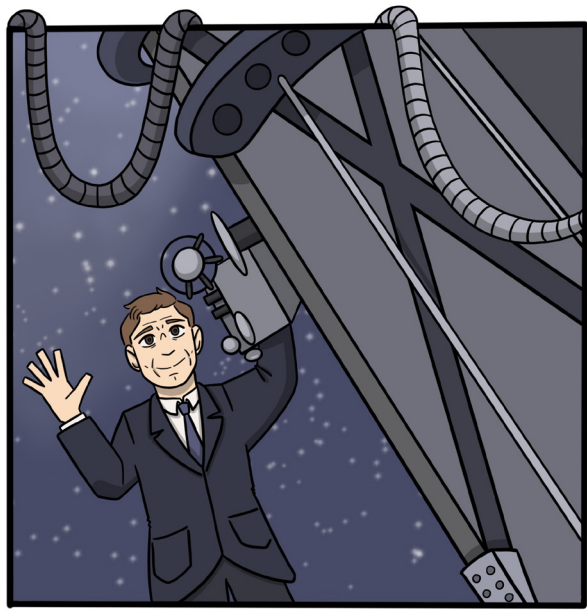


Scientists and Inventors

Edwin Hubble, Astronomer

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The night sky through the telescope appeared inky, with a blurry smear of stars. Edwin Hubble expertly adjusted the instruments, bringing the view into perfect clarity. The Hooker Telescope let Edwin see galaxies where the naked eye just saw stars. It was the world's largest telescope, housed at the Mount Wilson Observatory in California, where Edwin worked. He'd been with the observatory since 1919. It felt like home to him and became the birthplace of his greatest work and discoveries.

California was a long way from Edwin's hometown. He'd been born in Marshfield, Missouri in 1889, but grew up in Wheaton, Illinois. In boyhood, he was known as a great athlete and student. Edwin studied at the University of Chicago, where his curiosity about the makings of the world turned into a Bachelor of Science degree.

His studies took him to the University of Oxford in England, where he studied law. Edwin had promised his sick father that he would become a lawyer, but it didn't interest him. How could he spend his days writing legal briefs when there were mysteries of the universe to explore? Edwin fizzled out of the legal profession, then taught high school science for a year before pursuing his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago's Yerkes Observatory in 1917.

The world in 1917 was at war. Edwin finished his Ph.D. just before joining the U.S. Army. He eventually became a Major in the 86th Division but never saw combat. After World War I ended, he soon found himself at Mount Wilson, alongside the Hooker Telescope. It became his favorite refuge on a clear night.

The hours and hours he'd spent in his lifetime with his face bent toward the telescope's eyepiece were worth it. In the 1920s, Edwin viewed faint,

fuzzy, cloud-like patches of light called nebulae. One nebula, known as Andromeda, particularly interested him. Through careful study, Edwin discovered that the Andromeda Nebula was its own galaxy. He found out that there are millions of galaxies in the universe besides our own Milky Way.

By 1929, Edwin redefined where humanity saw itself within the universe. He classified galaxies in an organized scheme and wrote about how the universe was constantly expanding, a revolutionary concept at the time.

Over thirty years later, Edwin was still using the Hooker Telescope to try to peel back the layers of the universe. He stepped back from the scope and readjusted its aim before stepping forward and studying the new view. Where some saw filmy clouds, Edwin saw whole galaxies.

He'd lived a long life, worked hard, and contributed significantly to his field. But he never wanted to stop exploring.

The Hubble Telescope, named in his honor, was launched in 1990, carrying on his legacy of exploration.

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