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Nota di contenuto	Pt. one: The Jeffersonians -- Fossil hunters on the frontier -- Big Bone Lick -- Franklin, Jefferson, and the incognitum -- Jefferson's "great-claw" and a world about to change -- The first American dinosaurs: an eighteenth-century mystery story -- Fossils and show business: Mr. Peale's Mastodon -- Pt. two: Fossils and geology -- Fossils and extinction: dangerous ideas -- Mary Anning's world -- An American natural science -- An American geology -- Bad lands: no time for ideas -- Dr. Leidy's dinosaur -- Ferdinand Vandiveer Hayden -- Pt. three: Giant Saurians and horned mammals -- Kansas and a new regime -- Entry of the gladiators -- Riding the rails -- The first Yale college expedition -- The competition begins -- Buffalo land: who was Professor Paleozoic? -- 1872: the year of conflict -- The case of the great horned mammals -- Going separate ways -- Two into four won't go -- To the Black Hills -- To the Judith River -- Pt. four: Toward the twentieth century -- The rise of dinosaurs -- The good, the bad, and

the ugly -- Going public -- 1890: the end of the beginning --  
Appendixes -- The geological column -- Leidy on evolution -- Cope  
on evolution.

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Sommario/riassunto

The uncovering in the mid-1700s of fossilized mastodon bones and teeth at Big Bone Lick, Kentucky, signaled the beginning of a great American adventure. The West was opening up and unexplored lands beckoned. Unimagined paleontological treasures awaited discovery: strange horned mammals, birds with teeth, flying reptiles, gigantic fish, diminutive ancestors of horses and camels, and more than a hundred different kinds of dinosaurs. This exciting book tells the story of the grandest period of fossil discovery in American history, the years from 1750 to 1890. The volume begins with Thomas Jefferson, whose keen interest in the American mastodon led him to champion the study of fossil vertebrates. The book continues with vivid descriptions of the actual work of prospecting for fossils--a pick in one hand, a rifle in the other--and enthralling portraits of Joseph Leidy, Ferdinand Hayden, Edward Cope, and Othniel Marsh among other major figures in the development of the science of paleontology. Shedding new light on these scientists' feuds and rivalries, on the connections between fossil studies in Europe and America, and on paleontology's contributions to America's developing national identity, *The Legacy of the Mastodon* is itself a fabulous discovery for every reader to treasure.

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