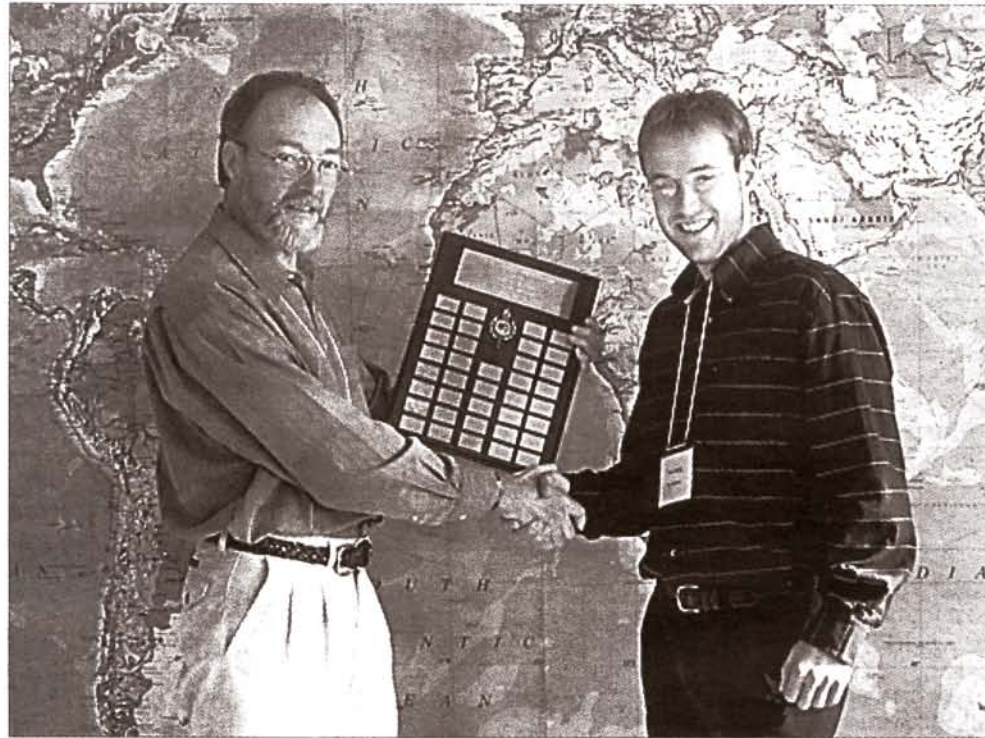


Mount Allison student Nigel Selig, right, recently earned an award for best overall presentation at the 17th annual Atlantic Division of the Canadian Association of Geographers Conference (ACAG) in St. John's by Hugh Millward, president of the ACAG.



Student wins Atlantic geographers' award

By **STACEY COLWELL**
scolwell@lighthouse.ns.ca

CONQUERALL MILLS — A former Park View Education Centre student is making quite a name for himself in academic circles.

Nigel Selig has won top honours at a pair of Atlantic science conferences for his work in dendroarcheology, or the science of using tree rings to determine the age of wood in an archeology study.

The kicker is the Mount Allison University student hasn't even finished his undergraduate degree at Mount Allison University yet, and was competing in an open forum against master's and PhD students in February's Atlantic Geoscience Conference and November's Atlantic Canadian Association of Geographers Conference.

"I was stunned when I was selected," said the Conquerall Mills native of his most recent award.

Mr. Selig used dendroarcheology to solve the mystery of what was believed to be a centuries-old home in Dorchester, New Brunswick.

"The owners really wanted to know when the house was built and who built it. The people that own the house are both historians and it was a bit of a family project for them."

An architectural study had estimated the time of construction to be around 1804/05.

"But they really had no idea. It could have been 1786 or it could have been 1856, so they asked us to come in and date

the house."

He and his team took samples from the house in May and analyzed them in the lab.

"We cross dated the sections of the house we knew were original — like the base, beams and old exterior walls — which were built with logs that were cut down in the fall of 1820 and logs that were felled in the spring of 1821, so we concluded the house was built in late spring or early summer of 1821."

They also determined there was an addition put on in 1857.

"Now they really understand when it was built, how it was changed, when it was changed and even who changed it."

They also used census records to determine who built the house, why and when.

"It turns out [the owner of the house at that time] had about nine kids in 1820 ... but another reason he might have built it is the fact his wife's [brother] was a very wealthy, well-known man in Canada," said Mr.

Selig, who explained William Black Junior was well-known in Canada for being the first person in Canada to spread Methodism.

"When he died in 1820, it's believed he probably left a nice inheritance for them, which may have been a reason for them building the house."

The 22 year old said the project was a good example of how powerful the science can be when dating buildings.

"It can really help all social sciences if you can actually figure out why people built these old houses."

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Nigel Selig

Former Park View student