

January 15, 1944

Dr. J. A. Burdine, Vice-President
The University of Texas
Austin, Texas

My dear Dr. Burdine :

Elvin Hurlbut has received a card from his Wharton County draft board indicating that he has been classified 1-A. Hurlbut has been working since June 1943 as assistant to Dr. H. S. Stenzel on some detailed mapping that Stenzel is doing in east Texas. Since notice of Hurlbut's reclassification was received, Dr. Stenzel and I have canvassed the situation with a view to finding whether or not there is any person available that can take Dr. Hurlbut's place as Stenzel's assistant. Hurlbut's training consists of his course at the University with geology as major plus the practical field work experience that he has acquired since beginning this work with Stenzel last June. The work that he is doing with Dr. Stenzel requires a degree of individual work and a knowledge of geology. There has been a continuous call for trained geologists throughout the year, and there is no one known to me and no probability of finding anyone who is available and qualified to take his place.

The work that is being done by Stenzel and Hurlbut is detailed mapping in east Texas on a problem bearing on petroleum production. We have been pushing this work since it first became apparent that there would be a shortage of oil. The mapping that is being done is very detailed and would proceed unduly slowly if Stenzel should attempt to continue it alone. The plan for this work contemplates continued field work, except as interrupted by weather conditions, throughout the winter and spring and until June. If Hurlbut is inducted at this time the mapping will perhaps not entirely cease but will be greatly retarded.

I have not myself seen the original statements, but I understand from an article in the September 1943 issue of the Bulletin of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (page 1278) that the War Relocation Commission has recognized that the shortage of geologists is acute and has indicated that it considers this shortage so acute as to "impede or threaten to impede war production."

According to press reports, Selective Service has issued or will issue a ruling that occupational deferment shall not be considered for men between the ages of 18 and 22. From inquiry from the local board it appears that such order has not yet come to the boards, and whether or not it applies to Hurlbut who was 22 last December 4, I do not know.

I am enclosing a statement from Dr. Stenzel in which he has given some further information about the work that Mr. Hurlbut is doing. I concur in Dr. Stenzel's opinion that it is desirable that the Wharton County Board be asked to reconsider Mr. Hurlbut's classification.

Dr. J. A. Hurdina
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I am asking Mr. Hurlbut to bring this letter to your office as a request for reconsideration if made should, as I understand it, reach the board on or before January 22.

Very sincerely yours,

E. H. Bellards, Director
Bureau of Economic Geology

ENCLOSURE
Enclosure