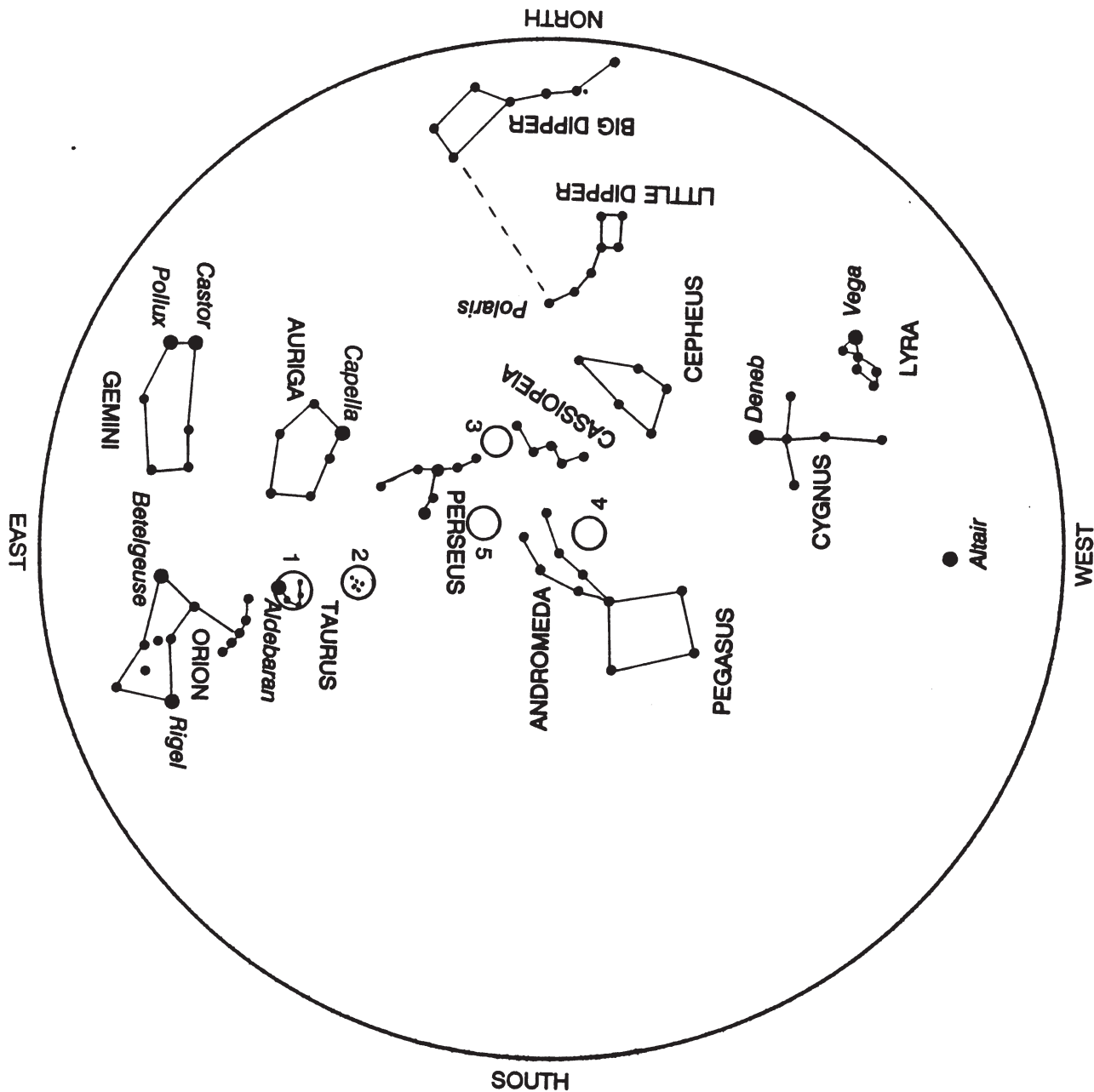
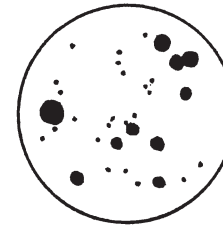


December (Approximately 6:00 p.m.)

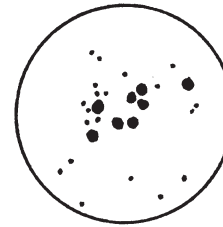


1. Hyades



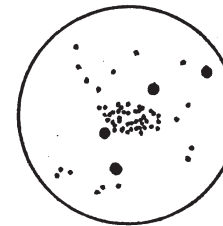
Open Cluster in Taurus - "V" shaped head of Taurus the Bull. Only 140 ly away, this cluster is one of the closest open clusters to us. The bright central region is approximately 8 ly in diameter and contains 132 stars. Aldebaran, the bright "eye" of the bull which appears to lie on the edge of the cluster, is not actually a member of this cluster. Aldebaran lies half way between us and the cluster.

2. Pleiades



Open Cluster in Taurus R.A. 03^h43.9^m Dec. 23°58'
Other names: Seven Sisters, M45
To some it resembles a little dipper. This cluster is 410 ly away, and approximately 50 stars can be seen with binoculars. The nine brightest stars lie within a circle 7 ly in diameter, with the rest of the cluster stretching out to a diameter of 20 ly.

3. h & X Persei



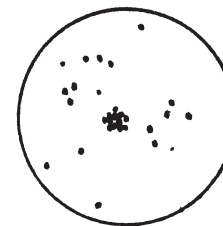
Double Cluster in Perseus R.A. 02^h17.2^m Dec. 56°54'
Other names: NGC 869 & NGC 884
Though the two appear close to each other in the sky, they are not physically connected. The closest cluster (NGC 869) lies 7400 ly from us, contains approximately 400 stars and is 11.5 million years old. NGC 884 is approximately 8500 ly distant, contains 300 stars and is 16 million years old. Both clusters appear to be 70 ly in diameter.

4. Andromeda galaxy



Spiral Galaxy in Andromeda R.A. 00^h40.0^m Dec. 41°00'
Other names: M31, NGC 224
The Andromeda galaxy is the most distant object that can be seen with the naked eye. At a distance of 2.2 million ly and a diameter of 180,000 ly, this galaxy appears as a fuzzy cigar with a brighter central region. The Andromeda galaxy contains over 300 billion stars.

5. M34



Open Cluster in Perseus R.A. 02^h38.8^m Dec. 42°34'
Other name: NGC 1039
A nice cluster for binocular viewing, M34 contains 80 stars and lies approximately 1450 ly away from us. The bright central region is 4 ly in diameter, while the whole cluster is about 18 ly in diameter.