

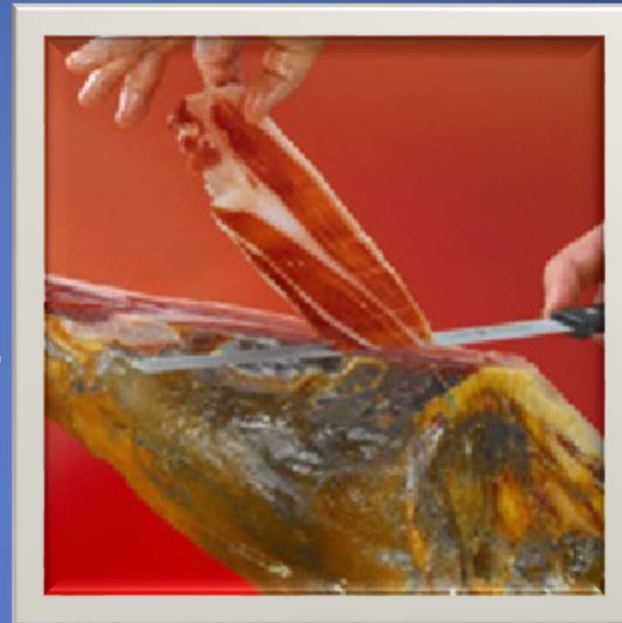
# The History of Country Ham

- No one knows exactly when country ham or dry cured ham was invented
- Pigs domesticated 4900 B.C.
- Pigs raised in Europe 1500 B.C.
- Techniques borrowed from making mummies



# The History of Country Ham

- Salt used to preserve meat appeared during the Roman Empire
- Preserving techniques for hams became regional
  - England used sugar
  - France no sugar
  - Spain fed pigs acorns
  - Italians fed cheese waste
  - Germans smoked with Beachwood



# The History of Country Ham

- Queen Isabella encouraged Columbus to include 6 pigs on his 2<sup>nd</sup> voyage
- Hernando de Soto introduced pig to US when he landed in modern day Tampa Bay
- Native Americans taught Colonists how to make dry cured hams, with “Magic White Sand”



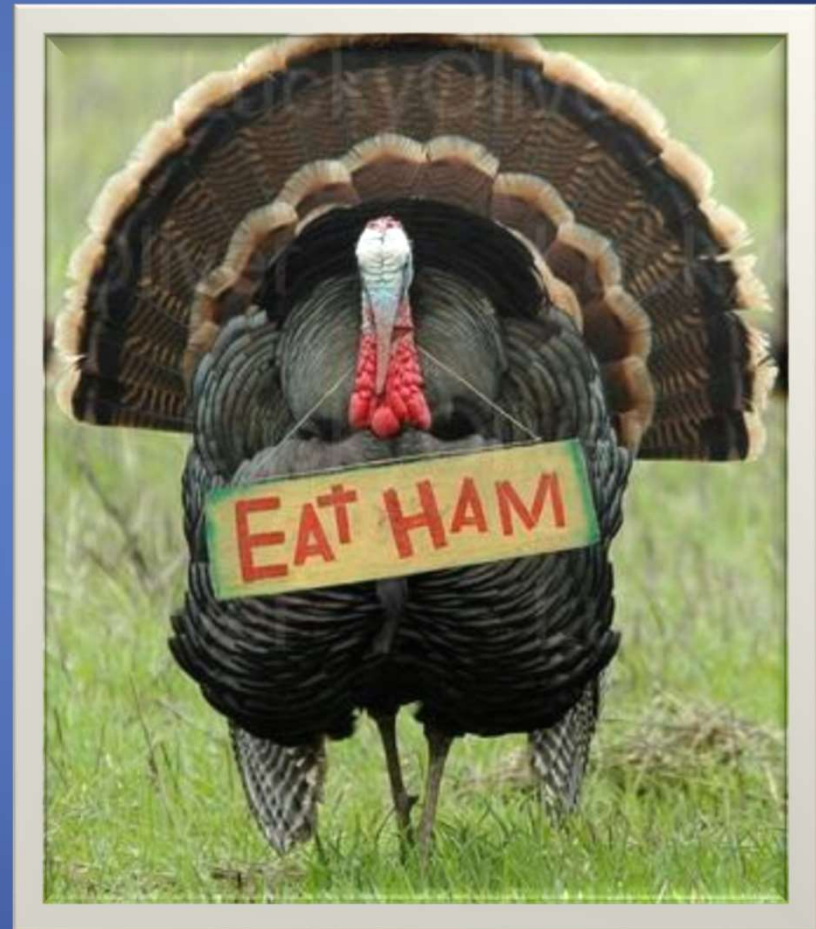
# The History of Country Ham

- Settlers in Jamestown cured hams to send back to England
  - Traded them for other goods such as coffee, tea, molasses, rum, spices, and other foods
- Pigs became the main food of choice
  - New Amsterdam kept pigs behind a huge wall
  - Later moved, wall destroyed, a road put in its place, the road was named Wall Street.
- Hams from the new world became all the rage in Europe
  - Queen Victoria ordered 6 hams per week



# The History of Country Ham

- Traditionally, pigs harvested in the winter
  - Don't have to feed them during the long winters
- Hams were put in cure
- Ready for Easter
- Some were saved for Thanksgiving and Christmas



# The History of Country Ham

- The majority of Country Hams were made in the Southeast
  - Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, etc
- Even North Florida made Country Hams
- Smithfield, Virginia became the home of the Country Ham



# The History of Country Ham

- In Virginia, tobacco depleted the soils of nutrients
- Virginia farmer planted peanuts to replace tobacco
- Pigs were allowed to eat leftover peanuts
- Country Hams were made from those pigs
- Smithfield Hams
- In 1926, Virginia State Assembly declared that Smithfield Hams must:
  - 1.) Come from pigs fed Virginia peanuts
  - 2.) Peanut-fed pigs must be harvested, cured, and processed in Smithfield, VA to be called a Smithfield Ham

# The Oldest Country Ham

- Isle of Wright County Museum, Smithfield, VA
- Fell off his wagon in 1902
- Mr. Gwatley wanted to see how long it would last and use it to sell more of his hams
- 1920 put a brass ring on the ham with a tag that read:
  - “Mr. Gwatley’s Pet Ham”







**P.D. Gwaltney, Jr.'s Pet Ham**  
 1962  
 Howard Gwaltney, Jr.

In 1962, a cured ham was missed when a shipment was sent Gwaltney plant. P.D. Gwaltney kept the ham to eat how the best with his curing methods. In the 1920s, he had a ham on for the ham and took it to trade stores and farms. His Gwaltney his "pet" ham for \$7,000.00. How old is it today?

Tab. 65



# The New Era in Ham

- Mechanical refrigeration
- City Ham
  - Pickled ham that is not shelf stable, but faster to make
  - Everyday ham
- But...
- The Country Ham is making a comeback!!

