

# Grand THANKSGIVING Memories



REDWOOD CITY, CALIFORNIA  
terragalleria.com - the photography of QT Luong

My Thanksgiving memories growing up were spending the day at the home of my Grandparents, Ralph and Charla Vest Culpepper, in Redwood City, CA.

My grandmother was a fine southern lady who attended finishing school and had an eye for the exotic. She did everything with great attention to detail, especially when hosting a family dinner.

Upon entering their home on Thanksgiving day, the smell of roasted turkey and fried onions filled the air and I would rush in to see how she had set the dining room table for the big event. My grandmother had purchased a full set of **Canton Porcelain Rose Medallion** china before the manufacturing plant was bombed in the second world war. I loved the pink and green dishes with their designs of the Imperial family. Not your everyday Thanksgiving décor I know, but then my grandmother was not your everyday grandmother.



The table and chairs were made of Mahogany and the chairs were upholstered with a needle point design. I remember the creaking sound the chairs would make when you moved in them. Like most turn-of-the-century furniture, they had handcrafted joinery.



On an embroidered linen tablecloth, she would set the table with the silver cutlery, each piece engraved with the Culpepper "C," and she brought out the cut crystal water and wine glasses and had silver goblets readily available.

She always had something growing in the garden—even when it turned cold—so fresh flower arrangements, usually gladiolas or large white mums, would be placed in the room.

We had all the important thanksgiving recipes; roast turkey, bread stuffing with herbs, onions and celery, french green beans with fried onions, pearl onions in crème sauce, cranberry sauce, homemade gravy, caesar salad and, because my grandmother was from the south, black-eyed peas.



The deserts were all handmade, from the apple pie, made of apples from their own tree, to Mince Meat pie (*not my favorite*)—they were every year. My grandfather was always very generous with the vanilla ice cream and loaded your plate upon request. Even as a kid, I could never finish all of the ice cream he served with a slice of pie.

Of course my sister and I were expected to sit up, say "please" and "thank you" and pass all serving dishes left to right. Requisite etiquette growing up, the result of two generations of finishing school graduates. My grandmother, and my mother as well.



GRAPHIC STOCK

I am thankful to have had my family and all the thanksgiving experiences in my life. I remember them all like they were yesterday.

I hope all of you have wonderful memories and the good fortune to create new ones this year.

**Happy Thanksgiving to you and yours,**

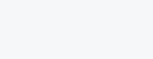
Lauren



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