During the evening "Dog Watch," the Captain will take the entire crew below decks. Here he will share nautical lore, sing sea chanteys, and discuss the history of the times. A great addition to this activity is the "letters to the sailors." These letters are a very important aspect of the program and greatly enhance this "Dog Watch" time.

Encourage the parents to write letters to their "lads" as if they were living in the year 1874-75. These should be secretly delivered to the teacher or group leader who will bring them the day of the program and hand them over when checking in with the administrator. Imagine the amazement of the sailors when the Captain gives them their letter telling them of life back home in England or Europe, or friends or family members awaiting their arrival in America! Please strongly encourage parent participation in this activity. While the Captain will make an excuse for students who do not receive a letter, it can be very disappointing for a child to be left out of the excitement. Our desire is that every student receives "news" from home.

The idea is to incorporate news items of the times; developments of the world or the hardships of starting life anew in a strange land. These letters should help build upon the lessons the students have learned as well as provide some entertainment. **Teachers - please be sure the parents understand that the letters should not refer to or reflect modern times.** The year is 1874-75 and each student has signed aboard the *Euterpe* for a job as a **male** sailor to pay for his passage to America. The letters can be from the "parents," "children," "wife," "suitor," "friend" or whomever, but should mainly attempt to recreate the atmosphere of the times. They can talk about how life on the farm has been or the tough times in the city, what's happening in the world, new inventions etc. Here are some interesting facts:

- President Ulysses S. Grant is in his second term in office.
- The Civil War ended in 1865.
- The first transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869.
- The United States buys Alaska in 1867.
- Barbed wire was invented in 1874.
- Women were granted the right to vote in Wyoming in 1869.
- Gold was discovered on an Indian reservation in South Dakota in 1874.
- In 1865 the 13th amendment was passed abolishing slavery throughout the US.
- California became a state in 1850.
- In 1865 Lincoln was assassinated.
- In 1868 the 15th amendment was passed protecting the voting rights of black men.

There is an additional United States time line included in the resource section of this website.