The first satellite to observe in the ultra violet was the Orbiting Solar Observatory. The sun was an easy target. It is bright so it is easy to find. It is unique, so once found, it was unnecessary to search elsewhere. Stars and galaxies presented more problems. It was necessary to locate and identify a particular star, remain on it for a long time and then move to another star. As a result the first stellar ultraviolet observations were not obtained until the Orbiting Astronomical Observatory 2, launched in December 1968. This satellite carried several 6-inch telescopes and two 16-inch telescopes.

The National Academy of Science held a summer workshop in 1962 to advise NASA. In the astronomy panel, Aden Meinel announced that he had looked at the Saturn booster and determined that it could carry a three-meter telescope. The panel was unanimous. That was what they wanted. I thought that it was too early to start on a three-meter telescope. I knew how much trouble we were having trying to design a spacecraft to carry small telescopes so did nothing about it. However, some people at NASA's Langley Research Center, which was then in charge of the manned space program, jumped on the idea. They thought that it would be great for a man to be able to look through the telescope. In another summer study in 1965, the committee members again were enthusiastic about a three-meter telescope. The only discussion was should it be in-orbit or on the moon. Two aerospace companies came in with studies of a spacecraft carrying a man and a three-meter telescope. This was the last thing that astronomers wanted. Aside from the fact that astronomical research was not done by a man looking through a telescope since the beginning of the century except for double star measurements, a man needs an atmosphere, which was what we wanted to get away from. Also, no man is going to sit for a half hour without moving and moving the satellite.

I decided that if the companies were going to spend money designing a spacecraft, they might just as well design something useful. Hence, I got together a group of astronomers representing a broad range of interests and some NASA engineers to sit down and outline a design that the astronomers thought would meet their needs and that the engineers thought was doable. This was the beginning of the planing for the Hubble. After that my primary role was to convince a large number of people that such a mission would be worth while.