

27th May, 1953

Dear Eyre,

Your letter of the 13th May on the name "Kingsmill" was most welcome, but I am sorry to say that Dr. Bowden appears to be in error in his statement to you, as will be seen from the attached note by Miss Leeson, who kindly examined ^Krusenstern and the first edition of Findlay for me in the Mitchell.

Some day we shall get to the bottom of this mystery.

Yours sincerely,



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Naming of one part of the Gilberts as Kingsmill by Krusenstern.

This seems to be a misinterpretation of Findlay.

In his Directory for the navigation of the Pacific Ocean, pt. II (London, 1851), p.1052, he states "The name Gilbert Archipelago was given to the group by Admiral Krusenstern, after the commander of the Charlotte. Krusenstern separates them into three groups, the Kingsmill Islands, the Simpson Group, and the Scarborough Range ... All these names seem to be very appropriate, and have been for many years acknowledged; we therefore follow them. On the other hand, in the American work (Wilkes) they are all given under the collective title of the Kingsmill Islands, the name being only that of a small portion".

A footnote gives the reference to Krusenstern's Recueil de memoires hydrographiques pour servir d'analyse et d'explication à l'Atlas de l'Océan Pacifique (St. Petersburg, 1827, tom.2). Krusenstern does say he named the whole group the Gilbert Islands. As the name Marshall had already been given to another group in honour of Captain Marshall, he deemed it just that this one should bear the name of Gilbert.

But, concerning the Kingsmill Islands, he says "Le nom Kingsmill ne se trouve point sur la carte de Dalrymple, et n'est apparemment que la dénomination collective de deux sous-divisions de ce groupe, dont l'une se nomme Isles Bishop, et l'autre Sydenham Teast".

This makes it obvious that Krusenstern did not give the name Kingsmill.

A further proof is that the name was already known to Admiral Duperrey whom Krusenstern quotes a number of times, and from whom he says he received information.

Duperrey's Voyage autour du monde was published in 1826; Krusenstern's Recueil in 1827.

The volume of Krusenstern covering the history of the voyage was not completed and ends at February 1823, but in the volume Zoologie, tom.1 pt.1, on p.71 there is the statement: "Le 15 mai 1824, des pirogues que montaient des naturels de l'île de Kingsmill, vue en 1799 par le Nautilus, vinrent communiquer avec la corvette la Coquille".