. He described Goshen as a “clannish” town. In my story I gave him the benefit of the doubt and spelled clannish with a *c* and not with a *k*. He said, “Goshen has never accepted outsiders. Forty years ago if you had told me I’d be this town’s postmaster, I never would’ve believed it.” As a high-school student in South Bend in the late ’30s, early ’40s, young Stith had competed in the Goshen Relays. “Whether you won or lost,” he said, smiling and shaking his head, “*you had to get out of town quick.*”

24—**Remedies (this is from Carol Honderich):** In 2013 when I started the “sundown town” project I didn’t realize I was implementing Carol’s first point. But increasingly I felt a *calling* to research and write—as a Goshen resident but also as part of my Christian walk. Telling this story hasn’t been “fun” because there’s a lot of difficult and painful material here. But I’ve tried to get the stories right.

And I’ve been inspired in my effort by Howard Thurman, a 20th-century African American theologian, educator and civil-rights leader. He said, “Don’t ask yourself what the world needs, ask ... what makes you come alive, then go and *do* that. Because what the world needs is people who have come *alive.*”

25—In my Marian Anderson “clarification” in September of 2013, I soon I had enough material that the *Goshen News* editor agreed to run this thousand-word piece on Sept. 22, 2013. My sister, Rhoda Keener, then director of Mennonite Women USA and still head of the SisterCare network, saw what I had done for the *News* and said a lot of *Mennonites* across the country (not just Goshenites) also

needed to know about and face these issues. She recommended *Mennonite World Review*.

26— In late September I contacted Editor Paul Schrag about it, and we negotiated for two months; it already had a lot of copy. In late November he agreed to run it in connection with Dr. King Day, 2014. By the time I finally sent Schrag my evolving version in early January, it had grown to forty-**eight** hundred words. He trimmed it to about forty-three hundred; I thought he did a wonderful job, graphically as well, in presenting such a long piece. The Associated Church Press agreed, giving *MWR* an award a year later for in-depth coverage.

27—After Laura Coyne, a progressive kindred spirit in Goshen, saw the *MWR* version, she suggested that it be posted on the Goshen Commons website. There it also comprised about forty-three hundred words—but with more of a **Goshen** emphasis, less about **Mennonites**. Another woman, Sara Hershberger Mast of our church, read what I had written and asked, “Now that we **know** all this, what is Goshen going to **do** about it?” I replied, “Good question, Sara,” and the next day I contacted Mayor Kauffman, which started Goshen’s 14-month sundown-town **resolution** process.

28—Toward the end of his 2005 book Dr. Loewen has a 42-page chapter titled “Sundown Towns Today.” Yes, **today**. But it’s also true that **change** can happen, as Bluffton, Indiana, south of Fort Wayne, can attest.

29—Goshen **too** is changing. A couple of cases in point:

In the summer of 1996, as noted, a small faction of the KKK exercised its constitutional right to free speech by getting permission for, then conducting, a rally on the steps of the Elkhart County Courthouse in downtown Goshen. Former Police Chief Mike Kettlebar recalled a total of about 150 people on both sides of the divide coming to the courthouse—as 30 to 40 police officers kept them apart.

Meanwhile, though, about **1,000** people—including yours truly—voted with our **feet** and attended Goshen’s first annual Diversity Day celebration at Shanklin Park

a mile south. I covered the event for the *Truth*. Particularly with the leadership of Sreekala Rajagopalan (close: Rajagopalan, OK, there I got it; I'm glad to have you here, Sreekala), originally from India, Diversity Day was subsequently celebrated *annually* for 15 years.

30—And six years *before* Bluffton's mayor put up *his* signs, Goshen was doing the *same*—in 2000. In the center is former Mayor Allan Kauffman, the same guy who played his accordion at the Goshen minstrel show in '56. Next to Allan is Carl Weaver, a teacher at Goshen High School Bioethics, part of which tackled “diversity” in the spring of '99. At far right is Matt Scott, a Goshen signmaker who at no cost prepared the four signs that graced Goshen's four major entryways for about a decade until the colors faded and the signs came down.

Finally, at left is Tim Shenk, our oldest son (glad ... Vera's back here), and Tim is now of Ithaca, New York, but he was a class member who led a student group that went to the Goshen Human Relations Commission and the Goshen City Council to get permission to place the signs. He also conceived and executed the artwork on the sign, which shows five buckets pouring five colors of *paint* onto Goshen's structures. I was proud of Tim then, and I'm proud of him now. Currently he is director of the Committee on U.S.-Latin American Relations out of Cornell.

31—As mentioned earlier, another sign of progress for Goshen occurred 3½ years ago—March 17, 2015—when the Goshen City Council voted 6—nothing to *acknowledge* the racially exclusionary past of Goshen as a “sundown town.” (Most of you might have picked this up as you came in.) The resolution shown here was the culmination of almost five months of work by a lot of people—Democrats and Republicans and Independents—who felt this would be an important step for Goshen to take. What you see here is (and what you have in your hand) is the **31st** draft of the resolution, which Lee Roy and I first presented to the Community Relations Commission (CRC) Nov. 11 of 2014 about five months—four or five months earlier. Why 31 drafts? Because nearly a dozen different people from November to March helped draft this document, which truly became a non-partisan community effort. Providing particularly helpful input

were Republican council members Brett Weddell and Ed Ahlersmeyer II, along with Goshen College's Gilberto Pérez Jr.

When Lee Roy and I addressed the CRC, I thought he powerfully set the stage for community discussion about this issue. Here are two paragraphs from his page-and-a-half statement. Lee Roy has agreed to read what he stated that night. I figured it makes more sense ... Do you have it with you? Here we go.

Lee Roy Berry Jr.

Do you need the quote? Yeah, this is a quotation here from the [closer?] ... there you go, all right. It's a quotation from what I presented to the committee. It says:

"The historical record is clear. Individual **freedom** [in dark print] is preeminent among American values; but that same historical record also shows that despite that deep-seated belief in and commitment to individual freedom, Goshen, Indiana, along with many other towns and jurisdictions in the United States, denied people of color the right to exercise their individual freedom. They denied it by letting people of color know, in a variety of ways, that they were not free to come and go at any time that they chose even if they respected the rights of others—that people of color, unlike white people, had to leave before sundown.

"Perhaps the City of Goshen, in its own way, can be exemplary by formally stating to the world that its 'sundown town past' was in violation of a most cherished value, the belief in the integrity and **freedom** [again, in dark print] of the individual." That's a quote.

Dan Shenk

Thank you, Lee Roy.

In the last couple of weeks before the council vote, a number of people raised questions about **other** groups—in addition to African Americans—being discriminated against throughout Goshen's history, including Jews, Dutch celery

pickers, the Amish, Appalachian whites, Ukrainians, Russians, and, of course, Latinos. In my remarks to the City Council, I said the discrimination ... I said it had indeed happened in various ways in Goshen, but I said the **African American** experience for most of the 20th century in this community was **unique**, in three respects: its **intensity**, its **duration** (70–80 years) and the fact that it was **formalized—in writing**—by City leadership (Mayor’s Office, Chamber of Commerce and subdivision developers) from at least 1937 to 1978.

On March 17 I also said: “Soon after Nelson Mandela was elected in 1994 as the first black president of South Africa, he and Archbishop Desmond Tutu initiated a truth-and-reconciliation process—because, as they said, **truth-telling precedes** healing and reconciliation. I think we’re trying to do something similar in Goshen with this resolution.”

In my view the key portion of the resolution is actually on page 2; it’s the final nine words: “It happened. It was **wrong**. It’s a new day.”

32—That the City Council passed this resolution is in some measure historic. According to Dr. Loewen, several other sundown towns have gone on record in facing their past, but these steps were taken by ... I call ’em “3 M’s”: mayors, museums and media. Loewen tells me Goshen still **may** be the first sundown town in the U.S. to have a duly elected **council**, comprising members of **both** political parties, to make such a statement.

I’d like to publicly commend the *Goshen News* for its excellent coverage of the resolution process—from mid-November to mid-March. Nine days after Lee Roy and I went to the CRC, we also took the idea to the Goshen Ministerial Association; within two weeks the GMA reported its unanimous endorsement of the resolution. I’d like to thank Julia Gautsche, the councilwoman for my district, for her wise counsel in early fall 2014 that Lee Roy and I could proceed **simultaneously** with the CRC (and glad to have Darin here from the CRC) and also the GMA. And so we did; we presented nine days apart.

The *Goshen News* covered the GMA decision, as well as the CRC’s discussion of the issue in **five consecutive meetings** from November to March. (Lee Roy and I

opted out; we chose to “trust the process,” so we didn’t attend after that first meeting.) Credit also goes to CRC Chair Nate Mateer Rempel who shepherded the resolution through those five *at-times-intense* sessions until, on March 10, the body voted 7–nothing to recommend to the City Council that it consider the resolution. The *News* covered this process every step of the way—and in December 2015 listed the resolution *passage* as one of Goshen’s top 5 stories of the year.

33—A day or two after the first *Goshen News* story (by Roger Schneider) in mid-November 2014 on the resolution idea, *regarding which* someone had sent an Internet link to Dr. Loewen at his home in Washington, *he e-mailed me* and said he’d like to come to Goshen to encourage our process further. So we made arrangements for him to come to Elkhart County. A number of us worked at it; I won’t say all the names here in the interest of time.

Here Dr. Loewen is pictured front and center at the St. James AME Church in Elkhart the evening of March 1, along with a number of us involved in the planning and the programs. Our second son Jason is right center in the back; as head of the People’s History of Elkhart group, and he made comments from Elkhart’s perspective that evening. Loewen spoke in three public settings, four private ones over a 1½-day period. His last Elkhart County appearance was Monday, March 2 at College Mennonite. There Mayor Kauffman made a 10-minute speech in the midst of *his* speech in support of the resolution process, which was Allan’s first public statement about it since I had raised the idea with him more than a year earlier. A personal highlight for me that evening was the spontaneous embrace that Lee Roy gave Allan as the mayor stepped off the platform.

34—That’s on page ... that’s attached to your resolution, so I won’t read this, so that we can get to the next portion here. But Dr. Loewen took note and put something on his website. [The following text for slide 34 was not read orally on October 11.]

Goshen, Indiana, Pledges To Transcend Its Sundown Town Past

On March 17, 2015, the mayor and city council of Goshen, Indiana, passed a resolution to acknowledge and transcend its past as a sundown town. Between 1890 and 1940, more than 200 towns and counties in Indiana became sundown towns -- places that were "all-white" on purpose. Goshen was one of these towns. To be sure, it stopped enforcing its ban both formally and informally some years ago, but this resolution clearly moves Goshen beyond its sundown past. I recommend it as a model for other former (or persisting) sundown towns in Indiana and across the United States.

35—Lee Roy and I were *elated* by the council vote in March 2015—and grateful to *all* members of the GMA, CRC and City Council, as well as Mayor Kauffman, who gave us and the resolution a hearing. Richard Aguirre of Goshen College took this photo about 20 minutes after ... after the vote by the council.

Lee Roy and I have been friends since the fall of '71 when we worked on a print project together. In the *summer* of '71 Lee Roy had been best man at my older brother Dave's wedding in Morton, Illinois, another sundown town; Dave and Lee Roy had become friends while working in Mennonite Voluntary Service in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1966. Do I have the year right? '66 or '67? '67, OK. You also met a young woman named Beth Hostetler too, I think, in Cleveland, right? OK. As noted earlier, Lee Roy became professor at GC in '69. In '85 he graduated from law school and has been an attorney in Elkhart and Goshen ever since.

Also as noted, I was a reporter for the *Elkhart Truth* for 13 years. During that time I got to know John Stith, Goshen's postmaster, member of Goshen Noon Kiwanis, Maplecrest Country Club and other Goshen organizations. He died about 15 years ago.

In my view, John Stith and Lee Roy Berry did more in the late 20th century and early 21st century to help break down the walls of prejudice and gradually help Goshen be transformed from a sundown town into the forward-looking

community it largely is today. Lee Roy's **quiet dignity, cordial professionalism** and **insightful observations** have blessed and inspired me **and others** for a long time. I'm pleased he's here this evening.

I closed both of the longer pieces I wrote with quotes from former GC history prof Steve Nolt and from Lee Roy. I'll close the same way this evening ...

First Steve. Steve Nolt said: "Communities [that] fail to acknowledge their racial past may have a harder time moving forward in a positive way. It's not like we need to **dwell** on this and say the community is forever **marked** by it, but the other extreme would be to just not **acknowledge** it all, which could blind us to ways that prejudice might continue."

And Lee Roy said: "We need to tell these **stories**. It's easier to have a false understanding of our community than it is to deal with ambiguities. This process helps to foster healthy humility for us all."

Thank you, Lee Roy, and thank you, all.

[End PowerPoint video]

Due to time constraints, Dan cut the following three sections from his PowerPoint presentation on October 11 ...

After the material on Goshen's restrictive subdivision covenants:

Also in **Elkhart** in the 20th century, restrictions were sometimes placed on where African Americans could purchase a home. H. Brent Curry, an Elkhart city councilman the past decade, told me recently that his father, Herman, who had

just returned from serving his country in the U.S. Army in the early 1950s, wanted to buy a house in the 900 block of Garfield Avenue, just west of Benham Avenue, but was told by a white Realtor that Negroes couldn't live there. Angry but unable to change the Realtor's mind, Herman Curry bought a house nearby in the 1500 block of 10th Street where the same "red-lining" restrictions didn't apply. That's where Brent was raised.

Thirty years later, in the mid-1980s, the Johnny Brown family defied neighborhood norms by purchasing a home on Monroe Street not far from Elkhart Central High School. They would be the first African American family on that block. Before the family could move in, however, the house was torched in what clearly was an arson hate crime, causing considerable damage. The Browns persevered, however, renting nearby until renovations could be completed a few months later. Donald Brown, now of Goshen, was about 5 when all this happened. He told me that the initial reception of him and his siblings was chilly, but then the footballs and Frisbees came out, and eventually *some* of the neighborhood children were joining the Browns in backyard games. But not *all*. Brown said a KKK element had been strong in the neighborhood, but most of those families soon moved out as other African Americans moved in.

After reference to J. Lawrence Burkholder's eulogy for Dr. King:

In the 1960s it wasn't just Eighth Street Mennonite Church, Vic Stoltzfus and J. Lawrence Burkholder taking stands for racial justice, it was Gordon Gibson, pastor for many years of Elkhart's Unitarian Universalist Fellowship; he was a leading civil-rights activist in the 1960s as well. That fellowship has continued to be in the forefront of justice work in recent years, as have several churches in Elkhart that have largely African American memberships.

After "one of Goshen's top 5 stories of [2015]":

While this is a somber subject—with considerable pain as we reflect on a troubling chapter of Goshen's history—it hasn't been *all* doom and gloom. There also have some lighter moments along the way. I'll mention just one:

Current Goshen Mayor Jeremy Stutsman told me he was at a Downtown Goshen meeting in late 2014 (when he was still a member of the City Council) ... and the group was trying to come up with a slogan to encourage Goshen stores to stay open later **and** urge people to frequent those establishments. A Goshenite who evidently was unaware of recent discussions about the city's past suggested "Downtown at **Sundown**." According to Stutsman, the idea was met with stony silence. Or as my dad, Stanley, might have put it, the proposal went over like a "lead balloon."