

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Christopher R. Cloud

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Cloud, Christopher R., 1969-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Christopher R. Cloud,
Dates:	February 14, 2005
Bulk Dates:	2005
Physical Description:	6 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:45:13).
Abstract:	Cultural heritage chief executive Christopher R. Cloud (1969 -) was the president and chief executive officer of AMISTAD America. He conceived and designed Freedom Schooner Amistad, a human rights education project which re-creates the Spanish ship made famous by an 1839 slave revolt. Cloud was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 14, 2005, in New Haven, Connecticut. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2005_048
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Christopher R. Cloud, president and chief executive officer of AMISTAD America, was born on April 15, 1969, in Washington, D.C., to Diane and Sanford Cloud. After moving to Hartford, Connecticut, Cloud attended Rembrook School, Noah Webster School, and Kingswood Oxford Junior High School. Graduating from Northwest Catholic High School in Hartford, and then Howard University in Washington, D.C., Cloud earned his B.A. degree in Political Science in 1991.

From 1991 to 1992, Cloud worked as an associate for the Council on Foundations. Later, while serving as a legislative aid for Connecticut State Senator Eric D. Coleman, he researched and wrote the legislation that created the first African American Males Taskforce and the Connecticut African American Affairs Commission. In 1997, Cloud was appointed project manager for AMISTAD America in New Haven; there he conceived and designed Freedom Schooner Amistad, a human rights education project which re-creates the Spanish ship made famous by an 1839 slave revolt. Promoted to executive director in 1999, Cloud serves as president and chief executive officer.

Cloud is a fellow of the Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy at Duke University; the Emerging Leaders Programme in Cape Town, South Africa; the Coro Midwestern Center in St. Louis, Missouri; the Amistad Sierra Leone Friendship Delegation; and the Amistad America/University of Havana Delegation. In 2004, Cloud received a Tourism Ambassador of the Year Award from the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism. A board member of the Connecticut Institute for the Blind; the Bushnell Theatre; American Sail Training Association; and the Greater Hartford Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Cloud also received the National Maritime Historical Society, American Ship Trust Award in 2002.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Christopher R. Cloud was conducted by Larry Crowe on February 14, 2005, in New Haven, Connecticut, and was recorded on 6 Betacame SP videocassettes. Cultural heritage chief executive Christopher R. Cloud (1969 -) was the president and chief executive officer of AMISTAD America. He conceived and designed Freedom Schooner Amistad, a human rights education project which re-creates the Spanish ship made famous by an 1839 slave revolt.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

Cloud, Christopher R., 1969-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Cloud, Christopher R., 1969---Interviews

African American executives--Interviews

African American civic leaders--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Amistad America, Inc.

Occupations:

Foundation Chief Executive

HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Christopher R. Cloud, February 14, 2005. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Christopher R. Cloud, Section A2005_048_001_001, TRT: 0:28:50 ?

Christopher R. Cloud was born on April 15, 1969 in Washington, D.C. His mother, Diane Brown Cloud, was born in 1946 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Mae Dell Ragin Brown and Oscar Brown, a successful entrepreneur. She attended Philadelphia High School for Girls and Howard University in Washington, D.C. Her family traces its lineage to an Irish horse trainer who had children with an enslaved woman in South Carolina. His father, HistoryMaker Sanford Cloud, Jr., was born in 1944 in Hartford, Connecticut to Sanford Cloud, Sr., a mechanic, and Inez Morgan Cloud, who worked at G. Fox & Co department store. The surname Cloud came from a maternal ancestor who was Native American. As a teenager, Cloud's father worked as a caddy. He originally attended Arizona State University in Tempe, but transferred to Howard University and became a lawyer. Cloud grew up and went to school in the Hartford area. He remembers a childhood trip to San Francisco, California, and his firm decision to attend Howard like his parents.

African American executives--Interviews.

African American civic leaders--Interviews.

Video Oral History Interview with Christopher R. Cloud, Section A2005_048_001_002, TRT: 0:29:11 ?

Christopher R. Cloud attended Kingswood Oxford School in West Hartford, Connecticut and Northwest Catholic High School in Hartford, Connecticut. As a child, he attended church with his family every Sunday. In school, he had influential foreign language teachers, but very little exposure to black history. In high school, he ran track, played soccer and served as class president one year, which confirmed his interest in politics. He also took part in the debate team. He matriculated at Howard University in Washington, D.C. in 1987 where he studied black political science and minored in Caribbean studies. Dr. Lorenzo Morris and Dr. Olive Taylor influenced his understanding of culture and history. Cloud partied a lot his first year of college, but shaped up for the remaining years. He interned with U.S. Senator Chris Dodd in Washington, D.C. and Hartford, Connecticut. Cloud married childhood friend, Stacy Hurley, in 2004. He describes his interest in the history of slavery and its continuing impact.

Video Oral History Interview with Christopher R. Cloud, Section A2005_048_001_003, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Christopher R. Cloud graduated from Howard University in Washington, D.C. in 1991 with a major in black political science and a minor in Caribbean studies. After graduation, he was hired at the Council on Foundations, which acquainted him with HistoryMaker James Joseph and launched his career in philanthropy. Being awarded a Coro Fellowship to study leadership brought him to St. Louis, Missouri. After the nine-month fellowship, he remained, working for Southwestern Bell, then returned to the east coast to work for Connecticut State Representative Eric Coleman. Following this, he was hired as CEO at AMISTAD America Incorporated in 1997. Cloud also participated in the Emerging Leaders Programme in Cape Town, South Africa in 2003 and 2004 and visited Cuba to research the Amistad. Cloud describes the history of the Amistad and abolitionist J.W.C. Pennington. He also talks about the 1997 'Amistad' film, how its storyline diverges from the historical record, and its connection to AMISTAD America Incorporated.

Video Oral History Interview with Christopher R. Cloud, Section A2005_048_001_004, TRT: 0:29:10 ?

Christopher R. Cloud began working at AMISTEAD America Incorporated in 1997. The organization built a recreation, rather than a replica, of the original schooner since sailing the ship required it to meet modern standards. Cloud

oversaw programs that took it to seventy ports throughout the United States as a mobile educational space and a goodwill ambassador from the State of Connecticut. For one program, students come aboard the ship and must work as a team to sail it back into harbor. Cloud describes how the ship's recreation and educational programming raises awareness of the history of slavery in the United States. He talks about misconceptions regarding the ship's history, such as the expectation that it was a slave ship rather than a cargo schooner. In noting the impact of historical depictions of the Amistad and how its history offers an empowering story, Cloud underlines the importance of black history both for the African American community and American society generally.

Video Oral History Interview with Christopher R. Cloud, Section A2005_048_001_005, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Christopher R. Cloud, on behalf of AMISTAD America Incorporated, has built connections with the government of the Republic of Sierra Leone to preserve the history of the Amistad incident. In the course of this work, he met descendants of Sengbe Pieh, one of the Africans aboard the Amistad who returned home to Sierra Leone, and HistoryMaker Donald George and John Kamara, who traveled from Sierra Leone to work as part of the crew on the recreated Amistad. In this part of the interview, Cloud describes AMISTAD America Incorporated's upcoming plans, including the recreated Amistad's first international trip scheduled for Bermuda, his personal goals for the future and his hopes and concerns for the African American community. When talking about varying historical accounts of Sengbe Pieh, he notes the accuracy and validity of different studies. He reflects upon his life, the commercialization of recent historical movies and the difficulty of dealing with the history of slavery as well as the necessity of doing so.

Video Oral History Interview with Christopher R. Cloud, Section A2005_048_001_006, TRT: 0:18:32 ?

Christopher R. Cloud reflects upon his legacy and describes how he would like to be remembered. He ends the tape by narrating his photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Christopher R. Cloud, Section A2005_048_Cloud_Christopher_06_MED_001, TRT: