



Smithsonian Associates

An Unsung Hero of the Fight Against Slavery

Scott Shane

Tuesday, February 10, 2026 - 6:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. ET

Reviews and other information on Scott's 2023 book, *FLEE NORTH: A Forgotten Hero and the Fight for Freedom in Slavery's Borderland*, can be found at scottshane.org. It's available in hardback, paperback, e-book and audio.

He recommends reading *FLEE NORTH* before tackling *The Writings of Thomas Smallwood*, just out from Penguin Classics, which he edited and for which he wrote an introduction and many footnotes. Smallwood's newspaper dispatches in particular may be easier to understand and appreciate fully after reading Chapter 7 of *FLEE NORTH*.

Scott is working with others on trying to get public recognition for Thomas Smallwood in Washington, in the form of a historical marker and perhaps a monument or statue, probably in Smallwood's neighborhood near the Navy Yard in Southeast. In Baltimore, he has proposed to the developer in charge of redesigning the Inner Harbor that the new arrangement incorporate a memorial to the victims of the domestic slave trade. He can always be reached at scottshanebaltimore@gmail.com.

For a broader look at the historical context in which Smallwood operated, Scott suggests a few books:

A readable history of the underground railroad: Fergus M. Bordewich, *Bound for Canaan: The Underground Railroad and the War for the Soul of America*

A pioneering account of the radical abolitionist movement in Washington, including Smallwood and Torrey: Stanley Harrold, *Subversives: Antislavery Community in Washington, D.C., 1828-1865*

A fair and insightful biography of Charles Torrey: E. Fuller Torrey, *The Martyrdom of Abolitionist Charles Torrey*

A recent book on the domestic slave trade, drawing on a rare collection of business records for a major slave-trading company based in Alexandria, VA: Joshua D. Rothman, *The Ledger and the Chain: How Domestic Slave Traders Shaped America*