Brat Brother Learned a Heated Lesson

OUR FAMILY was divided into three sections—our folks, the girls and the brat—me!

An incident from August 1927, when I was 10, may provide some insight into this domestic division.

It was a steamy-hot day, and my folks and my sister Mildred, 10, were out for the afternoon. I was left in the care of my other two older sisters, Virginia, 11, and Mae, 12.

They decided to have their girlfriends come over. They were learning the lively new steps to a dance called the Charleston. The girls rolled back the rugs in the living room and were having a wonderful time.

I had a big collie named “Scottie” and thought I’d give the girls a thrill.

Scottie and I came in through the back door, barking and yelling, and ran through the house and out the front door. There was a lot of screaming by the girls.

This worked twice, but the third time, they collared us and locked Scottie and me in the basement, as that was the only place with a hook lock on the door.

I didn’t care much for that treatment, so I decided to help the red-hot dancers upstairs.

I built a fire in the steam boiler. Soon I heard the girls upstairs saying how hot it seemed to be getting.

The dancers decided to move out onto the porch. Soon, the folks and Mil came home.

Talk about hot. It got even hotter when Dad found out what I did.

No one could sleep that night, as steam radiators do not cool off quickly.

The next day, Dad and I had a one-on-one seminar. The lesson: Do not start a steam furnace in August.

I haven't since.

—Bernard H., Ypsilanti, Michigan