

Grand Blanc VIEW

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Scene September 2, 2010

living history

living history Area re-enactors take part in Civil War documentary
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The Confederate forces charge the Union during the re-enactment of The Battle of Pickett's Mill on Aug. 28 at the Civil War Muster in Jackson. The event drew in a crowd of close to 35,000 people.
Photo by Amanda Braniecki

GRAND BLANC — In the eight years iMichigan Productions have been filming their documentary, The Michigan Experience: The American Civil War Years, no battle re-enactment has come close to reaching the size as that

of the living history 26th Annual Civil War Muster in Jackson.

Rodney Brown, producer and director of the film, and Gary Ewell, also a producer on the film, made the trek from their Grand Blanc production company to Jackson to film part of their documentary, The Michigan Experience. The film itself is to be a true testimonial to Michigan's involvement in the American Civil War. It is written by and features stories told by

Michigan people, including those of the 102nd United States Colored Troops of Detroit.

"It (the film) is going to be a lot of re-enactment and living history," living history Brown said. "We have filmed a few re-enactments for The Michigan Experience, including ones in Bay City, Greenfield Village and Fort Wayne, but nothing of the magnitude in Jackson.

The Civil War Muster, which was held on Aug. 28-29, is one of the largest events of its kind in the midwest drawing in more than 2,000 re-enactors and close to 35,000 spectators.

The weekend event included tours

of the re-enactors

campsites, blacksmith demonstrations, a meet and greet with the son of a Civil War soldier and two battle re-enactments.

The first re-enactment was the Battle of Pickett's Mill. Pickett's Mill was fought on May 27, 1864, between the Union and Confederate forces. The second re-enactment was The Battle of Jonesborough which was fought Aug. 31-Sept. 1, 1864, between Union armies and the Army of Tennessee.

"It was incredible," Brown said. "Our camera man was getting brushed by horses and he had the North on one side and the South on the other side so he was filming back and





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forth. It was just wonderful.”

Both battles as well as segments from interviews with the re-enactors will be featured in the film, which is set to be released in the spring of 2011 to coincide with the Michigan's Civil War Sesquicentennial Celebration.

“The film is going to be a way to engage students where they can learn history and have fun at the same time, and that is what our goal is,” Brown said.

The film will be presented by WKAR-PBS, East Lansing, and it will also include specials for commercial television and an online classroom that meets the curriculum standards of the Michigan Department of Education. Online content will feature everything iMichigan has filmed and will include audio recordings of interviews done with re-enactors and others with history on Michigan's involvement in the war.

Brown also said Grand Blanc Schools will have access to the materials so that the children may further their knowledge not only on the war, but with Michigan specifically.

The Michigan Educational Production Company, iMichigan Productions was started by Brown of Grand Blanc, Leon Collins of Houston, Texas, and Donna Ullrich of East Lansing. The three came up with iMichigan, a non-profit company, after recognizing the need to inform and educate the public through media means. In the process, they knew their company would be able to provide media students with the professional experience they would need for their careers.

