

Bill Pierro "Gone Too Soon"

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"My career could have been better. But I was one of the few that made it, even for a short time. And for two years, I was the strikeout king of organized baseball. How many people can say they were the king of anything for two seconds?"
-- Bill Pierro, *Newsday*, October 30, 1994

On April 15, 1951, on his 25th birthday, prized Pittsburgh Pirates' farm-hand Bill Pierro is admitted to Pittsburgh's Presbyterian Hospital in "critical" condition after being stricken with what is later diagnosed as encephalitis, an inflammatory disease which adversely affects the brain.

Considered one of Pittsburgh's top prospects with eight one-hitters to his credit in his four years the minors, the 6-foot-1, 155-pound [William Leonard Pierro](#) first becomes ill six days earlier in Knoxville, Tennessee.



Pirate Hurler Seriously Ill

PITTSBURGH, April 15 (AP) Bill Pierro, Pittsburgh Pirate pitcher, is in critical condition from a brain ailment, Dr. Norman C. Ochsenhirt reported Sunday night.

Pierro entered Presbyterian hospital Saturday on his 25th birthday. He first became ill at Knoxville, Tenn., last Tuesday.

Dr. Ochsenhirt, the Buc team physician, said:

"I've consulted brain specialists and we've diagnosed Pierro's ailment as either encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis (inflammation of the brain lining.) His condition is critical and he's been placed in isolation.

Pierro's wife arrived by plane Sunday night from their home in Brooklyn and rushed to his bedside.

The rookie pitcher lost two games for the Pirates last year after coming up from Indianapolis of the American association, where he had an 8-3 record.

Only Saturday Pierro had been assigned to Indianapolis on a 24-hour option.

One year later, on April 11, 1952, the Pirates waive Pierro to clear the way for the World War II veteran to make a deal for himself in what ultimately proves to be an unsuccessful comeback attempt.

Born in Brooklyn, New York, on, or about April 15, 1926, to unknown parents as he is discovered abandoned behind a building in Long Island. He's estimated to be about six weeks old. Adopted by Saverio "Daniel" Pierro and his wife Mary, he attends Chelsea Vocational High School in Brooklyn, where he letters in three sports. On August 31, 1943 the 17-year-old Pierro lies about his age to join the Marines. Pierro sees action in the Pacific before being discharged in June of 1946.

Over his brief four-year career, two stories emerge as to how 21-year-old Pierro got his start in professional baseball.

Version No. 1: In early January, 1947, Pierro and shortstop [Raymond Feraco](#) are the first players from the [Snuffy Stirnweiss](#) Bartow (Fla.) Baseball School to be selected by a big league club when both are signed by the Pittsburgh Pirates. Feraco is sent directly to the York White Roses of the

B-level Interstate League while Pierro, a "hard-throwing right-hander with control issues," signs with Pirates' scout Ralph Dilullo and is assigned to the Tallahassee Pirates of the D-level Georgia-Florida League. For years this is the accepted version.

Version No. 2: In October, 1994, Pierro tells *Newsday* that following a tryout with the Pirates in Ebbets Field, the team signs him to a contract for \$135 a month. He says that the Dodgers passed on him because they thought he was too skinny.

Pierro tells the *Tallahassee Democrat* that he is superstitious about talking to women during a game and his hobbies include photography, hunting, fishing and swimming.



Bill Pierro
1950 Pittsburgh Pirates

Bill Pierro Year by Year:

Year	Team	League	Level	W-L	Finish	Age	W-L	GP	CG	SHO	INN	H	ER	BB	SO	ERA	
1947	Two Teams	2 Leagues	D			21	9-11	37	10	0	171.0	135	-	203	212	--	
	Tallahassee Pirates	Georgia-Florida	D	80-60	3 of 8	21	1-2	14	1	0	37.1	38	-	44	32	--	
	Bartlesville Oilers	KOM	D	-	-	21	8-9	23	9	0	134.0	97	64	159	180	4.30	
1948	Bartlesville Pirates	KOM	D	71-52	3 of 8	22	17-8	31	22	6	230.0	114	55	145	300	2.15	
1949	Waco Pirates	Big State	B	76-72	*4 of 8	23	18-11	36	21	2	255.0	199	84	126	275	2.96	
1950	Indianapolis Indians	American Association	AAA	-	-	24	8-3	25	4	2	104.0	56	30	59	85	2.60	
1950	Pittsburgh Pirates	NATIONAL	ML	-	-	24	0-2	12	0	0	29.0	33	30	28	13	10.55	
Major League Totals							1 Season										
Minor League Totals							4 Seasons	52-33	129	57	10	760.1	504	-	533	872	--

*denotes Waco captured the league title via Shaughnessy Playoffs beating Texarkana 4 games to 1.

ML Debut: July 17, 1950 at Forbes Field, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Pitching for the Pittsburgh Pirates - started and allows six runs on eight hits, six walks and five strikeouts in eight-plus innings in an 8-6 loss to the Boston Braves; relieved by Bill Bowery; is 2-for-4 at the plate.

ML Finale: September 19, 1950 at Ebbetts Field, Brooklyn, New York: Pitching for the Pittsburgh Pirates - relieves starter Vern Law 2 batters into the second inning of a 14-3 loss to the Brooklyn Dodgers; allows three earned runs on five hits and two strikeouts; gives up a solo home run to centerfielder Duke Snider.

All-Star Teams:

- 1948 - Kansas-Oklahoma-Missouri League
- 1949 - Big State League

Transactions:

- January 14, 1947 Pierro signs with the Pittsburgh Pirates and is assigned to Tallahassee of the Georgia-Florida (D) League.
- May 14, 1947 Tallahassee sells Pierro to the Bartlesville Pirates of the Kansas-Oklahoma-Missouri (D) League.
- September 21, 1948 Pittsburgh Pirates announce that Pierro has been sold outright to the Albany Senators of the Eastern (A) League.
- April 13, 1949 Albany sends Pierro and three other players to the Waco Pirates of the Big State (B) League.
- September 29, 1949 Indianapolis secures the rights to Pierro via working agreement with Pittsburgh.
- July 11 1950 Pittsburgh Pirates call up Pierro to their major league roster one day after bringing up infielder Danny O'Connell.
- April 17, 1951 Pierro is one of four players optioned by Pittsburgh to Indianapolis.

On April 29, pitching on only two days rest, Pierro turns in his first career complete game and his first career win, allowing only three hits and striking out 10 in a 4-3 win over the Albany Cardinals. Oddly enough, Pierro's three-hit, 10-strikeout masterpiece will be the only start that Tallahassee player/manager [Phil Segui](#) allows the slender right-hander to make in 14 appearances in the Georgia-Florida League before he is sold on May 14, to the Bartlesville Pirates of the Kansas-Oklahoma-Missouri (D) League.

Pierro & The Yankee Clipper

Newsday, October 30, 1994

Bill Pierro once threw two quick strikes past Joe DiMaggio, hitched up his belt confidently, then tried to catch the Yankee legend off guard with a pitch down the middle, figuring DiMaggio would be expecting something outside the strike zone.

Pierro, who was coming off back-to-back seasons in which he led all of professional baseball in strikeouts, threw a sidearm fastball, a pitch he often used to get that third strike. But the next time he saw the ball, it was disappearing over the center-field fence, still rising.

"No one ever hit a ball harder off me than that," said Pierro a 68-year-old Bensonhurst native, who faced the Yankees in an exhibition game while pitching for Triple-A Indianapolis in 1950. "When DiMaggio rounded third base, I tipped my cap to him.

After the game, DiMaggio came over to me. He said, "You may think you screwed up, but that was a good pitch. A smart pitch. I just outguessed you because I've got more experience."

"That's one of my favorite baseball memories."



Bill Pierro
Pittsburgh Pirates

With Bartlesville, he strikes out 180 and walks 159 in 134 innings and is 8-9 with a 4.30 ERA and nine complete games.

In 1948, Pierro, back in Bartlesville, turns in his best season, finishing 17-8 with a 2.15 ERA and leading all of organized baseball with 300 strikeouts in 230 innings. His performance, which includes a league-record six shutouts, earns him a promotion following the season when the Pirates move him up two levels to the Eastern (A) League's Albany Senators.

The following spring, a "temperamental" Pierro is listed as a "determined" holdout for the Senators. Albany club president Thomas McCaffrey says the two sides are "\$1,000 a month and an automobile apart."

Eventually, Pierro reports to the Senators' spring training camp in Brunswick, Georgia, and appears in several pre-season games for manager [Pinky May](#). However, for undisclosed reasons, prior to the start of the season, Pierro is one of four players the Senators send to the Waco Pirates of the Big State (B) League.

Bill Piero [3 of 7]:

Piero responds to the change of scenery by going 18-11 with 21 complete games, two shutouts, a 2.96 ERA and a league-record 275 strikeouts in 255 innings leading Waco to its first title in organized baseball since 1916. Considered the league's biggest drawing card, crowds at some parks double in size when he is scheduled to pitch.

Following back-to-back seasons where he is 35-19 with a 2.58 ERA and 575 strikeouts and despite the presence of [Paul Petit](#), the Pirates' \$100,000 Bonus Baby making his debut 434 miles away with the New Orleans Pelicans, then Pittsburgh General Manager [Roy Hamey](#) says, "Piero's the man we're watching."

[Bob Shawkey](#), the Pirates' roving minor league pitching instructor, is also impressed with Piero, "He's definitely big league material. He'll win a game today and go in tomorrow and save another. He's got an arm like a rubber hose and he throws a good fast ball. He throws underhand, sidearm and overhand. But the overhand is his best delivery."



Bill Piero
1950 Indianapolis Indians

Major League Debut

July 17, 1950

Boston Braves at Pittsburgh Pirates
Forbes Field, Pittsburgh Pirates

BOSTON		PITTSBURGH								
abr	hr	o	a	abr	hr	o	a			
H'ts'f'id,2b	5	1	2	0	Rojek,ss	5	0	3	2	1
M'rshail,rf	5	2	2	0	Beard,cf	4	0	0	3	0
d-Mauch	0	1	0	0	Hopp,1b	4	1	0	5	0
Olmo,cf	0	0	0	1	Kiner,lf	4	2	2	1	0
T'geson,1b	4	1	2	5	Bell,rf	4	1	1	3	0
Elliott,3b	5	0	2	0	O'Conn'l,3b	4	0	0	3	1
Gordon,lf	4	1	1	3	M't'ugh,2b	4	0	1	3	2
Holmes,rf	4	0	0	0	Turner,c	4	1	1	7	0
Crandall,c	4	0	1	2	Piero,p	4	1	2	0	0
Kerr,ss	5	0	0	1	Borowy,p	0	0	0	0	0
Sain,p	0	1	0	1						
a-Reiser	1	0	0	0						
Johnson,p	0	0	0	0						
b-Cooper	0	0	0	0						
c-Sisti	1	1	0	0						
Hogue,p	0	0	0	1						
Total	38	8	10	27	Total	37	6	10	27	4

a-Fouled out for Sain in 7th.
b-Walked for Johnson in 9th.
c-Ran for Cooper in 9th and batted in 9th.
d-Ran for Marshall in 9th.
Boston 0 0 2 0 0 0 1 0 5-8
Pittsburgh 2 1 2 1 0 0 0 0 0-6
E-Marshall, Crandall, O'Connell. RBI
-Kiner 2, Turner, Murtaugh, Hopp, Marshall 3, Torgeson, Gordon, 2B-Crandall, Marshall 2, Torgeson, 3B-Gordon. HR-Kiner, Turner. Left-Boston 10; Pittsburgh 8. BB-Sain 4, Piero 5, Borowy 2. SO-Piero 5, Sain 6, Johnson 1, Borowy 1, Hogue 1. HO-Sain 8 in 6 innings; Piero 8 in 8; Hogue 0 in 1; Johnson 2 in 2; Borowy 2 in 1. WP-Piero 2. PB-Turner. Winner-Johnson (2-0). Loser-Borowy (1-3). U-Stewart, Gore and Conlan.

Boston scores five runs in the ninth inning to defeat Pittsburgh 8-6, before a crowd of 21,450, Piero, the Pirates' starting pitcher, had allowed only six hits and three runs prior to the ninth inning. Reliever Hank Bowry, pitching for the third time in two days, fails to stem the rally as the Braves eventually score five times for the come-from-behind win. In eight innings of work, Piero allows six runs on eight hits, six walks and five strikeouts and is 2-for-4 at the plate.

He is 0-2 with a 10.55 ERA and in 29 innings he strikes out 13 and walks 28. In his first three appearances, he walks 15 batters with nine of them eventually scoring.

On September 29, 1949, the Pirates promote Piero to the Indianapolis Indians of the American (AAA) Association.

On April 23, Piero makes an "auspicious" debut for [Al Lopez's](#) Indians, going 11 innings to beat the Toledo Mud Hens 2-1, on seven hits with nine strikeouts. Fifteen days later, on May 8, he comes to within four outs of a no-hitter when he blanks the Kansas City Blues 8-0 on one hit, a two-out triple in the eighth inning by Blues' outfielder [Archie Wilson](#) off of the left field wall.

Bucs Take Piero From Indianapolis

Piero is 8-3 for the Indians and is limiting opposing hitters to a "timid" .155 batting average, with only 56 hits in 104 innings when he is summoned to the major leagues by the Pirates on July 11, one day after the team had brought up infielder [Danny O'Connell](#) (.351-8-50). To clear space on their roster for Piero and O'Connell, Pittsburgh releases third baseman [Nanny Fernandez](#) (.258-6-27) and pitcher [Frank Papish](#) (0-0, 27.00) outright to Indianapolis.

The 24-year-old ex-Marine departs Indianapolis with a 52-33 career minor league mark and 10 shutouts in four minor league seasons. He strikes out 872 batters in 760 1/3 minor league innings (10.3 stikeouts per 9 innings) and walked 533 (6.3 per 9 innings).

Piero makes his major league debut on September 17, 1950, against the Boston Braves before 21,450 hopeful fans under the lights at Forbes Field. He strikes out the first batter he faces ([Roy Hartsfield](#)) and two of the first three (Hartsfield and [Earl Torgeson](#)) and has a 6-3 lead entering the ninth inning before the Braves score five times for a 8-6 win. Thirty-four-year-old [Hank Bowry](#), pitching for the third time in two days relieves Piero and absorbs the loss.

One of 18 pitchers to take to mound for manager [Billy Meyer](#) in 1950, Piero, the team's third-youngest pitcher, appears in 12 games, including three starts, for the last-place Corsairs (57-96-1).

Name	Italian	Position	Throws
Piero, William Leonard	P	R	R
Born Place		Date	Married
Brooklyn, N.Y.		4/19/25	Yes
Address		Height	Weight
..... Bartlesville, Okla.		6-00	185
Teams Played With			
Tulalabasse 10/25/46-47-rel. to			
Bartlesville 6/15/47-rel. for 48-Rel. to			
Albany, N.Y. 9/21/48-rel. for 49-Rel. to			
4/10/49. Opt. rec. to Albany N.Y. 7/15/49-49			
Rel. to Indianapolis 9/28/49. re to N. Rel. out-			
right to Pittsburgh 7/12/50. re to N. Disabled			
List 4/20/51- Vol. Retired List 7/23/51-52-Relin-			
6/7/52- Rel. 4/21/52-			

Bill Pierro [4 of 7]:

With General Manager [Branch Rickey's](#) youth movement now in full swing, an optimistic Pierro reports early to the Pirates' 1951 training camp in San Bernardino, California. However, things go awry for the Brooklyn native. First, early in camp he's left off a 50-

Kiner Listed as Infielder on Pittsburgh's 'A' Squad

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif.—Branch Rickey and Bill Meyer made a change in plans when the Pirates went north to Sacramento, Oakland and San Francisco for a series of exhibitions, March 14. Instead of squiring the entire party of 50 players, Rickey and Meyer decided to divide the squad and leave 22 behind at San Bernardino for hastily arranged exhibitions and also for workouts.

On the so-called A team were Catchers Ed Fitz Gerald, Jim Mangin and Dale Long, Pitchers Bill Werle, Vernon Law, Bill Koski, Pete Wilson, Con Dempsey, Bob Friend, Paul Pettit, Joe Muir, Chuck Fedoris, Joe Stelmack and Stan Milankovich.

The infielders include Ralph Kiner, Johnny Merson, Jack Phillips, Pete Castiglione, George Strickland, Sal Campagna and Bob Dillinger. Outfielders were Tom Saffell, Wally Westlake, Earl Smith, George Metkovich, Dino Restelli and Harry Fisher.

Those remaining behind were Catchers Clyde McCullough and Ray Mueller; Infielders Ed Stevens, Monte Basgall, Danny Murtaugh, Stan Rojek, Bob Thomson and Hank Schenz; Pitchers Murry Dickson, Jack Sutter, Bob Bonaparte, Preston Elkins, Cliff Chambers, Jim Walsh, Mel Queen, Bill **Pierro** and Bob Chesnes, and Outfielders Gus Bell, Ted Beard and Pete Reiser.

man travel roster (**left**) and then he makes a mistake by showing up late for a special pitching lesson set up by Rickey with the general manager himself and two Pirate coaches (**right**). An angry Rickey sends Pierro to the team's minor league camp in Deland, Florida.

Several newspapers report that Pierro is in Deland to work on a change up and will report to the New Orleans Pelicans within a week. When apprised of Pierro's situation, Indianapolis Indians' President [Ownie Bush](#), who has the first right of refusal on any Pirate minor leaguer, asks Rickey that Pierro be optioned to Indianapolis. The "the Mahatma" responds by saying that the soon-to-be 25-year-old is one of the best pitchers on Pirates' roster and, "we figure on Pierro winning as many games as any pitcher on the Pittsburgh staff."

With the team short on quality pitching (4.96 ERA in 1950), Pierro rejoins the Pirates on April 9, and is quickly inserted into that day's game against the defending National League champion Philadelphia Phillies where he allows two hits and two walks in two innings.

The next day, after "appearing" to have made the team's opening day roster, Pierro is removed from the team's train in Knoxville, Tennessee, and taken to St. Mary's Hospital where he is treated (right) for what doctors diagnose as "acute gastritis and food poisoning". Two days later he is en route to join the

team in Cincinnati when he is overcome by weakness and dizziness and leaves the train. His condition worsens while in Cincinnati and the Pirates' management team rushes Pierro to Pittsburgh and admits him to Presbyterian Hospital where his condition turns into a life-threatening paralysis.

Pirate Bill Pierro Has Serious Brain Ailment

Pittsburgh, Pa., April 6 (UP)—Pitcher Bill Pierro of the Pittsburgh Pirates battled a "serious brain ailment" in Presbyterian hospital today, less than a week after he became ill with what Pirate officials said was a stomach disorder.

"He's a mighty sick young man," said hospital officials who said he was on the critical list.

Pierro was placed in isolation shortly after he was admitted to the hospital yesterday. Dr. Norman C. Oehsenhirt, Pirate team physician, said after consultation with brain specialists, that the young right-hander was in critical condition.

"We've diagnosed Pierro's ailment as either encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) or meningitis." (inflammation of the brain lining), Dr. Oehsenhirt said.

The doctors are finally able to stabilize his condition but he is still listed as critical when the doctors diagnosed his ailment as either encephalitis, a serious disease that affects the brain, or meningitis. With the illness, Rickey is forced to cancel a deal where Pierro is sent to the Indianapolis Indians (on 24-hour recall) in return for lefty [Paul LaPalme](#).

On April 17, doctors are certain that Pierro is suffering from inflammation of the brain and his condition improves from "serious" to "satisfactory." On April 22, he is removed from the Isolation Ward and permitted limited visitors. On May 4, he is placed on the team's inactive list and a week later is released from the hospital and along with his wife, returns to his parents' home in Brooklyn to convalesce.

Told privately by the doctors that his playing days are over, Pierro maintains a positive public demeanor, stating that he will make a comeback in 1953. In July 1951, Rickey hires Pierro to be a scout and troubleshooter in the Oklahoma region.

In the spring of 1952, Pierro asks Pittsburgh to be reinstated, but the team does not feel that is possible and on April 12, the Pirates ask for waivers on Pierro.

Pierro & The Mahatma

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, March 26, 1951

Pierro loses the support of Pittsburgh Pirate General Manager Branch Rickey. Denied a tryout at Ebbets Field when Rickey was the boss of the Brooklyn Dodgers, Pierro is at spring training when Rickey tells him that has a good chance to become a "fine major league pitcher," but needs to add another pitch to his repertoire.

After Pierro says that no one has ever helped him, Rickey tells him to come to Perris Hill Park the next morning at 8:30 a.m., where Rickey himself will assist Pirate coaches Bill Posedel and Sam Narron in some extra pitching instruction.

When Rickey arrives the following morning, he finds out that no one has seen Pierro. At 9:10 a.m., when Rickey is ready to leave the park, Pierro arrives. Rickey tells Pierro to go into the clubhouse, get his spikes and glove and catch the "earliest" transportation to Deland, Florida.

Rickey says, "Right now I don't care where that boy pitches this season. He doesn't have the attitude to play on this ball club. He is going to have to show me a great deal more desire than that."



The encephalitis contributes to a degenerative spine condition that leaves Pierro on crutches for most of the last 50 years of his adult life. He continued to believe he contracted the disease while serving with the marines in the Pacific during World War II.

Bill Pierro [5 of 7]:

His opinion provokes a disagreement with the Veterans Administration lasting several decades. Prior to retiring in 1975, Pierro is variously employed as a mechanic, roofer, cabinetmaker and a cab driver.

On April 1, 2006, William Leonard Pierro passes away two weeks before his 80th birthday.

PIERRO CHRONOLOGY

April 16, 1947

Making his pro debut, Pierro allows three runs on four hits and three walks in three innings of work in a 14-7 loss to the Waycross Bears.

April 26, 1947

The third Tallahassee pitcher of the game, Pierro takes the loss allowing six runs, on six hits, six walks, six strikeouts, one hit batter and one wild pitch in a 13-10 loss at undefeated Waycross (10-0).



Bill Pierro and his wife Tamara, who he met while playing with Bartlesville in Oklahoma, are playing a game a canasta in their room at the [Hotel Webster Hall](#). Having lost 25 pounds during the illness, Pierro now weights 135 pounds. Doctors say he will learn how to walk again and maybe be able to play baseball again next year.

First Career Win

April 29, 1947

Tallahassee Pirates at Albany Cardinals
Municipal Stadium, Albany, Georgia

TALLAHASSEE	AB	R	H	PO	A	E
Stasko, 2b	4	1	1	6	2	0
Fink, ss	3	2	0	1	3	0
Anjeski, cf	5	0	1	4	0	0
Seghi, 3b	4	1	2	0	2	0
Lutes, lf	3	0	1	0	0	0
Rixey, rf	4	0	1	1	0	1
Bartalozzi, 1b	3	0	2	11	2	0
Dravecky, c	4	0	0	4	3	0
Pierro, p	4	0	0	0	1	0
Totals	34	4	8	27	13	1
ALBANY	AB	R	H	PO	A	E
McGovern, cf	2	1	1	2	0	0
Simpson, ss	4	1	0	1	2	0
Goljembiewski, rf	4	0	1	1	0	0
Ewaniak, 3b	2	0	0	0	0	0
Katkaveck, c	4	0	0	6	3	0
Porreca, 1b	2	0	0	10	0	0
Herbison, 2b	3	1	1	4	3	0
Dance, lf	3	0	0	3	0	0
Cyrus, p	2	0	0	0	2	2
z-Kerschke	1	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	27	3	3	27	11	2

z-Popped out for Dance in 9th.

Score by Innings: R H E
Tallahassee 100 020 010—4 8 1
Albany 000 030 000—3 3 2

Runs batted in: Seghi, Goljembiewski 2, McGovern, Bartalozzi. Two-base hits: Seghi, Goljembiewski. Three-base hits: Rixey, Lutes. Stolen base: McGovern. Sacrifices: Fink, Lutes, Stasko, Herbison. Double play: Fink to Bartalozzi to Stasko. Left on bases: Albany 8, Tallahassee 8. Bases on balls: Cyrus 2, Pierro 10. Strike-outs: Cyrus 7, Pierro 4. Umpires: Smeltzer and Marino. Time: 2:22.

In what passes for a "pitcher's dual" in the hit-happy Georgia-Florida (D) League, Pierro, working on two days rest, walks a season-high 10, but allows only three hits in a 4-3 win over the Albany Cardinals. The Cardinals play the game under protest after a throwing error in the fifth inning by pitcher David Cyrus allows two runs to score.

April 27, 1947

Pierro pitches scoreless baseball over 1 2/3 innings of relief and picks up his first save in a 9-8 win over visiting Thomasville.

◀◀ April 29, 1947

Pitching on two days' rest, Pierro turns in his first career complete game and picks up his first career win, allowing only three hits in a 4-3 win over the Albany Cardinals ... Pierro strikes out four, walks 10 and allows only one "solid" hit, a two-run double by Albany right fielder [Marion "Whitey" Golembiewski](#) in the fifth inning.

May 14, 1947

Sold to the Bartlesville Pirates of the KOM (D) League earlier in the day, an ineligible Pierro is sent in to relieve [George "Snuffy" Yebernetsky](#) in the seventh inning of that evening's game with Albany and prompting Cardinals' manager [Mickey Katkaveck](#) protest the game ... the protest is dismissed when Albany wins 7-6 in 11 innings.

May 22, 1947

In his first start for Bartlesville, Pierro allows six runs on two hits, six walks and five strikeouts in 1 2/3 innings ... Pierro takes the loss in a 10-4 setback to Ponca City.

May 31, 1947

Pierro strikes out 10, walks 11 in a 15-7 win over Chanute ... Pierro also hits Athletics' catcher [Bob Gast](#) in the face requiring 11 stitches.

June 26, 1947

Pierro allows eight hits and strikes out 12 in a 26-3 win over the Miami Owls.

July 1, 1947

In a 3-2, 13-inning loss to Ponca City, Pierro strikes out 13 and walks nine ... Ponca City's [Tony Brzezowski](#) out-duels Pierro and strikes out 17 en route to the win.

August 21, 1947

Pierro strikes out 15 and allows only three hits in a 13-2 win over Chanute.

May 12, 1948

Pitching on five days' rest, Pierro strikes out a career-high 21 in a 3-2 win over the Independence Yankees ... he allows four hits and walks only three in the complete game victory.

Bill Pierro [6 of 7]:

21 Strikeouts

May 12, 1948

Bartlesville Pirates at Independence Yankees
Riverside Stadium, Independence, Kansas

BVILLE	AB	R	H	O	A
Dereole 3b	5	0	2	0	1
Godla 2b	5	1	1	2	1
Sanders lf	4	1	2	0	0
Neims cf	4	0	1	0	0
Cases 1b	4	0	0	3	1
Kreuger cf	4	0	0	1	0
Montell ss	3	0	0	2	1
Stock c	1	1	1	21	2
Pierro p	2	0	0	1	0
Totals	34	3	7	30	6
INDEPENDENCE	AB	R	H	O	A
Hudson 2b	5	1	1	2	1
Gott cf	4	1	1	0	0
Hamric ss	4	0	1	1	2
Sparks cf	3	0	0	1	1
Slaughter lf	4	0	1	3	0
Davis 3b	4	0	0	2	3
Ananias 1b	4	0	0	11	0
Pettit c	3	0	0	9	2
Michels p	2	0	0	1	4
xx-Hasten	0	0	0	0	0
xx-Buzzard	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	33	2	4	30	13

X -- Walked for Michels in 10th
 X -- Walked for Michels in 10th
 Bartlesville 000 002 000-1 3
 Independence 000 200 000-0 2
 Errors -- Dereole, Hudson 2, RBI
 -- Dereole, Sanders, Neims, Gott
 Slaughter, 2BH -- Hudson, Gott, 3BH
 -- Sanders, Sacrifice hits -- Pierro
 2, Michels LOB -- Bartlesville 5,
 Independence 5. Earned runs -- Bart-
 lesville 3, Independence 2. SO -- Pi-
 erro 21, Michels 9, BOB -- off Pi-
 erro 3, Michels 1. Passed balls --
 Stock 2. Umpires -- Helmig and Sta-

Pitching on five days' rest, Bartlesville's Bill Pierro strikes out a career-high 21 in a 3-2 win over the winless Independence Yankees (0-6). He allows four hits and walks three and has two key sacrifice hits en route to the complete game victory. In his first two games of the season, Pierro is 2-0 and has allowed only seven walks while striking out 31.

May 17, 1948

Pierro allows only one hit but loses a 5-4 decision to the lola Indians when lola catcher [Buck Walz](#) steals home in the ninth inning.

June 9, 1948

Pierro strikes out 18 Miami Owls and yields only one hit in a 4-2 win ... the Owls' lone hit is by 27-year-old player/manager [Art Priebe](#) a lifetime .220 hitter in five minor league seasons, Priebe hits .187 as the player/manager for Miami in his final season of organized baseball.

June 19, 1948

Pierro strikes out 15 while allowing only two hits and walks in a 1-0 win over the visiting Pittsburgh Browns.

June 25, 1948

Pierro strikes out 12 and gives up five hits and four walks in a 1-0 win over the visiting Chanute Giants.

June 29, 1948

Pierro extends his scoreless inning streak to 30 (it eventually reaches 32 innings) and records his third-straight shutout with a 6-0 win over lola ... he strikes out 16 while walking three and allowing only three hits.

July 22, 1948

Bartlesville, on the strength of Pierro's two-hitter, extends its win streak to 13 with a 6-3 win over Miami ... Pierro strikes out 17 and walks four.

September 6, 1948

In the final game of the season, Pierro, the fourth of seven Bartlesville pitchers, strikes out three Carthage hitters in an 8-5 loss to reach 300 for the season.

"He's the fastest pitcher in baseball." - Ray Kennedy, Pirates' Minor League Director, December 1948

April 1949

Albany sends outfielder [R.T. Upright](#) and pitchers Bill Pierro, [Al Fedak](#) and [George Trejo](#) to Waco.

August 2, 1949

In a 2-1 loss to Texarkana in 11 innings, Pierro strikes out 16 and sets the Big State League strikeout record with 207 for the year, breaking the existing record of 192 set in 1947 by [Nat Love](#) of Greenville.

September 7, 1949

In the first round of the Big State Playoff series with Wichita Falls, the regular season champion, Pierro strikes out eight in a four-hit shutout and drives in the only run in a 1-0 win.

September 14, 1949

In the championship round of the Big State Playoffs with Texarkana, Waco trounces the homestanding Bears 16-1 on Pierro's six-hit, 12-strikeout complete game.

April 23, 1950

Making the jump from Waco to Indianapolis of the AAA American Association, Pierro makes an "auspicious" debut, pitching 11 innings to beat the Toledo Mud Hens 2-1 ... yields seven hits and strikes out nine in his complete game victory.



Bill Pierro
1950 Pittsburgh Pirates

Bill Pierro [7 of 7]:



Bill Pierro
1950 Indianapolis Indians

May 8, 1950
Pierro allows only one hit in an 8-0 shutout of the Kansas City Blues in an American (AAA) Association game ... Kansas City's outfielder [Archie Wilson](#) - a lifetime .303 hitter in 15 minor league seasons - ruins Pierro's no-hit bid with a triple off of the left field wall with two outs in the eighth inning.

July 1, 1950
Indianapolis manager Al Lopez says there are only two players on his team that could help the Pirates in July. "They are Danny O'Connell and Bill Pierro, but I won't say they are ready for the big leagues. If Pittsburgh needs them that badly I guess they'll have to go up. My advice would be to keep them here at least until the end of the season."

July 5, 1950
In what will be the final victory of his career, Pierro out-duels Louisville's [Harley Hisner](#) in a 1-0 win over the visiting Colonels ... Pierro allows only five hits en route to his second shutout and eighth victory of the season.

July 11, 1950
Pierro is 8-3 with a 2.60 ERA and leads the American Association in strikeouts with 85 when Pittsburgh calls up the right-hander.

July 17, 1950 ▶▶
Wearing No. 13 in his major league debut against the Boston Braves, Pierro takes a 6-3 lead into the ninth inning before the Braves rally for five runs and a 8-6 win before 21,450 at Forbes Field ... Pierro pitches eight-plus innings, allowing six earned runs on eight hits with five strikeouts and five walks.



July 15, 1950 -- The rebuilding of the Pirates has brought the five young aspirants pictured above to Forbes Field this season. Left to right are Third Baseman Danny O'Connell, Pitcher Bill MacDonald, Pitcher Bill Pierro, Right Fielder Gus Bell and Pitcher Vernon Law.

27-year-old southpaw Paul LaPalme ... LaPalme will finish his rookie season 1-5 with a 6.29 ERA for the seventh-place (64-90) Bucs.

May 22, 1951
In an effort to bolster their portside pitching, the Pittsburgh Pirates again purchase the contract of lefty Paul LaPalme from the Indianapolis Indians ... the Bucs, in turn, send Pierro and outfielder [Ted Beard](#) to the Indians.

April 1, 2006
Pierro dies at the age of 79, in his hometown of Brooklyn, New York.

Major League Debut

July 17, 1950
Boston Braves at Pittsburgh Pirates
Forbes Field, Pittsburgh Pirates

BOSTON					PITTSBURGH						
	ab	r	h	o	a		ab	r	h	o	a
H'ist'ld,2b	5	1	2	3	0	Rojek,ss	5	0	3	2	1
M'rshall,rf	5	2	2	0	0	Beard,cf	4	0	0	3	0
d-Mauch	0	1	0	0	0	Hogg,1b	4	1	0	5	0
Oimo,cf	0	0	0	1	0	Kiner,lf	4	2	2	1	0
T'geson,1b	4	1	2	5	2	Bell,rf	4	1	1	3	0
Elliott,3b	5	0	2	0	1	O'Conn'l,3b	4	0	0	3	1
Gordon,lf	4	1	1	3	0	M't'ugh,2b	4	0	1	3	2
Holmes,rf	4	0	0	0	0	Turner,c	4	1	1	7	0
Crandall,c	4	0	1	2	1	Pierro,p	4	1	2	0	0
Kerr,ss	5	0	1	2	1	Borowy,p	0	0	0	0	0
Sain,p	0	1	0	1	1						
a-Reiser	1	0	0	0	0						
Johnson,p	0	0	0	0	0						
b-Cooper	0	0	0	0	0						
c-Sisti	1	1	0	0	0						
Hogue,p	0	0	0	1	0						

Total 38 8 10 27 7 | Total 37 6 10 27 4
 a-Fouled out for Sain in 7th.
 b-Walked for Johnson in 9th.
 c-Ran for Cooper in 9th and batted in 9th.
 d-Ran for Marshall in 9th.
 Boston 0 0 2 0 0 0 1 0 5--8
 Pittsburgh 2 1 2 1 0 0 0 0 0--6
 E--Marshall, Crandall, O'Connell, RBI
 --Kiner 2, Turner, Murtaugh, Hopp, Marshall 3, Torgeson, Gordon, 2B--Crandall, Marshall 2, Torgeson, 3B--Gordon, HR--Kiner, Turner, Left--Boston 10; Pittsburgh 8, BB--Sain 4, Pierro 5, Borowy 2, SO--Pierro 5, Sain 6, Johnson 1, Borowy 1, Hogue 1, HO--Sain 8 in 6 innings; Pierro 8 in 8; Hogue 0 in 1; Johnson 2 in 2; Borowy 2 in 1, WP--Pierro 2, PB--Turner, Winner--Johnson (2-0), Loser--Borowy (1-3), U--Stewart, Gore and Conlan.

Boston scores five runs in the ninth inning to defeat Pittsburgh 8-6, before a crowd of 21,450, Pierro, the Pirates' starting pitcher, had allowed only six hits and three runs prior to the ninth inning. Reliever Hank Bowry, pitching for the third time in two days, fails to stem the rally as the Braves eventually score five times for the come-from-behind win. In eight innings of work, Pierro allows six runs on eight hits, six walks and five strikeouts and is 2-for-4 at the plate.

September 19, 1950
In his final pro game, Pierro relieves starter [Vern Law](#) two batters into the second inning of a 14-3 loss to the Brooklyn Dodgers ... Pierro allows three earned runs on five hits and two strikeouts and gives up a solo home run to center fielder [Duke Snider](#).

April 13, 1951
Suffering from gastritis, Pierro is optioned to Indianapolis with a 24 hour recall privilege ... General Manager Branch Rickey replaces Pierro on Pittsburgh's major league roster with

This date in Bush Stadium history

June 12, 1950 — Bill Pierro goes the distance for Indianapolis as the Tribe defeats the St. Louis Browns 4-1 in an exhibition game. Danny O'Connell homers for the Indians. Don Lenhardt homers for St. Louis. Among the Browns shackled by Pierro is Roy Sievers, who goes 0 for 4.