

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Clovis Prince

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Prince, Clovis, 1950-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Clovis Prince,
<b>Dates:</b>	March 13, 2008
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2008
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:29:20).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Corporate chief executive Clovis Prince (1950 - ) founded Prince & Associates, a telecommunications consulting firm that was instrumental in the construction of cellular network infrastructure in the United States and abroad. He negotiated the nation's largest independent monopoly agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation. Prince was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 13, 2008, in Dallas, Texas. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2008_048
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Prince & Associates, Clovis Lionel Prince was born on July 22, 1950 in Guthrie, Oklahoma to Daisy Mae and A.C. Prince. Prince was raised in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma where he attended North East High School. In 1968, Prince graduated and went on to attend the University of Oklahoma where he earned his B.A. degree in 1971.

After graduating from college, Prince was hired by General Motors as a manager and worked in that capacity until 1985. In 1986, he founded Prince & Associates and began providing real estate development services for residential and commercial properties. In addition, Prince's services also included the provision of legal assistance to the public and private sector.

Upon entering the communications industry, Prince has helped to manage the likes of some of the world's first cellular networks including Cellular One. Since its inception, Prince & Associates has managed properties in Oklahoma, Florida and Texas, and in 1991, the company expanded throughout the United States and overseas. In 1997, Prince was responsible for the first ever monopoly agreement between Omnipoint Communications and the Florida Department of Transportation, Turnpike District.

Then, in 2000, Prince & Associates helped Nextel Communications to handle traffic in downtown New Orleans during the CTIA Convention. Later in 2003, Prince became instrumental in the launching of several U.S. Cellular projects across various states including Oklahoma and Kansas. In 2005, Prince continued providing telecommunication services in the Midwest by assisting with the design, optimization and operations of the wireless telecommunications system in Iowa and other Midwestern cities. In 2007, Prince & Associates began its new venture: Prince & Associates Restaurants, which include Prince Bistro and Papa John's Pizza franchises.

Prince was interviewed by the *The HistoryMakers* on March 13, 2008.

## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Clovis Prince was conducted by Denise Gines on March 13, 2008, in Dallas, Texas, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Corporate chief executive Clovis Prince (1950 - ) founded Prince & Associates, a telecommunications consulting firm that was instrumental in the construction of cellular network infrastructure in the United States and abroad. He negotiated the nation's largest independent monopole agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation.

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## 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®.

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## 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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

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

### Persons:

Prince, Clovis, 1950-

Gines, Denise (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Prince, Clovis, 1950- --Interviews

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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## The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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### Occupations:

Corporate Chief Executive

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### HistoryMakers® Category:

BusinessMakers

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## 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 Clovis Prince, March 13, 2008. 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).

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## 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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Clovis Prince, Section A2008\_048\_001\_001, TRT: 0:30:30 ?  
Clovis Prince was born on July 22, 1950 in Guthrie, Oklahoma to Daisy Reels Prince and A.C. Prince. His maternal great-grandfather, Oscar Reels, obtained federal land due to his Native American ancestry, and married Prince's maternal great-grandmother, former slave Menthie Reels. Prince's paternal grandfather, Sherman Prince, inherited his formerly enslaved parents' land; and, after

Prince's paternal grandmother passed away, raised Prince's father in Elmore City, Oklahoma. Prince's parents met after his maternal grandmother, Lillian Prince, married his father's cousin, Grant Prince, an entrepreneur who became Prince's mentor. His parents married in Guthrie, and raised twelve children, of whom Prince was the sixth born. His family moved to Lawton, Oklahoma, and then to Enid, Oklahoma, where his father worked at the Vance Air Force Base. Prince attended Enid's George Washington Carver Elementary School until the fifth grade, when his father transferred to the Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Video Oral History Interview with Clovis Prince, Section A2008\_048\_001\_002, TRT: 0:28:50 ?

Clovis Prince spent his early childhood in Guthrie, Oklahoma, where he belonged to a congregation that held church services in a tent. Upon moving to Enid, Oklahoma, Prince attended a church built and pastored by his maternal step-grandfather, Grant Prince. When the building was taken over by the white townspeople, his grandfather built a smaller church for the African American community. There, Prince's grandfather often asked Prince to conduct the scripture readings. Prince began his education at Enid's George Washington Carver Elementary School, and frequented Ms. Fields' grocery store after class. There, Ms. Fields allowed African American families to purchase goods on credit, and Prince often completed small chores in exchange for sweets. He played football, baseball and basketball in his spare time, and aspired to become a professional athlete. Upon moving to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma in the fifth grade, he enrolled at Culbertson Elementary School, where he played on organized teams for the first time.

Video Oral History Interview with Clovis Prince, Section A2008\_048\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:40 ?

Clovis Prince studied at the all-black F.D. Moon Junior High School in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma until the eighth grade, when he transferred to the newly built John F. Kennedy Junior High School. He attended segregated schools until his freshman year at Frederick A. Douglass High School, when Oklahoma City implemented a busing initiative, and Prince was sent to the previously all-white Northeast High School. Around this time, he often attended civil rights demonstrations with his parents. Upon graduating in 1968, Prince enrolled in the business program at Central State College in Edmund, Oklahoma, and obtained a job at a service station. When the owner announced his retirement, a customer named T.A. Killian bought the station for Prince to run. Prince managed the service station for eleven years; and, during this time, married his wife in 1969, and graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1971. In 1979, he decided to join the wireless communications industry, and travelled to Europe to study the business.

Video Oral History Interview with Clovis Prince, Section A2008\_048\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:50 ?

Clovis Prince spent a year in Europe learning about cellular networks in 1979, and then returned to the United States to work for Cellular One, LLC. After developing a successful test network in Chicago, Illinois, he built the company's commercial networks in Indianapolis, Indiana and Dallas, Texas. During the 1980s and 1990s, Prince built some of the nation's first commercial cellular networks for companies like AT&T Inc., Ameritech Cellular and the Western Wireless Corporation. In 1986, he founded an independent telecommunications consulting firm called Prince and Associates; and, one year later, negotiated the nation's largest independent monopoly agreement with the Florida Department of Transportation. In 2000, Prince created a temporary cellular network in New Orleans, Louisiana, and the infrastructure was widely implemented to help cities accommodate usage increases during special events. Next, Prince was hired as

an in-house consultant at Ericsson A.B., a Swedish telecommunications firm.

Video Oral History Interview with Clovis Prince, Section A2008\_048\_001\_005, TRT: 0:29:30 ?

Clovis Prince supervised telecommunications network expansion projects for several wireless carriers in the Midwest. He secured a contract with Cingular Wireless LLC to expand the carrier's network in Salt Lake City, Utah, and the carrier became one of Prince and Associates' largest accounts. Prince was also hired to manage renovations at a hotel owned by Extended Stay America, Inc., which led to partnerships with other major hospitality companies, including Comfort Suites and Hilton Hotels and Resorts. In 2007, Prince opened franchise locations of Papa John's International, Inc. in Houston, Texas and San Antonio, Texas. That year, he also established his own restaurant chain, Prince Bistro. At the time of the interview, he hoped to open more Prince Bistro locations, and planned to develop real estate for commercial and residential use in Dallas, Texas. Prince reflects upon his legacy, and describes how he would like to be remembered. He concludes the interview by sharing his advice to aspiring entrepreneurs.