

Michigan's role in Civil War told in video

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GRAND BLANC — Rodney Brown grew up in Washington, D.C., surrounded by American history, but it wasn't until he moved to Michigan that he became captivated by one of the United States' most defining moments, the Civil War.

More specifically, it was Michigan's role in the war.

That led him to continue his research, eventually leading him to create a nonprofit production company to create a film and tell Michigan's portion of the Civil War story.

"So iMichigan Productions is a company that is (working) with new media basically," Brown, of Grand Blanc, said of the company. "It's telling the stories of our ancestors and our contemporaries. That's what we're doing. And we're telling it with history and culture."

Brown has ideas for future projects, but iMichigan's first will be about Michigan during the Civil War.

"I had this thing about Michigan in the Civil War. Because I'm from Washington, D.C., I've seen the battlefields, you know, they were right there. Then I got to Michigan," he said.

Brown was working for WFUM, a public broadcasting station, when he was sent to cover a civil war re-enactment. He ended up learning about the 102nd Division — a group of all-black soldiers — and meeting two people whose grandfathers had fought in the war.

"And then it just started to grow," he said. "And we just got into it."

It's not just Brown who's doing the storytelling. Aside from his two partners in iMichigan Productions, Brown is working with local college students who intern with the company, learning the ins and outs of film production.

"I like mentoring. I got three kids ... the education's important."

For more information, visit www.imichiganproductions.org.