

**"Great Meetings" dated back to the 1720s. They were primarily independent religious gatherings, not connected to any particular group, and they were typically held at farms over a period of two or three days. Word would go out about an upcoming meeting — time, place, etc. People would pack enough clothes and food to last a few days, travel however many miles they needed to travel, and bunk in homes, barns, tents, or crude shelters built just for the event. The host would stockpile food and maybe slaughter a few hogs, sheep, or even a cow.**

**Various preachers would show up, gather a crowd, and let loose to everyone in hearing range. Several might be preaching at the same time on different parts of the farm — in the barn, from the farmhouse porch, or under the big oak tree. People from rural areas who didn't have regular access to a minister were able to sit under meaty preaching, and the fellowship was good. Whole communities would find the Holy Spirit descending in power.**

**Isaac Long, with his brothers John and Benjamin, were among Martin Boehm's converts among the Mennonites. All three were successful farmers. Isaac often accompanied Boehm to Great Meetings.**

**In 1767, Isaac offered to host a Great Meeting at the barn his family had built 13 years before six miles northeast of Lancaster.**

**People came from all around — Lutherans, German Reformed, Mennonites, Dunkers, Amish, and others. A lay preacher from Virginia even attended. A number of Mennonites lived in the Shenandoah Valley in what is now Virginia and West Virginia, and Boehm went there to minister in 1761, kind of a short-term mission trip. As a result, some lay evangelists from Virginia would come north to help Boehm conduct Great Meetings.**

**And then there was that tall Reformed pastor from York, who traveled 30 miles for the meeting. The Virginia minister was preaching in the orchard, but William Otterbein decided to go into the barn and hear what Martin Boehm had to say.**

