

- <sup>16</sup> Timothy Arnold and Walker Sampson, "Preserving the Voices of Revolution: Examining the Creation and Preservation of a Subject-Centered Collection of Tweets from the Eighteen Days in Egypt," *American Archivist* 77, no. 2 (2014): 510–33, <https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.77.2.794404552m67024n>.
- <sup>17</sup> Brewster Kahle, "Universal Access to All Knowledge," *American Archivist* 70, no. 1 (2007): 23–31, <https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.70.1.u114006770252845>.
- <sup>18</sup> Steven Lubar, "Information Culture and the Archival Record," *American Archivist* 62, no. 1 (1999): 10–22, <https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.62.1.30x5657gu1w44630>.
- <sup>19</sup> Margaret Hedstrom, "Understanding Electronic Incunabula: A Framework for Research on Electronic Records," *American Archivist* 54, no. 3 (1991): 334–54, <https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.54.3.125253r60389r011>.
- <sup>20</sup> Emily Maemura, "Web Archives Bibliography" (2019), <https://github.com/emilymae/web-archives-bib#readme>.
- <sup>21</sup> Society of American Archivists, "Web Archiving Section" (2019), <https://www2.archivists.org/groups/web-archiving-section>, captured at <https://perma.cc/75YS-KNEA>.

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## Teoria i praktyka archiwistyki USA

By Bartosz Nowożycki. Warszawa: Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych, 2017. 285 pp. Softcover, Open Access PDF, EPUB, and Mobi. 20 zł PLN.  
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The archives of Europe have a centuries-long history that serves as a starting point for understanding and developing manuscript collections and records repositories in North America. Contemporary archival theory and practice across the United States owe their roots to these traditions, which are well known and intertwined with US archives history. Across the Atlantic, and south of the Baltic Sea more specifically, however, the story of American archives is not as well known. In an effort to resolve this, Bartosz Nowożycki explores the issue in great detail in his Polish-language monograph, *Teoria i praktyka archiwistyki USA*, or *Archival Theory and Practice in the USA*.

A historian and archivist, and a senior specialist at the State Archives of Poland, Nowożycki had the opportunity to explore the history, laws, theory, and practices of American archives while serving as a visiting archivist at two prominent Polonian institutions in New York City. As a result of a comprehensive review of a variety of published sources, his publication focuses almost exclusively on the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). Nowożycki has written a thoroughly researched and heavily cited chronological review of NARA's history from its inception in 1934 to 2009 when David S. Ferriero was appointed archivist of the United States, the laws governing its decisions and

practices, archival theories proposed and espoused by major figures in NARA's history, and best practices that government archivists follow.

Nowożycki's intended audience is primarily archivists in Poland; most helpfully, he includes a lengthy glossary of American English archival terms as an appendix. In his introduction, he notes previous Polish literature on American archives and states his goal to greatly expand on this somewhat negative research and provide a more comprehensive view. He does this through an even greater review of American literature on archives, including an impressive number of past articles published in *American Archivist*.

In his literature review, Nowożycki notes the early reliance on European texts in American archival studies, starting with the 1898 Dutch manual, *Handleiding Voor Het Ordenen en Beschrijven van Archieven*. He also discusses the use of Polish texts in American studies. This includes the translation of an article by Ryszard Przelaskowski entitled "Schedule of Internal Work in Modern Archives" published in a 1940 National Archives *Staff Information Circular* and later reviewed in *American Archivist* in 1942,<sup>1</sup> as well as other articles in the journal on European archives appearing as early as 1938 (p. 129). In many ways, Nowożycki's monograph and its review of the cross-pollination between American and European archival literature continues this tradition of international understanding.

Personally, I found this to be an interesting read on many levels. Although I am not an archivist in Poland, I am a Polish American archivist, educated in the United States, and working at a prominent Polonian institution in Chicago. The Polish Museum of America (PMA) has had its share of visiting archivists from the State Archives in Poland and regular cooperation has been ongoing for at least two decades. Most recently, this includes a published collections guide with joint copyright held by the Head Office of the State Archives and the PMA.<sup>2</sup> Although I have a very basic understanding of how Polish archivists perceive American archives, I had hoped for more contrasts and comparisons within the text. While Nowożycki includes a few points throughout, this was not the purpose of his research.

Rather, Nowożycki focuses with great significance on NARA and its role in shaping the archives profession in the United States. He often mentions the Society of American Archivists (SAA), but, in his narration, it is a secondary factor. A partial explanation could be his cited observation that, historically, SAA membership has predominately been composed of NARA employees (p. 84), and, therefore, there is an understood overlap. He also does not consider academic, corporate, or other specialized archives in any great depth. Before opening the book, I had assumed more consideration would be given to the variety of archives found across the United States. Instead, Nowożycki posits NARA as a nearly exclusive force in establishing archival theory, practice, and professionalism in the United States.

It is fascinating to read in such detail about the origins of NARA. Nowożycki's factual narrative provides a complete picture of why an archives was needed at the federal level, separate from the Library of Congress. He argues that the establishment of the National Archives and the SAA undermined the early dominance of libraries and historical associations, despite their early influence on managing archives and working methods (p. 124). Nowożycki also describes early archival education, tracing the inception of federal employee seminars to the creation of the archives program at the American University in Washington, DC. He recalls the midcentury difficulties the National Archives faced when it was positioned within the General Services Administration (GSA), including a loss of autonomy as it was no longer an independent federal agency and limited funding as a part of the GSA's budget (p. 37). In reviewing NARA's processes and procedures, Nowożycki considers the use of destruction and retention schedules as its method of control over the records. He especially emphasizes the influence of Theodore R. Schellenberg and his 1956 *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques*. In particular, he notes Schellenberg's definition of a record's value as divided into two categories: primary/documentary and secondary/informational, as a diverging point from European models (p. 133). Interestingly, he offers praise for the practical approach to archives once it outgrew European methodology. For example, he notes that methods were adapted to describe larger batches of records, in contrast to the European standard level of description to a particular document or folder (p. 126).

Nowożycki covers the legal requirements NARA must observe, citing United States Code, federal acts, and executive orders. He discusses presidential libraries along with the Presidential Records Act, as well as the Freedom of Information Act, the Privacy Act, and the various sensitivities of classified records and applicable laws. He addresses the requirements of e-government in the context of the ways in which NARA has led federal agencies in compliance for electronic records. Expectedly, it is in this section that distinctions with Poland's State Archives arise, as each country has its own governing rules and regulations. For instance, unlike the director of Poland's State Archives, the archivist of the United States can organize the administration and appoint advisory committees in support of the office (p. 98). The archivist of the United States, as a member of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress, is involved in its management policy; in Poland, however, no such direct involvement in parliamentary records exists (p. 101). The archivist of the United States is also permitted much broader powers by law to handle classified documents as opposed to the office's Polish counterpart (p. 101). Poland also does not have a comparable equivalent to the American presidential libraries (p. 105).

For any Polish language reader who wants to know about the American government archives system, this is the book to read. Unfortunately, nongovernment

archives are beyond the scope of this historical analysis and as such are essentially marginalized. Although Nowożycki does not study other types of archives in the United States in great detail, the reader will come away with a basic understanding of practices as followed by government archives. Any archives can apply these practices, from selection to processing, and user access and conservation. Most of these steps are similarly practiced in Poland; one point of divergence is the American practice of reappraisal and deaccessioning.

Through his thoughtful research, Nowożycki adds to the international body of knowledge concerning archives. As an academic overview of NARA, Nowożycki's *Teoria i praktyka archiwistyki USA* serves as a thoroughly researched handbook. It is particularly useful for a researcher who is not familiar with the American system but is interested in understanding why and how certain records created by the US government are available, while other records are not. Working with researchers from abroad at the Polish Museum of America, different expectations arise as to what services we should be offering, as well as how those services should be provided. Although differences exist in nongovernment archives and are not explored in this book, there is value in explaining the American perspective. There is also value in understanding that the profession on both sides of the Atlantic has more similarities than differences.

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*Polish Museum of America*

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Richard Morris, William McCain, and Charles Paape, "Reviews of Books," *American Archivist* 5, no. 1 (January 1942): 40–45, <https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.5.1.16p470612452h3pr>.

<sup>2</sup> Edyta Targońska and Teresa Sromek, *Guide to the Polish Museum of America Archives Collections* (Warsaw: The Head Office of the State Archives; Chicago: The Polish Museum of America, 2019).

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## The Monumental Challenge of Preservation: The Past in a Volatile World

By Michèle Valerie Cloonan. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2018. 280 pp.  
Hardcover. \$30.00. ISBN 978-0-2620-3773-0.

**T**he preservation of cultural heritage is a subject for specialists, often highly qualified with years of experience in the field. Yet, it affects the lives and aspirations of a great part of humanity. At the heart of this important book by Michèle Valerie Cloonan is the fact that objects from the distant past can be