

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR RALPH PAGE
will be held
SATURDAY MARCH 23, 1985 AT 1:00 PM
UNITARIAN CHURCH
WASHINGTON STREET
KEENE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Ralph G. Page, 82; an authority on folk dancing in United States

KEENE, N.H. — Ralph G. Page, an authority on American folk dancing, died yesterday in the Cheshire County Hospital here after a long illness. He was 82.

For more than half a century, Mr. Page had toured the United States, Canada, England and Japan as a contra dance caller, teacher, musician, composer and researcher.

Mr. Page, a native of Munsonville, began square dance calling in 1930 and five years later appeared at the World's Fair in New York.

He took only five days off a year from his job as a caller. He observed in a 1946 Boston Globe interview that square dancing had grown increasingly popular in New England but that the steps had become simpler and the tempo faster.

"It's the temperament of the American people to get things done fast," he said. "It's a carry-over from everyday life in the city where people have to hurry so. I guess it's just the American way."

Mr. Page traveled to Boston every Tuesday for 25 years to teach square dancing at the Clarendon street YMCA. He founded the New England Folk Festival Assn. there in 1944 and served as its president for several terms. In 1963, he was awarded an honorary life membership by the Boston YMCA.

Recognized as a leading dance caller, he visited Japan in 1956 under the sponsorship of the State Department and toured England in 1966 as a workshop director and teacher with the English County Dance and Song Society.

Mr. Page received the Granite State Award in 1977 from Keene State College and the Callerlab-Milestone Award in Florida in 1980.



RALPH PAGE
1958 photo

He was listed in Who's Who of New England and published the monthly magazine Northern Junket for 35 years. He was the author of four books on square dancing and the heritage of early American dancing and wrote an article on American dance for the Reader's Digest First Day Cover Collection in 1978.

Also active in local politics and civic affairs, Mr. Page served as president of the Cheshire County Historical Society for 15 years, as a selectman in Nelson from 1932 to 1938 and as president of the Cheshire County musicians union during World War II.

He leaves his wife, Ada (Novak), a daughter, Laura S. Wilson, and a sister, Marguerite Page, all of Keene, and two grandchildren.

Funeral services will be conducted tomorrow at 11 a.m. in the Chapel by the Lake, Munsonville. Burial will be this spring in Munsonville Cemetery.