

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Jim Kinsella

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Illinois State Museum's *Oral History of Illinois Agriculture* project

Interview # AIS-V-L-2008-052

Jim Kinsella, a central Illinois farmer and a pioneer in no-till farm practices, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and IL State Museum's *Oral History of Illinois Agriculture* project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: May 23, 2008

Location: Kinsella farm in Lexington, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Michael Maniscalco, IL State Museum

Technical Support: cameraman, Dr. Robert Warren, IL State Museum

Transcription by: Tape Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Mike Maniscalco, IL State Museum

Video indexed by: James Oliver, IL State Museum

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Abstract

Jim Kinsella, *Oral History of Illinois History*, AIS-V-L-2008-052

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Jim Kinsella was born on September 11th, 1940 in Lexington, Illinois and grew up on the family farm. His great grandparents came to the United States in the mid 1800s to escape the potato famine in Ireland, and eventually bought land near Lexington. Jim's uncles all farmed in the same area on or near the original homestead, with the next generation continuing in farming. Kinsella attended Southern Illinois University, majoring in Soil Science, then went to work for a corporation in Chicago. After some time he moved back home and purchased land within sight of the old family homestead. He soon began putting his knowledge of soils to work testing out no-till farming practices. Jim spoke about some of the opposition to no-till farming.

Kinsella's no-till ventures grew over time and he gained an international reputation for his innovative farm practices. He also worked with BASF, a German chemical company, where he could exhibit the company's chemicals on his field. BASF assisted by building a large office on Kinsella's land where he could give presentations on no-till farming. He estimates that since the beginning of his career in no-till farming, some 91,000 people have passed through the office to learn about no-till farming.

Kinsella also flew fighter jets for the Illinois Air National Guard, which helped satisfy his love of speed. After becoming a pilot, Jim often found himself driving a tractor in the morning and flying a fighter jet in the evening.

Topics Covered: No-till farming; Growing up on a Family farm; family history; no-till farming; Government Policies toward no till farming; Air Force reserves; BASF

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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