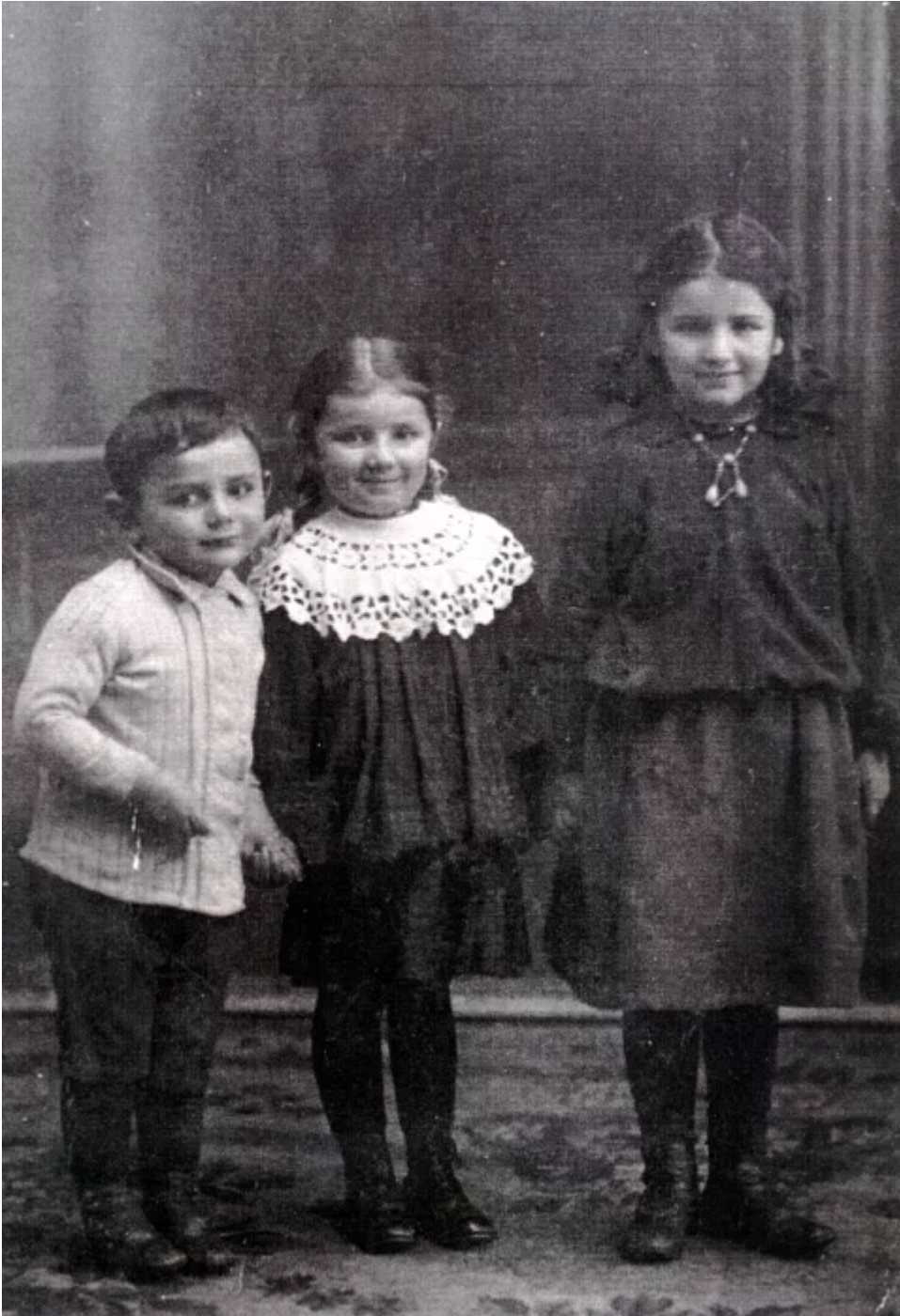


Sophia And Naum Vollerner With Their Friend



This is a picture of (from left to right) my brother Naum Vollerner; our friend, the daughter of the photographer, who was our neighbor and me. The photo was taken in Kiev in 1915. got married in 1909. They had a traditional Jewish wedding with a chuppah. They had their wedding in Tulchin where my mother's parents lived. After the wedding the newly-weds came to Kiev. My father worked as a dentist and my mother was a housewife. I was born on 31st October 1910. My younger brother, Naum, Nakhman in Yiddish, was born in April 1913. My father told me that my brother was born during the first seder at Pesach that my parents celebrated with the family of Grandfather Yankel in Zhylianskaya Street. Our apartment on Kreschatik Street was in a big three-storied

house. This house was ruined during the Great Patriotic War. Today the building of Kiev Town Hall is situated at the place where our house was. There were five or six different shops on the first floor and a printing house on the second floor. Grigorovich-Barski, the owner of the printing house, was also the owner of the house. He was a Russian man. There were two apartments on the third floor: one was ours and another one belonged to a photographer called Excelrod and his family. They weren't Jewish: he was Polish and his wife was Russian. My parents got along well with them, but didn't visit them. My brother and I and their two daughters were friends and we visited each other; they were our best friends. Our neighbor's photo-shop was also in his apartment. We often visited our friends, but we were just kids and weren't allowed to go inside the photo-shop. My parents spoke Russian and only switched to Yiddish when they didn't want their children to understand the subject of their discussion. I learned to understand Yiddish, but I cannot speak it. I learned to read Russian before I turned five. We had a big collection of books. From the time I learned to read I spent most of my time reading and even burst into tears when my nanny took me for a walk. When I turned six my nanny was replaced with a governess, a Russian woman. She was a beautiful, slender, fair-haired woman wearing dark gowns. She seemed very strict to me compared to my nanny. The governess taught me French, French verses and children's songs that we sang together.