

### ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY JANUARY 22



*A Message to Garcia, 1917*

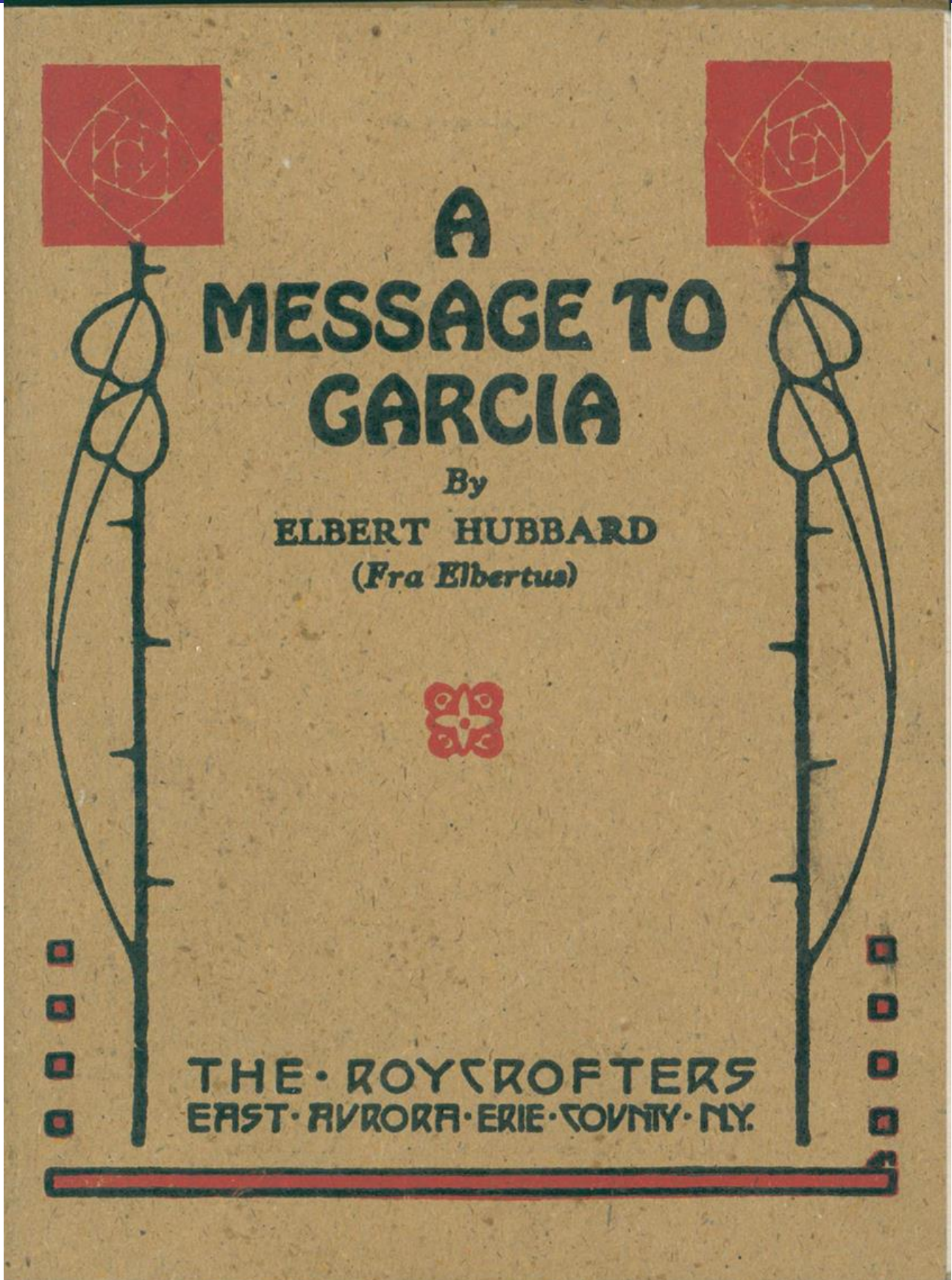
**On January 22, 1901, the West Virginia Legislature adopted a joint resolution honoring Spanish- American War hero and West Virginia native Captain Andrew S. Rowan.**

**CSO: SS.8.23, ELA.8.2**

**Investigate the Document: (A Message to Garcia, Hubbard, Elbert, 174 H875 1899 PAM)**

1. What will most messengers or clerks ask when given orders to do something? According to the law of averages, would the narrator lose the bet to the reader?
2. What historical event took place during the story? Who had war broken out between?
3. Who was supposed to deliver the message to Garcia? Where was Garcia?
4. What do you suppose a stenographer is?

**Think Critically:** What is the main theme of "A Message to Garcia?" Share a favorite quote from the book. Why did this quote stand out? Why do you presume the author chose the individual that he did for this essay?





## A MESSAGE TO GARCIA

**I**N all this Cuban business there is one man stands out on the horizon of my memory like Mars at perihelion. ¶ When war broke out between Spain and the United States, it was very necessary to communicate quickly with the leader of the Insurgents. Garcia was somewhere in the mountain fastnesses of Cuba—no one knew where. No mail or telegraph message could reach him. The President must secure his co-operation, and quickly.

What to do!

Some one said to the President, "There is a fellow by the name of Rowan will find

Garcia for you, if anybody can." ¶ Rowan was sent for and given a letter to be delivered to Garcia. How the "fellow by the name of Rowan" took the letter, sealed it up in an oilskin pouch, strapped it over his heart, in four days landed by night off the coast of Cuba from an open boat, disappeared into the jungle, and in three weeks came out on the other side of the Island, having traversed a hostile country on foot, and delivered his letter to Garcia—are things I have no special desire now to tell in detail. The point that I wish to make is this: McKinley gave Rowan a letter to be delivered to Garcia; Rowan took the letter and did not ask, "Where is he at?"

By the Eternal! there is a man whose form should be cast in deathless bronze and the statue placed in every college of the land. It is not book-learning young men need, nor instruction about this and that, but a stiffening of the vertebrae which will cause them to be loyal to a trust, to act promptly, concentrate their energies: do the thing—"Carry a message to Garcia."

General Garcia is dead now, but there are other Garcias. No man who has endeavored to carry out an enterprise where many hands were needed, but has been well-nigh appalled at times by the imbecility of the average man—the inability or unwillingness to concentrate on a thing and do it.

Slipshod assistance, foolish inattention, dowdy indifference, and half-hearted work seem the rule; and no man succeeds, unless by hook or crook or threat he forces or bribes other men to assist him; or mayhap, God in His goodness performs a miracle, and sends him an Angel of Light for an assistant.

¶ You, reader, put this matter to a test: You are sitting now in your office—six clerks are within call. Summon any one and make this request: "Please look in the encyclopedia and make a brief memorandum for me concerning the life of Correggio." ¶ Will the clerk quietly say, "Yes, sir," and go do the task?

On your life he will not. He will look at you out of a fishy eye and ask one or more of the following questions:

Who was he? ¶ Which encyclopedia?  
 Was I hired for that?  
 Don't you mean Bismarck?  
 What's the matter with Charlie doing it?  
 Is he dead?  
 Is there any hurry?  
 Sha'n't I bring you the book and let you  
 look it up yourself?  
 What do you want to know for?  
 And I will lay you ten to one that after  
 you have answered the questions, and  
 explained how to find the information, and  
 why you want it, the clerk will go off and  
 get one of the other clerks to help him try  
 to find Garcia—and then come back and  
 tell you there is no such man. Of course I  
 may lose my bet, but according to the Law  
 of Average I will not. Now, if you are wise,  
 you will not bother to explain to your  
 "assistant" that Correggio is indexed under  
 the C's, not in the K's, but you will smile  
 very sweetly and say, "Never mind," and  
 go look it up yourself. And this incapacity  
 for independent action, this moral stupidity,  
 this infirmity of the will, this unwillingness

to cheerfully catch hold and lift—these are  
 the things that put pure Socialism so far  
 into the future. If men will not act for  
 themselves, what will they do when the  
 benefit of their effort is for all?

A first mate with knotted club seems  
 necessary; and the dread of getting "the  
 bounce" Saturday night holds many a  
 worker to his place. Advertise for a stenog-  
 rapher, and nine out of ten who apply can  
 neither spell nor punctuate—and do not  
 think it necessary to.

Can such a one write a letter to Garcia? ¶  
 "You see that bookkeeper," said the fore-  
 man to me in a large factory.

"Yes; what about him?"

"Well, he's a fine accountant, but if I'd  
 send him uptown on an errand, he might  
 accomplish the errand all right, and on the  
 other hand, might stop at four saloons on  
 the way, and when he got to Main Street  
 would forget what he had been sent for." ¶

Can such a man be entrusted to carry a  
 message to Garcia?

We have recently been hearing much

maudlin sympathy expressed for the "down-trodden denizens of the sweatshop" and the "homeless wanderer searching for honest employment," and with it all often go many hard words for the men in power.

Nothing is said about the employer who grows old before his time in a vain attempt to get frowsy ne'er-do-wells to do intelligent work; and his long, patient striving after "help" that does nothing but loaf when his back is turned. In every store and factory there is a constant weeding-out process going on. The employer is constantly sending away "help" that have shown their incapacity to further the interests of the business, and others are being taken on. No matter how good times are, this sorting continues: only, if times are hard and work is scarce, the sorting is done finer—but out and forever out the incompetent and unworthy go. It is the survival of the fittest. Self-interest prompts every employer to keep the best—those who can carry a message to Garcia.

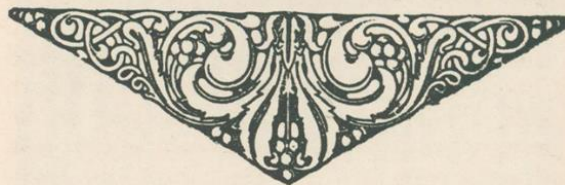
I know one man of really brilliant parts

who has not the ability to manage a business of his own, and yet who is absolutely worthless to any one else, because he carries with him constantly the insane suspicion that his employer is oppressing, or intending to oppress him. He can not give orders, and he will not receive them. Should a message be given him to take to Garcia, his answer would probably be, "Take it yourself!" ¶ Tonight this man walks the streets looking for work, the wind whistling through his threadbare coat. No one who knows him dare employ him, for he is a regular fire-brand of discontent. He is impervious to reason, and the only thing that can impress him is the toe of a thick-soled Number Nine boot ¶ ¶

Of course I know that one so morally deformed is no less to be pitied than a physical cripple; but in our pitying let us drop a tear, too, for the men who are striving to carry on a great enterprise, whose working hours are not limited by the whistle, and whose hair is fast turning white through the struggle to hold in line dowdy indif-

ference, slipshod imbecility, and the heartless ingratitude which, but for their enterprise, would be both hungry and homeless. ¶ Have I put the matter too strongly? Possibly I have; but when all the world has gone a-slumming I wish to speak a word of sympathy for the man who succeeds—the man who, against great odds, has directed the efforts of others, and having succeeded, finds there's nothing in it: nothing but bare board and clothes. I have carried a dinner-pail and worked for day's wages, and have also been an employer of labor, and I know there is something to be said on both sides. There is no excellence, per se, in poverty; rags are no recommendation; and all employers are not rapacious and high-handed, any more than all poor men are virtuous. My heart goes out to the man who does his work when the "boss" is away, as well as when he is at home. And the man who, when given a letter for Garcia, quietly takes the missive, without asking any idiotic questions, and with no lurking intention of chucking it into the nearest

sewer, or of doing aught else but deliver it, never gets "laid off," nor has to go on a strike for higher wages. Civilization is one long, 'anxious search for just such individuals. Anything such a man asks shall be granted. He is wanted in every city, town and village—in every office, shop, store and factory. The world cries out for such: he is needed and needed badly—the man who can "Carry a Message to Garcia."



HERE ENDETH THE PREACHMENT, "A MESSAGE  
TO GARCIA," AS WRITTEN BY FRA ELBERTUS AND  
DONE INTO A BOOKLET BY THE ROYCROFTERS,  
AT THEIR SHOP, WHICH IS IN EAST AURORA,  
ERIE COUNTY, NEW YORK STATE, MAY, MCMXVII

