

## HUMPBACK TREE

43.51056 N, 72.1330 W

This yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*) was probably bent over as a young sapling. The main trunk may have been cracked resulting in the rotten core you can see exposed. Nevertheless, a portion of the original trunk survived, and a branch that had originally been on the side of the upright tree became a new leading shoot which grew upward seeking sunlight. In the meantime, what was originally the top of the tree, having been pushed to the forest floor by some natural event, died away in the shade.

Can you guess what caused the yellow birch to be bent over? Look for a stump nearby, just to the north. Could that tree have fallen onto its younger neighbor? If so, the remains of the fallen tree should have left a ridge pointing back to the stump. Can you see a ridge? If not, maybe the bigger tree was removed for firewood or perhaps the young birch was bent over by something else. Could it have been snow and ice?

Go ahead and try to ride the birch. The 30 inch circumference of the saddle won't have any trouble holding you. We don't know how old this tree is, but yellow birch often reach 150 years of age and some are known to have lived over 300 years.