

THE CHEST GAZETTE

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Klaipeda

Klaipeda was established on an empty shore of the Baltic Sea by the Teutonic Knights in the 1250s. Invited by the Duke of Masovia to convert or destroy pagan Baltic tribes the Order chose this place for its castle. They called it Memelburg. Memel is the German name for Nemunas river.

Around the castle, a town of primarily German craftsmen sprung up. The castle itself was constantly upgraded and managed to withstand all the wars against Lithuania leaving Klaipeda and its surroundings the only area of Lithuania that has never been ruled by any Lithuanian state until the 20th century.

Klaipeda remained Memel until 1925. Founded in 1252 by the Teutonic Order, who built the city's first castle, it was a key trading port from the 15th century until 1629, when Swedish forces destroyed it. After the Napoleonic wars of the early 19th century, it became part of Prussia and stayed in Prussian hands until World War I. The population at this time was an even split of Germans and Lithuanians.

During the World War II the city served as a Nazi submarine base. The city's



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