selves swinishly in the mud. Not a fifth of them are perpendicular. They lean this way and that, hanging on to their bases precariously. And one and all they are streaked in grime, with dead and eczematous patches of paint peeping through the streaks. Now and then there is a house of brick. But what brick! When it is new it is the color of a fried egg. When it has taken on the patina of the mills it is the color of an egg long past all hope or caring.

Mencken was, of course, describing what he saw from a rail car, which typically traveled the industrial corridors of cities. He was probably familiar with more of Pittsburgh since his brother lived in suburban Crafton, but to the uninformed reader Mencken painted a vivid landscape that, while not without merit, was certainly devastating to the city’s image. It surely made working Baltimoreans pleased to reside in their long lines of brick rowhouses.

On the lighter side, HLM judged Pittsburgh inferior for the poor quality of its food preparation and preferences. He always considered the culinary delights of Baltimore and Maryland among his city’s outstanding qualities. Delicacies such as Maryland terrapin, crabs, and oysters made Baltimore distinctive to visitors. In contrast, the liver and onions, pot roast, rice pudding, and glucose apple pie of Pittsburgh were fitting with its generally uncivilized character. “In Pittsburg,” wrote Mencken, “any kind of pie is worse.” HLM saw little more merit in rice pudding:

In the Blue Ridge Mountains it is used as a poultice for lame horses, and on the Eastern Shore they feed it to horned cattle. In Baltimore it is entirely unknown. When we eat here we demand victuals, and are not satisfied with tasteless concrete. A waiter who set a rasher of rice pudding before a Baltimorean would pay for the insult with his life.

While attacking Pittsburgh’s mince (continued on page 58)
Photos courtesy Allegheny Conference on Community Development
businessman James Hillman spearheaded the clean-up drive because he had been “somewhat embarrassed for his city when visitors came to call among the soot” and “careless litter.” Hillman approached Mayor David L. Lawrence and Park H. Martin, executive director of the Allegheny Conference, and also wrote the first check to get the ball rolling.

Pa Pitt’s Partners had a downtown office, organized school brigades (the location of the photograph at left is unknown), funneled money into pollution enforcement, which included a platoon of “Lady Cops” who patrolled streets for litterers, and made city equipment and personnel available for neighborhood rubbish drives. Pittsburgh won national commendations (note the trophies in the bank window photograph) and the campaign continued, in varying forms, well into the 1950s.

Much of the promotional effort was aimed at stimulating residents of low-income neighborhoods — the city, in fact, built “parklets” on land cleared in four targeted city neighborhoods. That probably explains the use of African-American women in publicity stills, unusual for a period in which racial and class discrimination was rampant and ethnic models were generally shunned in mainstream advertising campaigns.