PREFACE

In 1936 the printshop of the *Neu Braunfelser Zeitung* (*New Braunfels Times*) published a slender volume of German writings by Friedrich Hermann Seele under the title of *Die Cypresse und Gesammelte Schriften* (*The cypress and collected writings*). This is the English translation of that work. The book contained a short romantic tale of the same name, i.e., "The Cypress"; a history of the German settlements in Texas to 1889; and a series of autobiographical sketches that traced Seele's life from the Christmas of 1843 to his travels in Central Texas in 1860, on the eve of the Civil War.

To the general reader, we especially recommend these autobiographical writings. They are invaluable for the vivid, detailed picture of life in Texas during the two decades that preceded the Civil War. Scholars may find that certain parts have a familiar ring. Among others, R. L. Biesele (*The History of the German Settlements in Texas, 1831-1861*) and Oscar Haas (*History of New Braunfels and Comal County, 1844-1946*), two authorities on German-Texan history, have introduced excerpts from the Seele writings into their works.

In making the transition from German to English, I have sought to do as little violence to Seele's language as possible. And, no attempt has been made to correct factual inaccuracies; e.g., the list of Germans living in Houston obviously refers to a time later than "the close of the first period in 1836." The order of the chapters has been changed by moving the fictional part, "The Cypress," to the end and putting the autobiographical material into chronological order. An index identifies, where possible, the many persons whose names are mentioned in the text. Other entries serve in lieu of notes.

For their help, my sincerest thanks go to Mr. Louis A. Hartung, Dr. Jack A. Dabbs, and Mrs. Ruth Seele Aniol (a direct descendant of Hermann Seele).

I should like to remember here Frederic Oheim, a distinguished citizen of New Braunfels, who set the type and printed *Die Cypresse* in 1936. His death occurred in the autumn of 1978. Finally, I should

like to figuratively tip my hat to another fine gentleman and revered Texan, Oscar Haas, the New Braunfels historian.

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