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Van Eenenaam, Isla Oral History Interview: Sesquicentennial of Holland, "150 Stories for 150 Years"

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Oral History Interview with
Isla Van Eenam

(unedited)

Conducted November 4, 1996
by Ellie Norden

Sesquicentennial Oral History Project
"150 Stories for 150 Years"
EN: We’re going to just have a good time chatting this afternoon.

IVE: Sounds wonderful.

EN: First of all, if you would give us your name and if you’ll include your maiden name please.

IVE: My name is Isla Pruim (was my maiden name) Van Eenanaam.

EN: And how do you spell Pruim?

IVE: P-R-U-I-M. I really think in the Dutch it would have been pronounced Proom but we always pronounced it Pryme.

EN: Would you please tell us your date of birth?

IVE: [date removed], 1902.

EN: So you’re looking towards a birthday soon!

IVE: Very shortly.

EN: Where were you born?

IVE: I was born in Zeeland and my parents had built a new home on a lovely lot on Central Avenue that they moved me to. I don’t remember whether I was born in the house or whether I was born and they moved right in.

EN: So had your family been long time residents of Zeeland? They didn’t come from the Netherlands?

IVE: No, not my family. I don’t think their parents came from the Netherlands but their
EN: Can you tell us a little bit about your family and your early life in Zeeland?

IVE: I was raised an only child. My parents lost a little boy and a little girl when they were very young. But I grew up with cousins right next door, the De Pree family, so I never was without companions and fun. I married the boy that I saw when we were baptized together on the same Sunday morning. I looked over my father’s shoulder and I thought that’s a nice, likely boy. I think I’ll keep my eye on him (laughs). So I married Gordon Van Eenanaam who also lived and was born in Zeeland and, following our wedding... He was running for the senate at the time, the Michigan State Senate, and he won. So our first eight years of married life while we were settled in Muskegon and he was starting law practice, we commuted back and forth for eight years to Lansing. Our first eight years were very busy.

EN: He could continue with his law practice?

IVE: Yes. They didn’t stay in Lansing like they do now. Then we had three children, two boys, John, the older, and David. David is a doctor and John is a lawyer. David practices in Watertown, NY. And my daughter, Isla Van Eenanaam, she married a Vermeulen boy from Grand Rapids and settled in Columbus, Ohio.

EN: When did you first come to Holland? Or did you have association with Holland as a child?

IVE: As a child we had very close ties to Holland. My family had relatives in Holland, Dr. and Mrs. Van Peursem (Mrs. Van Peursem was my mother’s sister), and the close friends of my mother’s, the Kleins. Dr. and Mrs. Abraham Leenhouts were
very close friends of theirs. In fact, he brought me into the world. Another family, the Cathcart family, were my father’s family and they were a lovely family. One of the women was a very wonderful teacher in Holland and has been honored in Holland as a teacher. So we were back and forth visiting in Holland a lot. In those days the only way of getting back and forth was on the interurban, which was a marvelous mode of transportation. It was a wonderful line, speedy and clean. And of course, you walked once they let you off at downtown in Holland. You walked where you had to go unless you had a horse and buggy waiting for you.

EN: Was that possible? Could you order a horse and buggy to pick you up?

IVE: Oh, yes. There were livery stables everywhere. But generally you walked a lot.

EN: Do you remember the fare for riding on the interurban in those days?

IVE: Oh, a nickel, probably. I don’t really remember. It never was very much.

EN: And how far did the interurban go?

IVE: Oh, it went to Grand Rapids, it went to Saugatuck, it went to Kalamazoo. I don’t recall it going to Grand Haven. Usually, that was by train, or by automobile when the automobiles came in, but then it was over corduroy roads. I don’t know if you know what a corduroy road was but those were roads built with logs over the loose park sand in this area. Then they put some dirt over those logs, but of course that dirt would settle and finally (laughs) you’d plop along on the road on the logs. That was before they started to pave the highway.

EN: What are some of your happy experiences in Holland as a child?

IVE: I think visiting with my mother and father, because, being an only child, they took
me everywhere they went and I guess I must have behaved well because (laughs) I went everywhere with them. As a child, I think for all children in this area who were connected in any way with Sunday School, the big excitement was always the Sunday School picnic at Jenison Park. You all went on the interurban and that was a wonderful trip. I remember the figure eights and the House of Troubles and the merry-go-round at the amusement park in Jenison, and then they had a great big dance pavilion on that peninsula. Now it has just beautiful homes on that peninsula but it used to be... and then we'd walk over to Macatawa Park and I happened to be a witness to the first terrible accident.

EN: Tell us about that.

IVE: Well, earlier, the boardwalk had been washed away and the bathhouse had been washed away by the waves and the erosion, but that had sort of subsided and they built a cement board walk all along in front of the cottages on Lake Michigan at Macatawa Park. Those were great big, square slabs of cement and there must have been an erosion under that pavement. I happened to be there. In fact, I had walked over that very pavement not long before, and all of us had because we were all at a Sunday School picnic. But I was standing off to the side and all of a sudden there were two big slabs that collapsed and came (claps hands together) up together and two men were crushed. It was a horrible thing.

EN: How old were you then?

IVE: I suppose I was about ten probably or twelve.

EN: Oh my. And that’s still a vivid memory.
IVE: Oh yes, definitely. I can shut my eyes and think about it... and a lot of excitement and the Coast Guard were coming, running with ropes to pull the slabs apart. I remember somebody next to me got so upset he threw up. You know, it was just so nervous.

EN: You mentioned the dance pavilion at Jenison? Did you enjoy the dances there?

IVE: I surely did! Years later, when I was a student at college, if we had fraternity or sorority parties at Jenison Park we always managed to get the chaperon... I remember one of our teachers, Miss Gibson, was a chaperon one time at a fraternal party, and we managed to get her on the interurban first and then those of us who didn't care to dance got on the interurban with her and those who liked to dance hung back and enjoyed a couple dances. You see, we were not supposed to dance at that time at Hope.

EN: But your parents didn't mind?

IVE: No, no. As a child I can remember asking my parents if I could take dancing lessons at the Women's Literary Club in Holland. I wish I could remember the instructor. She was just darling and everybody knew her in Holland. I'm sure her name must appear somewhere. But she was giving dance, ballroom dancing it was. Finally my parents said, yes, I could do that. But they would have to drive me. I couldn't go alone, and they didn't want me to go with a boy. Then, they would wait for me. But that didn't last very long. I soon lost interest in that, but it was fun.

EN: You mentioned that you moved to Muskegon after marriage. Have you lived any other places?
IVE: In Lansing, when my husband was in the senate. I lived in three different places in Lansing, I remember: in a home that we rented and also an apartment for a year. One session of the senate, we lived in the old Downey Hotel in Lansing. We had a room and a living room.

EN: Can you tell us a little bit about your life in Lansing?

IVE: I can tell you some funny things.

EN: Okay, We’d like to hear it!

IVE: (Laughs) I can remember...oh dear, this is really funny... We had a suite of rooms on the third floor of the hotel that comprised a bedroom and a bath and a living area. On the fourth floor was an identical suite and my husband came home with a couple of his men and said, "Come on in and we’ll visit for a while in my digs." So, he went up in the elevator and he got off on the wrong floor and he walked into this suite on the fourth floor and he saw a woman at the telephone through the bedroom curtains and he thought it was I, or a friend of mine. So he told the men to take their wraps off and they sat down and when the woman got through visiting on the telephone, she came into the room and she looked at my husband and she said, "What are you doing in my room!" And it was the husband of... oh who was this big boxer at the time... I wish I knew, but anyway... but fortunately, unfortunately, I guess, he walked in at the same time. Just then! And my husband had said, "What are you doing in my room?" She said, "This is our apartment." And in walked her husband, but fortunately my husband had met him because they had something to do in the senate, perhaps a bill about boxing. He had met this chap and so they knew each
other and they got it all straightened out. But imagine walking in uninvited into a big, brawny boxer’s apartment (laughs).

EN: Oh my, what an interesting experience.

IVE: Well no, it was a wonderful experience. I enjoyed every minute of it.

EN: Was the social life different with that you had experienced?

IVE: Yes. There was a House and Senate club, they called it, and the wives of the men who were in the legislature. We got together very often for social events and things like that.

EN: Actually, I guess that doesn't pertain to life in Holland. Maybe I've digressed a little bit. I failed to ask you, you graduated from high school in Zeeland, and then what did you do?

IVE: I came right to Hope. Almost all my class who graduated that year with me in Zeeland came to Hope.

EN: Is that right?

IVE: Yes. That was quite unusual. We had a very, very nice class that year. So yes, that was in 1920.

EN: Did you marry right away or did you work?

IVE: No, I supervised music and art in the Zeeland Schools for four years after I graduated, and then I married.

EN: I know you've had a very active life. Can you tell me about some of the organizations that you have been involved in over the years?

IVE: Well, yes. All of them, for the most part, have been closely related to my church
and my religious life. I've been very interested in the YWCA in Muskegon. Very interested. I was on the board a lot, and I was the president, and I was on the committee when we built the new YWCA, and when it was finished, they asked me to be the chairman of the decorating committee. I just have been very interested in the work of the YWCA. And then of course, in my own church; I was a member of one of the Reformed Churches in Muskegon and president of the Women's Missionary Society and that type of thing. I did a lot of... besides the singing that I did. I had been a vocalist and a singer and called on a lot to sing and directed choirs and what not... taught Sunday School. When I came to Holland, I joined Hope Church and was very active in Hope Church. Then I was appointed to the Board of Church World Missions, so for six years I served on the national board for the Reformed Church in their missionary work, and I loved that. It was a wonderful experience.

EN: Were you involved in any organizations here in Holland after you moved here?

IVE: Yes, I joined HASP when it was organized and I've enjoyed that contact. It's been a very stimulating and very fine organization. Very good. I didn't join the Literary Club although they wanted me to, but at the time I was busy with my position at the college and I didn't feel as though I had the time for it. Then I had gotten interested in my church here, Hope, and I just thought that I had to make a choice, while the Literary Club is great and it's fine and it's a wonderful opportunity to get to be acquainted and get to know lovely people, and their programs are wonderful. I gave one of the programs one year when I was still living in Muskegon and they asked if I
would give a concert at their last meeting in the spring so I said yes, but then I told my husband I thought I'd better practice a little bit and get a teacher and work with her on a program. So by the time I paid my teacher and then bought a new dress, I was paid $25 for the concert. So I didn't make much on that (laughs).

EN: We haven't determined when you moved to Holland and what caused you to come to Holland.

IVE: My husband died in 1960. President Irwin Lubbers was the president of Hope at the time and he offered me a position on the campus. My daughter was married that summer following my husband's death and my other two boys were married and out of the house, and I accepted and came as the head resident of Voorhees Hall. I had that position for two years when I was offered the position of Dean of Women when Miss Reeverts resigned, and so I held that position until I retired.

EN: So how many years were you actually there?

IVE: On the campus, I was there as a part of the organization for eight years.

EN: Can you tell us some of your experiences? And some of the changes?

IVE: I could write a book! For one thing, as the Dean of Women, I was partly responsible for discipline, although I never thought of myself as a disciplinarian. I always thought of myself as somebody there to help if they needed me. It was fun. I enjoyed the girls and I think they enjoyed me. But we had very definite rules and regulations and I think most people pretty much know about them: getting in on time and signing out. They had to know every minute where you were. That has all changed.
EN: And what do you think about that? About the rules?

IVE: I thought part of them were necessary. A necessary change. I felt that the women were responsible enough to certainly do some of the things without being told when and where and what. But some of the things I think have been a little too relaxed.

EN: Can you give me an example?

IVE: Well, one of the first things that surprised me was when the women asked for keys to the dormitory. Already some of the rules had been relaxed a little, and that was in my term as Dean of Women, and I went along with some of them. But then they asked for keys, and I said, "Keys!" Everybody asked for a key. I said, "What if you lose the keys and somebody picks it up or you give them to your boyfriend or something, that might cause a lot of real problems." But I said, "All right. If your parents tell me that you may have a key and I get a written notice from your parents, I will allow you... at least, my part of the bargain I'll say, "Yes, you may do that." My goodness sakes I hardly had a parent that didn't say, "No, they couldn't have keys." So I was just so surprised! I thought the parents would surely back me up. And they didn't! I was really very surprised. Now whether they still have keys now or whether that privilege has been taken away, I don't know. It seemed to work out all right.

EN: What are some of the biggest changes you've seen in Holland in the past fifty years? That's a long time.

IVE: First of all, of course, the interurban tracks were removed (laughs) from Holland's Eighth Street. I think probably the biggest change, and one that I kind of welcome to
a point, was the influx of different nationalities. I thought that was good for us. It was interesting, and now... It all came about in the years when the blueberry farmers needed help in their fields and had the Mexican people coming in to help. I must say it was wonderful how Holland rallied around them and helped them and supported the families and did everything they could to make it easy for them. Now, there's quite an influx of Spanish background people and I think, for the most part, they've been nice. The buildings all around and the manufacturing businesses, that has just burgeoned in Holland. I think that would probably be the one thing.

EN: Has the change in the industrial area been good for the city of Holland? Many industries have come in, you know.

IVE: Oh sure, sure.

EN: In what way?

IVE: Well, monetarily of course, providing positions and jobs. It's also brought in a lot of people because you have to have workers in those factories, and subsequently Holland has expanded. The growth of Holland is phenomenal, really, when you think about the darling little town we used to have, and what a beautiful city it has evolved into. Because, I think Holland is beautiful.

EN: Are there negative aspects to having the industry here?

IVE: With a growth in population you're bound to have problems. Crime would be one problem I would think. I can't think of any other negatives.

EN: Traditionally, the Dutch heritage has played a very big part in our community. Do you think it still does or has that lessened because of the expansion of industry, and
what has come with industry?

IVE: Of course it has. Still, we’re doing a great deal to keep it also, which I think is great. It’s very important and I think sometimes I feel myself once in a while when I see the part of the Sentinel that’s devoted to the Spanish, I have little misgivings about that and I shouldn’t because we have so many Hispanic people and they must enjoy that section, too, of the Sentinel. But when I think of the early settlers that came and the Dutch families that came and lived in Zeeland, they were so proud of the fact that they could speak English, and I’m a great supporter of English first in our country. I have supported that program with my funds as well as my mouth, because I think it’s important for us to have one language. If they want to come here so badly and they love America, presumably, then they should learn our language. Because I have seen these Dutch families that came years and years ago, when I was a child, and how proud and how anxious they were to acclimate themselves to this culture and our way of life and we didn’t have special instructors in the schools…

EN: So you think there is not a need or it’s not wise to have bilingual teachers?

IVE: Maybe for the first couple years, perhaps, but not beyond, because they can learn the language. They learn it quickly, children do.

EN: Have you been aware of any controversy in the city of Holland?

IVE: I don’t get into the business area very much and know too much about that. No…

EN: Let’s go back to Hope College. How has Hope changed over the years and how does the community react to this?

IVE: Well, of course, physically it’s changed. Absolutely (laughs). When I came as a
student the dormitory of Voorhees was the only one for the women. Van Vleck Hall was then... I don't know whether the seminary students lived there then... It was for the men, and then VanRaalte hall was the only building as far as classrooms were concerned. There was no music hall. Carnegie Gym was there on the campus. That was a very lovely gift from Mr. Carnegie and was used a lot for our activities. Then the chapel, Graves—that was a beautiful building and the chapel was in there and the library was in there. Classrooms were in there and that's where we all went, and Van Raalte Hall. And then the president's home.

EN: What about curriculum?

IVE: Oh, it was so different! The core curriculum, English and history and chemistry, were big. And the biology and chemistry. I did take one chemistry class and then the math and... Music? Oh, I wish we had had more music and more drama because I did belong to the little drama club that we had at the time and we would have a woman from Grand Rapids come and coach us. We had nobody on the campus on the faculty who was interested. But the music was very sketchy. We had a pianist, a teacher, Dr. Kress, and Mrs. Fenton was our instructor in voice and I took both. I soon dropped piano because voice was my love and later when the orchestra... they always had a very nice orchestra, too... when they gave concerts I went as their soloist with them, and went all over singing. So that was my real love.

EN: How did the physical expansion and the increase in student population affect the community? Is there a good rapport?

IVE: I always felt that there was a good rapport. There may have been little
misunderstandings or clashes or a little jealousy probably. I think that Holland has, oh, it’s been so wonderful for Holland. To have the campus right in the middle of the town and think of what the college offers in cultural things. The people here living in Freedom Village can’t get over how wonderful the college is and what it offers. They’re excited about all the opportunities for music and drama and athletics and writing and they’re excited about HASP. Many of the people here belong to HASP.

EN: So you think it makes a definite contribution?

IVE: Oh very, very definitely.

EN: Have you read or heard anything about some people in the community complaining that the college has too much power and therefore can make decisions relating to buying up property or...?

IVE: Again, I don’t hear much of that because I don’t have contact in a business way or too much in that area. I have personally never run into anything like that.

EN: You’ve already mentioned how important your church life is to you. Would you like to talk a little about that? What the role of the church is playing and has played in Holland and how has it changed? What do you think about the relationship between Holland and the churches and the city?

IVE: Well, I have my own private opinion of what I think the ministers ought to preach more about (laughs)...but I won’t go into that.

EN: No, that’s fine.

IVE: Oh, I don’t know. I’m the kind that I like a minister who pounds the pulpit. I think
a lot of our clergy are afraid to speak out about our social problems in our country, and I really think that they are a little bit hesitant. I think they want to be... I don’t know what it is, but I just feel as though they aren’t really getting us enough direction in our Christian life.

EN: Is the church, then, more of a social gathering place?

IVE: No, no, no. I don’t feel as though the people here in Holland feel that their church is a big social club. I think they’re very committed, definitely, and I think the average church preaches the gospel and I don’t have any quarrel with that. It’s just that life is difficult today and in our country there are a lot of problems that I think we ought to face a little more up front and we don’t get an awful lot of direction in that area from the pulpit, I don’t think.

EN: How is your involvement changed over the years?

IVE: As I’ve gotten older I’m not teaching Sunday School anymore. I don’t think I’ve ever skipped Sunday School, as old as I am (laughs). This year, I haven’t gone to Sunday School. Otherwise I always went to all the adult classes, everything that they have to offer. And they have a very fine program at Hope Church for adult education. I used to teach high school Sunday School class in my old church in Muskegon. I’ve been asked now to help with the young children at Hope with one of our instructors, one of our teachers has asked me to help him. I’ve done a lot of speaking and in Muskegon I was busy speaking a lot.

EN: What do you think is the role of the church in Holland? What role is it playing in Holland?
IVE: We think of Holland as a Christian community but there certainly must be a lot of people who never darken the church door. I should be the last one to say anything, because I don’t go out searching either for those that aren’t… So I don’t know, but I just feel probably… and some churches do more of that than others to reach out into the neighborhood and interest the unchurched to… I think a lot of that problem of crime and all those things could all be mitigated with a little more effort on the churches’ part to go into those areas and try to help. I think we ought to support, too, the agencies that we have here. I’m very interested, and I don’t do what I should do really, but I’m interested in the Holland City Mission. I think that’s such a good organization. It doesn’t get help from the United Fund. It relies only on individual help and also on the churches. I get their report regularly and you’d be amazed at how many people they feed and clothe and allow to live there until they get straightened around.

EN: Do you think Holland is unusual in that a place like the City Mission gets a lot of help from its citizens as compared to another community where that might not be true?

IVE: I hadn’t really thought about that, but it’s possible, because in our church we’re very conscious of… bringing produce and food to the church all fall and all summer every week we just have baskets full at Hope.

EN: Where does it go? Community Action House?

IVE: Community Action House.

EN: My point is that because I think this is a strong religious community, I wonder if we
are more aware than other communities? More ready to help?

IVE: Yes. Yes and no. Still I think sometimes people that aren’t so connected to the church sort of salve their conscience by being very generous with their giving for things like that.

EN: Now let’s skip back a little bit in history again. We’ve experienced several wars during our lifetimes. Do you remember what it was like just after World War II in Holland?

IVE: Do you mean World War II or World War I? I go back to World War I.

EN: Maybe you’d like to say something about that.

IVE: I can remember when it stopped. Oh, we were wild, you know.

EN: You were in Zeeland then?

IVE: Oh yes, I was in high school, and we heard the news and everybody just left high school. We just walked out and ran down Main Street in Zeeland, shouting and yelling, and somebody got into the belfry of the First Reformed Church and rang the bell. That was the false alarm, the first indication that the war was over and then it was later, just a matter of days, I think, when the real armistice was signed. We had to celebrate all over again (laughs). But that was quite a time.

EN: And World War II was pretty much the same?

IVE: World War II, I was married. I had been so grateful and I had been so sympathetic to the Paralyzed Veterans of America and the Hospitalized Veterans of America. I do what I can to help them because my family, for some reason, have always escaped active service. They were either too young or too old when the First and the Second
Wars took place, and the Korean War, my children served in. But one was a doctor and his services were back of the lines and, in fact, in Chicago, in the hospital there. My [other] son was trained in Mandarin Chinese for a whole year and sent to Taiwan and on the ready, of course, but never in danger. The War did certainly affect all of us, and I've been very grateful, and for that reason I've been very sympathetic to all the agencies that are trying to help the veterans.

EN: You've spoken a little bit about your job at the college, but I wonder if there is one job that you had in the past fifty years that you particularly enjoyed and why?

IVE: I think Dean of Women. I loved that job, I really did. I had a good time. I enjoyed my contacts with the women, and, as I say, there were times when I had to sit in on disciplinary problems, but for the most part I enjoyed just the association with them and counseling them and helping them and feeling as though I was needed. And a lot of them, a couple of the women, I still have very close ties to. I have one little incident, shall I tell you?

EN: Please!

IVE: I got a notice one time in my office: "Dean Van (that's what they called me), please come to your office (I had an office in the Boyd Cottage which it was called at that time and it was a lovely first floor of a nice home) at 7:30. We have a very serious matter to discuss with you." And it was signed, "the Association of Women Students," which was the governing body for the women and I was its sponsor and the officers signed it. So at 7:30 at the end of a busy day and probably a lot of meetings I walked over to my office and there were about six girls sitting on the steps...
and they were all smoking a cigarette! They weren’t allowed to smoke cigarettes and the officers of the governing body, they were sitting there smoking cigarettes! I didn’t say a word! I walked up to them and I said, "Hi." I said, "What’s the big, important meeting we have tonight?" They looked at me and they put their cigarettes out and they got up and we all walked into the building together. They opened up the French doors and they said, "Surprise!" And here they had a table set up with a birthday cake and candles and it was my birthday.

EN: What was the point of the cigarettes?

IVE: I think they just wanted to be dickens. I think they just wanted to shock me. And unfortunately, they didn’t get a rise out of me.

EN: Oh. Wasn’t that smart?

IVE: We laughed about it afterwards.

EN: So during your time there, did that rule change so that they could smoke?

IVE: Well, later we decided that there were certain smoking rooms. They weren’t allowed to smoke in their own rooms nor in public places, but we did have smoking rooms. Well, that was alright, but it meant that if a girl really craved a cigarette at ten o’clock at night, she had to walk over to the smoking room across the campus (laughs) so I don’t think that lasted very long either.

EN: Did you ever have a job in Holland that you didn’t like?

IVE: You mean at the campus?

EN: Any place. Was that the only job you had?

IVE: No, I supervised music and harp for four years in Zeeland and I loved that.
EN: So you didn’t have a job you didn’t like?

IVE: No, I didn’t.

EN: How do you think the role of women has changed in the past fifty years in Holland?

IVE: Oh, so much, so much.

EN: For the good?

IVE: I’ve never been a feminist. I think that there is a role (end of side one)... women have changed, so much so, so much. I say I’ve never been a feminist, but I also feel, though, that there’s definite room for women to be equally considered, really because they add a great deal. They approach a position so differently. But to work together on some things is priceless.

EN: Can you think of any specific opportunities that women have now which they didn’t have fifty years ago in Holland? For instance, we have a women who is assistant city manager.

IVE: Great! Wonderful! I think that’s fine. Women are very creative. I think sometimes more creative than men. They think differently. Men think expansively and women have a little more detail, which is great and adds a great deal to a project, some details that are beautiful and lovely and add so much. But I say I’ve never been a feminist, and the idea of a women leaving her children to other people to care for and raise and never seeing them all day long until at the end of the night... I’ve given talks about that and I’ve written papers on it. Everybody comes home at the end of the day and the men are tired and the women are tired and they’re all hungry and the kids are excited. They want to tell the parents something that’s happened in school
and the parents are too tired to listen! I was asked one time to speak to the state convention of business women in Michigan. They met in Muskegon and I don’t know whether they liked exactly what I said. But I gave them a lot of credit because I feel they are in a situation where a woman has to help with the income. It’s marvelous, wonderful. I give her all kinds of credit. I feel, too, there are some women who are very gifted and feel very deprived not to be able to go on with their careers since they’re married. I don’t see any reason, if arrangements can be made at home, that she shouldn’t do that. So it isn’t that I’m against feminism.

EN: Can you think of any major turning point in your life?

IVE: Well, my husband died. That was a big turning point because I left my town, I left my friends, I left my associations, I left the things that I had worked hard for. I was the vice-president of the Council of Church Women in the State at the time and I could go on and take the presidency. I left my friends, I sold my home. I came to Holland to take a position that I didn’t feel I really was cut out for particularly. Except I told Dr. Lubbers and John Hollenbach, "Well, if you take me just the way I am! I’ve had a lot of experience with young people. I had three of my own and I’ve enjoyed them, and I had a lot of their friends around and I’ve taught Sunday School and Hi-Y and Y-teens so…"

EN: So even though it was traumatic you can say it was a growing experience for you?

IVE: Oh, yes.

EN: Can you tell me what you have heard other people say about Holland, such as your family from out of town? What do they think about Holland? Your children have
moved away. What would they say?

IVE: They loved it.

EN: Even now?

IVE: Yes! In fact my daughter has four sons and all of them went through Hope and two of them graduated from Hope. And the others took two years and then went on to other colleges. They come back, they bring their friends. The first thing they do is go to the college and show them the campus. My daughter and her husband are building a retirement home on Lake Michigan just about fifteen minutes from here and I was there last night and the children bring their girlfriends. They love it. They love Holland. They had a wonderful experience here.

EN: Well, you have all good things to say about Holland. It's given you a good life and you've given a lot to Holland, too.

IVE: Well, I don't know about that.

EN: Oh, I think you've made a wonderful contribution.

IVE: I don't know about that, but at least I certainly have loved it and my parents did.

EN: We've had a good time talking.

IVE: I know we have.

EN: I really enjoyed it. I hope I've covered most everything that has been significant to you. Is there any last thing you'd like to say as far as Holland and your relationship to it?

IVE: I think the people that my parents knew... there's a wonderful coterie, a beautiful group of people that meant a great deal and did a great deal for Holland at a time
when it was developing. They were friends of my parents and when I was in college, the women in that group were very close to the college and did so much for the college. That was Mrs. Telling and Mrs. Olive and Mrs. Diekema, and Mrs. Kollen. And, oh, they were lovely and they entertained the women on the campus. The men were all interested in the college and the associations. They were very close to the college. I don’t know whether there has ever been quite such a group of people again that were quite as closely associated or were as proud of the college and tried to do something for it. I was thinking of Dr. and Mrs. Leenhouts. They were my family, my mother’s and father’s very close friends. They lived on the corner of 12th Street and Maple, I guess, in a big, lovely red home. It’s still there and it’s the priest’s home now and that’s where they lived and it’s been changed and remodeled a little and they lived right next door to the Bosches. Nicodemus, who at one time was the mayor of Holland. And Nicodemus’s daughter, ?, was my very close friend and so I spent a lot of time at both of those houses. The life was a little more relaxed I guess and very social and they were all very interested in the church too. But they had very gracious manners, very, and a little more conscious of how they looked and dressed (laughs). And we always had hats and gloves and it was a nice time of the year.

EN: Thank you so much, Mrs. Van Eenanaam. You’ve really made a significant contribution to the history of Holland. Thank you.