

Alaska Becomes A State

On his second expedition in 1741, Vitus Bering (a Danish explorer who worked for Russia) found Alaska and took the land for Russia. During the next century, the Russians built villages and wanted to use Alaska for **fur trade** (*Fellhandel*).

² Near the middle of the nineteenth century, Russian interest in Alaska was falling. The fur trade was bad, and Russia lost a lot of money in the **Crimean war** (*Krimkrieg*) with England. Russia was ready **to get rid of** (*loswerden*) Alaska.

³ **Secretary of State** (*Außenminister*) William H. Seward signed the **deal** (*Handel*) on March 30, 1867 to buy Alaska from Russia for \$7.2 million. Many Americans thought this was silly and called the deal "Seward's Icebox." Seward dreamed that Alaska would become an American state.

⁴ But until 1884 nothing happened. Later the US army controlled Alaska. Later the gold rush brought thousands of people to Alaska. Also European immigrants from Norway and Sweden came to Alaska.

⁵ In 1959 Alaska became the 49th State of the United States. In 1968 oil was found and the citizens of Alaska receive money from the oil production every year.

⁶ Today most people in Alaska work in the paper- or wood industry, **mining** (*Bergbau*) and fishing. Alaska is the largest state in the USA but only 0.2 % of the American population live there.