



In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, during the reign of Empress Catherine the Great, tens of thousands of Armenians left the territory of Eastern Armenia (mostly Lowland Karabakh) and settled in the territory of modern Stavropol Region and some areas of Northern Caucasus, creating their colonies near Kizlyar, Stavropol, and Mozdok. According to historical documents, about 50 Armenian and 20 Georgian families, which immigrated to Russia, appealed to the Astrakhan provincial government for the possibility of settling down on vacant land along the Tomuzlovka River from its mouth downstream the Kuma River. The request was granted, and some 30 families moved to this place and formed a settlement named Karabagly, after their ancestral land - Karabakh.

The next wave of Armenians moved to the area from Derbent in Dagestan and Persia, and by a decree of Russian Emperor Pavel I on January 1, 1799 the land from state owned summer cottages and additional land was allocated for arriving Armenian and other immigrants. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Armenians lived in the village of Nugdi near Derbent. Facts regarding it appear in the letter of Catholicos Isosif Argutinsky-Dolgorukov to General Sergei Bulgakov, dated August 1796. This letter lists 9 Armenian villages and their inhabitants in Derbent and Mushkur provinces, including the village of Nugdi. The Geographical and Statistical Dictionary of the Russian Empire, published in 1865, stated that Derbent had up to 1,500 orchards in which various kinds of fruit were grown. It was noted that Armenians made vodka and wine from grapes in Derbent. In Buinaksk (Temir-Khan-Shura), in addition to the Armenian church, there was also an Armenian parish school, led by priest Hovhannes Paremuzov.

On October 28, 1799 Emperor Pavel I signed another decree establishing at the place where was previously located Karabagly settlement, the town of SVYATOI KREST, which was also called SURB KHACH, as it was founded by Armenian settlers. This decree also defined the rights and liberties of Armenians from Astrakhan, Kizlyar and Mozdok regions. The immigrants were given various benefits and advantages with the rights of established various social institutions, and were allowed to build churches, bell towers and other buildings. In 1819 Armenian community built Saint Gevorg's Church which was destroyed in 1935 by Soviet government. It should be noted that besides Russians, Ukrainians, Armenians and Georgians there was a small population of colonists from Germany and Poland in the town. Between 1822 and 1833 town's population was very small and there were even attempts by authorities to dissolve it. Based on historical data in 1833 there were only 114 Armenians and Georgians and 78 Germans living in Svyatoi Krest. But starting 1850s town experienced rapid growth and in 1910 it was officially recognized as a district capital and there were 10,685 Russians and Ukrainians living there, 4,414 Armenians, 86 Georgians, 26 Poles and 13 Germans.





In 1921 Soviet authorities renamed town from Svyatoi Krest to Prikumsk, and in 1935 it was renamed to Budyonnovsk after Soviet military hero Semyon Budyonnyy.

Recently, after long period of trying to find any postal history items with postmark of Svyatoi Krest, I was lucky enough to find one. It is a stamped postal card mailed on June 20, 1916 from Svyatoi Krest to Vienna, Austria most likely by a German colonist. The postal card has two censor handstamps – one made by the Military Censor #80 of Caucasus, and the other one made by the censor at the Main Post Office in Vienna. The postcard has a 3 kopeks indicium to pay for international postcard rate in 1916.



Coat of Arms Logo and City view picture:  
By Novosty