

Parsons Lecture:
What's up on the Northwest Coast?
Revising\Rethinking Complex Hunter-Gatherers

Speaker: Dr. Ken Ames

Host Department: Museum of Anthropological Archaeology

Date: 10/16/2014

Time: 12:00 PM

Location: 2009 Ruthven

Description:

The Northwest Coast remains one of Anthropological Archaeology's exemplars of cultural complexity among hunter-gatherers, despite several decades of research elsewhere. In this time, research on the Coast has not remained static with rapid changes in our understanding of the chronology of complexity on the coast as well as challenges to the notion that Northwest Coast peoples were hunter-gatherers, to the dominating role of Northwest Coast ethnography in interpretation and theory building and even to the concept of complexity itself. This presentation examines these issues through the lenses of two, ongoing research projects, one which focuses on how late prehistoric Chinookan peoples on the Lower Columbia structured their household economies and financed complexity and some of the densest populations in western North America – testing the archaeology against ethnohistory -, and the other in Prince Rupert Harbor, British Columbia. This project looks at changes in settlement patterns and village organization to trace the evolution of inequality and the emergence of a Coast Tsimshian polity. The project uses both archaeological data and Coast Tsimshian traditions that are contained within their adwax, which are essentially oral historical archives.