

# Zakarius Martin Taftezen Collection, 1939-2003

## Overview of the Collection

<b>Creators</b>	Grace Ryan Cornwell, Ada N. (Frostad) Olson, and the Island County Commissioners
<b>Title</b>	Zakarius Martin Taftezen Collection
<b>Dates</b>	1939-2003 (inclusive) 1939 2003
<b>Quantity</b>	1 File (1 folder)
<b>Collection Number</b>	SIEmss_67
<b>Summary</b>	This collection contains the original and copy of two overviews of the life of Norwegian immigrant, Zakarias Martin Taftezen, including information about the dedication of the Taftezen Memorial; a handwritten letter by Grace Ryan Cornwell; and a brief summary of Zakarias' brother, Christian.
<b>Repository</b>	<a href="#">Pacific Lutheran University, Archives and Special Collections</a> Archives and Special Collections Pacific Lutheran University 12180 Park Avenue South Tacoma, Washington 98447 Telephone: 253-535-7586 Fax: 253-535-7315 <a href="mailto:archives@plu.edu">archives@plu.edu</a>
<b>Access Restrictions</b>	The collection is available for research.
<b>Languages</b>	English, Norwegian

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## Biographical Note

Zakarias Martin Taftezen (Toftezen), or Martin, was born in either Hammerfest or Levanger, Norway on 17 September 1821. He took up sailing and landed in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1847. Intrigued by news of the California gold rush, he and two others, Sumner and Ulrich Freund, headed west in 1849 and ended up in Oregon. They continued on until they arrived at Whidbey Island where they each claimed a plot of land and built their homes. Taftezen was the first Norwegian to land and settle in Washington Territory.

Martin married a native woman and they had two boys. Both boys and their mother died of a measles epidemic by 1863, so Martin sold his property and moved to San Francisco. Before leaving, he got his citizenship at Port Townsend on 25 April 1863. His mother and sister joined him in California, and they all soon returned to the Northwest in 1865. Martin traveled to Black River in 1873 and built a homestead only to discover that the land was not government owned, but property of the University of Washington. He had to leave the homestead and wandered to California and then Colorado before

returning to Whidbey Island in 1889. He died there at the age of 80 in 1901. He was buried at Oak Harbor, but later was moved to the new Our Savior's Cemetery east of Stanwood.

The Crown Prince Olaf (later King Olav V) and his wife Martha attended his funeral, and 11 September 2000 was proclaimed "Martin Taftezon Day" in Island County, Washington

Christian Taftezen was the brother of Martin. He lived at one time at the thriving port of Utsaladdy, Camano Island. He was an agent for the trans-Atlantic mail and carrier lines.

Martin's mother Emmerence, daughter Bernhardine, brother Ole Christianson and his wife Sophia, and stepdaughter Marie also immigrated to the United States. Emmerence and Bernhardine joined Martin at Oak Harbor in 1865 while Ole Christianson and his family stayed in New York until 1874 when they settled at Coupeville, Washington, and later at Utsaladdy. Bernhardine married Eilert Graham in 1866. Eilert Graham, of Lindesnes, Norway, settled at Oak Harbor in 1858. After they married, they moved to Utsaladdy, Washington, and then to Hatt Slough with Emmerence. Emmerence, who was born in 1792, died at Hatt Slough on 22 October 1871. She is the only known white person who lived in this district who was born in the 18th century. Bernhardine and Eilert moved to Camano Island. She died in 1906, he in 1884.

## Content Description

The collection consists of a biographical account of Zacharius Martin Taftezon related to the 11 September 2000 proclamation of "Zacharius Martin Taftezon Day" in Island County, Washington. Also included is the proclamation itself, minutes from the Island County meeting resolving to establish Zacharius Martin Taftezon Day, a transcript of the ceremony in Norwegian and English, a cover letter written by C.J. Gunderson to Pacific Lutheran College dated 6 June 1939, complete program notes for the dedication program of the Taftezen Memorial and the following luncheon on 27 May 1939, a biographical document entitled *Facts about the Taftezen Pioneer Family*, and other miscellaneous documents regarding the family.

## Use of the Collection

### Restrictions on Use

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### Preferred Citation

The Zakarius Martin Taftezen Collection, SIEmss\_66, Archives and Special Collections, Pacific Lutheran University, 12180 Park Avenue South, Tacoma, WA 98447

## Administrative Information

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## Names and Subjects

**Subject Terms :**

California--Gold discoveries  
Emigration and immigration  
Gold mines and mining

**Personal Names :**

Ada N. (Frostad) Olson  
Bernhardine Taftezen Graham  
Christian Taftezen  
Eilert Graham  
Emmerentze Taftezen  
Grace Ryan Cornwell  
J.T. Adams  
Sumner Freund  
Ulrich Freund  
Zakarias Martin Taftezen  
Zakarias Martin Toftezen

**Corporate Names :**

Island County Commissioners

**Family Names :**

Graham family  
Taftezen family  
Toftezen family

**Geographical Names :**

Hammerfest (Norway)  
Levanger (Norway)  
Oak Harbor (Wash.)  
Olympia (Wash.)  
Port Townsend (Wash.)  
San Francisco (Calif.)  
Stanwood (Wash.)  
Utsaladdy (Wash.)  
Whidbey Island (Wash.)

**Form or Genre Terms :**

Biographies  
Minutes (Records)

**Occupations :**

Gold miners  
Pioneers  
Sailors

**Titles within the Collection :**

The First Norwegians to Settle in Washington  
Zakarias Martin Taftezen

Finding aid prepared by Denae McGaha.  
2015