

Limestone: Indiana's State Stone

From the Late Cambrian to the Middle Mississippian—480 to 330 million years ago—Indiana was covered by a shallow ocean. During that time, the central United States was also located near the equator, so this ocean was warm, making it ideal for marine life. Invertebrate bryozoans, brachiopods, corals, and echinoderms (especially crinoids) flourished in the tropical waters. The calcium carbonate shells and other hard body parts that they left behind formed into thick deposits of limestone.

It is this limestone that is a vital economic resource to the state. When cut, crushed, ground, or heated, limestone fills our needs for aggregate, building stone, cement, filler, flux, lime, and many chemical products. When quarried and carved, limestone is used for dimensional building stone. It is small wonder that Salem Limestone is the official state stone of Indiana.

