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Entire Home Sails to Hawaii in Two Containers

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When the Harwood Bloedels of Milwaukie packed for Maui, Hawaii, last winter, they included the proverbial kitchen sink - in fact they took two containers filled with everything needed to build and furnish a three-bedroom home. About the only things they didn't take were the concrete for the foundation, a pick, shovel, and Maui. "We were told to bring everything possible," said Harwood Bloedel, who has been in the building business 45 years. "We brought the fixtures, bedding, refrigerator and everything but a living room chair and three rolls of felt that wouldn't fit into the container," said Mrs. Bloedel.

The Bloedels said that from the beginning the project was touch and go. If it wasn't the longshoreman strike, it was getting the 8,120 board-feet of tongue and groove cedar, which is imported into the United States from Canada. "Most of the mills in Canada had filled their quota," said Bloedel, who noted that cedar was necessary since it is termite-resistant and meets the Maui building code. "The project began as part of a dream," said Mrs. Bloedel. She said their son, Elmen (or Red as he goes by), and daughter-in-law, Lucy living on Kwajalein Island currently, had always wanted a family vacation home in Hawaii.

"One day, Red called from Hawaii and wanted to know which lot the family would like in Kihei, so we had to make up our minds fast!" Mrs. Bloedel said, "We were to take a vote among the family and call him back within a few minutes. We called our son, Rodger, in Aumsville, and daughter, Joan, in Independence and all the families voted on which lot they preferred." "Every member of the family, including the grandchildren, had something to do with the project," she said. Red became the financier and business manager, Rodger, a third-generation builder, drew up plans for the home according to his brother's specifications. His wife, Betty, a home economics graduate, became the interior decorator. Harwood spent months purchasing construction materials. This was followed by cutting of more than 9,000 board-feet of lumber, building louvers and cabinets and doing as much pre-fabrication work as possible in his Milwaukie shop.

While Harwood cut the boards, Betty began purchasing carpeting and furniture. The Bloedel's explained the reason for shipping the materials to Hawaii was to save money. "Everything there (Hawaii) is much more expensive and sometimes you have to wait for months after you order to get it," said Harwood. The Bloedels shipped their car to the island so they would have transportation upon arrival. When Harwood and his wife arrived on Maui there was a month's delay in getting the house started. "Once things got going and all 14 members of the family got to Maui - it was only a matter of days (three weeks total) before the house was up and the roof was on," Harwood said. "Then there was the frustration of trying to find someone to lay the flooring - Rodger had to send for several of his men from Oregon," said Mrs. Bloedel. "They didn't have anyone on the island who knew how to lay this particular type."

There is no heat or air conditioning in the home, since the trade winds blow through and keep it at about 68 to 77 degrees. "Red caught the killer clam shell that we are using for the bathroom sink," said Harwood, who said the home is to be finished in cedar and redwood inside and out. When the Bloedels returned to Milwaukie, the vacation house was complete but for some finish work and connecting water service. Rodger Bloedel was taking care of that before they started back to the mainland.

