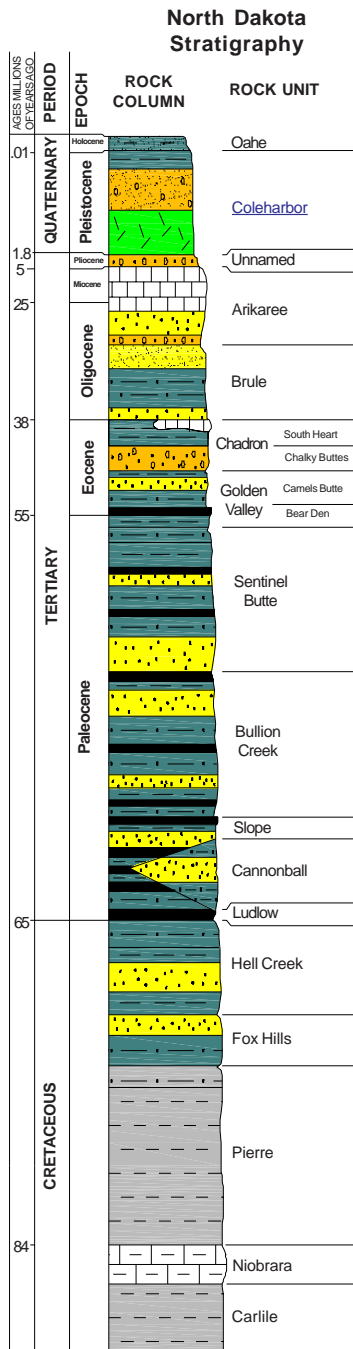


# Mammut americanum



**Common Name:**  
American mastodon

**Classification:**  
**Class:** Mammalia  
**Order:** Proboscidea  
**Family:** Mammutidae



Skeleton of the Highgate Mastodon on display at the North Dakota Heritage Center in Bismarck. Skeleton is 10 feet tall at the shoulder. State Historical Society of North Dakota Collection.

**Description:**  
The American mastodon, *Mammut americanum*, was one of the most common proboscideans that lived in North America at the end of the Ice Age, but few fossils of these animals have been found in North Dakota. Mastodons were elephant like and elephant size, about the size of the Indian elephant that lives today. Many were about 10 feet tall at the shoulder. The heads of these animals were long and held low, with long, curved tusks. Like the woolly mammoth that lived in North Dakota at the same time as mastodons, they were covered with long shaggy hair for insulation against the Ice Age cold. They were browsers and lived in spruce woodlands. Paleo-Indians hunted these animals. They became extinct at about the same time as woolly mammoths at the end of the Ice Age about 10,000 years ago.



Painting of mastodons in a spruce forest. Much of North Dakota appearing like this about 11,000 years. Painting by Robert G. Larson, courtesy of the Illinois State Museum.



Locations where fossils have been found