

Orenda adventure to Hawaii

A crew of three set sail last week in a hand-carved replica of a Haida war canoe, hoping to prove that Haida Indians could have settled the Hawaiian Islands 1,400 years ago. According to a report in the Ketchikan Daily News, former logging engineer Geordie Tocher left his job and home three years ago to start carving the canoe from a single 18-ton Douglas fir. He named the craft Orenda.

Tocher is accompanied on the epic voyage by anthropologist Karin Lind, and Gerhard Kiesel. They departed Seattle on May 20, laden with food and fresh water. Unlike the Haidas, however, they also have a small outboard motor with generator, an emergency radio, a pump, and a little wine.

The report quotes Tocher as saying that similarities between Haidas and Hawaiians were observed by Captain James Cook when he arrived at Vancouver Island in 1778.

The Orenda (which means something like "harmony" in Haida) is decorated by a symbolic killer whale, and its cedar outrigger bears a seawolf. The crew hopes to reach Hawaii before the end of June.