The house was built. Its knobby lower limbs were perfect for swinging pie pans placed on the table, each one draped with pastry. Beside them on the breadboard, were long strips of dough. Mabel and Mother worked quickly to get the fruit peeled and cut into quarters. After the piecrusts were filled with sugared and spiced apples, Mabel skillfully laced the strips of dough into a top crust. Between the strips, she left spaces where the juice could bubble as the pies baked. “Surely, Bradley will be impressed,” she said as she put them in the oven and closed the door behind them.

As Mabel began to clear the table of the baking utensils, Mother put a heavy iron skillet of lard on the stove to heat. The girls were happy to help with the next chore as the newfangled potato chips were their favorite. They formed a chain to do their work. Maddy took the potatoes from the box, Helen washed them and Libby dried. Mother stood at the table and pushed the potatoes again and again over the sharp blade of the slaw cutter, making a round thin slice with every pass. When enough slices had accumulated on the plate, Mabel carefully slid them into the hot grease to fry. Then with a big spoon, she lifted them onto a piece of brown paper, hot and crispy and ready for a sifting of salt.

When the food for the picnic was finished, everyone gathered for the excursion. Harry and Alan led the group up Spruce Street. They carried the trunk with the picnic dinner inside. They rolled up their shirt-sleeves, and Harry tilted his hat to one side. Mother looked happy and relaxed, wearing a becoming white summer blouse and a big straw hat. Even with Jack riding on his shoulders, Papa looked as he always did, in perfect order.

The Sharps stepped excitedly toward Fourth Street where they would catch the streetcar.

**Chapter 9 — Girls fill bucket**

**Activity:** The chapter tells how to prepare some of the girls’ favorite foods, apple pies and potato chips. Write down each step. Then write down how you prepare a favorite snack, step by step.

**History:** Almost every city with 10,000 people or more acquired a streetcar system operated by electric utility companies from the 1890s to 1920s, according to historian Walter Turner. Conduct research to find out if the city where you live or another city in your region operated streetcars during the late 1800s and early 1900s.