

**LISETTE LAMON AND BENJAMIN SOEP PAPERS, circa 1932-1980**  
**2006.145.2**

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives  
100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW  
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**Descriptive summary**

Title: Lisette Lamon and Benjamin Soep papers

Dates: circa 1932-1980

Accession number: 2006.145.2

Creator: Lamon, Lisette, 1920-1982

Additional creator: Soep, Benjamin, 1919-1941

Extent: 0.5 linear foot (1 box)

Repository: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place SW, Washington, DC 20024-2126

Abstract: The Lisette Lamon and Benjamin Soep papers include biographical materials, correspondence, and personal narratives documenting Lisette and Benno Soep's marriage, Benno's imprisonment and death at Mauthausen, Lisette's imprisonment at Westerbork and Bergen-Belsen, and her immigration to the United States. The collection also includes photographs stamped "International News Photos" taken in Nazi Germany depicting Hitler and senior members of his staff, Kristallnacht, book burnings, firing squads, and hangings in the forest near the Buchenwald concentration camp.

Languages: English, German, Dutch

**Administrative Information**

Access: Collection is open for use, but is stored offsite. Please contact the Reference Desk more than seven days prior to visit in order to request access.

Reproduction and use: Collection is available for use. Material may be protected by copyright. Please contact reference staff for further information.

Preferred citation: (Identification of item), Lisette Lamon and Benjamin Soep papers (2006.145.2), United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Archives, Washington, DC

Acquisition information: David Mendels, son of Lisette Lamon, donated the Lisette Lamon and Benjamin Soep papers to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 2006, 2010, and 2018. Accessions cataloged as 2006.145, 2010.265, and 2018.482.1 have been incorporated into this collection.

Related material: Benjamin Soep, his parents, and his sister are featured on the Museum's Identification Card project at <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/landing/en/id-cards?letter=S>. Some of the photographs in this collection are individually cataloged by the Photo Archives: 16008, 18325, 48068, 50868, 65352, 65640, 65651-65653, 66493-66496, 66505-66524, 66532-66534, and 66698-66705.

Accruals: Accruals may have been received since this collection was first processed, see archives catalog at [collections.ushmm.org](https://collections.ushmm.org) for further information.

Processing history: Julie Schweitzer, March 2019

### **Biographical note**

Lisette Lamon (1920-1982) was born May 14, 1920 in Amsterdam, Netherlands to Hartog Lamon and Mintje van Dam Lamon. She had a brother named Isaac Lamon (1917-1991). Isaac fled from Amsterdam to New York in August 1938, and the rest of the family followed in May 1939, but Lisette was unable to bear the separation from her fiancé, Benjamin Soep ("Benno," 1919-1941). She returned to the Netherlands, which were occupied by Germany in May 1940, and married Benno in October. In June 1941, Benno was arrested by the Germans, deported to the Mauthausen concentration camp, and murdered. Lisette joined the Dutch resistance, was frequently held in Nazi custody, deported to Westerbork circa October 1943, and transferred to Bergen-Belsen in February 1944. She was evacuated along with her in-laws in April 1945, and her train was liberated at Farsleben by American troops on April 13, 1945. She was asked to serve as an interpreter when the Americans discovered her German and English language skills. She asked Major Adams to have someone send a short letter to her parents to let them know she was alive and discovered that his parents coincidentally lived in the same building as her parents in New York City. She returned to the United States to rejoin her family, and she married Robert Mendels and later Victor Fink. She obtained a BA from the State University of New York, trained in the Program for Psychiatric Rehabilitation Workers at the Albert Einstein School of Medicine in the Bronx, and worked as a psychotherapist.

Benjamin Soep ("Benno," 1919-1941) was born March 2, 1919 in Amsterdam, Netherlands to Abraham (1892-1953) and Tonie Soep (1895-1980), and he had two sisters Catharina ("Ina," later Polak, 1923-2014) and Josette (later Wolf, 1924-1996). He grew up in a religious Jewish household in Amsterdam. His father was a successful diamond manufacturer and president of the Amsterdam Jewish community, and he joined his father in the diamond business. He met Lisette Lamon while their families were skiing in Switzerland. Germany occupied the Netherlands in May 1940. The couple were married in October 1940, and a Jewish refugee lodged with them. On June 11, 1941, the Gestapo came to Benno's door, looking for the refugee boarder. In reprisal for the murder of a German, the Nazis were rounding up foreign Jews, and they took Benno with them instead. Benno was deported to the Schoorl labor camp in the Netherlands, and then to the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria, where he perished. The same year, his father was appointed to the Nazi-imposed Dutch Jewish council. His family was arrested in 1943, taken to the Westerbork transit camp, and then deported to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. The Soep family was kept together and spared from the death camps because the Nazis wanted to use Abraham's expertise to build their own diamond industry. As the Soviets advanced, the Soep

family was loaded onto evacuation trains along with Lisette Lamon and liberated at Farsleben by American troops on April 13, 1945.

### **Scope and content of collection**

The Lisette Lamon and Benjamin Soep papers include biographical materials, correspondence, and personal narratives documenting Lisette and Benno Soep's marriage, Benno's imprisonment and death at Mauthausen, Lisette's imprisonment at Westerbork and Bergen-Belsen, and her immigration to the United States. The collection also includes photographs stamped "International News Photos" taken in Nazi Germany depicting Hitler and senior members of his staff, Kristallnacht, book burnings, firing squads, and hangings in the forest near the Buchenwald concentration camp.

Biographical materials include Lisette and Benno Soep's marriage certificate, a death announcement for Benno copied alongside a quotation from Stefan Zweig, a certificate documenting Lisette's work at the Westerbork camp hospital, her Bergen-Belsen registration card, a travel permit allowing her to visit London after the war, a certificate documenting her postwar address in Amsterdam, and her United States naturalization certificate. Most of the records are photocopies, but the Bergen-Belsen card, travel permit, address certificate, and naturalization certificate are originals. Some of the documents are accompanied by English translations.

Correspondence includes a postcard and letter written by Benno Soep apparently while in custody in the Netherlands and another postcard and letter he wrote from the Mauthausen concentration camp. The first two express Benno's uncertainty about his future and his desire to rejoin his wife and parents, and they are accompanied by English translations. The other two are on official camp forms and describe his status, health, and address as well as the rules for corresponding with Mauthausen prisoners.

Personal narratives include Lamon's 127-page memoir consisting of vignettes describing her experiences in Amsterdam, her deportation to Westerbork, her imprisonment in Bergen-Belsen, and her liberation, as well as shorter individual vignettes, a speech drafted for Lamon in 1946, and articles she published in newspapers.

Photographs consist of press photographs taken in Nazi Germany between 1932-1945 depicting Hitler and senior members of his staff, Kristallnacht, book burnings, and firing squads. The photographs are stamped "International News Photos" on the verso, and most also bear German or English captions. They were given to Lisette Lamon after the war to "figure out what to do with them." Additional unattributed photographs depict Nazis, camps, and atrocities. This series also includes a photograph of the prisoner transport train that American troops liberated in Farsleben in April 1945. The train was one of three that left Bergen-Belsen between April 6 and 10 bound for Theresienstadt bearing prisoners holding papers from neutral and non-European countries. Lisette Lamon was one of the liberated prisoners aboard the Farsleben train.

### **System of arrangement**

The Lisette Lamon and Benjamin Soep papers are arranged as four series:

Series 1: Biographical materials, 1940-1951

Series 2: Correspondence, 1941

Series 3: Personal narratives, 1946-circa 1980

Series 4: Photographs, circa 1932-1945

**Indexing terms**

**Personal Names**

Lamon, Lisette, 1920-1982.

Soep, Benjamin, 1919-1941.

**Corporate Names**

Bergen-Belsen (Concentration camp)

Mauthausen (Concentration camp)

Westerbork (Concentration camp)

**Topical Terms**

Jews--Netherlands--Amsterdam.

Concentration camp inmates--Austria--Mauthausen--Correspondence.

Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945)--Netherlands.

**Geographic Names**

Amsterdam (Netherlands).

**Genre**

Correspondence.

Personal narratives.

## CONTAINER LIST

**Series 1: Biographical material, 1940-1951**

Box/Folder	Title
1.1	Biographical materials, 1940-1951 (includes photocopies and some translations)

**Series 2: Correspondence, 1941**

Box/Folder	Title
1.2	Correspondence, 1941 (includes photocopies and some translations)

**Series 3: Personal narratives, 1946-circa 1980**

Box/Folder	Title
1.3	Articles by Lamon, 1979
1.4	Description of Lamon's book, circa 1980
1.5	"Draft speech for Mrs. Lizette Soep (sic)," 1946
1.6	"Lisette Lamon was a teenager..," circa 1980

1.7-1.8	<i>The Most Precious Gift: A Legacy of Lisette Lamon, (2 folders)</i>
1.9	<i>My Ambition, circa 1980</i>

**Series 4: Photographs, circa 1932-1945**

<b>Box/Folder</b>	<b>Title</b>
1.10-1.12	International News Photos credited photographs, (3 folders)
1.13	Unattributed photographs of Nazis, camps, and atrocities, circa 1942-1945
1.14	Liberated Farsleben train, 1945