

Although there are many glacial periods throughout geologic time, the last widespread glaciation was during the Pleistocene. It is called the Ice Age. At that time, a major ice sheet advanced southward across the north-central United States reaching its maximum extent around 20,000 years ago. The ice extended as far south as northern Missouri.

THE ICE AGE IN ARKANSAS

During the Ice Age many mammals, birds, and reptiles that are now extinct roamed the earth. Pictured below are just a small number of the many mammals found in Arkansas.

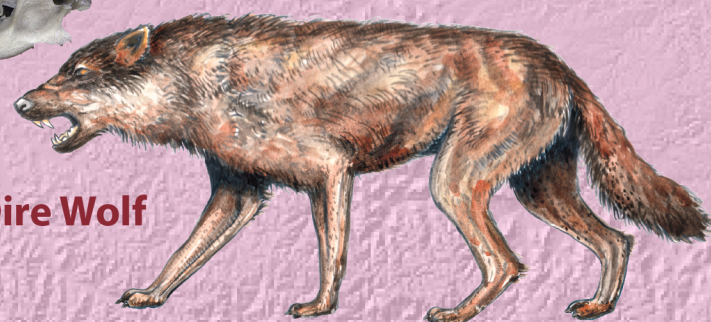
Other animals not pictured include bears, moose, oxen, llamas, manatee, deer, and giant tortoises, just to name a few!

As the ice sheet melted, the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers carried tremendous amounts of water and sediment which carved large and deep river valleys. Winds blew and deposited the finer sediment, known as loess, across the river valleys. The Mississippi River flowed on the west side of Crowley's Ridge from around 64,000 to 20,000 years ago and the Ohio River flowed on the east side. The rivers helped make Crowley's Ridge a prominent feature as they cut deeply into their river channels. The Mississippi River captured the Ohio River near Cairo, Illinois around 11,000 years ago and now flows east of Crowley's Ridge.

Fossils of the saber-toothed cat, dire wolf, peccary, and many other small animals have been recovered from caves in northern Arkansas.



Dire Wolf



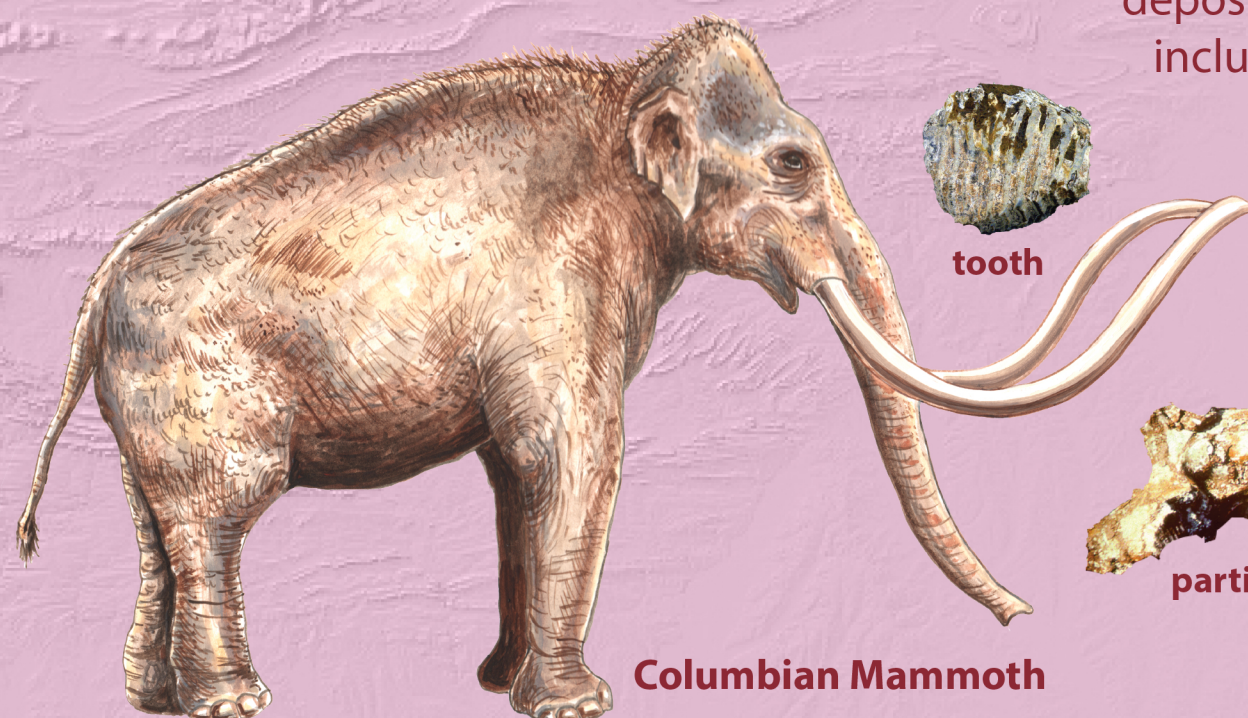
Saber-toothed Cat



Peccary



Mammoth and mastodon fossils have been recovered from Pleistocene alluvial deposits along several rivers including the Mississippi.



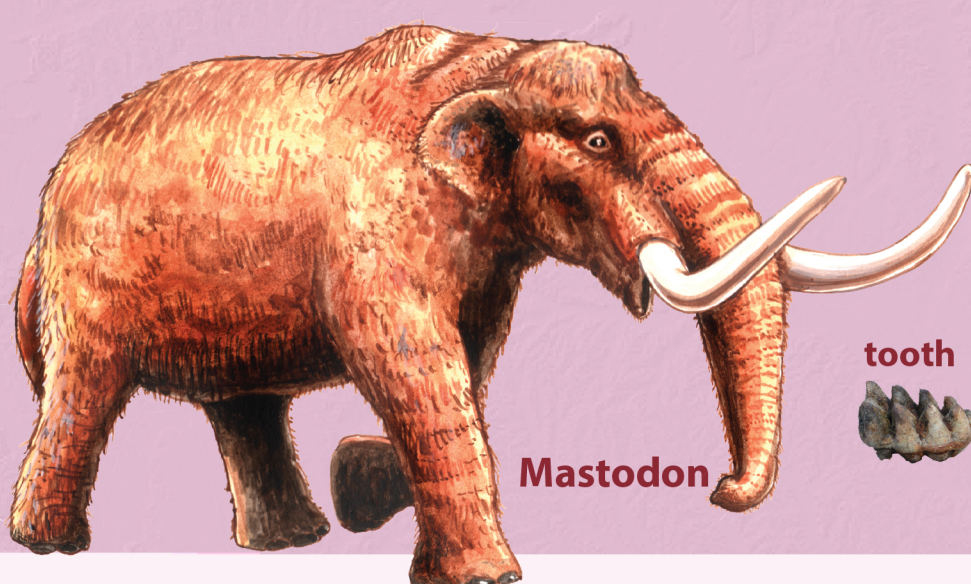
Columbian Mammoth



tooth



partial skull and tusks



Mastodon



tooth

Ancestral Mississippi River

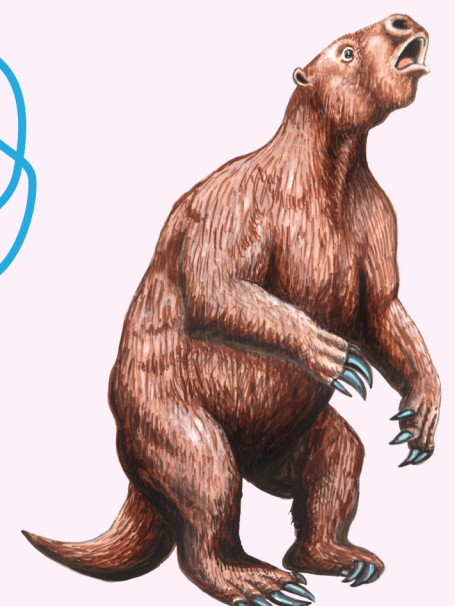
Ancestral Ohio River

Crowley's Ridge

© Cairo, IL

Present day Mississippi River

Fossils of many different Ice Age mammals were discovered in gravel bars along the Mississippi River in southeastern Arkansas, including the Giant Ground Sloth.



Giant Ground Sloth

claw

