

## "The Story of the Brodmann Family"

We were an Austrian family, and my parents grew up in the days of the [Austro-Hungarian Empire](#).

But during the war my family had to flee from [the Nazi regime](#).

My brother went to Birmingham, England, my parents to [Shanghai, China](#), and as for myself, I ended up in Tel Aviv, Israel (then Palestine).

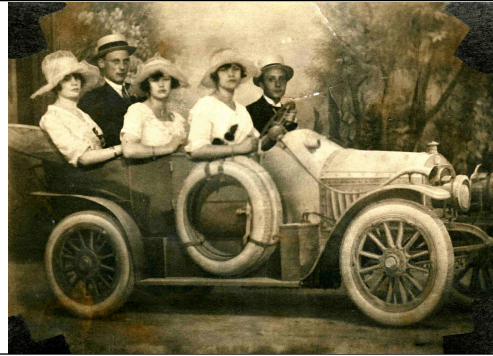
This is our story.

Here you can see my father and his company in the Austrian army during the [First World War](#).



My father was a well-known actor. On stage he was radiant; he dedicated himself heart and soul to acting.

My mother, Franziska Rachel Brodmann, nee Goldstaub, was born in [Lvov](#) in 1902 and came to [Vienna](#) when she was two years old.



She grew up in a very sheltered home.

My parents met each other in [Bad Hall](#).

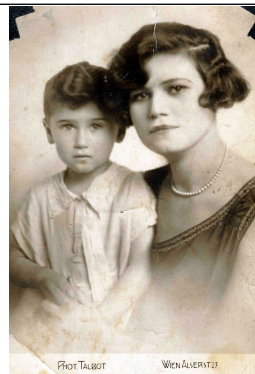
My father was performing on the stage, and my mom was sitting in the first row. He took one look at her and they fell in love on the spot.

But there were obstacles.

My mother's family was very pious and my grandfather said: "You don't fit in here. You are not a pious man, and if you want to have my daughter, you'll have to give up your profession. That's out of the question among us [Orthodox Jews](#)."

And since my father truly loved my mother, he said: "I will give up everything; for my great love I'll do that."

I was born a year later, in 1923, in Vienna. My brother Harry is five years younger than me. He was born in Vienna on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1928.



We had a hard time financially.

Fortunately, there was Granny, who often helped us out.



When [Hitler came to power](#), I went to secondary modern school in Vienna.

Our class teacher was a Nazi. Despite my being a Jew, he liked me, because I was a wonderful singer. It was a kind of love-hate relationship.

He often asked me questions, which he knew I wouldn't be able to answer, and treated me unfairly when it came to grading.

Shortly after the [Germans invaded Austria](#), my mother organized my little brother's and my own escape.

My brother went to England on a "[Kindertransport](#)." He was very lucky, as he was accommodated with a wonderful family.



I went to [Palestine by ship](#).

And my parents? Well, there were very few countries that were willing to take in Jewish refugees.

For Shanghai, you didn't need a visa. Some 40,000 refugees took advantage of this opportunity.

So my parents [fled to Shanghai](#).

The Jews there lived in poverty, had great difficulties, and yet [managed to open shops, restaurants and small factories](#).

My mother opened a coffee shop called "Wiener Stüberl," where Jewish immigrants could enjoy apple strudel, cheesecake and other delicacies from their faraway home.



And my father began to act again in Shanghai.



He learned Vienna operettas by heart in Chinese and performed on stage along with [actors from Germany](#).

This way our family survived [the Second World War](#) in England, China and Israel.

My parents returned to Vienna from Shanghai after the end of the war, in 1947.

Here we are on one of our trips to Israel, with my brother Harry, his wife, Joyce, her relatives and my parents.



I came back to Vienna from Tel Aviv in 1954. A short time afterward I met my future wife, Erika.

My brother remained in England.

Here we are on one of our trips to Israel, with my brother Harry, his wife, Joyce, her relatives and my parents.

My father, Leopold Brodmann, Austrian soldier, actor and businessman, died in 1965.

1989, 24 years later, my mother died, his great love from the first row in Bad Hall.

