



It is not easy for me to talk with all of you about our first ten years together. There are too many things in my mind and heart for which there are no words. But I shall try my best to share with you a few of my reflections about the past, and a few dreams about the future—I hope we will all enjoy together.

In many places, I hear it said that there is no longer much opportunity in this country of ours. There are too many people who seem to believe that America has run out of frontiers where men and women may expect a challenge, and stack their skills and character against the future. I wish these cynics and men of little faith could see for themselves what has happened here at Ecusta in the brief span of ten years. I wish they could have been privileged to watch all of you as you converted a quiet mountain valley into one of the world's greatest sources of fine paper. I wish they could have seen the good solid homes you have built up one after another here in our county. I wish they could have watched your children in this community of ours, as they grew up in the last ten years, to take their place in the world with priceless assets of good health, good education and good character.

I wish they could have watched as you built new stores, new schools, new roads and new churches. These things all meant that here in our mountains you found and won a place for yourselves on a frontier. This frontier was just as real and just as rugged as any your great-grandfathers ever met along the Oregon trail.

In almost every case, the skills and knowledge you possess today were not passed along to you by your parents. You learned them the hard way. They have served you well.

I know you will understand—because I am much older than most of you—when I say I am truly proud of you for what you have done, and very happy for my family and myself that you have accepted us with such friendliness and goodwill into this community. For my wife, for my children, for my grandchildren, may I say that the Strauses are very proud indeed to be Tar Heels!

As to the future, it seems quite clear to me that there are still many frontiers left for us to conquer together.

You know that several of our big paper machines are standing idle. They were in operation at one time. For reasons beyond our control, the export business, which kept them occupied, has disappeared. This is neither your fault nor mine.

Now, we must find new paper products which can be manufactured on these machines so that Ecusta can give employment to more and more people. Toward this end, I am making strenuous efforts, and while, with present keen competition in the paper field, this is not very easy, I shall leave nothing undone until I shall succeed.