Fossils of extinct mammoths and mastodons were first unearthed in the mid-18th century, and before long, other large, and more unfamiliar extinct vertebrates came to light. The Mylodon shown here was a giant ground sloth, a distant relative of the Megatherium that had been discovered in the late 18th century. This particular Mylodon was discovered by none other than Charles Darwin and sent back from the voyage of the Beagle (1831-36). It was given for analysis to Richard Owen, the most gifted comparative anatomist of his day. Owen not only described the animal for Darwin’s Zoology of the Beagle (1839-43), but he subsequently wrote an entire monograph on the beast: Description of the Skeleton of an Extinct Gigantic Sloth, Mylodon robustus (London, 1842). This image is unusual in that includes a living (and much smaller) tree sloth for comparison (photo and caption courtesy of the Linda Hall Library of Science, Engineering & Technology).