



**PHOTO: *PLVS VLTRA* Newsletter, 3rd-Quarter, 2009, by Rob Weller. FOUR COOL “CATS”. Hank Parker, Bill Mathers, ‘Hobbes’ [#4], and Ernie mug for the camera at the 2009 Bob “Frogfoot” Weller Salvage Seminars.**

“From 1565 to 1815 the Pacific Ocean was the setting for one of the most profitable —and dangerous— trade routes in history. This was the era of the fabled Manila galleons. Crews and passengers endured almost inconceivable hardships while transporting priceless cargoes of New World silver and Oriental treasures between Mexico and the Philippines. Fueled by the greed of merchants and officials, and despite the loss of thousands and over forty galleons, the hugely profitable trade persisted over two and a half centuries.

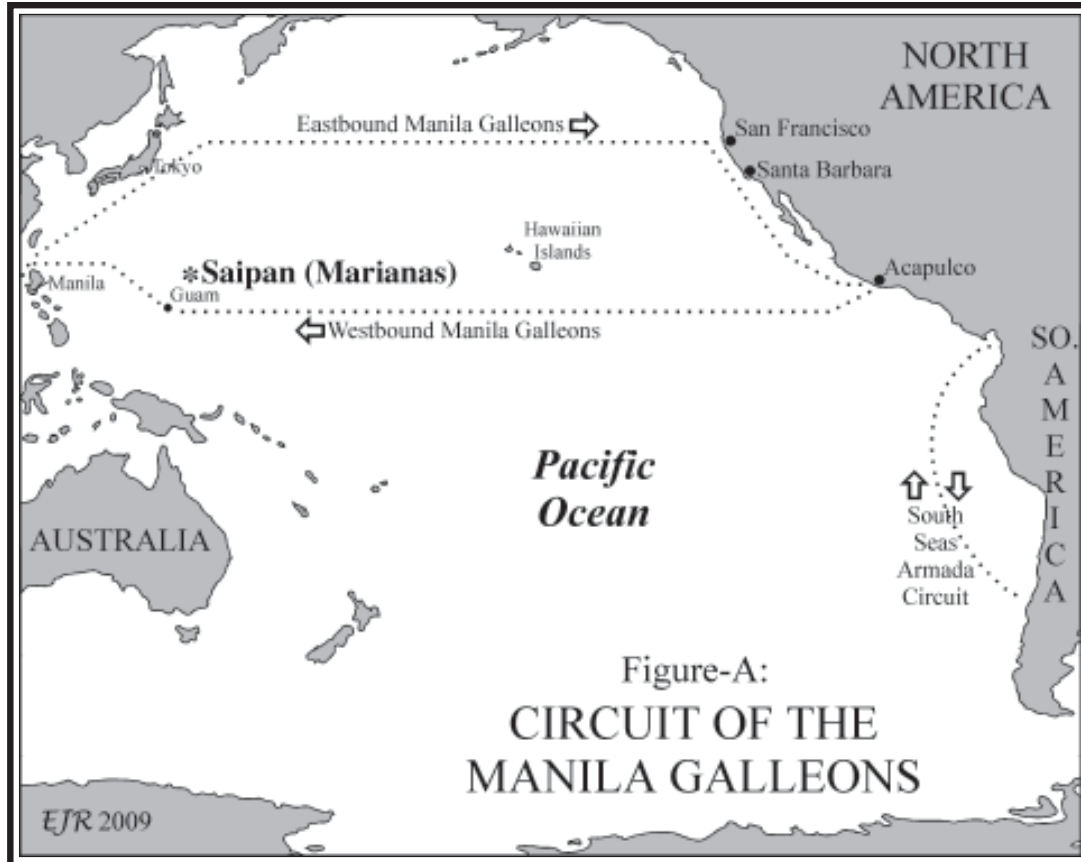
The *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción* was perhaps the grandest galleons of them all —and her story one of the most intriguing.

In August, 1638, the *Concepción* set sail from Manila, bound for Acapulco, carrying a cornucopia of Asian goods and the private treasure of the Philippines’ corrupt governor. Four weeks into the voyage she tore out her bottom on a storm-ravaged reef in the remote Northern Mariana Islands.

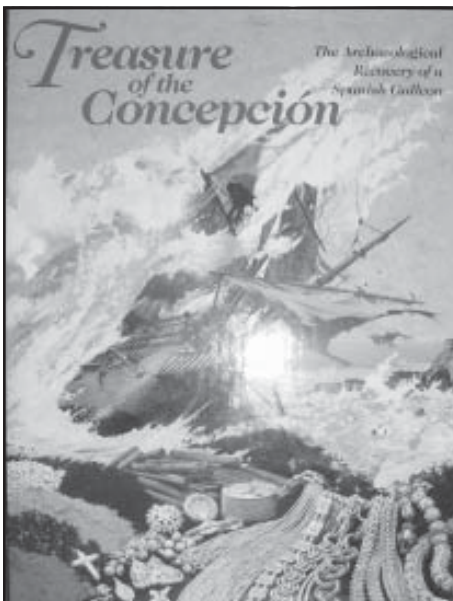
For 350 years the ship’s remains lay undisturbed and forgotten beneath the waters of Saipan, the scene of bitter fighting in World War II. Not until 1987 did an international team of experts, armed with the latest underwater technology, successfully research and recover the galleon’s remains and unlock centuries-old secrets. This would be history’s first archaeological excavation of a Manila galleon.”

**THE AUTHOR:** “Project leader and senior author **Bill Mathers** grew up on the shores of New York’s Long Island Sound. He studied Asian history at Yale University and learned the rudiments of his trade as an Engineering and Salvage Officer in the United States Navy. Following service in Vietnam, he remained in Southeast Asia, where he co-founded an international marine construction group. The *Concepción* project was the realization of his dream to recover a Spanish galleon.” —*From the cover leaves of his book Treasure of the Concepción.*

Mathers writes of his Assistant Project Manager in *Treasure of the Concepción*: “**Hank Parker**, whose indefatigable energy contributed to the overall success of the project, carefully directed the collection and keeping of records on the archaeological sites, as well as on the fish and plane species of the reef. On leave from the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, he brought the academic experience necessary for this effort.”



**CHART of the Manila Galleon Circuit**, showing the approximate location of the *Concepción* site off Saipan in the Mariana Islands. Borrowed from *PLVS VLTRA Newsletter*, 2nd-Quarter, 2009.



*Treasure of the Concepción: The Archaeological Recovery of a Spanish Galleon.* Here’s a book that we all missed. Marketed “differently” in the Far East and Europe, this didn’t come to our attention until recently. This is an insightful work regarding the Manila Galleon fleet which annually visited the Asian trade centers carrying Spanish silver to the Orient and bringing rich textiles, jewelry, etc. back to Acapulco. This *Concepción* sank off Saipan in 1638, laden with a rich cargo for the Americas, and it was salvaged by the author in recent years. **Treasure of the Concepción**, ISBN 0-931234-

56-7. \$30, postpaid, in the U.S. Order from the author: **William Mathers** / 2614 Emory Lane, Lake Worth, FL 33460. PH: 561-366-1378/Email: psrwmm@aol.com (From the 3rd-Quarter 2007 issue of *PLVS VLTRA Newsletter*.)

