

Mary Roberts

Mary Black Roberts, crowned the first Miss Santa Cruz in 1924, died in Santa Cruz Friday at the age of 85.

Mrs. Roberts was born in Cloverdale and moved to Santa Cruz in 1916. She went to Laurel Grammar School, now the Loudon Nelson Center, and graduated from Santa Cruz High School in 1922.

She worked for the Frazier-Lewis candy factory during high school, moving on to Leask's Department Store following her graduation.

It was the store's owner, Samuel Leask Sr. who persuaded her to enter the Miss Santa Cruz contest in 1924. Unlike today, winning the contest did not give Mrs. Roberts the right to enter the Miss California pageant. Instead, it gave her the chance to act as hostess to those who did.

Mrs. Roberts married in 1925 and lived on Beach Hill, where she raised her three children and more than 200 foster children before retiring in 1973.

She was a member of the Native Daughters of the Golden West and the Isabella Rebekah Lodge 17.

She leaves a son, Gary Richard Roberts, and a daughter, Mary Lee Lincoln, both of Santa Cruz; a daughter-in-law, Angela Lidderdale, of Alta Loma; seven grandchildren, Janet Rupp, Barbara Lincoln, JoAnn Armstrong and Robert W. Lincoln, all of Santa Cruz, George Lidderdale, of New Mexico, Elissa Lidderdale, of New Jersey, and Ernest Lidderdale, of Alta Loma; and two great-grandchildren. Her other son, William J. Lidderdale, died earlier.

Friends may call at the Chapel of the Four Seasons, 1050 Cayuga St., Santa Cruz, from 5 to 9 p.m. today. Services will be held there at 2 p.m. tomorrow, under the direction of the Rev. Bonnie Bell of the Light of Life Lutheran Church. Private burial will follow at Santa Cruz Memorial Park.