



SINGER JOHN DENVER

"A Real Nice, Plain Guy"—

Denver Finds Prudhoe "Far Out!"

PRUDHOE BAY, ALASKA — June 10, 1975 — Despite thick clouds and snow flurries outside, nearly 500 north slope oilfield workers got an unexpected burst of "sunshine" over the weekend — provided by singer John Denver.

Now traveling in northern Alaska with an ABC film crew, Denver flew from Barrow to Prudhoe Bay Saturday for his first visit to North America's largest oil field and an impromptu concert in

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the BP Alaska Operations Center.

Workers from camps spread across the slope flocked to hear the young singer whose hit songs such as "Rocky Mountain High" and "Country Road" needed no introductions. And what started out as a 30-minute show stretched to an hour and fifteen minutes.

Denver told the workers his first visit to Alaska, which has included filming polar bears and the first high school graduation at Barrow, had been an "incredible experience." And the crowd sitting on the astro turf in the Operations Center's recreation area roared approval to Denver's observation: "Prudhoe Bay, huh?

✓... It's pretty far out if you ask me."

Denver's visit to the north slope included a tour through a Brinkerhoff Drilling Company rig completing the fifty-third well in western half of the field operated by BP Alaska. Between signing autographs for rig roughnecks and posing for snapshots, Denver tried his hand at drilling and handled a sample core of the oil-rich sadlerochit sandstone provided by BP geologists.

The young singer received several other offerings from admirers during his concert later in the day, including a heavy brass belt buckle inscribed "Alaska Pipeliner" and a seven-foot long piece of baleen engraved: "John Denver — Prudhoe Bay — from Lucy Ahvakana." Mrs. Ahvakana, who works in the BP Operations Center and lives 20 miles west of the oil field at Beechey Point, said she decided to give Denver the baleen from a 50-foot-long sperm whale killed by her stepbrother and his uncle because Denver seemed "a real nice, plain guy who wasn't conceited."

"He showed understanding for little people," said Mrs. Ahvakana, a life-long resident of Prudhoe Bay. "He was real friendly and made himself at home up here. It's real nice to have entertainment at Prudhoe Bay where I grew up. We never used to have anything like this up here."

Denver's open friendliness to north slope workers drew many warm reactions.

"I was impressed," said Tom Yeager, of Girdwood, the BP Operations Manager. "He came across as a man and not a plastic celebrity. He took time to talk with dishwashers and played ping pong with the construction workers."

"He lives up to his song about just being a country boy," added Security Guard Ray Cooper, of Kenai. "I know, because I'm just a country boy myself."

"He left a lot of good friends up here," said Cooper, "and he made a bunch of new friends because some of the people who hadn't heard his music before left his show saying he was fantastic."

Baleen in hand, Denver and his 13-person party finally managed a midnight departure from the slope to return to Barrow, leaving behind some of the happiest workers in Alaska.