

Jose Evelio Garcia BELLO

<https://exploringfloridahistory.org/2025/02/28/jose-evelio-garcia-bello-joe-bello/>

Jose Evelio (GARCIA) BELLO was born on March 7, 1917, in Key West, Florida, to Maria Carmen Amparo Rodriquez (1885-1959 b. Cuba) and Jose Garcia Bello (1871-1950 b. Cuba)

Joe's birth certificate was amended on Sept 3, 1976 to read **José Evelio Bello**. On March 17, 1977, that document was finalized as **Jose Garcia Bello, Jr.**

See more explanation of the name change from *Evelio Garcia* to *Joe Bello* later in this post.

SIBLINGS

- [Blanca Rosa Bello](#) was born on March 20, 1907, in Key West.
- [Candido 'Beby'](#) was born on September 22, 1909, in Key West.
- Carmen was born on July 30, 1913, in Key West.
- [Elio Garcia](#) was born on March 2, 1923, in Key West.

In 1920, Joe lived with his parents at 615 Simonton St in Key West, Florida. His father worked as a cigar maker.

1920 United States Federal Census Florida > Monroe > Key West Ward 6 > District 0100													
Name	Relation	Home Ow	Mortgage	Sex	Race	Marital St	Year Imm	Naturaliz	Year Natu	Attended	Can Read	Can Write	Birthplace
Isabel Masero													
Paul Masero													
Charles Masero													
Jose Garcia	Head	R		M	W	49	1915	al		yes	yes		Cuba
Carmen Garcia	Wife			F	W	33	1907	al		yes	yes		Cuba
Blanche Garcia	Daughter			F	W	14	1910	al		yes	yes		Cuba
Candio Garcia	Son			M	W	10				yes	yes		Florida
Carmen Garcia	Daughter			F	W	6				yes	yes		Florida
Evelio Garcia	Son			M	W	3							Florida

In June 1929, Joe sailed on the S.S. *Governor Cobb* from Havana to Key West with his mother, Carmen and brother, Elio.

1st MARRIAGE

Jose Evelio (GARCIA) BELLO married [Clara Belle LARIZ](#) in Monroe, Florida, on November 19, 1936, when he was 19 years old. They divorced in 1953 in Monroe, Florida.



Clara and Joe (not sure of children's names)



Joe and possibly Jane





Clara Belle holding niece,
Clara. Clara's brother,
Andrew Lariz holding
Clara's daughter, Jane. Joe
Garcia Bello



Clara Belle LARIZ



Blanca Rosa GARCIA Díaz,
Evelio Garcia, Clara Belle
LARIZ Garcia (holding
Delores GARCIA), Josepha
DIAZ, Jane GARCIA, and
Josephine GARCIA



Andrew "Bubby" Lariz, Manuel Lariz, Clara Belle Lariz, and Joe Bello Garcia

CHILDREN

- Jane Ann was born on April 26, 1938, in Key West,
 - Josephine was born on July 20, 1940, in Key West
 - Delores Matilda was born on November 28, 1942, in Key West
 - [Rosa Maria \(Rosemary\) 'Meme'](#) was born on December 11, 1947, in Key West
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MILITARY

Joe registered for the draft on October 16, 1940 in Key West. He lived at 1227 Royal St in Key West. His birthdate is listed as September 17, 1915, which makes him more than two years older than he actually was (23). His draft card describes him as 5'8" and 145 lbs with a ruddy complexion, black hair, hazel eyes, and a scar on his chin. His employer is listed as the WPA in Key West.



SERIAL NUMBER 1458		1. NAME (Print) Jose Garcia Bello (First) (Middle) (Last)			ORDER NUMBER 199
2. ADDRESS (Print) 1227 Ryoal St. Key West, Monroe Florida (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)					
3. TELEPHONE	4. AGE IN YEARS 25 DATE OF BIRTH 99.17.15 (Mo.) (Day) (Yr.)	5. PLACE OF BIRTH Key West, Flor da (Town or county) (State or country)	6. COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP U. S. A.		
7. NAME OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Candido, Bello (Mr., Mrs., Miss) (First) (Middle) (Last)				8. RELATIONSHIP OF THAT PERSON Brother	
9. ADDRESS OF THAT PERSON 615 Oliva St., Key West, Monroe Florida (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)					
10. EMPLOYER'S NAME W. P. A./					
11. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS Key West, Florida (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)					
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.					
REGISTRATION CARD D. S. S. Form 1 (over)		16-17105 <i>Jose Garcia Bello</i> Registrant's signature			

REGISTRAR'S REPORT					
DESCRIPTION OF REGISTRANT					
RACE	HEIGHT (Approx.)	WEIGHT (Approx.)	COMPLEXION		
White <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5'8"	145#	Sallow		
	EYES	HAIR	Light		
Negro	Blue	Blonde	Ruddy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Gray	Red	Dark		
Oriental	Hazel <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Brown	Freckled		
	Brown	Black <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Light brown		
Indian	Black	Gray	Dark brown		
		Bald	Black		
Filipino					
Other obvious physical characteristics that will aid in identification Scar on chin.					
I certify that my answers are true; that the person registered has read or has had read to him his own answers; that I have witnessed his signature or mark and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge are true, except as follows:					
<i>Ruth E. Gainer</i> (Signature of registrar)					
Registrar for Division St. E. Sub. Key West, Fla. (Precinct) (ward) (City or county) (State)					
Date of registration					
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> MONROE COUNTY LOCAL BOARD 206 FEDERAL BUILDING KEY WEST, FLORIDA (STAMP OF LOCAL BOARD) </div>					
(The stamp of the Local Board having jurisdiction of the registrant shall be placed in the above space.)					

Joe was granted an honorable discharge from the Navy November 4, 1945. He requested additional training as a plumber at Pipefitter School.

On his daughter Jane's birth certificate in 1938, Joe is listed as an ironworker for the Oversea Toll and Bridge.



Joe third from left



Joe second from right front row



Joe in center



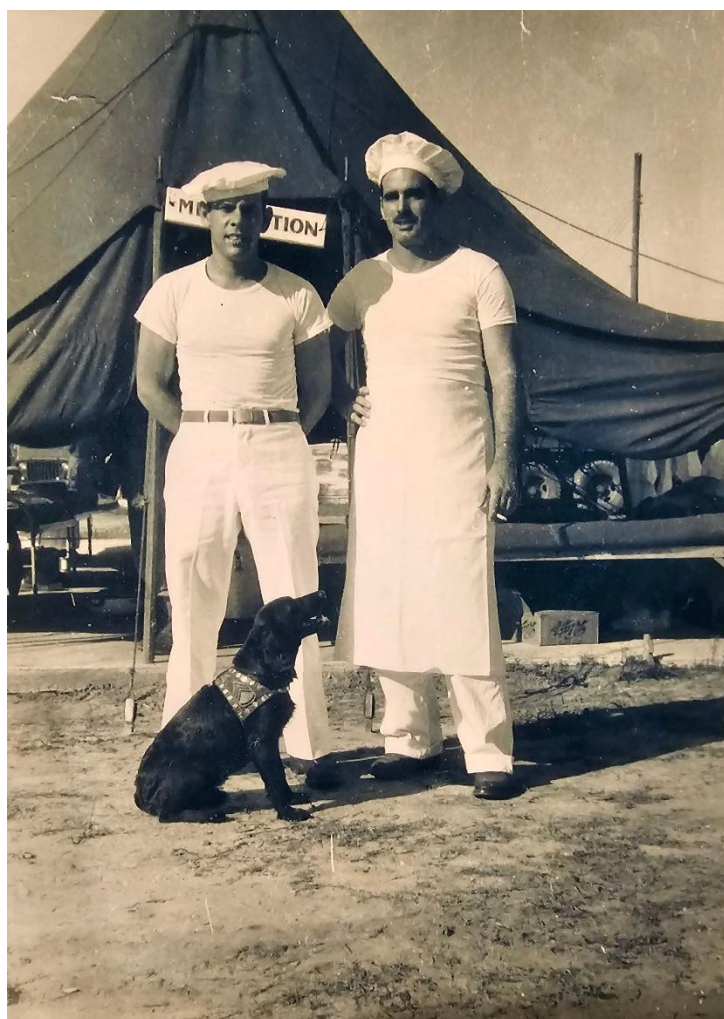
Joe second from left



Joe on the left



Joe on the left



In 1945, his address was listed as 913 Watson St. Key West.

Granddaughter Jane GARCIA Rowland recalls. “He went to an English and Spanish school. Joe’s father, Jose, studied to be a Catholic priest but changed his mind.”

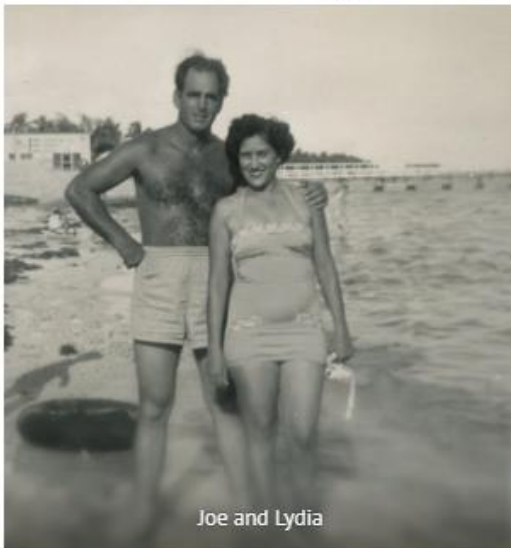
Jane continues, “My dad has washed dishes in a restaurant. He was trained by a famous chef to help him cook meals in Key West. He has worked in Tampa rolling cigars and a pipefitter. He drove a garbage truck, dump trucks for the county, a cabinet maker, a carpenter and as a contractor and subcontractor. He has built houses for millionaires, movie and tv stars, and he built the bar at Sloppy Joe’s in Key West. He built Kenno Plaza; he was the contractor. He built hotels and condos in Key West and all up the Florida Keys. He was an overseas Highway bridge builder during the WPA. At the age of 83, he painted my bathroom walls, installed a cabinet, and redid my ceiling. He completely remodeled my sister. Josephine’s kitchen, built a laundry room, redid the dining room and computer room.”

Joe worked as a construction supervisor with Cates Construction. He retired in 1986 after working for them for 32 years.

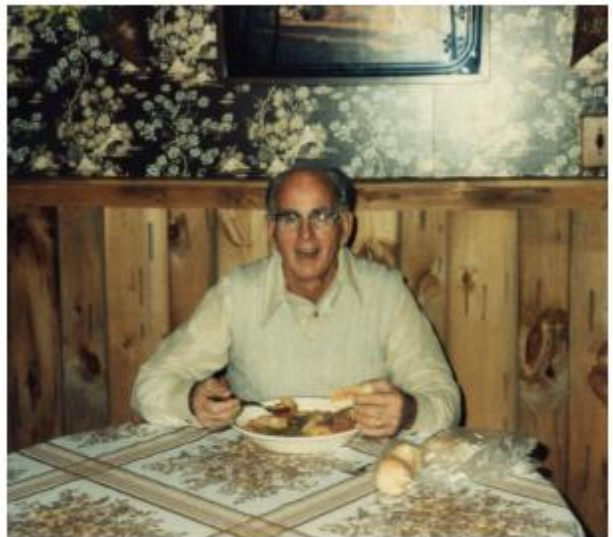
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2nd MARRIAGE

Joe married Lydia LLANEZ Semler November 19, 1954. Joe and Lydia moved to Lakeland, Florida in 1986.



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BELLO/GARCIA Name Confusion Explained

Joe is listed with the U.S. Social Security system as Jose Garcia Bello. His gravestone reads Jose G. Bello. He went by the name Joe Bello for most of his adult life. His grandchildren called him Papa Garcia.

This is from his oldest daughter, Jane GARCIA Rowland: “There were several confusing things that concerned my dad’s name. He was known for most of his life as *Evelio Garcia*. It was the name he used to wed my mother, and the first three children were *Garcias* on their birth certificates. The Spanish custom of using the mothers maiden name caused some confusion, but my dad was never named Rodriguez, which was his mother’s maiden name. His dad used the *Garcia De Bello* title, *Bello* being his mothers maiden name.

My grandfather signed his name *Garcia* sometimes. Other times he used *Bello* and *Garcia De Bello*. My dad was drafted into the Army during WWII and questions arose about what name was correct. He began to use the *Bello* name, and my younger sister Rose Mary was named *Bello*. Then after he wed his second wife and applied for a passport there were all kinds of problems. He sent for his original birth certificate. The name his father gave him was *Joseph Evelio Garcia Bello*. My father and his second wife decided to change his name legally to *Joseph Garcia Bello Jr.*

This was legal and his name was *Bello* from then on. Our names were still *Garcia*. Elio, his younger brother, who was drafted at the same time, also changed his name to *Bello*.

I visited my uncle, my dad's oldest brother, Candido 'Beby' Garcia, in the early 1980s. He was very upset about the name change and he did not change his name. He said, "They can change the name on the paper, but they are still Garcias." My dad's two sisters also retained the maiden name of *Garcia*."

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MEMORIES

His granddaughter, Karen, remembers when her papa did that work at her mother's house (Josephine). He tried to get Karen to read the Miami Herald (Spanish edition) to him and she had to remind him that she did not know Spanish. He also tried to get her to help him do some work in the kitchen. She worked with him a little bit but got bored and wandered off. He found her, thumped her forehead, and said, "You hard headed like your Mama."

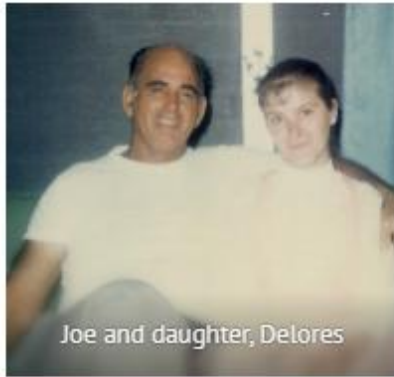
Joe was known for dropping a cigar stub (unlit of course) into walls he was building all around the Keys. Leaving a bit of him behind. Karen always associates the cigar smell with her Papa Garcia.

Granddaughter Kathy ROWLAND recalls, "I remember when our family first came back stateside and met all of the family. I never knew I had such a big family since I had never met anyone. We all went to Rock City and I bought Grandpa the giant cigar souvenir. I think I was 7 years old then.

Granddaughter, Lynda BURCH Stoller remembers when Papa Garcia came to Atlanta to visit her. "Mother was there as well. We took him to an Atlanta Braves game. He was so overwhelmed with the stadium. He held on to my mother and took baby steps to walk around to take in all the sights. It was so rewarding to see how much he appreciated going to a major league game."

Lynda also recalls, “We were visiting Papa and Grandma Lydia when Robert Kennedy was assassinated. I remember we were in their house and he came running through shouting, “They shot Kennedy.” It was very scary to see him so upset.

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Joe and daughter, Delores



Karen Hamilton, Mona Hamilton, Kathy Rowland, Cathy Burch with their grandfather



Joe and daughter, Josephine



Joe and Lydia with Josephine, Rosemary, and Delores



Josephine, Lydia, Joe



Delores, Joe, Jane,
Josephine



Josephine, Diane, Dee,
Clara, Joe Bello in Key West



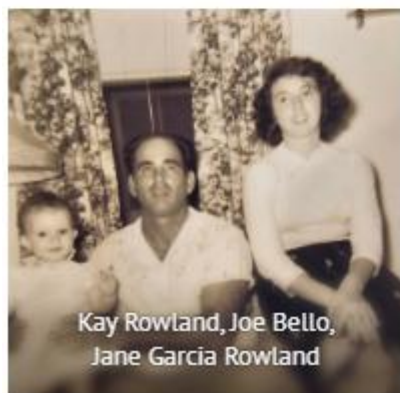
Carmen Rodriguez Garcia,
Jane Rowland, Kay
Rowland, Joe Bello



Joe Bello



Josephine and her father,
Joe Bello



Kay Rowland, Joe Bello,
Jane Garcia Rowland



Clara, Jane, Joe, Rosmary in
basket, Diane, Josephine



White St. Joe Bello holding
Rosemary, Josephine, Jane,
Clara, Delores

LOSSES

- His father [Jose](#) passed away on June 2, 1950, in Key West, Florida, at the age of 78.
- His mother [Maria Carmen Amparo](#) passed away on November 10, 1959, in Key West, Florida, at the age of 73.
- His sister [Blanca Rosa](#) died on April 12, 1982, in Key West, Florida, when Jose Evelio (GARCIA) was 65 years old.
- His brother [Candido 'Beby'](#) died on February 17, 1993, in Key West, Florida, when Jose Evelio (GARCIA) was 75 years old.
- His sister Carmen died on February 23, 1995, in Miami, Florida, when Jose Evelio (GARCIA) was 77 years old.
- His wife Lydia passed away on November 21, 1999, at the age of 85.
- His brother [Elio Garcia](#) died on March 25, 2001, in Brandon, Florida, when Jose Evelio (GARCIA) was 84 years old.
- His daughter [Rosa Maria \(Rosemary\) 'Meme'](#) passed away on March 4, 2004, in Greenville, South Carolina, at the age of 56.

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Jose Evelio (GARCIA) BELLO died on May 8, 2009, in Lakeland, Florida, when he was 92 years old. Joe was laid to rest at Oak Hill Cemetery, Lakeland, Florida.



Key West Veterans Memorial Garden at Bayview Park

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LAKELAND - Jose Garcia Bello, Jr., 92 of Lakeland, died Friday, May 8, 2009 due to heart failure.

He was born March 7, 1917 in Key West, FL to Joseph and Carmen Bello, Sr. and moved to Lakeland in 1986. Jose was employed as a construction supervisor with Cates Construction company and retired in 1986 with 32 years of employment. Jose is a WWII Navy Veteran and United States Army Reservist.

He is preceded in death by his wife, Lydia Bello and a daughter, Rosemary Bank. Jose is survived by his sons, Robert Semler of Trinity, FL and Jerry Semler of Key West; his daughters, Arline Bazo of Mulberry; Jane Roland of Charleston, SC, Josephine Simmons of

Greenville, SC and Delores Burch of Myrtle Beach, SC. Eighteen grandchildren and twenty-five great grandchildren also survive.

Friends will be received from 10 - 11am Wednesday at the Gentry-Morrison Funeral Homes, Southside Chapel where funeral services will be held that morning at 11am. Interment will take place in Oak Hill Cemetery, Lakeland.

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Joe Bello with his grandchildren



Joe Bello with some of his descendants, his daughter Josephine and her children and grandchildren. 1992.

Top row: Joseph Rager, Steve McMahon, Jesse Rager

Middle row: Ernie Hamilton, III; Ernie Hamilton, Jr.; Josephine GARCIA Simmons; Mona HAMILTON McMahon; Kathleen McMahon; Teresa McMahon; Joshua Rager; Karen HAMILTON

Bottom row: Misty HAMILTON; Joe Bello (Papa Garcia)

SOURCES

Personal recollections from family; Photo collection of Jane GARCIA Rowland and Josephine GARCIA Simmons; 1920 United States Federal Census; 1930 United States Federal Census; Florida Divorce Index, 1927-2001; Florida Marriage Collection, 1822-1875 and 1927-2001; Florida Passenger Lists, 1898-1964; Florida State Census, 1867-1945; Florida, Naturalization Records, 1847-1995; U.S., World War II Draft Cards Young Men, 1940-1947; Web: Florida, Find A Grave Index, 1800-2012