

Excerpt from Interview with Teno Griffith: the Wreck of the Edna  
New York, NY 2016

Stephanie: — and that's a big boat to be sailing that hard. How big is the Edna, like 100 feet?

Teno: She was over 100 overall, I think her sparred length I think is 120-125. She was a big, big boat. I mean we put Cadillacs and trucks inside of her. She had 100 ton cargo hold. I mean we carried everything from lumber and cement, to rice and beer – you know, and whatever.

S: And that became lucrative enough to support your mom.

T: Yeah, that route became a success. In fact, Brad is down there right now doing that very same route with the Kwai.

S: Yeah, I've been on the Kwai. Not with Brad, but I went with them last year. Yeah, amazing.

So, did you consider to sail with your mom on the Edna?

T: Somewhat. I was in- I was still in school .I did a few voyages with her. I didn't sail regularly with her on the Edna.

S: So, where were you living then?

T: So, when the Edna arrived in Kona, I was 16 or 17. I remember..

[Interrupted by phone call]

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S: And so, what happened to the Edna?

T: So, Nancy was shipping in the Cook Islands with the Edna. And the Cook Islands are treacherous. They are steep sided islands that have- not very many safe harbors. I think Irving Johnson lost the Yankee down there, in the Cook Islands. And the Edna was lost in the Cook Islands too. On the island of Atiu. My mom was servicing the hotel, the Atiu hotel, owned by Roger Malcolm. They had been offloading cargo all day, and they knew some weather was supposed to blow in, and they looked for an anchorage. And I know they tried to drop the anchor 4 times before they got it just right. The islands are so steep that you're either in too close, or its too deep. So, it's very hard to get the anchor in the right spot. And you know, after that hard day's work they went to bed. And in the middle of the night, the winds started blowing and the front came through, and the storm came. And the anchor watch, was awake and woke up the engineer, and then Nancy. And the engine – you know the nitroglycerin in the port – the engine started on the first crank, it never started on the first crank, but it started on the first crank. And they thought 'boy we're just going to barely make it out of here.' And then they didn't. The coral head caught a keel plate. In those days they built those steel ships like wooden ships, and there was a keel plate running the length of the keel. And when it got a hold of the keel plate it opened up a big seam, and you had 20 feet of water – a ribbon – pouring into the boat and there was just nothing you could do to stop it.

S: Were you on the boat?

T: I was not on the boat, I was at university. But everybody was washed ashore, with bumps and scrapes, and nobody got seriously hurt. And the Edna broke in two. And the bow in the Edna I think even to this day is lodged up into the crevice of the cliffs, and the stern where the engine was has tumbled down to the depths. And that was a very sad day. I mean we cried, it was like losing a member of the family. I mean a ship, it has its own life.

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