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Article Summary: A tribute to Olaf Hagen (1904-1949), a Regional Historian at the National Park Service who specialized in historic site conservation and interpretation.

Scroll down for complete article.

Olaf T. Hagen

By Merrill J. Mattes

OLAF Theodore Hagen, Regional Historian, Region Two Office, National Park Service, Omaha, died at his home of a heart attack, on August 27. Memorial services were held at Omaha on August 28. Funeral services were held at Fargo, North Dakota, on August 30. He was buried at Moorhead, Minnesota, at the side of his parents. His wife and two daughters, ages five and ten, survive.

Mr. Hagen's rather sudden and most untimely death came as a distinct shock to his friends in the National Park Service and the historical profession. He had many splendid achievements to his credit in the field of historic sites conservation and interpretation. A man of exceptional talents as a research worker, writer, and speaker, a vigorous and engaging personality, a true practical idealist, his passing is a great loss to the cultural community of the Midwest.

Born in 1904 in Kittson County, Minnesota, of Norwegian parentage, Mr. Hagen attended Concordia College at Moorhead, Minnesota, and took graduate work at the Universities of Washington, California, and Minnesota. At the latter he received his Master's degree in 1930, and lacked only the completion of a thesis to achieve his doctorate. His career with the National Park Service, beginning in 1933, included service at Meriwether Lewis National Monument and Vicksburg and Shiloh National Military Parks. From 1937 until 1942 he was Regional Historian, Region Four, of the National Park Service, headquarters in San Francisco. During the war he served first as Superintendent of Chalmette National Historical Park, New Orleans, Louisiana, later as Administrative Assistant to the Director of the National Park Service, headquarters in Chicago.

Mr. Hagen undertook his most recent assignment in 1946. He aided notably in the task of developing Homestead, Fort Laramie, Custer Battlefield, Mount Rushmore, and other national historical areas. His inquiries ranged widely over the field of early Western history, encompassing such topics as Fort Osage, Fort Snelling, Fort Atkinson, Jefferson Barracks, Chicago Portage, the Verendryes, and the Pony Express. Several of his monographs have been published in professional journals. His most recent work was "Lessons in Democracy in the Badlands of North Dakota," (*The North Dakota Teacher*, April-May, 1949), an original study relative to the new Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park near Medora, North Dakota.

Mr. Hagen was a member of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, the American Pioneer Trails Association, the Westerners, and the State Historical Societies of Minnesota, North Dakota, Iowa, and Nebraska.