African American communities in Washington and its suburbs in Maryland and Virginia have been repeatedly and strategically displaced during the roughly hundred-year period bracketed by the American Civil War and the height of urban renewal and general municipal planning in the region. These cyclical displacements, often seeing communities moved from fringe areas of Washington City to surrounding rural counties, and then moved again in the face of suburban development, has created sites of archaeological and place-based heritage that are being encountered anew in the current moment of commercial and residential redevelopment of land. Cultural resources management has a role to play in these encounters, often through implementation of highly local regulatory frameworks, and African American citizens have new powers to exercise that can shape the outcomes, and continue to struggle with, protest, and engage regulatory powers to further their own empowerment. The history of collusion between municipal planners and agents of development has left no good faith or trust to build upon while considering these resources. This presentation regards the work of archeologists in such challenging scenarios, and compares recent projects, their outcomes, and their lessons.

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