THEY WEREN'T ALWAYS THERE

Most buildings give the appearance, once they have weathered for a few years, of eternity. It is inconceivable that they have not always been exactly where they are or that time can have had any effect on them. Like mountains, they seem to have been placed on the earth by forces beyond the comprehension of human beings. Like mountains, they seem to be parts of an everlasting scheme.

The majority of students and graduates of Brooklyn College never saw the downtown campus. Since 1937, the school has been located at its present site, and for most of those associated with the college, Boylan and Lager- sull Halls, LaGuardia Hall and Roosevelt Hall have always been.

But these buildings, in fact, are not terribly ancient, and photographs of their construction and even of their site before excavation began can still be found. Here are photographs of the beginnings of the present Brooklyn College campus.

When the buildings opened in 1937, construction was not complete. Cement walks had still to be laid, with the result that slippery planks across the muddy land constituted the paths, and many are the tales of scattered clothing and ruined shoes among the first students to attend.

BUILDING THE CAMPUS

The parcel of land now known as Brooklyn College was originally assembled as the Wood-Harmon site. Complicated real estate manipulations went into its being obtained by the city, and the price set for the land changed a number of times. Ultimately New York City bought the land, which had seen service as a golf course and a circus grounds, for $1,025,029.

$5,000,000 was allocated for construction of the buildings by the Public Works Administration, a depression-born federal construction agency. Ground was broken on October 2, 1935, at a ceremony described in the 1936 Brooklyn Eagle:

Taking their initial possession of the rather stumpy grounds, soon to be transformed to a shaded quadrangle, the sun shining on their proud heads, the students trooped about the field in a procession. Led by their marshals, professors in academic robes, they arrived at the speaker's rostrum singing that soon-to-be-adopted marching song, "From the Porals of Jerusalem."