

Interviewee Dr. and Mrs. Louis Kominz

Interviewer Brian Mitchell

Date(s) of interview August 11, 1976

Setting (place of interview, people present, impressions)

This interview took place at the Kominz' apartment on East Avenue. Both Dr. and Mrs. Kominz were most anxious to help and participate in the project. They seemed to genuinely enjoy my company and became thoroughly involved in honestly answering all questions which were posed.

Background of interviewee

Dr. Kominz is a Rochester dentist. We discussed the changing nature of dentistry in Rochester and his reflections on the nature of that change. He retired in the early '70's.

Interview abstract

Dr. and Mrs. Kominz were excellent on Rochester's dental community and the problems which it (and Dr. Kominz personally) have encountered. They were also good on the changing character of Park Avenue and on Rochester in general

Interview index (corresponding to tape numbers, sides of tape, and cassette recorder numbers)

* <u>Social history</u>	* <u>Jewish community</u>
*** <u>Family</u>	*** <u>community relations</u>
*** <u>Demographic/residential</u>	** <u>Religious life</u>
<u>Economic</u>	* <u>Jewish education</u>
<u>Political/civic</u>	** <u>Anti-semitism</u>
** <u>Zionism/Israel</u>	

Interview log

- a) corresponding to tape numbers, sides of tape, and cassette recorder nos.
- b) including references to others in the Rochester community

--see following page(s) --

Interview: Dr. and Mrs. Louis Kominz August 11, 1976

- I. Born in Rochester in 1892 --- parents married in Russia
 - a. came to Roch. at the urging of relatives
 - b. father a miller in Russia who took sick shortly after he arrived in Rochester --- eventually, they operated a small general store
 - 1. moved from Ormond (Chatham) to Hudson Ave.
 - c. three surviving children;

- II. parents store produced "a living" --- not a predominantly Jewish clientel --- reflected the make-up of Hudson Avenue
 - a. Hudson Avenue a fine neighborhood eventually infiltrated by a "lower level of Polish people"
 - b. parents passed away early but all nine children were rather grown up
 - 1. children maintained close contact
 - 2. parents were orthodox Jews who made very good parents who brought their children up in a kosher home
 - a. presently belongs to a conservative temple

- III. would prefer living in the present --- more freedom to do things as they should be done
 - a. worked in "Water Works" at City Hall for four years before entering dentistry
 - 1. told an interesting story of anti-Semitism coming from a close Irish friend
 - a. since Israel has come into existence, anti-Semitic tensions have tended to die down
 - b. Roch. can be considered a fairly successful Jewish community although not unique

- IV. took a business course at Roch Business School, attended # 26 School which he thoroughly enjoyed
 - a. was rather difficult to go back to school at first (after seven years); went to U of Buffalo for three years
 - b. began practicing in his home on Hudson Avenue where he stayed for 19 yrs. and then moved to South Goodman Avenue
 - 1. operated a practice with his doctor brother
 - 2.. worried over the projected move but all worked out fine

- V. met his wife through intermediaries --- wife from Patterson, New Jersey
 - a. celebrated a golden anniversary approximately one year ago
 - b. Mrs. Kominz's parents were from Russia and came over in 1895 (mother); father came over in (1885)
 - 1. father had 3 brothers and children who all settled in Patterson

 - c. married in 1925; lived on St. Paul Boulevard area for 12 years; lived on Harvard St.

1. son and daughter; son settled at Ohio State for BA and MA then a Fullbright and finally a PhD at Columbia

a. taught at Johns Hopkins and finally NYU And then CCNY

1. "Distinguished Professor of Physics"

2. daughter went to Northwestern and met a Chicago stockbroker

3. kept a strongly kosher home and children educated in Jewish tradition

a. difficult to raise children today

END OF
SIDE I

VI. Beth-el has made the religion important to them; the old orthodox synagogues were not keeping up with the times

a. presently not active but have participated in the Men's Club; Mrs. Kominz served on almost every committee

b. ability to change very important

c. kept in close contact with the various families --- present generation drifting away ; the Kominz's have a yearly "cousin's club"

1. keep in very close contact with children and the neices and nephews

VII. Rochester has a great deal to offer; outlined some of Roch's favorable aspects

a. Mrs. Kominz enjoys Rochester

VIII. supports the state of Israel --- only democracy in the Middle East

a. stressed the importance of Israel as a homeland that Jews throughout the world can call their own

1. Israel could be a kind of last stand

b. supports the United Nations although third world nations have taken over

1. still, there must be a place where these things can come out

c. Roch. Jewish community a strong one -- future rests with the young people

d. Roch has changed for the worse over the years ---but they are trying

1. have made only feeble attempts to save the downtown cities will survive but only after a tremendous struggle

END OF
SIDE II

Q. Do have any idea how they met?

A. That I don't know at all.

Q. I see. I see. Do you know about when they came over?

A. They came over somewhere in the 1880's.

Q. In the 1880's? Did they land in New York or Boston and then . . . or did they come directly to Rochester?

A. They landed in New York the way I understand it, and I think, either my father or mother had a relation out in this part of the state, so they came to Rochester because they were urged to come by this particular relative.

Q. I see. That's pretty common practice. What trade was your father in?

A. My father in Europe was a millright.

Q. A millright. Could you explain what a millright is?

A. Well, he was a mechanic and he worked in, I think when they manufactured flow-ers or something like that.

Q. Oh, sure. Sure. Right.

A. He came over here, and I don't know what business he was in. He went into business almost immediately here. And, he took sick shortly after he came here. He developed an asthmatic condition which forced him to curtail his activities. But, he stayed in some sort of a business. They operated a store, he and my mother together, they handled mostly coffee, tea, chinaware. Sort of a general store, you might say, on a small scale.

Q. Where was this store located? What neighborhood?

A. They originally were in business on a street that is now called Ormond Street in Rochester.

Q. The old Joseph Avenue area?

A. That's the old Chatam Street. Chatam was the original name.

Q. Sure. Okay.

- A. And from there they moved to Hudson Avenue, and they were in business there until they gave up the business. Quite a few years.
- Q. Did your father or mother ever say to you why they left Russia?
- A. If they did, I don't recall. I don't know what the reason was why they left.
- Q. Okay. Were they only children? How many were in each family? Do you have any idea?
- A. Pardon?
- Q. Do have any idea how many people there were in each family, in your father's family and your mother's family? How many aunts and uncles you had?
- A. I really don't know that definitely either, no.
- Q. Okay. Let's see. Was your mother in any particular trade? Did she . . .
- A. My mother used to do . . . she served as the clerk in the store. It was merchandising if you call that . . . I wouldn't call it clerical work because she worked in back of a counter . . .
- Q. Oh, I see.
- A. . . . selling merchandise, you know.
- Q. Okay. About how many others . . . well obviously, how many are there in your family counting yourself?
- A. There were originally nine children.
- Q. Okay. Could you explain what happened to each one of them?
- A. Well, at the present time, they've all passed away except for, at the present time, there are exactly three survivors of the nine.
- Q. Where were you in relation to the children; were you younger or older?
- A. I was about half way, in the middle. Just about half way.
- Q. That's a good place to be. Okay. Of the three surviving children, what are they doing now?
- A. Of who?

Q. Of the three surviving children, what are they doing now?

A. Well, I have a brother who's in the furniture business on Main Street in Rochester, and a sister who's retired.

Q. When . . . before your sister was retired, did she hold any particular occupation?

A. She at one time operated a millinery store. And I think that's the only work that she actually did.

Q. When your mother and father came to Rochester, you said earlier that they operated a kind of general store where they sold china, tea, coffee, and so on. Was it relatively successful? How would you . . . what are your recollections of it? Did you ever help out in the store?

A. Well, they never got to be a big scale operation. It was . . . it produced a living for them, and that's about all.

Q. Okay. What was their clientele? Who was . . . who came by? Was it predominantly Jewish clientele, for instance?

A. No, it was a mixture. A mixed patronage there. Particularly, they spent a quite a good part of their business life on Hudson Avenue, and there they had really quite a mixed group of people living in that vicinity consisting of German, Jewish, Polish, primarily that was about the kind of people that lived there. In proportion by the third of each kind.

Q. What are your recollections of the neighborhood? What do you remember from Hudson Avenue and growing up on Hudson Avenue?

A. Well, it was the old story really being revived today. When we moved in, it was a fine neighborhood and had a lot of things in it's favor. But gradually, it was infiltrated by lower level . . . the lower level of Polish people moved in there. Some black people, and it did seem to deteriorate.

Q. Did your mother and father stay on Hudson Avenue until they passed away?

A. Yes. Yes.

Q. Why do you think it deteriorated?

A. Well, the houses were allowed to go down. The yards weren't taken care of. The general appearance of the neighborhood seemed to be a lot worse than when we moved in. Things weren't kept up, in other words.

Q. Well, okay, now, suppose you're young again and you're growing up on Hudson Avenue. What was the neighborhood like; can you describe, for instance, what the people were like? Did you enjoy living there? Was it a good place to grow up?

A. At the time we were there, I'd say yes. It was a good neighborhood. Had a very . . . types of people, but they were all congenial, friendly. And people kept up . . . the people who were living in the homes were all the owners of the homes. There were very few rentals at that time. And, the homes were kept up, the yards were kept up. It was really a nice, congenial neighborhood at that time. It's gone down a lot since then, though. I had an occasion to go through there a short time ago, drove through there, and I hardly recognized the neighborhood from what it was . . . to what it is today.

Q. It's really changed.

A. Oh, it changed considerably.

Q. About when did your mother and father pass away?

A. Approximately, about fifty years ago.

Q. Fifty years ago?

A. Yes. They died fairly young.

Q. So, it was still a pretty nice neighborhood at that time.

A. Yes. It wasn't too bad at that time.

Q. Okay.

A. You see, my father passed away in his forties.

Q. That's awfully young.

A. And my mother was, I think, exactly sixty years of age when she passed away.

Q. That's also young.

A. Fairly young, especially by today's standards, you know.

Q. Were all the nine children pretty well grown up by the time they . . .

A. They were grown up, yeah. (Unintelligible) grown up, you know.

Q. Did you at the time and do you still with your surviving brothers and sisters keep in pretty close contact.

A. We do today, the one's that are left. In fact, we were always pretty close to each other. Although, several of my family were out of town . . .

Q. That's very difficult.

A. . . . and it made it a little harder to keep in close touch. But we were fairly congenial with each other. We visited from time to time. We talked to each other over the telephone. We kept in touch.

Q. Can you describe what your home life was like? What are your recollections of growing up? Why don't we try it this way, first of all, what are your recollections of your mother and father? Your personal recollections. What kind of characters were they?

A. They were both good people. They were the Orthodox frame of mind, as far as religion is concerned. Hard workers. And, did all they could for the family, the children. I'd say they were both very fine parents.

Q. You mentioned just a second ago that they were Orthodox frame of mind. Did they keep a kosher home and so on?

A. Strictly.

Q. Okay. Did they bring you up with a strong Jewish heritage?

A. They did, yes. We brought up along those lines, and we remained so, more or less. Yeah.

Q. Are you Orthodox today?

A. Well, today I guess you'd have to classify yourself as Conservative.

Q. Ah! I see. I see.

A. I go to Conservative Temple.

Q. You belong to Temple Beth El?

A. Temple Beth El. Been a member there for years. And, we don't do the things . . . we don't do the things as carefully as they used to. You do things that in their day would be unheard of, you know.

Q. Sure.

A. But I'm primarily still quite . . . I'd say Orthodox at heart, but Conservative in my beliefs and observance.

Q. (Laughter) Okay.

A. There's a distinction there between the two, you know.

Q. That's very important, sure.

A. Yeah. And, that's the way I describe myself today, really.

Q. Do you think it was . . . what do you feel about the Orthodox heritage your parents gave you? Do you think it was important?

A. I believe so.

Q. Are you . . . did you . . . would you try to say (unintelligible) into your children as time went on?

A. Well, we brought them up along those lines, but today it's hard to keep younger people doing the same things that you did. After all, the modern trend today is to change things. We're really in an age of change. And, some of those changes I go along with. I think they're really called for.

Q. Yeah. I'm . . . you're raising a really interesting question to me, and it's something that's not directly related, but I do want to ask. What do you think about living today versus living back then? Do you like it today?

A. I think I prefer it today.

Q. Ah! That's a good answer.

- A. I prefer it. I think you have a little more liberty, a little more freedom to do things as you think they should be done. You have a little more right to kind of think things over and decide what you want to do, and what you don't want to do. In the old days, you were hype-bound to really follow your parents footsteps. You know, you had to do . . . you had to, really, as they did. Or else, you were considered out of line or something like that. Today, I think there's a little more liberty in what you want to do. You're permitted to do things today that you couldn't do in those days.
- Q. I see. Getting back to what we were discussing earlier which was your home life growing up, did your parents subscribe to things, for instance, like the New York Jewish Press, the (Unintelligible), those types of newspapers?
- A. Did they subscribe to them?
- Q. To Jewish newspapers and so on.
- A. Yes. They used to get the newspapers, the Jewish newspapers. Now that you mention it.
- Q. Was that neighborhood . . . did that neighborhood, rather, have a substantial proportion of Jewish people?
- A. I would say so. I would say so.
- Q. Were your friends pretty well mixed, or did they tend to be Jewish?
- A. My friends were mostly Jewish, I would say.
- Q. Now, it raises one more question I want to ask. Like any strongly, there was a period of relatively strong ethnic ties and so on as . . . you probably could relate better than I. Were there any tendencies towards anti-semitism? Did you come up against any strong examples of this?
- A. Oh, yes. I think you run up against that all the time.
- Q. Want to describe one? Does any come to mind?
- A. Well, for instance, to give you one example that comes to mind. I worked

- A. (Unintelligible) before I went to study dentistry after I graduated high school. I worked in Rochester City Hall for four years, Water Works Department. I was the only Jewish man in the office, the rest were all non-Jewish. Very nice people. And there was one of the men working there and was Catholic that I was very friendly with. Fellow by the name of O'Neil.
- Q. An Irishman.
- A. Irisher. In fact, he had a cousin who was practicing dentistry in Rochester. Dr. O'Neil. He used to say, he talked to me, why don't you study dentistry? Before I decided to become a dentist. Well, I got pretty close to this man, very friendly with him. And, one day we got into a little dispute about something. I don't recall what the reason of it was, the background. And, he turned around and he says to me, well what do you expect from the little Jew. Just like that.
- Q. No kidding.
- A. Out of the open blue. What do you expect of a little Jew. I was shocked, really shocked, because that I didn't expect from him. It came to me like a bull out of the sky. I said, Gene what do you mean? His name was Gene O'Neil. I said, what do you mean, Gene? He turned around and he just said nothing after that at all. But, there was an example, an (unintelligible) example of anti-semitism that came out suddenly.
- Q. Sure.
- A. See, without a chance to any preparation or anything.
- Q. That's a good example. Yeah.
- A. And, it came out quickly out of his mouth, what do you expect from a little Jew? There are other incidents too, that aren't so . . . that I don't remember so clearly, but this one's always stood out in my mind because this man I considered a good close friend of mine.
- Q. He was one of your buddies, sure.

A. You might say that. We used to sit side by side working on books. I did, more or less, clerical work there on big books. And, we were fairly close and friendly. Very congenial to each other. And all of a sudden out of the clear sky (unintelligible) what do you expect of a little Jew of a Jew? So, that's an example that really (unintelligible) anti-semitism.

Q. Sure.

A. Very often it's there, but it's kept under cover, it's controlled.

Q. Do you think that's true today?

A. I think it's true today, too. Yes.

Q. Do you think it's just as strong today?

A. Well, I don't think it's as strong, possibly it's been modified a little bit, because there is more mingling of the races today, and Jews are coming out more in important positions or in the government and all that. And, I think, there's been an . . . especially since Israel has come into existence. That's helped to have some influence on this too, in my opinion. I don't think it's quite as strong as it used to be. I think there's been some easing up of the tension, you know, this anti-semitic tension.

Q. It raises another point, too. How do you think the Jews are doing in Rochester?

A. Well, by and large, I think they're fairly successful. We have a lot of nice people . . . nice Jewish people in Rochester. People that have done a lot for the community, have been outstanding business people, in the professions they've been outstanding men. I think Rochester has, by and large, can be considered a fairly successful Jewish community.

Q. Do you think that the Rochester Jewish Community is in any way unique. Do you think because of its dynamic tendencies, its vibrant tendencies, and so on?

A. No, I can't see anything unique about it actually. No. I don't think so.

Q. That's a good answer. Okay. Getting back to what you raised earlier, this is

Q. (Continued) probably a good time to get into it. Were did you go to school, first grammar school then high school, and so on?

A. Did I mention I took a course . . . a business course at the Rochester Business Institute. I worked for a while after graduating from high school.

Q. Well, where did you go to grammar school, first of all? To public school?

A. I went to Number 26 School. I didn't live in that district, but my brother, my older brother had gone there and graduated, so I was permitted to enter Number 26, though it was out of my district.

Q. Oh, I see.

A. I lived in the district, Number 9 School. And that was a Jewish school, where all the Jewish people used to go. On Joseph Avenue.

Q. That's right.

A. This 26 school was way down . . . about, oh, a mile away on Clifford Avenue, Thomas Street.

Q. What did you think of it? Did you like going there? Were you glad you went?

A. I liked it very much. I liked the principal, I liked the teachers. I was close to all the staff there, you know. In some way or another, I seemed to be with them. We had a man, a principal name of Colonel Mothrup was one of the outstanding men in the entire part of the state here. I graduated from Number 26, then I went to East High School.

Q. East High, sure.

A. And after graduation from East High, I attended the Rochester Business Institute. I was hoping to get a better job. And after working for four years, I went back to the University of Buffalo. That's where I studied dentistry.

Q. Okay. That raises a couple of questions we can get into now. What made you go into dentistry?

A. Well, this man had been urging me, this Eugene O'Neil in the office. He put

A. (Continued) the bee in my bonnet, you know. That thing was buzzing up there.

Q. (Laughter)

A. And, I was kinda fooling around . . . kicking around not knowing what the heck to study. My mother first wanted me to study to be a rabbi. A Reformed Rabbi which would have been a darn good profession. I would have been better off there than in dentistry, maybe. And finally, we . . . my mother and I sat down one day and she says to me, "How about dentistry?" Well, I had become friendly with another Jewish dentist in Rochester, a man who's dead now. I said, "You know, that's not a bad idea", I said to her. And, I sat down and I thought about it, and the more I thought about it, the more I liked the idea. And, I'd been out of school for about seven years when this thought came up to go back to school.

Q. What . . . was it difficult to go back to school after you'd been out of it?

A. It was in the beginning. In the first months, it was kinda odd getting reconciled to the idea, getting back into stride again. But once I got to it, once I got down to business . . . that's when I was old enough to realize that meant a lot to me. I didn't fool around, you know. Once I got down and started paying attention to things, I had very little difficulty. In fact, I had wonderful marks.

Q. How long were you at the University of Buffalo?

A. Three years. It was the course at that time.

Q. Three years.

A. I was the last . . . we were in the last group of the three-year classes. After they extended to four.

Q. Well, you were lucky then?

A. Yes. We just made it.

Q. That's good. Did you like the University of Buffalo?

A. Very much.

Q. Had you been to Buffalo much? What did you think of Buffalo?

A. The city itself? Well, I . . . compared to Rochester, I disliked it. It was large and seemed that a lot of neighborhoods were unkept, you know, not kept up well. There was an extremely large Polish population in Buffalo. And, I . . . there's a lot of nice Polish people there, though. Fine people there. But, it was a little strange to me to be so close to them, you know. I . . . my room was right on the edge of the whole Polish area there. A lot of fine Polish people there, though. But, the city itself, the streets weren't kept up clean, you know, and pavements weren't kept up well. The sidewalks weren't kept up well. But, they had a nice, busy-looking downtown area. Their business section was really (unintelligible). A live looking area down there. Better than Rochester's.

Q. Sure. Sure. Now what happened after you got out of the university? Did you come back to Rochester?

A. Came back to Rochester and I went to New York first, and I studied x-ray at one of the hospitals in New York for about two, three months. I came back to Rochester and went into practice. And I began on Hudson Avenue, in my home there.

Q. In your home, right.

A. In our home there on Hudson Avenue.

Q. Okay. Did you stay on Hudson Avenue or did you move?

A. I stayed on Hudson Avenue for about nineteen years.

Q. Nineteen years.

A. And, after nineteen years, I moved to a street called South Goodman Street.

Q. Oh, sure.

A. You know where that is?

Q. Oh, sure.

A. Now South Goodman Street, I was for thirty odd years.

Q. What . . . well, that raises a couple of questions. First of all, who was your clientele primarily? Did it take a long time to build up a practice?

A. No! I got right into business there. I had business coming in the first day.

Q. Oh. You're pretty fortunate.

A. Fact, the first week I got through, my brother . . . my brother who is a physician by the way, he said to me, "Well, how did you do this week?" I said, "Pretty well." He said, "Did you take in any money?" I said, "Yup". He said, "How much"? I said, "Eighty dollars". "Eighty dollars"? He almost fell off his chair. (Laughter)

Q. (Laughter)

A. I guess I got busy right away.

Q. Very good.

A. I . . . I don't know, I had no trouble (unintelligible) side of the town.

Q. Was it difficult for you to move after you had built a clientele on Hudson Avenue to go out to South . . .

A. Well, it was . . . the difficulty was all before I moved and after. I was worried because some men who had a move were trying to . . . really, they almost frightened me saying that it was a terrible thing to do. I was moving about two miles from where I was before. They said that your patients will not go with you. You'll lose your old practice. And, building a new practice is quite a stunt for a person a little older, you know. I had been in practice at that time nineteen years. But, I thought it was worth the gamble. That, I told you, that neighborhood deteriorated even when I got in practice. It got worse every year. And, my brother was anxious to get out. Because his practice was coming from all over the city. In fact, all over Monroe County. So, he decided to move, and I said, "Well, I'll go with you". We had no difficulty (unintelligible).

- Q. So, when you moved to South Goodman, your brother who was a physician, moved with you?
- A. Right.
- Q. So, it was a medical and dental office.
- A. Yeah. He was downstairs, and I was upstairs.
- Q. Ah! That worked out pretty well then?
- A. Worked out fine.
- Q. Whereabouts on South Goodman?
- A. We were just around the corner from Park Avenue.
- Q. I live on Park and Culver.
- A. Where?
- Q. Park and Culver?
- A. Oh! Right down the neighborhood, yeah.
- Q. Right down the street, sure. That's interesting.
- A. Right around the corner. Park Avenue.
- Q. Did your patients follow you pretty well, or did you have to build up . . .
- A. Well, about . . . I'd say about twenty percent of my practice . . . a good twenty percent went with me. In fact, when I retired which was four years ago after fifty-two years of practice, quite a few of my original patients were still my patients at that time. After fifty-two years of practice.
- Q. Is that right? When . . . if you retired in 1974 . . .
- A. Seventy-two.
- Q. Seventy-two. Then you started in 1920?
- A. Nineteen twenty, exactly. January 1920.
- Q. So that would be in 1939, just before World War II, when you moved?
- A. I moved in '39. That's right.
- Q. Okay. A couple of questions on another field. How did you meet Mrs. Kominz?

- A. Mrs. Kominz I met at a summer resort. (Laughter)
- Q. Oh. (Laughter) No kidding? You've been around.
- A. We met at a place in the Catskills. And, it's quite a nice summer resort. I didn't know she was there, of course. I went there because another patient, a girl who was a school teacher that used to be . . . we were kind of chummy with each other, she went there one year and thought it was wonderful. And, the next year she went there and thought I'd come down the same time she did. So, I remember this: I didn't get down the same time she did. I went down a few weeks later, and my present wife was there at that time.
- Q. Is that right? Well, how did you happen to meet her?
- A. Well, I was introduced to her, you know. And, the next thing you know I asked her out on a boat ride or something. I got to know her that way, and we kind of liked each other, so after I went home and she went home, she wrote to me a couple of times. And, I asked permission to come down and visit them. She's from Patterson, New Jersey.
- Q. Patterson, New Jersey, I see.
- A. In fact, her family, part of her family, is still out there. Her parents are both gone.
- Q. Was she born and raised in Patterson?
- A. Born and raised in Patterson. We'd been married . . . we observed our golden anniversary a year ago.
- Q. Congratulations. Super. Wow.
- A. Thank you. We had a nice party.
- Q. I'll bet it was.
- A. My children gave it for us. I have a son and daughter.
- Q. Do you have any idea . . .
- A. Do you delete some of that stuff that you don't need in there?

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz' responses)

- Q. It's all . . . everything in . . . Here, I'll shut it off for. . .
- *A. Don't you think you'd have more air with this door open? Don't you want that fan on now?
- A. I think . . . could you turn that fan on in back of you, Brian?
- Q. Sure. Okay.
- A. In the back there there's a thing that you squeeze or turn, I don't know.
- Q. Oh, I see.
- A. A little button. That's a boy.
- Q. Okay.
- A. Make it cooler for us. Very good. Thanks.
- Q. Do you have any idea where Mrs. Kominz parents were from? Or you never thought about it?
- A. Your parents. Where were they from?
- *A. My parents?
- A. Yeah.
- Q. Yeah.
- *A. From Russia.
- Q. From Russia. I see. Do you have any idea when they came over?
- *A. Lithuania.
- Q. About when they came over?
- A. Do you know when they came over here, Rhoda?
- *A. Well, let's see. She was eighteen in 1902.
- Q. 1892.
- *A. No. She was eighteen in 1902. Then when was she born?
- Q. Eighteen eighty . . .
- A. Four.
- Q. Eighteen eighty-four.
- *A. Then, she was eleven when she came here.

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

Q. So, eighteen ninety-five.

A. Ninety-five.

Q. Thank you, okay.

*A. My father came ten years before that.

Q. So that would be eighteen eighty-five.

*A. Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Eighteen eighty-five. Yes. About eighteen eighty-five.

Q. Okay. Do you know how many people there were in Mrs. Kominz' family. I have a couple of questions, okay?

*A. Yes.

A. You mean on the parents side?

Q. Well, first of all, how many aunts and uncles did you have? Right.

*A. My father had just two brothers, I guess, and just one sister.

Q. Okay. Did you keep in pretty close contact with them?

*A. Oh, yes. Yeah.

Q. Okay. Did they all stay in Patterson?

*A. They all came to Patterson eventually. Yeah.

Q. How did your father meet your mother? It's kind of a dual interview here.

*A. Well, it's a good story. My . . . a cousin of my father's was a customer of my grandfather's in New York, and said he had a young man that he thought would be interested in the (unintelligible) store.

Q. Did they live in Patterson all their lives?

*A. Yeah.

Q. Did you keep in pretty close contact with them after you moved to Rochester?

*A. Oh, sure.

Q. Was it difficult for you to move to Rochester?

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz' responses)

*A. Well, I'll tell you. (Laughter)

Q. (Laughter)

A. Don't give away any secrets. (Laughter)

*A. It was quite a drawing card, so I moved. (Laughter)

Q. (Laughter) I see. You made me lose all my questions. So, okay. How many brothers and sisters did you have?

*A. I had three. Two sisters and one brother.

Q. Did they stay in Patterson?

*A. Wait a minute. Two sisters I had?

A. Two sisters.

*A. Yeah. And one brother. My brother moved to Canton, New York.

Q. What was your father's trade in Patterson?

*A. He was in the retail clothing and furniture.

Q. And furniture. I see. And, did your mother work?

*A. And furnishings.

Q. Did your mother work, too?

*A. She helped him in the store. She was a great help.

Q. So, they had their own store, then?

*A. Oh, yeah. Yeah. They had their own business. Yeah.

Q. Okay. Have they passed away?

*A. Yes.

Q. Okay. Also, you had two sisters. Are they in Patterson still?

*A. One we lost, and the other one is in the suburbs. (Unintelligible) which is like Brighton to Rochester.

Q. Okay. My mother was . . . lived in Keylon (spelling?) in the 1920s.

*A. No!

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

A. I didn't know!

Q. How about that?

A. That's quite a coincidence. Yeah, it is.

Q. She . . . Okay. About what year were you were married?

*A. Nineteen twenty-five.

Q. Nineteen twenty-five. You came to Rochester immediately?

*A. Right.

Q. Okay. By then, Dr. Kominz had had a practice for about five years?

*A. Right.

Q. Okay. What neighborhood did you settle in? This is directed to either one of you, okay?

A. We lived off St. Paul Street near the river, right by the river.

*A. The Genesee River.

Q. Okay.

A. Costage Drive the name of the street was. Opposite Avenue E, you know where the avenues are off of St. Paul Street?

Q. Opposite St. Paul Boulevard?

A. Yeah. Close to the boulevard. Just a block away from the Driving Park Avenue Bridge.

Q. Okay. Sure. Did you stay there? How did you . . .

A. We lived there for seventeen years.

Q. Okay.

*A. I think we lived there twelve years.

A. No. We moved in 1937.

*A. So that's twelve years! (Laughter)

A. Oh, wait a minute. Pardon me. Twelve years. I was figuring the time I went into practice. Twelve years. Then we moved to a Harvard Street.

Q. Harvard Street.

(* denotes Mr. Kominz's responses)

A. Harvard.

Q. Sure. Off by . . .

A. And Harvard we lived from 1937 till 1965. That's about twenty-eight years.

Q. Okay. After Harvard?

A. Twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five, twenty-six, twenty-seven, twenty-eight years.

*A. Right here.

Q. You moved to here? Okay. You had two children?

A. Two children.

Q. Could you explain, first of all, what they're doing now, where they went to school, and so on? Those two questions.

A. Well, my son went to school at Ohio State, and he got his B.C., his B.A. and also his Master's Degree at Ohio State. And then he won a full grade scholarship for a year's study in Paris at the Sorbonne.

Q. At the Sorbonne, okay.

A. And from there, he came back to the states, and he went to Columbia University where he got his Ph.d. He first, when he got his Ph.d, he went first to teach at . . . did he start right in at the John Hopkins? He taught at John Hopkins University for . . . about seven years. And then he got his . . . what do you call it? After seven years you get a years sabbatical.

Q. Oh, sure.

A. And he spent that in New York. Some friend asked him to come down who was a professor at NYU in New York University, and through this man in the college, he got him . . . pulled away from John Hopkins and he went to teach for NYU. He was there, I think, about two or three years, and some way or another CCNY who has a . . . who's dean is a man who is a professor of physics at the University of Rochester . . . Dr. Marchak? Ever hear of the name?

Q. Yes I have.

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

A. And they got him to leave John Hopkin's . . . NYU, and now he's at CCNY. He's been there two or three years now.

Q. Okay.

*A. They made it attractive for him.

A. Yeah, they made him a disquished professor of physics . . . is that what they call him?

Q. That'll do it any time.

*A. Yeah. They made it attractive for him.

Q. Yeah, I guess so.

A. My daughter is married to a man who's a broker on the commodity exchange in Chicago. And, they live in Skokey, a city bordering on Chicago, and just on the edge.

Q. Skokey. Sure.

A. She'd been there quite a few years now, about twenty years, more or less.

Q. How did she happen to meet the Chicago stock broker?

A. They went to Northwestern University. They both attended at the same time.

*A. She went away to school and she never came home.

A. (Laughter) Yup.

Q. (Laughter) Why did she choose Northwestern?

*A. The year they graduated . . . she graduated from Monroe High School, Northwestern had an excellent football team. So, everybody was headed for Northwestern.

Q. Ah! That'll do it.

*A. Those who were accepted felt very fortunate. That's how she got to Northwestern.

A. It's a good school. It has a lot to offer, you know.

Q. It sure is. Boy, I'll say.

*A. Yeah. It was a good school, and we had no quarrel with that.

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

A. It had a good coach, Bus Eagen.

Q. The name rings a bell.

A. Yeah, Bus Eagen.

Q. Yeah. Wow.

*A. That was the main . . . I mean, that was the main issue that year.

Q. A couple of general questions: What was it like to bring children up in Park and the Harvard Avenue area? Was that a good neighborhood to bring children up?

*A. Yes. Yeah. It was very good.

Q. Did you consciously choose that neighborhood because it was a good neighborhood?

*A. It was a good neighborhood, it was close to where he was practicing which made it good. There were good schools in that area. In those years, Monroe High School was a very fine high school. Number 23 School, as a grade school, was a very good school. And, we're also near Temple Beth El on Park Avenue.

Q. On Park Avenue.

*A. And, there was good shopping within walking distance, which made it a little.

A. A lot of factor in this favor, in other words.

Q. What made you decide to leave Harvard?

*A. Harvard?

Q. Harvard Avenue.

A. Harvard Street.

Q. Harvard Street, I'm sorry.

*A. Well, we had a big house there.

A. Well, we had a large home, and the children at that time were both married and were living out of town. We didn't have any need for maintaining a home as large as that.

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

Q. Sure.

*A. It was hard. It was too hard.

A. It was difficult to maintain, yeah.

Q. That's a good reason. Okay. I'd like to ask you a few general questions about the methods and so on that you used in raising your kids. Did you keep a pretty strong kosher home?

*A. Oh, yes.

Q. Did you try to keep . . . sort of instill in them a Jewish heritage and so on?

*A. Oh, yes.

Q. You did?

*A. They had it.

Q. Okay. Was it . . . did the fact that you lived near Temple Beth El play a major role in your decision to locate in the area?

*A. Yeah. That was one . . . one of the good . . . And, at that time, the neighborhood had many families with whom we were friendly. And so, the children all became friends.

Q. So there was a great many reasons for you to decide to move there?

*A. Yeah.

A. That's right.

Q. Okay. Another . . . a couple of generally (unknown) at any rate, related questions that I have: I'm kind of curious, what would you think about raising children today? Do you think it's any more difficult?

*A. Oh, God! I'm so glad I'm not raising them today. (Laughter)

Q. What do you think about that?

A. There's a lot more that you have to cope with today. There's too much distraction, and the children have a tendency today to do things they weren't doing twenty-five or thirty years ago.

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

- *A. And there's something else, too. Maybe at our ages we haven't the strength. So you think that it would be that much more difficult. I don't know.
- Q. Let me just sort of back track then. Was it difficult to raise children in, say, the 1930s, and '40s, and '50s?
- *A. It's never easy.
- A. There was always problems. Always were problems. I think . . .
- *A. Especially if you have standards, and when children come in, they say everybody's doing this. Why can't I? And, you don't fool them. You really have to respect them. I mean, you have to know, well, why. And, sometimes you're able to get it across and sometimes you're not able to get it across.
- Q. That's a good point, too.
- *A. But when all the girls were beginning to go out, and there were Friday night dates, and I said but you know that it's (Unknown) Friday night that you don't go out. But . . . but . . . they all do it! I said, well, we could have some fun. We could have Friday dates right in the house. So, our house became the Friday night center. And, I want to tell you. There was not sitting room on the carpet.
- Q. Is that right? (Laughter)
- *A. We had a lot of fun. And, they loved it. And, there were never any more questions about going out on Friday night. There was no reason to go out. They had a better time in the house.
- Q. Okay. Do you think that your children are as strongly motivated religiously as you both are?
- A. I don't think so.
- *A. Religiously yes, observant no.
- Q. Okay. Do you agree with that Dr. Kominz?
- A. I'd even doubt that they're inclined to be as religiously active as we are either.

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

A. (Continued) There's a little slipping away. After all, I think, most all religions find it drifting away from the hard-core, you might say, what twenty-five, or thirty, or fifty years ago. They kind of take it, the other generation take it . . . they've bitten their teeth, and they do as they want to do today. And, they're not so much inclined to do what the parents think they ought to do. They got their own ideas. They're more independent, in other words.

Q. I see. I see. We'll . . . I think this will probably be the end of side 1.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 1, INTERVIEW 1

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

Tape I
Side II
Interview I

A. . . . that's what happens when you . . . Is that on already?

Q. What role do you think Temple Beth El played, first of all, for both of you?

A. First of all, what?

Q. For both of you?

*A. What role did it play?

A. Well . . .

Q. How important was it?

A. I think it's made religion important to us in that we find it interesting to attend and to observe. The old Orthodox Synagogues really were, you might say, behind us. They weren't keeping up with the times. I think, Temple Beth El is trying to modernize it to some extent and make it interesting for people to attend and bring the worship down to a level where it means something to you. We really enjoy going and attending. It's up to . . .

Q. Are you pretty regular in you attendance?

A. We attend services as a rule, every Saturday morning.

Q. Are there any organizations or anything like that that you participate in or that you have in the past?

*A. In the temple?

Q. In the temple or any Jewish organizations that you . . .

A. Well, I used to belong to the Men's Club, and we used to have services every Sunday morning. I used to attend for quite a few years. Recently, it's been harder for me to go to early morning services. At the present time, I'm not active in any organization through the temple.

*A. I'm in the Sisterhood in every other (unintelligible), and I have to . . .
I've been active over the years, vice-president . . .

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

A. Yes, you're in the sisterhood. Yes.

Q. Well, could you explain? Please.

*A. Explain what?

Q. What your activities were?

*A. Were?

A. Or are.

Q. Ah! (Laughter) I'm sorry.

A. You were . . .

*A. Well, they really "were", because . . . younger, I had more pep, more strength.

A. You served on a lot of committees in the Sisterhood, too.

*A. Practically on almost every one.

A. Yeah. She was very active.

*A. And, accepted the responsibility of a vice-presidency but never would take the top.

Q. Did you enjoy working for it?

*A. Oh, yes! Very much! I got a great deal of satisfaction out of it.

Q. What do you think of Temple Beth El's role in the community? What, do you think, position it plays? That could be in Rochester, for that matter.

A. I think it has a very important thing . . . important role to play in the city.

*A. Well, it's the major Conservative Temple.

A. It brings people together where you can meet friends, discuss things.

*A. But in the city.

A. Well, in the city is . . .

Q. Well, either way is fine.

*A. There have been a great many new programs which we have not been able to participate.

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

Q. This is something that we've been discussing off tape that I would kind of like to put on tape. Dr. Kominz brought that up earlier: what do you think of the new type programs that they try and initiate in . . .

*A. I think they're fantastic!

Q. Do you think they're succeeding?

*A. I think they are. With the younger people.

Q. What are some of the programs?

*A. Well, groups . . . where they meet in small groups, is a wonderful thing. It seems that they . . . now, we have never participated in it. There's no place there for us. We haven't been enjoying the Golden Age Group yet either, you know. We're in limbo. (Laughter)

Q. (Laughter)

*A. But, many . . . I talked to many of the people who do belong to these other groups, and they find them most interesting. And, they like to participate. They like hearing the views of the other young men. There are the young married groups which are also good. And, I think it is a very good thing. It keeps them all together which is what we need.

Q. Okay. What do you think Dr. Kominz? Do you agree?

A. I agree with those sentiments. I believe that's true.

Q. Do you think, then, the change or the ability, put it that way, to change is important to the synagogue?

*A. Oh, yes. Oh, yeah. Yeah. You have to go with the young people. You can't hold them back.

Q. Mrs. Kominz, was your tradition Orthodox or Conservative or . . . ?

*A. Orthodox.

Q. Orthodox as well.

*A. Yeah. Yeah.

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

Q. Did your parents maintain a strictly kosher home and so on? Did you really have a strong . . .

*A. My . . . my father had a very successful business and it closed on Friday night, and it was closed all day Saturday, disregarding anything that went on, you know, in other businesses.

Q. Was there a strong Jewish community in Patterson?

*A. Yes. Yeah.

Q. Did you both have cousins, aunts, and uncles, and so on that lived close when you were growing up?

*A. Yes. I did. I don't know about Lou.

A. I didn't have too many, no. I had several relatives that were out of town. A distance away.

Q. So, essentially then, for you it was just, sort of, a nuclear family. Just your mother and father and . . .

A. Mostly, yes. Just a strictly family group, you might say.

*A. Well, but you were nine in your family. You had your own group.

Q. (Laughter) Yeah, that's quite a football team with two more.

A. That's right. That's right.

Q. Counting your mother and father.

*A. But, because my mother came from New York, which is so very close to Patterson, we were with the New York family as much as with the Patterson family. We had a great many cousins, and aunts, and uncles.

A. You know, I was just thinking: When my parents were living, they were closer to the relations that . . . the only relations they had cousins in Rochester, where as the older people passed away, the next generation didn't seem to be as close to each other as the parents were, you know.

Q. Sure. That's exactly what my mother says.

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

A. They're drifting away from each other.

Q. Do you find the same thing is true?

*A. No, because my children, now this is the third generation. My daughter lives in Chicago, of course, my son now in New York, but and they meet in Washington. One in . . . somewhere in Pennsylvania. They have a cousins club.

Q. They do?

*A. Yes they do.

Q. Do you think that's kind of unusual?

A. It is, I think.

*A. I don't know, but it's a beautiful thing. And, I love it, because they come together from all over. And, they're only able now to do it once a year. They tried it twice a year, but it's tough to get everybody from all over.

Q. And do they come to Rochester?

A. No. They meet in New York.

*A. No. No. There's nobody here. They're all right in New York . . .

Q. Oh, I see.

*A. . . . I think, yes. In New York. That's where they meet because that seems nearer for everybody.

A. New York.

Q. So, they come from Chicago . . . and so on?

A. Yes. They get it from all over.

*A. Yes. Yes. New York and Washington. Two from Washington.

Q. Do you keep in close contact with your children?

*A. My children?

Q. Yeah.

*A. Oh, sure.

A. We do. Very close to them.

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

Q. Okay.

*A. And the nieces and nephews.

Q. That's my next question. Okay. With your nieces and nephews, as well?

*A. Yeah. That's right.

A. Yes.

Q. Are they in Rochester or are they scattered?

A. No. They're out of the city.

*A. No. Well, you have nieces here.

A. I do? (Laughter) Yes, I do have nieces here come to think of it.

*A. (Laughter)

Q. (Laughter)

A. Well, we're friendly, of course, with them. You know, after awhile you have your own routine, and you . . . your own line of work, and your own activities, and you don't seem to cross the paths with the other people. But, we were fairly close with each other. Kept in touch. Let me say, kept in touch.

*A. But, our's are all very close to each other.

Q. Would you say there's a general barrier in the way of contact? In other words, cousin's club seems to be unusual, I mean, in the general Jewish Community, do you think cousins, for instance, in the general Jewish Community as they used to be . . . as they were, let's say, when you were growing up?

*A. Well, of course, you have to remember that that many years ago . . . fifty, sixty years ago, there were cars. You didn't go parading all over. Your contacts weren't close. And, now they could be scattered if they didn't care. But I think, ours have been very close. And, I know other families that have cousins' clubs in the area, and they meet.

Q. This is my first instance coming across this, and I'm really fascinated. Wow!

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

*A. We're very happy with it, because first of all, my nieces and the nephews are in touch with me, I'm in touch with them, always.

Q. It must cost you a lot in postage.

A. Excuse me, I forgot about Dorothy living . . .

*A. Well, sure you are. Nobody could be closer than that.

A. I'm quite close to one of my nieces and (unintelligible)

Q. Well, when you ask questions like that, I suppose it . . .

*A. Comes out of the blue and then you forget.

A. It presses your memory, yes, all of a sudden.

Q. What I wanted to know . . . I don't want to keep you too long, so I just want to ask you a few general questions. Okay?

A. Alright.

Q. What do you think of Rochester? How would you characterize the city? Has it been good for both of you? Do you like living here?

*A. I like living here.

A. I'd say I'd prefer Rochester probably to any other city in the United States limit.

Q. Why do you think your feelings are so strong?

A. Well, it has a lot to offer you. For one thing, years ago I know, we used to boast . . . even today, we still boast about park system. Rochester is supposed to have the finest park systems in the country.

Q. It's beautiful.

A. We're close to other important parts of the country that are popular. We have two beautiful state parks and two fine mountainous areas in New York State, the Adirondacks and the Catskill Mountains. We have . . .

*A. What does that have to do with Rochester?

A. Well, they're close to these other communities that are very important, and

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

- A. (Continued) they're . . . they make life worth living around here. We have, the people in Rochester have a tendency to be more friendly, I think, than you'll find in other communities. And, up to a short time ago, the cost of living wasn't too terrible in Rochester. There are lots of opportunities of employment here. We've got some big concerns like Kodak, Bausch & Lomb, Taylor Instruments, other concerns that gave many opportunities of employment. Almost everybody in Rochester worked for Eastman Kodak at one time or another. And, the climate here is not bad. You know, take it by and large, good-tempered climate. Used to be nice in winter, not too cold. Nice in the summer, not too hot. (Unintelligible)
- Q. (Unintelligible)
- A. (Laughter) I think that's ample reason for preferring to stay. But, when I was a youngster, I went to visit Detroit. At that time, Detroit was a beautiful city. And I used to think at that time, my . . . my desire to live in Rochester began to waver a little. I got to think maybe I'd prefer to live in Detroit, preference to being in Rochester. Today, I wouldn't accept Detroit anymore. I still . . .
- Q. No, not anymore.
- *A. No.
- A. The only place I'd like to be in, possibly today after having been there, would be San Diego, California.
- Q. Oh, you enjoyed it, huh?
- *A. We loved it.
- A. We loved that city.
- Q. How often do you . . . have you been to California more than once?
- A. Pardon?
- Q. You've been to California once?

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

A. Just once.

*A. We spent some time there, but we . . .

A. We also enjoyed San Francisco an awful lot, too.

Q. That's where I'd like to go.

A. Great place.

*A. Beautiful.

Q. Rochester . . . getting back to what we were discussing a little bit in depth earlier, Rochester is a good place to raise kids, you think.

A. I would say so.

Q. It's one of those communities which . . .

*A. I think so. Yeah, I think so.

Q. Are there any drawbacks you think, to Rochester? Did you think it's too provincial, for example?

*A. Well, my son would say so. And, (unintelligible) when I quote the Rochester newspapers.

A. I don't have any, really, complaints against the city.

*A. But, I (unintelligible).

A. I was born here, my wife's been here over fifty years, and we like the city. She still likes it after fifty years which is a pretty good test of the city, you know, desirability.

*A. You see, I used to say that in Patterson where I was born and where I grew up, you didn't have to be such a nice person, because if you couldn't make friends, there were all kinds of cities around, were near. When I got here to Rochester, you had to behave yourself. You had to be a lady, because this is it. (Laughter)

Q. It must've kept you in line. (Laughter)

*A. Yeah. That may be funny, but it's the truth. Where you gonna go, Buffalo? Syracuse? You won't stay right here.

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

Q. No. I . . .

A. No.

*A. In those days, you didn't travel that far. Today, maybe, you can go . . .

Q. Sure.

*A. But, I find it . . . I've been very happy here.

Q. A couple of general questions, then: what do you think of Israel?

*A. What do I think of it?

Q. Think of Israel. In other words, do you support it strongly?

*A. I surely do, because it's a fantastic development. I wouldn't even say experiment, because it's beyond that now.

Q. What do you . . .

*A. I wish it every success.

Q. Okay.

A. I think it's the only, really, democracy in the entire middle east. And, it's functioning beautifully, and trying to improve the standing of the entire part of . . . that entire part of the world, if they give them a chance to do it. If they all became friendly with Israel . . . all their Arab neighbors, the people around that area, they could really do a lot for them to raise their status, their standing in the world. To bring them education. To bring them ideas for improving their country, you know, raising their standards of living. If they'd only give them a chance.

Q. Now, I know that the Rochester (Unintelligible) has fund drives and so on as time goes on. Do you actively contribute to those kinds of things?

A. Oh, yes.

*A. (Unintelligible)

A. Yes.

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

Q. Have you ever been to Israel?

*A. No. (Unintelligible)

Q. Do you think that sometime you might want to go?

*A. We always wanted to go.

A. We are booked to go. In fact, we made reservations and everything else about five, six years ago, wasn't it? Six, seven years ago. I developed a little physical trouble, and my doctor advised against going.

*A. The first time we were ready to go, when the trouble began, I think Eisenhower was president. And, Herm was in Paris studying that year we had tickets to go. We were going . . .

Q. (Unintelligible)

*A. Yeah. We were going to see him, and then we were going on to Israel, and that was the time (unintelligible). And, he said it was no place to come. So, we cancelled our plans.

Q. So, he was right.

*A. Yeah. Well . . .

A. Yeah. It was the best thing to do.

*A. And then, the next time we were ready to go, we had paid for our tickets and went to the doctor . . . and he said no.

Q. What can you do?

A. He said not now.

Q. Okay.

*A. So, that's it.

Q. What do you think Israel's problems are? For instance, let's take a couple of things: What do you think of the United States policy towards Israel? Do you think it's as strong as it should be?

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

*A. I don't know what it is.

Q. Okay. (Unintelligible) Do you think it's wishy-washy where . . .

*A. Yes, it is. Because we don't know from one day to the next what it is.
And it depends who's speaking.

Q. What do you both think of (unintelligible)?

*A. He doesn't deserve the support that he's getting.

A. It so happens . . .

*A. I don't think he deserves the adulation that he got.

Q. Let me just check the tape.

A. It's pretty good. It's pretty accurate.

Q. Yeah, it's . . .

A. A very faithful reproduction.

Q. It is pretty good, actually. What do you think of Dr. Kissinger?

A. I think he's trying to do the right thing, but I think he's not being given the free hand he should have to accomplish what he wants to accomplish. The administration in back of it, in other words, is not sure of itself. They don't know what kind of policies to pursue. And, that's a handicap with what he's trying to do. I think given the free reign of hand and told to do what he wants to do, I think he'd be more successful in the attitude. I think he's trying hard, and he's been about as good a man as we've had in office in a long time.

Q. Do you think that Israel is going to succeed?

*A. Oh, yes.

Q. Do you think that there's something unique or unusual about Israel, it's sense of dynamic . . . the dynamic sense of Israel and the vitality, the vibrance?

*A. Say that?

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

Q. Well, Israel has a sense of dynamism, vibrance, vitality, that type of thing. Do you think that's unique? Is it something that you see in America as well as the State of Israel?

*A. No. I think you see it only there.

Q. Why?

A. When I think no other country, no other people has had the history that Israel has dating back for several thousand years. They'd been the wandering race now, wandering group of people for several thousand years, at least. Torn up by the rich from where they called home for a long time before that. And, always with the promise, with the hope that some day they'd be returned to their homeland. Now that they've been apparently returned, they've got to where they call their homeland, to which they feel they're entitled by every conceivable law, or any conceivable thing that's happened in the past, they're gonna try to hold on and make that a complete success. If it's at all possible for them to do so.

*A. Could it be because . . . a last stand?

A. You might call it that.

Q. Do you think that it could conceivably come down to that?

*A. I think so, yeah. This is it.

Q. Another question that interests me: What do you think of the United Nations?
(Laughter)

A. I'm in favor of it. I support the United Nations, although a lot of inequities have crept into it. The Third World nations today are trying to run the U.N. to suit their own needs and their own ideas. And, many of that I don't go along with, I don't approve of. But, I think, the United Nations has a base, what it stands for, is an important thing to the world to keep the world on an even keel, in other words. The motives, the founding of it were, I think, of the

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

- A. (Continued) highest kind. The reason for founding it, I approve of heartily. But, it's becoming difficult to do what they wanted to do, because of this group of small nations that got into it, who don't go along with the views of the Western Block you know.
- Q. Okay. I'll give you a for instance, now. They branded Zionism. Okay, what do you think of branding Zionism as (unintelligible).
- *A. Oh, I think that's nonsense, but I think, you have to keep it. You . . . have to have the United Nations, because there has to be a place where these things come out.
- A. There has to be reform.
- *A. Naturally this is stupid. Not only stupid . . . it's . . . it's . . . please. This is on tape, I'm not gonna say anymore. You have to have it. If you don't have it, then all this would be underground.
- A. It's the only forum that we have today, really, for the expression of world opinion.
- Q. I see. A couple of other questions that I have: Do you think . . . what do you think . . . first of all, we'll take Rochester's Jewish Community. What do you think of it? Do you think there's anything . . . Do you think, first of all, it's a strong community? Do you think there's anything unique about that?
- *A. I think it's a strong community.
- A. I think so, too.
- *A. And, I think they united.
- Q. What do you think about its future?
- *A. It'll grow. Of course, we have a beautiful group of young people who are interested in the work (unintelligible) with a purpose.
- Q. I see. I see.

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

A. We also have some very fine rabbis in our temple today who are trying to mold the lives of the young people into becoming good Jewish people, and good American citizens. Do the right thing by themselves, and by their country. I think they're succeeding to a point, too.

Q. I suppose so.

A. I think they are.

Q. Okay. Just a couple of more questions, then. Is Rochester changed over the years?

*A. Well, of course. (Laughter) Like every city.

Q. Well, how do you think? For the better, for the worst? If so, how?

*A. I . . . for the worst. And yet, I think, they really try. Haven't given up. I think they're trying, but it's not nice to have admit that you can't leave your house at night.

A. Well, of course, that's general through the entire country. Crime is more rampant . . .

*A. Well, I said that . . . that's what I mean.

A. The central cities are allowed to deteriorate, disintergrate.

Q. What do you think of Rochester's downtown?

A. I don't think they've done enough for it to try to keep it as a viable area, you know. After all, it's been disintegrating now for quite a few years. They made only feeble attempts to try to keep the city from going to the dogs and breaking down.

Q. Do you think communities like Rochester will survive, though? Will be . . . continue to be . . .

A. I'll think they'll survive, but they're having a terrible struggle in the process of surviving. But right now, there seems to be (unintelligible) enough

(* denotes Mrs. Kominz's responses)

A. (Continued) people are getting interested and are trying to maintain the downtown area. After all, that's really the (unintelligible) of the City of Rochester. The suburbs coming and springing up and coming to life are not gonna help the city at all, the central city at all. We have to have a central city. And, I believe there are enough people of power, with money, that are starting to realize the fact something more must be done to keep the city from perishing. I think gonna maintain, keep the city from going down, down the hill entirely. But, it's a terrific struggle. Terrific struggle. And, if the people who've got money would come forward and give their money to try to keep the city (unintelligible), they'd succeed without too much difficulty.

Q. What do you think Rochester's strong points are?

A. Well, we have a fine orchestra here. We have a good school of music.

Q. The history department.

*A. Yeah.

A. The history department. Fine staff at the University of Rochester.

*A. Who's our friend there. Brody. Ed Brody. Do you know him?

Q. Brody.

*A. Ed Brody. He must be in the science department. He got his doctorate from my son.

A. Mr. Mitchell teaches history.

Q. Just one course. It's part of my scholarship (unintelligible). Okay, then.

I suppose that'll complete the interview. Thank you both very much.

*A. Oh, you're more than welcome.

A. Did you get everything you wanted?