

*Commemorating the 150th Anniversary
of the
Alaska Treaty of Cession*

Alaska Historical Commission
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Fiscal Year 2016 Report

The Alaska Treaty of Cession in 1867 impacted the world and the people who lived in Alaska. The 150th anniversary in 2017 is an occasion to revisit Alaska's first years under the U.S. flag and to look at the time from perspectives different from those in the past.

The Alaska State Legislature passed a resolution in 2014 recognizing the historic importance of the Alaska Treaty of Cession signed in 1867. The resolution invited all communities in the state to plan activities and for Alaskans to engage in discussions to commemorate the anniversary. The resolution called on the Alaska Historical Commission to assist in coordinating events and specifically, to encourage new research and discussion about the times, the document, Alaskans, and the treaty's impact on the world and its significance. (28th Legislature, Second Session, Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 17)



The Purchase of Alaska, by Emanuel Leutze

The Alaska Historical Commission:

• Awarded \$148,258 in matching grants in FY 15 and FY 16, and will award \$100,000 in grants in FY 17 for research, planning, interpretation and public education about Alaska at the time the treaty was enacted. Currently 13 projects are underway:

- Kodiak Historical Society, Fort Kodiak research, \$3,277
- Gary Stein, Captain White and the Revenue Cutter *Lincoln*, \$5,251
- Jenya Anichtchenko, Artists of Russian America, \$15,000
- Sitka Historical Society, Planning for community's 150th commemoration, \$15,000
- Seward House, Alaska exhibit of *The Purchase of Alaska* painting coordination, \$6,866
- Juneau Community Foundation, William Seward statue, \$15,000
- Juneau Community Foundation, Interpretive signs about William Seward and the Treaty of Cession, \$13,025
- Anchorage Museum, Bring purchase treaty and check from the National Archives for 2017 *Alaska* exhibit, \$6,000
- Baranov Museum, *A Russian Colony in an Alutiiq Land* exhibit construction, \$12,150
- University of Alaska Museum of the North, Gallery and online exhibits on Interior Alaska circa 1867, \$14,969
- Alaska Historical Society, Online calendar of statewide commemorative events and photos, articles and resources about the treaty, \$15,000
- Anchorage School District, Curriculum and activity guide on the treaty and times, \$15,000
- Pratt Museum, Kenai Peninsula History Conference, April 20-21, 2017, \$11,960

• Is working with four museums to bring Emanuel Leutze's *The Purchase of Alaska* 1867 painting for exhibit in the state in 2017. The painting at the Seward House Museum in New York has never been exhibited in Alaska.

• Is partnering with the Alaska Historical Society on a calendar of events available at www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org.

• Is coordinating with museums and cultural organizations around the state, educational groups, visitor organizations, and communities to plan events and activities. Two major events being planned are the dedication of a statue of William H. Seward in Juneau in July 2017, and the Sharing Our Knowledge Conference of Tlingit Tribes and Clans in October 2017.

• Is coordinating with the Office of History & Archaeology and Alaska State Parks Interpretation & Education program to prepare an 8-panel travelling exhibit and a booklet on Alaska at the time of the Treaty of Cession. Topics include what Americans knew about Alaska in 1867, how Alaska's Native people were vital but taken advantage of in the Russian and American quest for furs, whales, gold and fish, the "Americanization" of Alaska, and the territory's advantageous location in the Pacific and Arctic oceans.

