

A. I. LEVORSEN  
GEOLOGIST  
221 WOODWARD BOULEVARD  
TULSA, OKLAHOMA  
January 5, 1942.

Mr. H. B. Stenzel,  
Bureau of Economic Geology,  
University of Texas,  
Austin, Texas.

Dear Stenzel:

Because you are President of the  
Southwestern Geological Society and because of  
the unusual opportunity which you have had of  
viewing the oil discovery problem objectively,  
the Research Committee particularly desires your  
ideas as asked for in the enclosed letter.

Sincerely yours,



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# THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PETROLEUM GEOLOGISTS

Tulsa, Oklahoma,  
January 5, 1942.

## RESEARCH COMMITTEE SURVEY OF OIL DISCOVERY METHODS

Fellow Member of A.A.P.G.:-

This letter is to invite you to cooperate with the Research Committee of the Association in developing a survey of the best current ideas on how to approach most effectively the problem of oil and gas discovery. Please consider this as a personal letter, even though it is in multigraph form, since it is going to several hundred members of the Association in order that the results may reflect an accurate cross section of geologic opinion.

The future stability of the entire oil industry is largely dependent on its ability to maintain an adequate discovery rate. Faced as we are with a national war emergency; with the demand for petroleum products increasing rapidly; and with the discovery rate declining, currently at least, petroleum geologists may well have thrust on them as great a responsibility as ever comes to any scientific body, since we are the only group within the oil industry directly charged with guiding its discovery effort. If we are faced with such a responsibility, by the same token we also have an equally large opportunity to demonstrate our worth and our effectiveness. A reserve of ideas is a prerequisite if we are to maintain our barrel-reserve of oil.

Even with a price which will insure wildcatting on an extensive scale, someone must be responsible for the thinking necessary to use the men, materials, and equipment to the best possible advantage. The question naturally follows whether or not our present efforts are sufficient and adequate for the job. If not, how may they be improved? What changes do you recommend?

The problem must of necessity be considered objectively and from a national or industry-wide viewpoint.

**THE QUESTION:** Granted the premise of a satisfactory price; thinking of the problem from a broad point of view; and considering all of the modern techniques of geology, physics, chemistry, and engineering, which of the current methods or combination of methods, applied to oil exploration, do you regard as offering the most promise in maintaining an adequate oil and gas discovery rate in the foreseeable future? Which of the lesser ideas, techniques, or methods do you believe are of most significance and of increasing usefulness as guides to oil prospecting? In other words, what in your judgment is the best approach to the problem of oil and gas discovery?

The answer in 1920 was undoubtedly more surface structure mapping; in 1925, more emphasis on subsurface structural conditions; and in 1930, most assuredly the answer would have been more geophysics. What is the answer now? Some may favor refining and improving the present geophysical methods; some a much more intensive study of stratigraphy and sedimentation; others in giving the scientific and creative minded geologist more opportunities; others may see the answer in cheaper drilling methods; and others, a variety of solutions. Whatever the answers, they should be of wide interest and value as being the considered opinions of a representative cross-section of independent thinking within our profession. The ideas expressed may well be a guide to much of the future exploration and point out to both geologists and executives many neglected fields of activity.

It is our plan to group the replies into various categories and to present them at the regular Research Committee evening round table discussion on Tuesday evening, April 21st, 1942, the evening preceding the opening of the Denver meeting of the Association.

The Research Committee desires your thoughtful consideration of this question with a letter of one or two pages expressing your conclusions. If possible, replies should reach me by February 15th.

In every case, replies are to be considered as the personal opinion of the writer and not as reflecting the attitude of his employer or company connection. If you request it, your name will not be used with your reply and the letter will be considered as anonymous. If you know of someone who has definite ideas on this subject and whose name might not be included in the list of those invited to participate, please advise me, since this letter is intended to reach as many as possible of the more experienced men who might be interested.

This is an opportunity for you to get "off your chest" some of your pet ideas as to how the discovery job should be done. Your support and your cooperation are sincerely appreciated.

RESEARCH COMMITTEE

By:



A. I. Levorsen, Chairman  
221 Woodward Blvd.,  
Tulsa, Oklahoma.