



## ***If wishes were...***

### ***Remembering Joseph W. Mather***

In the Homestead attic there is a large, curved-top, hide-covered trunk. Inside, a small blue book with the simple title: "Autographs." Written on the flyleaf: "Joseph Mather December 25, 1878."

The book belonged to Stephen Mather's younger brother, Joseph, who was born 8 January 1869 to Joseph Wakeman Mather and Bertha Jemima Walker Mather.

The book has entries from 1879 and 1880. It contains autographs, sentiments, and illustrations from classmates in San Francisco.

Today we'd be hard-pressed to find anyone under sixty with such refined cursive handwriting, much less children of ten or eleven!

The book has a true San Francisco flavor with sketches of boats—and cable cars. Some wishes are simple, no doubt typical of "yearbook" inscriptions of the era. Some are more personal.

Joseph Mather died 4 February 1888, less than eight years after the last entry. The San Francisco Examiner reported: "MATHER-In this city, February 4, Joseph W. Mather, Jr., a native of San Francisco, aged 19 years and 17 days." According to a biography of Stephen Mather, the cause was spinal meningitis.

Robert Grier's entry of April 2<sup>nd</sup> 1880 speaks of the hopes we all share: "It only takes a little spot, To write the words forget me not."



*Stephen Mather and Joseph Mather (right)*

