“I used to come in and play on Mom’s sewing machine. She would always tell me don’t break that, I have to have that to make the girls dresses,” Harry Stricker fondly recalled about how he began his passion.

Stricker began sewing at the age of three and has since taught himself how to quilt. Stricker spends many hours cross-stitching each section before putting them together making breath-taking quilts. The 87 year old is truly self taught, never taking a lesson, not even from his mom. He was one of 10 children, five girls and five boys born to Tom and Geneva Stricker. Harry was never shy when it came to jumping behind the sewing machine.

“I just kinda picked it up as I went from friends and neighbors,” Stricker stated.

He recalled when his love of quilting began. He attended a benefit sale for his brother-in-law and sister. When nobody bought something he would bid and buy it.

“I bought $261 worth of stuff. I brought it all home and just started ripping and sewing and making quilts out of them,” Stricker remembered.

The life-long Clark County resident has spent countless hours in front of a sewing machine perfecting his passion. He spent two years in Italy from 1943 to 1945 serving in the United States Army. Even thousands of miles from home he still was able to spend some time with a needle and thread.

“When I was in the service I would sew insignias and patch stuff for the guys,” Stricker said. “A sewing machine and needle ain’t no stranger to me.”

Stricker earned his living as a carpenter, being honored for being a 40 year member of the union. He also worked for a couple years as the bridge supervisor for the Clark County Highway Department. He would work all day, come home and farm, then spend the evenings relaxing in his comfy chair with his wife, Hazel, next to him. He would relax by cross-stitching, sewing and making beautiful quilts and pillow cases.

“I would work all day then come home and cross stitch. It is a good, clean hobby, it isn’t dirty work,” Harry said with a genuine smile.

Stricker’s talent has never earned him any extra income as he always gives away his treasures.

“I just made one and gave it to my son and daughter-in-law and grandson. I just give them to friends and family. I have not gotten a dime out of any I’ve done. I just work on the pattern until it gets done. I just sit here and work. I have slowed up a bit now,” Stricker explained.

Stricker’s family is truly grateful for the beautiful quilts he shares. He shares his talents with his youngest son, Larry and daughter-in-law Stephanie, two grandsons, Matthew and his wife, Maggie, and Adam. Before her passing, Stricker’s wife of 60 years, Hazel, also enjoyed her husband’s wonderfully colorful quilts. The couple lost a son in a vehicle accident in the early 1970’s.

Stricker has went through his share of needles over the years, but only one has been given a legacy of its own, Old Bent.

An energetic and humble Stricker recalled a needle he used so long and much that it literally was bent. He started calling the needle, “Old Bent.” He would talk to his sister in Washington and she started asking her brother about Old Bent. In great spirit he gave his faithful Old Bent to his sister.

“I put it in a birthday card and sent her Old Bent. She took a picture of it and put it on the wall. I just sent it to her she would always ask about it,” Harry said with a chuckle.

Although Harry has slowed up a little bit, or so he says, he has no intention of giving up his hobby. He enjoys sitting next to the huge window in his living room and passing the time by cross-stitching a pattern before making it into his next beautiful masterpiece.