

## **The Great Northern War of 1700**

**By Josh**

*Writing Prompt: What caused the Great Northern War of 1700 and what were the effects of it?*

In the 1700s, countries explored new lands and discovered gold and silver. Kings, czars, and sultans longed to experience other cultures and claim land as their own. What would stop Russia from accessing Western Europe? Most countries did not think that this could happen. Peter the Great, the czar of Russia, desired to obtain goods by trading with France, England, and Spain. Determined to do this, he had to find a way to the west, which meant taking control of the Swedish territory through the Baltic. This began the Great Northern War of 1700, which resulted in Russian's control of the Baltic Sea, trading with Europeans and becoming more western, and the construction of Saint Petersburg.

To achieve access to the west, Peter had to come up with a plan to get there. Since his only port, Archangel, was frozen half of the year, Peter's first plan was to fight the Ottoman Turks and get control of the port of Azov. After winning this battle and having control of the port, Peter the Great still could not transport his ships to the Mediterranean because the Turks were guarding the strait that led to the west. Being disappointed with this failure, he had to regroup. Rapidly rethinking his route, a new plan unfolded. The czar now thought that he could get through the Baltic Sea to the west, but he had a big problem. Sweden controlled the Baltic Sea. At first, Peter thought that it would be easy to take control of this region since King Charles XII was only nineteen years old. He was wrong! This war lasted for twenty-one years before Peter the Great took control of this important sea. By winning this war, Peter gained crucial access to the west.

Second, having control of the eastern shore of the Baltic made trading and accessing goods a dream come true. With this passage to the west, European countries made Russians richer in culture provided beautiful clothing, wonderful spices, and new ideas. For example, Peter liked the western ideas of shaving. When he returned home, he shaved his beard off, and demanded his nobleman to do the same. This created some conflict since the nobleman related their beards to their relationship with God. Peter was full of new ideas incorporated from the west. Purposefully, he began having the women of Russia take off their veils, and mingle with the men in social gatherings. Being influenced by these new concepts, Russian culture changed and trading became a reality.

Finally, Saint Petersburg came into existence as a result of the Great Northern War. It was in 1702 when Peter the Great captured a small Swedish fortress on the Neva River, and this became the building site of Saint Petersburg. Working hard, the peasants and Swedish prisoners helped to build it. When it was finished, it became the new capital city. By 1724, St. Petersburg became a historic place which was a result of the Great Northern War.

Peter the Great's desire of travelling to the west led to the Great Northern War of 1700 which resulted in the control of the Baltic Sea, buying and selling with Europeans and becoming richer in western culture, and the existence of Saint Petersburg.