

PH0356701

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 16 1977
DATE ENTERED MAR 8 1978

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC *
Wood Lawn
AND/OR COMMON
Wood Lawn

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Clifton Avenue facing George Street
CITY, TOWN
New Brunswick VICINITY OF
STATE
New Jersey CODE 34 COUNTY Middlesex CODE 023
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 15th

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Trustees of Rutgers College
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN
New Brunswick VICINITY OF
STATE
New Jersey

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Middlesex County Clerk's Office
STREET & NUMBER
John F. Kennedy Square
CITY, TOWN
New Brunswick STATE
New Jersey

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
New Jersey Historic Sites Inventory (#2155.35)
DATE
196
DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS Historic Sites Office, Dept. of Environmental Protection
CITY, TOWN
Trenton STATE
New Jersey

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This is a three story building with basement. The first two stories of Wood Lawn are of clapboard and are painted white. The third story consists of a mansard roof with projecting windows. There is a wing to the left of the main portion of Wood Lawn (as you face it from its front) which also is two stories in height with a mansard roof with projecting windows.

Along the front of the main portion of the house there is a covered porch. The porch's roof is supported by Doric-styled columns. A balustrade runs the length of the roof of the porch.

There are two projecting bays of two stories' height on the front of Wood Lawn. These are also topped by balustrades.

The windows projecting from the mansard roof are topped by classical pediments.

A Palladian window is located in the second floor windows that are located directly over the front entrance.

The rear of the main portion of the house has a small porch for an entrance. There are also two bays projecting from the rear, but unlike the front of the house, these extend from the ground upward including the mansard roof.

Wood Lawn was originally built in 1850 by Colonel James Neilson (1784-1862) on land purchased by his mother's grandfather, Johannis Voorhees, from Cornelius Van Langevelt in 1720. Van Langevelt had purchased the land from Indians about 40 years earlier.

The house was originally an almost perfect square (40 by 44 feet). It is located on a sloping hill with a view overlooking the Raritan River and New Brunswick. The original house had a hipped roof, supported on the front by tall columns. The portico was ten feet wide. On the back was a porch of equal width but 32 feet long.

There was a kitchen, milk room, wine cellar, and root cellar in the basement. Four rooms and pantry were on the first floor. Finished rooms were on the second floor.

In 1850, the wing was added to the house. This was to be the new location of the kitchen.

In 1868, the semi-circular or bay window extensions were made to the main portions of the house. At this time the front portico was changed into a porch and a mansard roof was substituted for the hipped roof.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Woodlawn

New Brunswick

Middlesex County

New Jersey 034

CONTINUATION SHEET DEFINITION

ITEM NUMBER

7

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The last extensive alterations to the house were made in 1905 by the architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White. The right half of the structure (as one faces the front) was moved so that the center entrance hall was widened from eight to seventeen feet. The second floor Palladian window as well as other classical elements were added to Wood Lawn at this time. This includes the classical pediments over the mansard windows, the balustrades, the classical columns of the porches. The building was transformed from a decidedly Second Empire Victorian structure into its present neo-classical state. The beauty and elegance of Wood Lawn must be ascribed to the McKim firm.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1830, 1850, 1868, 1905 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Original architects unknown; 1905 alteration by McKim, Mead and White.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Wood Lawn was built by Colonel James Neilson (1784-1862). His father, John Neilson (1745-1833) was Colonel of the Middlesex County minutemen. He was a trustee of Rutgers College from 1782 until his death. Lafayette presented John Neilson with a sword and came to visit him during his American tour of 1824.

James Neilson saw military action himself as the commander of a company during the War of 1812. He was a prominent New Brunswick businessman, promoting steamboat, canal and railroad transportation. James Neilson served on the Rutgers Board of Trustees from 1833 until 1862.

James Neilson in turn had a son whom he named James (1844-1937). James made a trip to Europe in 1870. He there met another individual on the Grand Tour, Mary Putnam of Norwalk, Connecticut. They were married in Berlin in 1870. James Neilson and his wife, who died in 1914, would have no children. Mrs. Neilson founded a Boy's Club in New Brunswick as well as the New Brunswick Free Public Library, one of the first in the State.

James Neilson served on the Board of Trustees of Rutgers from 1886 until his death in 1937. He was one of the University's most generous benefactors. Neilson presented most of the land on what is now the Voorhees Campus to the University. This is the area bounded by George Street, Hamilton Street, College Avenue, and Seminary Place in New Brunswick. He also donated an athletic field for the use of the college. The present University Commons stands on the site. He also donated land for the use of the Agricultural School. Neilson also made funds available for the purchase of College Hall at Douglass College. At Neilson's death, he left Wood Lawn to the University. It was originally used by the Associated Alumnae of Douglass. It is now the office of the Eagleton Institute of Politics.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Demarest, William H.S., "A History of Rutgers College," Princeton University Press, 1924.
McCormick, Richard P. "Rutgers: A Bicentennial History," Rutgers University Press, 1966.
Moxon, Rosamond Sawyer, "Wood Lawn: The Story of the Neilson House," New Brunswick, 1941, Library of Congress Number: LD7251.N25332M6

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY one-eighth approximately
UTM REFERENCES

A	18	548000	4481150	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundary of Woodlawn is shown as the green line on the accompanying map entitled "Douglas College",

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

(Terry Karschner, Office of Historic Preservation,
DEP, Trenton NJ (609)292-2023

NAME / TITLE

Michael C. Barr

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Rutgers Alumni Association

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

172 College Avenue

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

New Brunswick, New Jersey 08903

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Commissioner, Dept. of Environmental Protection

DATE

April 15, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

3-8-78

DATE

3-6-78

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

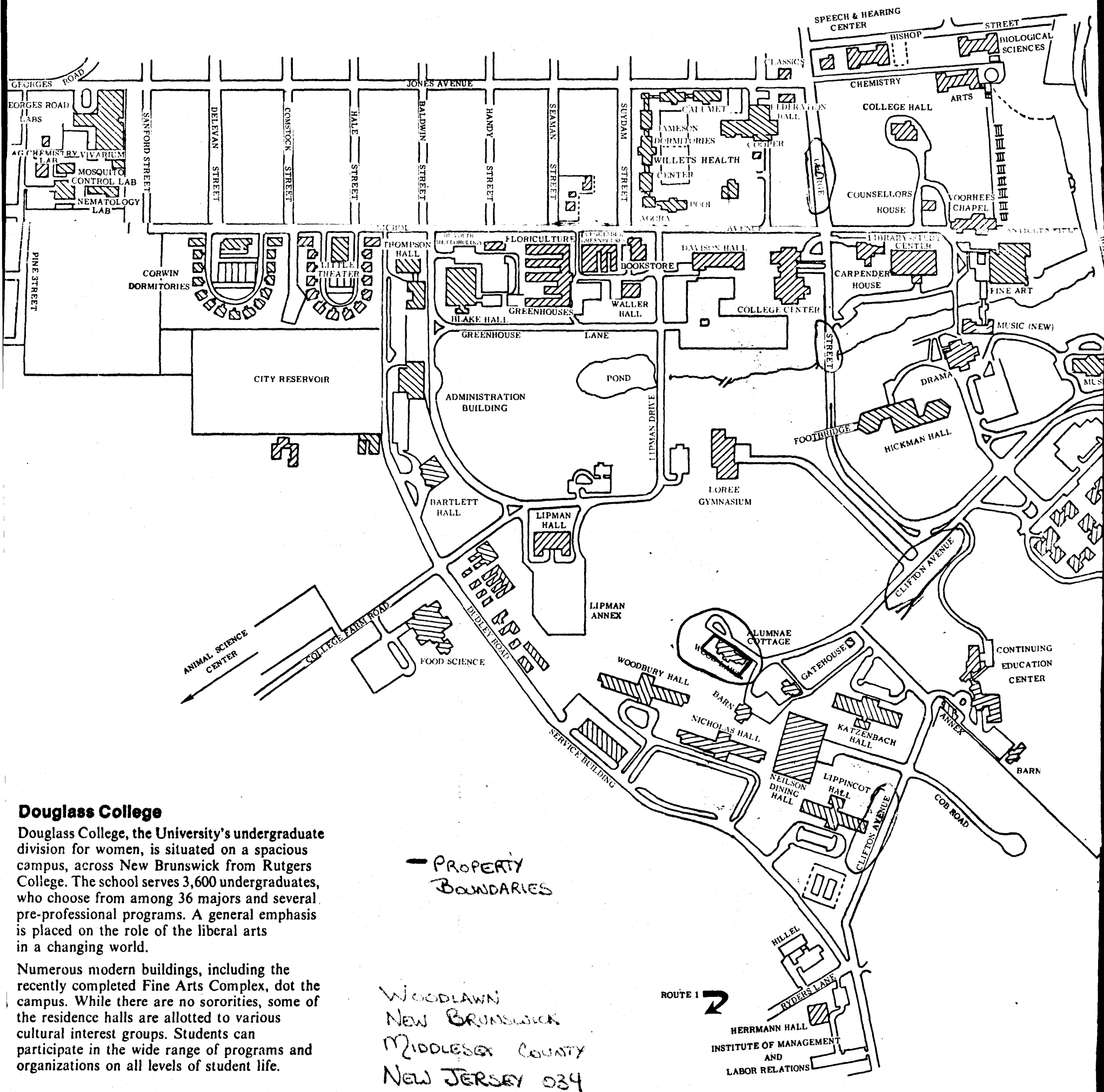
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Woodlawn
New Brunswick
Middlesex County
New Jersey

~~CONTINUATION SHEET~~ SIGNIFICANCE ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

The architectural firm responsible for the present appearance of Wood Lawn, McKim, Mead and White, was one of the most influential American architectural firms at the turn of the century. Many of their Georgian, neo-classic and Renaissance palazzo works are among the best examples of American architecture. The firm's work at Wood Lawn was limited to an alteration, albeit a major one, giving the house its present appearance.



Douglass College

Douglass College, the University's undergraduate division for women, is situated on a spacious campus, across New Brunswick from Rutgers College. The school serves 3,600 undergraduates, who choose from among 36 majors and several pre-professional programs. A general emphasis is placed on the role of the liberal arts in a changing world.

Numerous modern buildings, including the recently completed Fine Arts Complex, dot the campus. While there are no sororities, some of the residence halls are allotted to various cultural interest groups. Students can participate in the wide range of programs and organizations on all levels of student life.

WOODLAWN
NEW BRUNSWICK
MIDDLESEX COUNTY
NEW JERSEY 034

ROUTE 1

HERRMANN HALL
INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT
AND
LABOR RELATIONS