

Too Near Where History is Being Made: Henry Houston II in a Time of War

Guiding Questions

- Henry was from a wealthy family, who were able to spend time and money to find the location of his death, and donated a building in his name to honor his legacy. What about those families who aren't able to mourn in this way?
- What's the significance of first hand letters and photographs from war frontlines, like Henry's?
 - What emotions do you pick up on in Henry's letters for combat, modern warfare, and the desirability of war?
 - How does his tone change depending on who he is writing to? Why might Henry speak differently to his friend versus his mother?
- In March of 1917, what changed Henry's attitude towards serving in France?
- What aspects of war was Henry conflicted about?
 - How did being in war firsthand change his theoretical ideas about the U.S.'s involvement in WWI?
 - Do you think the president or military leaders back home felt the same way?
- Where does Henry's privilege come into play on his thoughts on serving? Why does he value upper class, educated lives more than "the uneducated?"
 - Do you think Henry Houston II felt he was superior because of his upbringing?

Classroom Activities

- Examine how the tone and ideas of Henry's letters changed as he became more acclimated to war and fighting.
- Henry Houston's trajectory throughout the war was different from many Americans because of his involvement before the U.S. officially entered the war. Using American newspaper articles, compare how Henry Houston's involvement and eagerness to fight in the war contrasted the general mood of the United States staying out of the conflict.