

ALLIGATOR ROCK

43.511 N, 72.134 W

Up until 15,000 years ago, the Laurentide glacier covered this part of New Hampshire with ice up to a mile thick.

The limit of its southern advance is shown in the accompanying map. As the glacier advanced, it plucked huge boulders from the mountains it passed and carried them southward. As the ice melted, those boulders dropped to the ground becoming what we call "glacial erratics". It is likely that just this mechanism accounts for Alligator Rock. This erratic is unusual because the "Alligator", a boulder 24 feet

long, 9 feet wide and 3 feet thick weighing over 50 tons, came to rest balanced on other smaller erratics that were somewhere beneath it in the original sheet of ice. Look at the community of plants that are growing on the alligator: moss, lichen, polypody fern, and raspberry. Crawl under it. Is there anything living below? Climb up on top. Can you tip it?

