Focus

MR. JOHN HANAHAN JR.

For close to a score of years, hundreds of Abbey students have discovered how to distinguish granite from limestone and shale from feldspar, learned the properties of igneous rocks, made excursions in to quarries and along rugged mountain slopes in quest of fossils, and discussed the formation of the Blue Ridge mountains of North Carolina. For all of this they are indebted to the able tutelage of "Friendly Jack" Hanahan, chairman of the Geoscience Department of Belmont Abbey College.

Jack has been intrigued by minerals ever since he was a boy skimming smooth flat stones across the marshy backwaters of the Cooper river, which lapped against the sandy banks of his ancestral home in Charleston, S.C. Over the years he has painstakingly assembled a fine collection of minerals and semi-precious stones from all over the Southeast. Students and visitors are fortunate to have access to such a treasury of specimens, many of which are on display in the science building. Jack has also donated to the Abbey library a fine collection of books valued at over $1,100.00.

Born in the Palmetto state, Jack spent his early years in private schools in Charleston (surprisingly, he has lost all traces of its distinctive accent), and thence was sent to prep school at St. Andrews in Middletown, Del. Strongly drawn by his southern origins, he returned for undergraduate work to the University of Tennessee. While at Knoxville he majored in business administration, became active in the Pi Kappa Alpha social fraternity and, it seems, got addicted to Volunteer football, to which he retains a fierce loyalty. Upon completion of his bachelor's degree, he enrolled in the graduate school of education and earned a master's degree. It was also during this time that he fell in love with Spanish culture and language (to the eventual chagrin of a generation of Abbey students who did not fully share his enthusiasm for irregular verbs).

After leaving the university he had worked for some time as curator of the natural science museum in Charleston when he heard about an opening in the language department of Belmont Abbey College. He joined the faculty in the fall of 1952 as an instructor in Spanish and geography. The following year he introduced a course in geology and so it happened that the geo-sciences became an established feature of the curriculum. Through the years he has been involved in a variety of activities on campus: he was the first Interfraternity Council moderator, he has coached varsity teams in tennis and golf, he has served on a number of faculty committees; but most significantly to Jack, he has been a close friend and advisor to students, with whom after their graduation, he remains in frequent contact.

Jack was interested in ecology and the preservation of our environment long before it became a popular cause. As director of the grounds he has been one of the principal agents responsible for the improvement of the college landscaping. It was the allure of flora and fauna which drew him to the Black Mountains near Burnsville and Spruce Pine. After careful exploration for a retreat where he could absorb the tranquillity of nature, he acquired a modest farm house on a piece of land across which rushed a stream of cool fresh water. The site was in close proximity to both Mt. Celo and a swimming hole amidst the rocks and white water of the South Toe river. Despite many subsequent improvments, the house conserves much of its rustic quality, as evidenced by one of the most elaborate outdoor "privies" in all of western Carolina! While painting the roofing eaves he suffered a fall and seriously injured his leg. Still, he managed to complete his courses while presiding from a bed in Mercy hospital in Charlotte.

Two summers ago Jack undertook a trip to Mexico to refresh his command of Spanish. He ventured into the Yucatan peninsula to the ruins of Chichenitza in search of Mayan artifacts, but returned home wiser and duly chastened, his only acquisition a case of amoebic dysentary.

Among faculty colleagues and student friends who drop by his Belmont apartment, he enjoys the reputation of an aspiring gourmet cook. A recent memorable event was a delightful soiree during which 27 kinds of cheeses and 19 different wines were served to guests. Most of the college community

(See FOCUS, Page 7)

'Phys-Ed' Among The First Americans

by Michael P. Reidy

American Indian history has had attention in recent books and films; something is now generally know of the price the Indians paid for white settlement. Few of us, however, know much about the Indian culture disrupted by the white invasion. The Indian tribes had, for instance, their own well developed system of physical education; and these had a long history. Athletics has also made at least one significant contribution to the Indian cause in modern times.

During the period of white settlement and expansion, Indians were driven to the poorest land, deprived of livelihood, and compelled to new ways of life. The once strong and proud race was forced into poverty, disease, and subjection. The Indian form of family life was discouraged and in many cases broken-up. Young Indian men were forced to live in inadequate boarding schools away from the reservations. Usually, the school's staff was inferior, the food poor, and the young men overworked. After a few years the students were returned to the reservations ill prepared for the life there.

Higher education was almost non-existent. However, in 1879 Captain R. H. Pratt founded the Carlisle Indian School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Indians of high school age were taken from their reservations and sent there to study from four to eight years. The idea was to change their tribal habits and prepare them vocationally to fit into white civilization.

In the early 1900's Carlisle grew famous as an athletic power, due primarily to the physical prowess of Jim Thorpe. In 1912, Thorpe won both the Pentathlon and the Decathlon events in the Stockholm, Sweden, Olympic games, scoring 8,412 points out of a possible 10,000 in the decathlon, which is still considered the severest of all athletic contests. As a result of his accomplishments, Thorpe was recognized as the greatest all-round athlete in the world.

His chances for immortality as an Olympic champion were thwarted when the Amateur Athletic Union was informed that he had played professional baseball in North Carolina during the summer months of 1909 and 1910. Thorpe was stripped of all his trophies and medals and debarred as an amateur by the A.A.U. His name was stricken from the record books. The fact of his athletic achievement could not, however, be stricken from the world's memory.

For the next fourteen years he played professional baseball and football. According to leading sports writers, the end of his career was the end of a dynasty. One wrote that "All history, ancient and modern, never produced his athletic equal. He was an all-round performer who could compete with the champions in any game without a long period of specializing." Through athletics, Thorpe won more respect for his Indian heritage than had been gained by any other single influence in modern times. The achievement was appropriate: American Indians had a long tradition of enthusiasm for athletics.

Although the history of physical education among the Indians had begun in the Stone Age, when the spear was used for hunting and defense, almost the only formal instruction for Indian youths took place in small groups led by elders who acquainted their students with tribal taboos and secrets. Otherwise, children were usually educated by their parents in their own homes.

Since the family was thus the primary center of education in many tribes, the man of the Indian household might be considered American's first physical educator. Tribes in the South, such as the Natches, had a master of gymnastics to look after the physical development of their youth. Some of the skills he taught were running, throwing, wrestling, boxing, rowing, swimming, fishing, hunting, and hurling the spear. The best runners of a tribe were useful in both peace and war as couriers and advance scouts. Races of various distances were even part of certain tribal rites. In some tribes in which racing was very popular, an oval running track was maintained outside the village.

Much of the training of the Indian boy from his earliest years was geared for a future warrior. Feats of strength and endurance were held in high esteem by the Indians, whose appreciation of physical powers and a strong body likens them to the ancient Greeks. An Indian boy's first lesson in life was endurance, which was learned while strapped to a cradle-board made less uncomfortable by soft buckskin. Once a day the baby was allowed to play freely upon a blanket.

The difference in treatment between the sexes was marked. A boy had his training and a girl her duties. As soon as she was able, she would carry wood, water, and often an infant on her back. Her responsibilities increased as she matured, and she was taught never to complain.

Boys, on the other hand, were allowed to run freely and were rarely punished for disobedience or insurbordination. It was thought unwise to inflict pain as punishment on an individual who might in later years be a mighty warrior; consequently, the usual chastisement was a dunking in the river.

An activity esteemed by the Indians more than any other and related to physical education, was the dance. Dancing held a special place in primitive society as a very serious and sacred action. The fact that dancing has survived the years when other forms of