

Source: Hawaiian Almanac & Annual, 1911. pages 181-182.

## FIRST CLERGYMAN IN HAWAII.

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**I**NQUIRY was made recently as to the time of arrival and residence of Howell, an Episcopalian, referred to in an historic address not long since, as the first clergyman to visit these islands.

He is referred to also by Richard J. Cleveland in "A Narrative of Voyages and Commercial Enterprises" on his second visit to these islands (June, 1803), as follows:

"Among others at this early period was a Mr. Howell, commonly called Padre Howell, who soon ingratiated himself into favor with the King, and, being struck with the superiority of intellect, conceived that it would not be difficult to induce him to abandon his idolatrous worship and substitute one of rationality. Accordingly he lost no opportunity, after acquiring a sufficient knowledge of the language, to convince the Chief of the incapacity for good or evil of his gods, and of the power, wisdom and goodness of the Supreme Maker and Ruler of the Universe, whom he worshiped. The first, that of impotency of the idols, was without difficulty admitted; but the second, not being tangible, could not be comprehended. His mind, however, appeared to be dwelling on the subject with increased attention after each conversation. At length, one day, while walking together, the King unusually thoughtful, and Howell auguring favorably from it, the silence was broken by the King's observing: 'You say your God is powerful, wise, good, and that He will shield from harm those who truly worship and adore him.' This being assented to, then said the King: 'Give me proof, by going and throwing yourself from yonder precipice, and, while falling, call on your God to shield you, and if you escape unharmed, I will then embrace the worship of your God.' It may be unnecessary to say that Howell failed to give the desired test, and that the King remained unconverted."

W. H. Pease, an early resident here, after quoting the above in "The Friend" for June, 1862, says: "The title 'Padre' was probably given to Howell for reason of his religious life and conversation, as it was commonly applied in those days to all priests or ministers on the coast. We have attempted to trace out the life of this person, with but little success. We learn from Greenhow's 'Historical Memoir on the N.W. Coast of America,' that he had acted as interpreter to the Spanish Government on the coast, and was or had been an Episcopal clergyman. He was also attached to the brig Margaret as supercargo."