

# THE SPECTATOR

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## The age of the Sinclair Inn

*Science backs historical records*

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*The Spectator*

Science is backing what historians have been saying for a while now: the Sinclair Inn is over 200 years old.

Results of the Dendrochronology study on the museum were released to the Heritage Society and public at a presentation on April 21. Residents had gathered in the basement of St. Anthony's Anglican Church, eagerly awaiting word on the age of the building.

In March students from Mount Allison University took samples of wood from the heritage property on St.

George. The wood was used in a process called Dendrochronology - the measurement of tree rings to determine the age of a structure.

The students took the core pieces of wood back to the lab at the university for analysis.

Before they could start dating the building, the students had to find out what type of wood they were looking at. Different species of wood have different reactions to climate. They found that the Sinclair Inn is made of various wood types, which is something they hadn't encountered before. The museum is built with white pine, spruce, and Balsam fir.

The reference chronology at the lab is all spruce, so the students used samples from that species to date the building.

The tree rings were measured under a microscope and compared with the reference chronology in graph form.

The Inn was originally two separate homes. One is called the Skene House and the other is known as the Soullard House. These structures were brought together and addition were made to form the Inn that currently sits on St. George Street.

According to students Amanda Colford and Ben Phillips, the Skene House was most likely built sometime between 1709 and

1711. The Soullard House was probably erected between 1708 and 1709.

The students also dated the junction - the area where the two houses were pieced together. Colford and Phillips said the last ring from those samples was dated to 1777, but two or three rings are missing off the samples so the houses were probably brought together between 1779 and 1780.

The dates proposed by the students match those historians have uncovered through careful research of documents. Members of the Heritage Society were happy to get confirmation of what the records had told them of the Inn.