

# Saying Goodbye



**By Darrell Ferguson**  
**Edited by Maddie Gallo**

Hi, I'm George. My family lived in a town called Little Rock. It was in Arkansas in 1857, and I was two years old.

Many people of color were brought to America from Africa in boats. They were enslaved.

Slaves were people of color who were forced to work without being paid. They were treated horribly. They were treated like property, not people.

Free people of color had to leave the states that had slaves. Some families had members who were free and some who were enslaved. It was very sad for many families.

We had to leave my father. He could not come with us because he was enslaved. My mother and I were very sad.

We took a steamboat on a wide river to a new town. It was called Alton, Illinois.

When we arrived in Alton, Illinois, nice people helped us get settled. They were called Abolitionists. They wanted to help enslaved people find freedom.



Life seemed good, but we still missed Father. I thought about him all the time.

In 1860, many people became sick. The sickness was called Tuberculosis. Many people died, including my mother.

I had to live at an orphanage with other children who lost their parents. They made us work hard. It was terrible.

One morning, I ran away. I went to the Wharf. I loved the steamboats.

Nighttime came, and I became scared. I hid in a shipping crate, wishing Mother was with me.

One night, there was a snorting noise outside my crate. Then something was licking my hand.

It was a dog! I was surprised. He was friendly,  
and we greeted the day with a new friendship.

The dog looked hungry. I offered him the pieces of fruit I was saving for breakfast.



Later, I had a pork chop. The dog cried for it. I said, "You want the pork chop? Fine! Take it! It is all yours!"

“You have taken my house, eaten my food, and even stole my blanket last night while we were sleeping.”

“I am going to call you Porkchop. It is already our favorite food.”

“We will be best friends, and take care of each other, and go everywhere together.”