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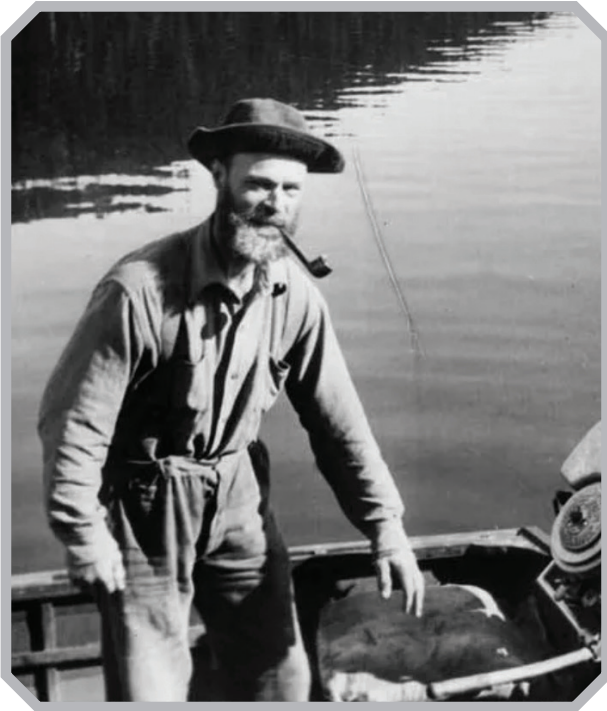


Photo from Alaska State Library Collections

THE BEAR MAN OF ADMIRALTY ISLAND

I first heard of Allen Hasselborg while reading the book, "Heart of the Hunter" by Edison Marshall. In the book there is a chapter on Hasselborg, known as the Bear Man of Admiralty Island. He was a solitary figure who lived a rugged and adventurous life in the wilderness of Alaska for half a century. His story is one of resilience, resourcefulness, and a deep connection to nature that few can truly understand.

In 1904, Hasselborg made his way to Admiralty Island on a boat he crafted himself. He built himself a small cabin in Mole Harbor, surrounded by the dense forests and abundant wildlife that would become his home for the next 50 years. Armed with a lever action 45-70 rifle, he began hunting bears for their skins. Bear hunting in the thick vegetation of Admiralty Island is not for the faint of heart. Brown bears can easily slip up on you. It takes nerves of steel to face down a charging Sow hell bent on protecting her cubs. Over the years, Hasselborg honed his skills as a hunter, becoming known for his marksmanship and his ability to track and outsmart the elusive bears of Admiralty Island.

But Hasselborg's hunting expeditions were

not solely for his own survival; he also became a world-renowned guide for scientific expeditions studying the bear population on the island. His knowledge of the bears' habits and habitats proved invaluable to researchers, who sought to understand the complex ecosystem of Admiralty Island and the role that bears played in shaping it. Hasselborg's expertise and his willingness to share his knowledge with others earned him respect and admiration from scientists and researchers around the world.

Despite his rugged lifestyle, Hasselborg was not just a hunter, he was also a skilled craftsman and boat builder. His cabin in Mole Harbor was a testament to his craftsmanship, sturdy and well-built to withstand the harsh Alaskan winters. He also handcrafted a 13-foot rowboat that he used to travel to Juneau once a year to buy supplies, a journey that required strength, skill, and a deep knowledge of the waters surrounding Admiralty Island. In 1912, Hasselborg had a near fatal run-in with a wounded Boar that left him disabled. He was known to have cataloged the weather, winds, temperatures and precipitation of his location at Mole harbor from 1926 to 1954.