

## 2014 Grand Marshall Fred Helm

Fred Helm was born on September 23, 1922, in Selma California. His family lived in Fresno and in 1929 they moved to Caruthers, where he has lived ever since. Fred started the 1<sup>st</sup> grade in Caruthers and his 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade years were spent in the Blakemore Building, now the Lions Club Building. Fred went through school and graduated from Caruthers High in 1942. He played football all four years of high school and varsity lettered two of those years. He ran track and earned varsity letters all four years of school and even won medals at the West Coast Relays, which were a real big deal back then. Fred had the distinction of playing on the last football team before sports were cancelled because of the war.

When Fred was younger all the farming in the area was done using horses instead of tractors. The farms in the area were mostly grapes, apricots peaches and alfalfa. There were a few dairies around as well. Fred remembers picking fruit for one dollar a day!

Following his high school graduation Fred joined the Navy and served from 1943 to 1946. He had worked for Jim Anderson in Anderson's Market while still in high school and returned to Anderson's after the war. He was an employee there until 1961 when he bought the store along with Sam Ulmer. In 1978 Fred sold the store and went to work for Mr. G's Market where he worked as a meat cutter for another 20 years. All told, Fred cut meat in Caruthers for the better part of 58 years!

Early on, the fair was held on the Caruthers Grammar school grounds, which was on the corner of Raider and Tahoe. The present day fairgrounds were a horse track where some of the events took place. The school grounds, and thus the fairgrounds, were covered with sand and he remembers looking for coins in the sand after the fair was over! There would be horse races and since everyone farmed with horses, there were also horse pulling contests, or early day tractor pulls! Teenage girls would take part in cow milking contests and mothers would enter their children in baby contests to see who had the cutest baby. He always looked forward to the great food and even then people bragged about the fair being the largest free gate fair around! He can't get over the number of people here on a Saturday night and watching the many improvements made over the years.

Fred Helm is a wonderful man who has lived a long a productive life. He has seen many changes over the years and enjoys reminiscing about the changes in the town of Caruthers. He was telling me about how the town once had both a Chevy and Ford Dealership, at the same time! He remembers when the train ran right through Caruthers, right along where Henderson Avenue runs. In fact, he used to take an old 1940 Chevy and let the air out of the tires and ride the railroad tracks all the way to raisin city and back!

Fred has four children, nine grandchildren, twelve great grandchildren, and one great, great grandchild. With that many grandchildren to choose from, Fred will have trouble deciding who gets to ride with him in the Model T during the Parade. Make sure and say high to Fred if you see him because you won't find a nicer person.