

## Check for the Purchase of Alaska (August 1, 1868)



In 1866 the Russian government offered to sell the territory of Alaska to the United States. Secretary of State William H. Seward, enthusiastic about the prospects of American expansion, negotiated the deal for the Americans. Edouard de Stoeckl, Russian minister to the United States, negotiated for the Russians. On March 30, 1867, the two parties agreed that the United States would pay Russia \$7.2 million for the territory of Alaska. For less than 2 cents an acre, the United States acquired nearly 600,000 square miles. Opponents of the Alaska Purchase persisted in calling it "Seward's Folly" or "Seward's Icebox" until 1896, when the great Klondike Gold Strike convinced even the harshest critics that Alaska was a valuable addition to American territory. The check for \$7.2 million was made payable to the Russian Minister to the United States.

Source: U.S. National Archives ([www.ourdocuments.gov](http://www.ourdocuments.gov)).