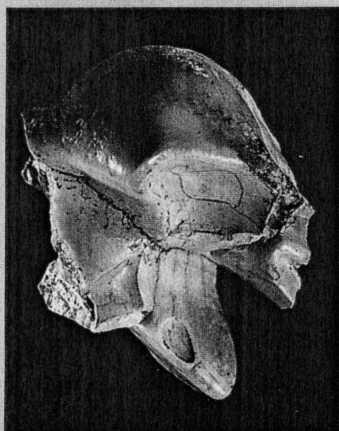


Probably the biggest change to the terrain was the Pacific Ocean; it had retreated almost to its present shoreline. In its place were flat open grassy and brush-covered plains that stretched across the basin.

Roaming the basin were some pretty amazing animals, including the mammoth, mastodon, saber-toothed cat, giant ground sloth and cave bear. Many of the animals living in this region at this time came here over the Bering Land Bridge, which connected northeast Asia and northwest North America, or from South America.

At the Metro Red Line subway, workers uncovered bones and teeth of the Great Ground Sloth and an Ancient Bison. They also discovered parts of "fossilized" cottonwood and incense cedar trees that were over 45,000 years old. Most of the animal fossils unearthed are similar to the types of fossils found at the nearby La Brea Tarpits and date back 28,000-10,000 years ago.

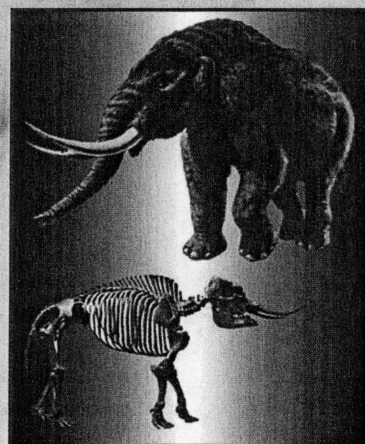


AMERICAN MASTODON

Mammot americanum

Portion of second lower molar

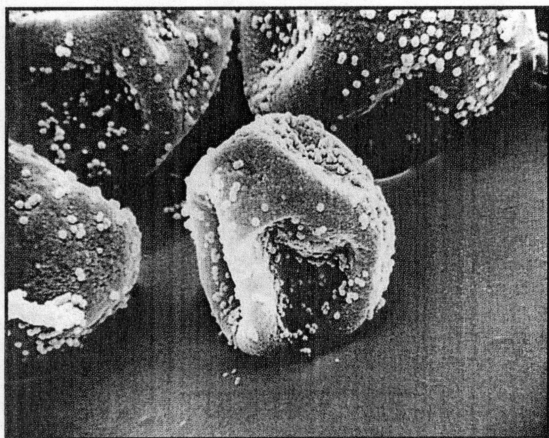
AGE: late Pleistocene, 10,000-280,000 years ago.



Although they had tusks and a trunk, mastodons are only distantly related to modern elephants. Mastodons originated in Africa and migrated to North America about 15 million years ago. They survived in North America until the end of the last Ice Age about 10,000 years ago.

PALYNOLOGY

THE STUDY OF POLLEN



While a relatively unknown science, palynology, is one of the best way to understand ancient environments and their climates. Through modeling, this information helps us to understand future weather and environmental patterns.

As standard practice, pollen is separated from ancient fossil sediment and from the earth in the immediate vicinity of fossil finds. The specimens are then sent to a lab for analysis.

At the Metro Line subway dig, pollen samples of "mormon tea" (as well as other arid-adapted plants) were found. Today "mormon tea" can be found in the Mojave Desert. Such a find tells us that the climate Los Angeles 9,000 years ago was drier and more extreme, with hotter summers and colder winters than today.

For more about the fossils found at the Los Angeles Metro subway, call Metro Transportation (MTA) Media at 213-922-2711.

Visit MTA Underground at www.MTA.net for pictures and information about the excavation.

The fossils are displayed at the Metro Line subway station.

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