

28th

EW
NTY

orth
ab

RD

RED
\$20

C

Blade-Citizen
Sunday, July 23, 1989

Sp

Gary
Hyvonen



A bizarre twist to Burns' tale

If you've seen the movie "Field of Dreams," you know about Moonlight Graham, the old-timer who played one inning in the major leagues but never got to bat.

According to the story, Graham — a real-life character — went to his grave regretting his failure to reach the batter's box.

You get the idea Franklin Burns knows how Moonlight Graham felt.

Burns has been a baseball fan virtually all his 94 years. He has heroes that most of us have only read about. He grew up preoccupied with playing baseball, though his father was strongly against it.

Burns says he played baseball anyway and made it to the World Series.

The problem is he can't prove it.

Burns, by all appearances, has been satisfying his baseball fantasies by putting himself into someone else's place in history.

Burns is an Oceanside resident. He was featured in this

After trade, I

Terrell dealt for Pagliarulo

By Gary Hyvonen
Assistant Sports Editor

SAN DIEGO — If nothing else, the Padres now have an experienced third baseman with home run potential.

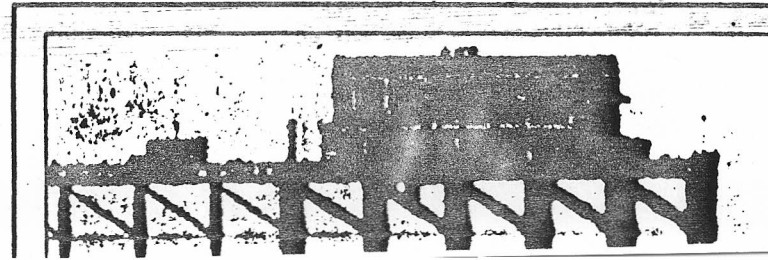
Considering their problems at that position over the years, and their problems in general this year, they were more than willing to gamble on Mike Pagliarulo.

The Padres acquired the left-handed power hitter Saturday, along with minor league pitcher Don Schulze, in a deal that sent struggling right-hander Walt Terrell to the Yankees. The Padres also will surrender a player to be named later.

"He gives us power, No. 1, and No. 2, he's a gamer," manager Jack McKeon said. "And you know he's got power. But I'm not expecting miracles. You've got to be patient with the guy."

Pagliarulo, 29, has been an enigma since joining the Yankees in 1984. He's never hit higher than .239, but he created a stir by belting 28 home runs in 1986 and 32 more in 1987.

► See Trade, Page C-3 Third baseman Mike Paglia



WILE
or CD rack
0 value)



WOOD

on your
1 card

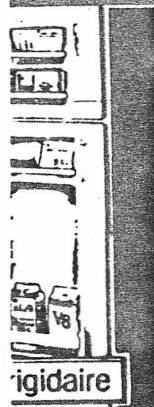
70

Rack System

player 7-band
the deck with
er

'48) Reg. \$870

NOW \$6999



rigidaire

only on your
credit card

\$70

acity

e-out adjustable
storage.

STOCK ONLY

CA

me in and
ply today!



also honor:



— Phyllis Lessin, Alzheimer's expert

paper July 4 as the Philadelphia Phillies catcher in the 1915 World Series against Boston.

Burns said he used the name "Eddie" as a disguise because his father forbade him from playing the game he so much wanted to play.

Eddie Burns was, in fact, the Phillies catcher in the 1915 World Series, but this story of a local man who once befriended Babe Ruth seems best filed in the fiction section, though Burns pleads with you to believe him.

You'd like to believe this story, but ...

According to the Baseball Encyclopedia, which lists every player who ever played in a big league game, Eddie Burns died in 1942.

Further research and interviews produce an overwhelming conclusion: Eddie Burns has been dead for 47 years, and Franklin Burns never played in the majors.

Burns' 48-year-old adopted daughter, Mary Walton, has since childhood been under the impression her father was a big league ballplayer.

And now?

"I'm shocked; I really don't know what to say," said Walton, who has never seen any memorabilia.

You can assume several volumes of baseball literature didn't make the same error in omitting Burns' name. But it may be too simple to say Franklin Burns is a liar.

You get the feeling he believes in his own mind he did play, that he caught in a World Series, that he knew Babe Ruth.

Phyllis Lessin, director of Alzheimer's research at UCSD Medical Center, says it's possible for a person who holds onto a fantasy long enough to eventually have difficulty separating reality and fiction when their memories fall in later years.

"There are between 50 and 100 causes of memory loss," said Lessin. "Lots of people make things up; then, after a long period of time, believe it."

She notes that people "who live a long time have a lot of memories" which eventually become a burden on the mind.

It's easy to see the connection between Franklin Burns and Eddie Burns. Franklin grew up in Berwyn, Pa., 18 miles outside of Philadelphia. He admits he was a Phillies fan, a nut about

► See Hygiene, Page C-5



Cardiff's Rob Machado rides to a third-place finish in junior m

Boris lowers the boom on Americans

MUNICH, West Germany (AP) — Boris Becker put on a one-man West German wonder show Saturday that practically destroyed the United States' chances of reaching the Davis Cup final.

Becker, one game away from losing on Friday, beat Andre Agassi in a one-set shootout Saturday. Then he teamed with Eric Jelen to hand Ken Flach and Robert Seguso their first ever loss in Davis Cup doubles as the defending champions took a commanding 2-1 lead in the best-of-five semifinal.

That means that the United States will have to win both singles matches today to advance and one of them will pit Brad Gilbert, a substitute for John McEnroe, against a Becker who has been at the top of his game.

Playing before a highly vocal capacity crowd of 12,300, Becker bested Agassi in the fifth and deciding set of the match that had been halted by a midnight curfew on Friday.

Becker had rallied from two sets down to even the contest before it was suspended. When play resumed 14 hours later, the world's No. 2 player broke No. 6 Agassi three times to complete a 6-7, 6-7, 7-6, 6-3, 6-4 victory.

Eighty minutes later, he was on the court again with Jelen. After losing the first set, the West Germans rallied for a 3-6, 7-6, 6-4, 7-6 victory over Flach and Seguso, who were unbeaten

► See Davis Cup, Page C-2



American Tom Watson

2,000 miles, Fignon leads LeMond

The distance from Versailles to

he would have liked his chances at a maximum 30 to 40 seconds.

Hyvonen

► From Page C-1

baseball, and his hometown team had a reserve catcher sharing his last name.

In "Field of Dreams," Kevin Costner constructs a baseball field where players from long ago return to satisfy dreams that were left unfulfilled. One of the players is Graham.

But for Franklin Burns, there is no Kevin Costner to come to the rescue.

For years, Burns has told family members and neighbors that he's a former major league baseball player.

They had no reason to doubt him, apparently satisfied with his explanation that all his memorabilia was lost in an accident when Burns moved to Oceanside in 1966.

Now for some sobering facts.

If Franklin Burns ever played for the Phillies, he's been left out of their history books. And if he's in fact the Eddie Burns, this should be a story about reincarnation.

Instead, it's a story about an unfortunate error, a story about a man who appears to be living a fantasy. There is documented proof that Edward James Burns, the baseball player, died June 1, 1942, in Monterey. Gary Van Allen, a research associate for the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, said obituaries are included in Burns' files there.

When the Blade-Citizen first learned of Franklin Burns' tale from a reader, Mary Walton and at least one neighbor were confident verifiers. World Series record books show Eddie Burns as a participant of the 1915 World Series and the Phillies' media guide lists Eddie Burns as a player from 1913-18.

So off to Burns' mobile home went a reporter, who found Burns quick to recall incidents of 34 years ago, though it was obvious his memory had deteriorated considerably.

In fact, on a recent afternoon, he couldn't recall what he ate for



'I don't think I want to talk anymore about this; I'm getting tired of it.'

— Franklin Burns

breakfast that morning.

In an effort to clarify the confusion, I visited Franklin, his family and his neighborhood.

Emma Roney, who lives two doors down, fetched her copy of the Baseball Encyclopedia as soon as Burns' name was mentioned.

"He was a baseball player, you know," she said. "Here, I'll show you."

She had never seen the small type identifying the date of his death. Even if she had, she probably wouldn't have believed it.

As he has told several people, Franklin Burns contends it's a mistake. He says he was thought to have been dead once and the error was never corrected in various print.

Told that there are obituaries on file for the Phillies' Burns, Oceanside's Burns said, "The last time I checked, I was still alive."

He wasn't trying to display his sense of humor. As he sat in his recliner, he was without expression, though he grew more ir-

ritable with each question about his past.

"I don't think I want to talk anymore about this; I'm getting tired of it," he said twice.

Burns repeated virtually the same story he had in the original interview. But when told that some of his friends from the '30s knew nothing of him being a baseball player, he became angry.

"If you're going to dig up my past," he said, "I'll say the hell with it all. If you don't take my word on it, I don't give a damn about it."

Some have taken his word.

Said Jack Walton, his son-in-law, "I never had any doubt he played. He told me he did. If he put something over on me, he went one step beyond because I've heard a lot of things in my day."

So, too, have Franklin's long-time friends.

Victoria Blunt of San Ramon met Burns in 1935 but hasn't seen him since her husband died in 1982.

"He was a good man, but his background was pretty much unknown to us," she said. "We never knew if he did all the things he said he did. We didn't believe a lot of his stories."

Mary Barnes of Torrance, whose late husband was a newspaper reporter, said Burns was "quite a storyteller" but he never played baseball as far as she knew.

It's unfortunate Franklin Burns was willing to have his story published because once an error is revealed in print it must be corrected.

Otherwise, he could have remained the baseball player we never knew about and his story could have been one he, his friends and neighbors all could continue to enjoy.

Roney, the neighbor, was only slightly disappointed to learn the facts.

"You have to do what you have to do," she said, "but if someone once in awhile takes credit for what someone else did, so what?"

**"By the law of nature these things are common to mankind —
the air, the water, the sea and consequently the shores
of the seas."**

THE CITY OF CARLSBAD'S

BEACH EROSION COMMITTEE PRESENTS.