

CHAPTER 6: "WHERE HISTORY MEETS THE SEA"



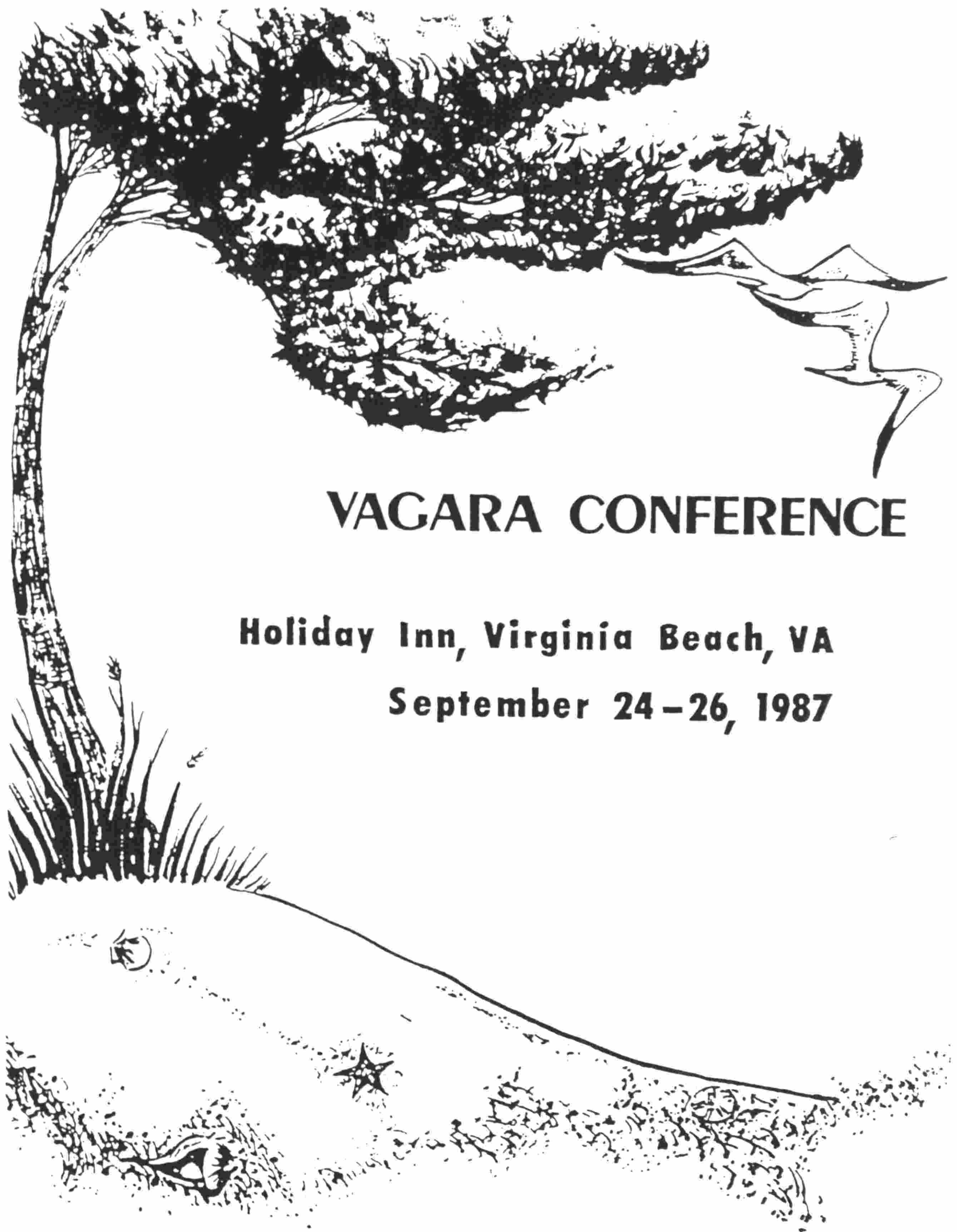
Virginia Beach was the site of our 1987 Conference...the "largest City" in the Commonwealth, "the largest resort city in the world," wrote Ruth Hodges Smith, the City Clerk, and "where history meets the sea." Her comments were included in a welcome letter to "VAGARA members and guests" in attendance at the 39th Street Holiday Inn at oceanside. This was the first, and only instance in our history, that a VAGARA President did not issue an annual welcome message. He was not able to attend the conference!

Two noticeable, yet unavoidable, absences from that event were Bob Friedman and Lettie Neher due to circumstances beyond their control. There were other peculiarities as well. In arranging for some "fun in the sun", our conference planners provided for our first three day meeting. Moreover, it was the first time a Vice-President ever presided over the annual business meeting; and it was the first and only occasion in our record keeping that the annual business meeting, at that time, took place on Saturday!

Nevertheless, what proved to be an eventful conference was initiated with a busy registration period, vendor exhibitions, and a friendly coffee and danish. Eighty-six attendees were introduced to a mixed bag of general and track sessions on computers in records management, developing computer applications, and introducing microcomputers. The "electronic age" had finally come to VAGARA! A unique feature of that first day was the utilization of a single speaker to address both a general and individual track session. Ray Cardin, President and Principal Consultant of Assured Information Systems, Inc. (Pa.), demonstrated his professional flexibility in handling both presentations with ease. The day's business concluded at 3:15 p.m. However, a "tour" of the Virginia Marine Science Museum later introduced many of our landlubbers to the fascinating world of Neptune's Kingdom.

Two track sessions and three general presentations dominated the educational agenda for our second day. Topics ranged from developing a filming system, filing methods, dealing with archival records, and managing fiscal records in the track sessions to vital records and disaster recovery, Freedom of Information Act, and optical disk and advanced technologies in general presentations. With this overflowing cornucopia of information, for the modest fee of \$65.00, our membership had been served up quite a menu of data delights.

Saturday morning brought a bright sunrise and an early breakfast complete with a



VAGARA CONFERENCE

Holiday Inn, Virginia Beach, VA

September 24 - 26, 1987

Fig. 7 - 1987 Virginia Beach Conference Program Cover. We had our first three day affair "where History meets the sea".

breathhtaking view of the oceanic shoreline as far as the eye could see. Following that moment of pleasantries, VAGARA-ites were treated to the conference highlight, Dr. Wolfgang Pindur of Old Dominion University, whose presentation on "Dealing With Difficult People", had the audience experiencing an emotional roller coaster from side-splitting laughter to thought-provoking amazement. Then the group's attention focused on organizational business.

With Dick Harrington presiding over the annual meeting, Lettie's last report as outgoing Treasurer, with the proceeds accounted for in Virginia Beach, showed a whopping balance of \$6,712.74 in the checkbook. We had come a long way from that first "workshop" in Alexandria. Lettie's note to Dick of 23 September 1987, perhaps expressed the feeling of those leaving office better than any spoken word. "I am going to miss meeting with the members of the Executive Committee", she wrote, "and hope that we will see each other some where in the future." "Please express my willingness to help in any way possible to the other members...."

The Nominating Committee's slate of officers was introduced; and the members unanimously voiced their acceptance. Section 601 also was amended to permit the "previous past president" to hold an ex officio seat on the board for two years. Actions on the VAGARA name change and logo adoption produced indecision and frustration. By eleven o'clock, Dick had called for adjournment.

Another conference, another year completed, but new horizons and challenges awaited the succeeding officers. The "first generation" board, fashioned the cornerstone and settled a firm organizational foundation. One fond beach keepsake that each of us took away from the shore was a handcrafted tote bag which depicted the Virginia silhouette. Stitched onto the Old Dominion outline were "dogwood" blossoms clinging to a leafy green limb with a bright red "cardinal" hovering above. On the reverse was our acronym, "VAGARA", which was lettered from the upper left corner to the lower right corner.