

Society stating his intention of settling at Hokianga and offering his services in promoting an inquiry in New Zealand into the truth of charges laid against the Society's missionaries.¹¹

The embarkation for New Zealand took place on 26 November 1840, when William Swainson, his second wife Anne and four of the five children¹² joined the McDonnells on the barque *Jane* which after long delays reached Port Nicholson on 24 May 1841.

At Port Nicholson, William Swainson parted company with Lieutenant McDonnell, abandoning the Hokianga scheme in favour of settling in Wellington. His son William later went to Hokianga to fetch back the property consigned on the *Patriot*,¹³ and the New Zealand Company allowed the rebate on passage money and freight customarily given to emigrating shareholders.¹⁴

The family lived for two years in Thorndon while a dwelling and cultivations were being prepared on leasehold land¹⁵ in the Hutt. By June 1843 they had moved there,¹⁶ to their new estate of Hawkshead. From the time of his arrival in New Zealand, William Swainson seems to have thrown himself wholeheartedly into the life of a settler, breaking in ground, planting hedges and crops and superintending the building of a house, in spite of harassment by the chief Taringakuri.¹⁷ He took part in community life, and his name appears through the pages of Ward's *Early Wellington* as vice president of the Masonic Lodge, committee member of the first Horticultural Society, Militia officer for Hutt, Justice of the Peace and Magistrate. He was interested in several properties, including the Rangitikei estate still associated with the family, and a number of transactions are recorded in Lands and Survey files held by National Archives.¹⁸ He hoped to participate in a scheme suggested by Governor FitzRoy by which absentee shareholders were to be kept out of a ballot for some fertile land of the settlers' choice, *i.e.* Wainuiomata, but which failed because the Company did not make a road, nor did the Government issue Crown grants. The memorial to the Governor which William Swainson drafted in 1848 begging for a road to the area met with refusal.¹⁹ In the same year part of the Hawkshead dwelling was burned²⁰ but the house appears to have been repaired and occupied for some time.²¹ Later the family lived at Fern Grove, on a section adjoining Hawkshead.²²

In his *Autobiography* of 1840 William Swainson had warned against putting faith in the names and promises of joint stock companies: in 1850, after nine years under the auspices of the New Zealand Company, he reviewed Edward Gibbon Wakefield's *View of the Art of Colonization* (1849), referring to 'the miserable failure of the Author's system in New Zealand.'²³ Earlier he had been writing to W. B. D. Mantell about leaving the cold and windy valley of the Hutt, in which nothing came to fruit, in order to settle in New Plymouth where he had six town acres.²⁴