

## The History of Müncheberg

Where today important federal roads cross the town Müncheberg is one of the oldest cities in the state of Brandenburg which was founded in 1232 and was named "*Lubes*". Cistercian monks established a market place. They were given the land for it from the Piast Duke of Lower Silesia, "*Heinrich der Bärtige*" (Henry 1 the Bearded). A citation in a document from June 29, 1232, makes the official date of the founding of Müncheberg.

This first settlement was called "Lubes" in honour of the monks' monastery in Leubus. The name did not last long because of frequent confusions with the town Lebus, another growing town in the district. Soon the name "*Mönchsberg*" became a custom and in a confirmation document from Pope Gregory the IX one could soon read about – Müncheberg.



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The town of Müncheberg developed fast in trade and handicraft to be one of the important towns in the former district Lebus. In 1319 came the arrangement of the reign to build a city wall.

On the 17th of April in 1432 a large amount of damage was caused by invading Hussites. They destroyed the "*Küstriner Tor*", plundered the church and set nearly the whole town on fire. In 1605 the town had to suffer the consequences of the bubonic plague which cost the life of 643 inhabitants. In the Thirty Year War (1618-1648) nearly half of the people in Müncheberg died and in the year 1641, the town burned down except of 6 houses.



A real recovery came at the beginning of the 18th century. In 1700 the first Huguenot refugees (40 French families) settled in Müncheberg and the town became a permanent military base that stimulated trade and business life. The population increased and by 1800 the town was flourishing again.

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The first school was constructed in 1852. A railway between Berlin and the Eastern Germany started operating on the 1st October 1867 giving Muncheberg a fast connection to the capital. The first volunteer fire brigade was formed in 1888. Brandenburg's first museum of local history had his origin in Müncheberg. Besides Frankfurt/Oder and Fürstenwald/Spree, Müncheberg was one of the most important towns of the district Lebus.

Now-a-days Müncheberg ranks among the few towns of Germany, which possess a still almost completely walled city. Further town symbols are the two town gates with their towers, the round Kustriner Tower at the south end of town and the square Berliner Tower at the north end of town and the Protestant Parish Church ("Sankt Marien") which reopened in May 1997 after years of restoring.



*This is a present day postcard from Muncheberg*

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The town is situated on the edge of 80 square miles of a large nature park, the "Märkische Schweiz" which became a national reserve in 1957. The district "*Märkisch Oderland*" has a charming landscape and the typical tree lined road avenues. Vacationers can find what they want: quiet woods which invite you for a walk and the many delightful lakes have excellent water quality for fishing and swimming. The patient and attentive can see rare plant types and animal species. Yet you are only 30 miles from Berlin or 20 miles from the Polish border. In the 1920's the "free" space in the inner city decreased and the "*settlement*" out of the city wall got more and more important.

Evelyn Zerba, Queensland Australia, 2010