

Basic Detail Report

Title A Celestial Planisphere, or, Map of the Heavens

Date 1861

Primary Maker Vistus Balch

Medium Engraving; black printer's ink and watercolor on wove paper mounted on fabric

Description Celestial chart showing the northern and southern hemispheres.

The twelve months from April to March and the names of the signs of the Zodiac are inscribed on a band linking the two spheres. Constellations are represented figuratively; most are given their English names (the Flying Horse, the Great Bear, the Dragon, the Swan), except in the case of proper names (Andromeda, Cepheus, Perseus, Hercules). Southern constellations include the Air Pump, the Clock, the Furnace, the Microscope, the Painter's Easel, and the Telescope. A key at lower center explains the order of magnitude of the individual stars. Larger stars are identified by name. A second chart at lower center lists those stars visible at Washington, D.C. with the hours of their rising.

Dimensions Primary Dimensions (image height x width): 26 x 47 1/2in. (66 x 120.7 cm) Sheet (height x width): 28 1/2 x 49 3/4in. (72.4 x 126.4cm)