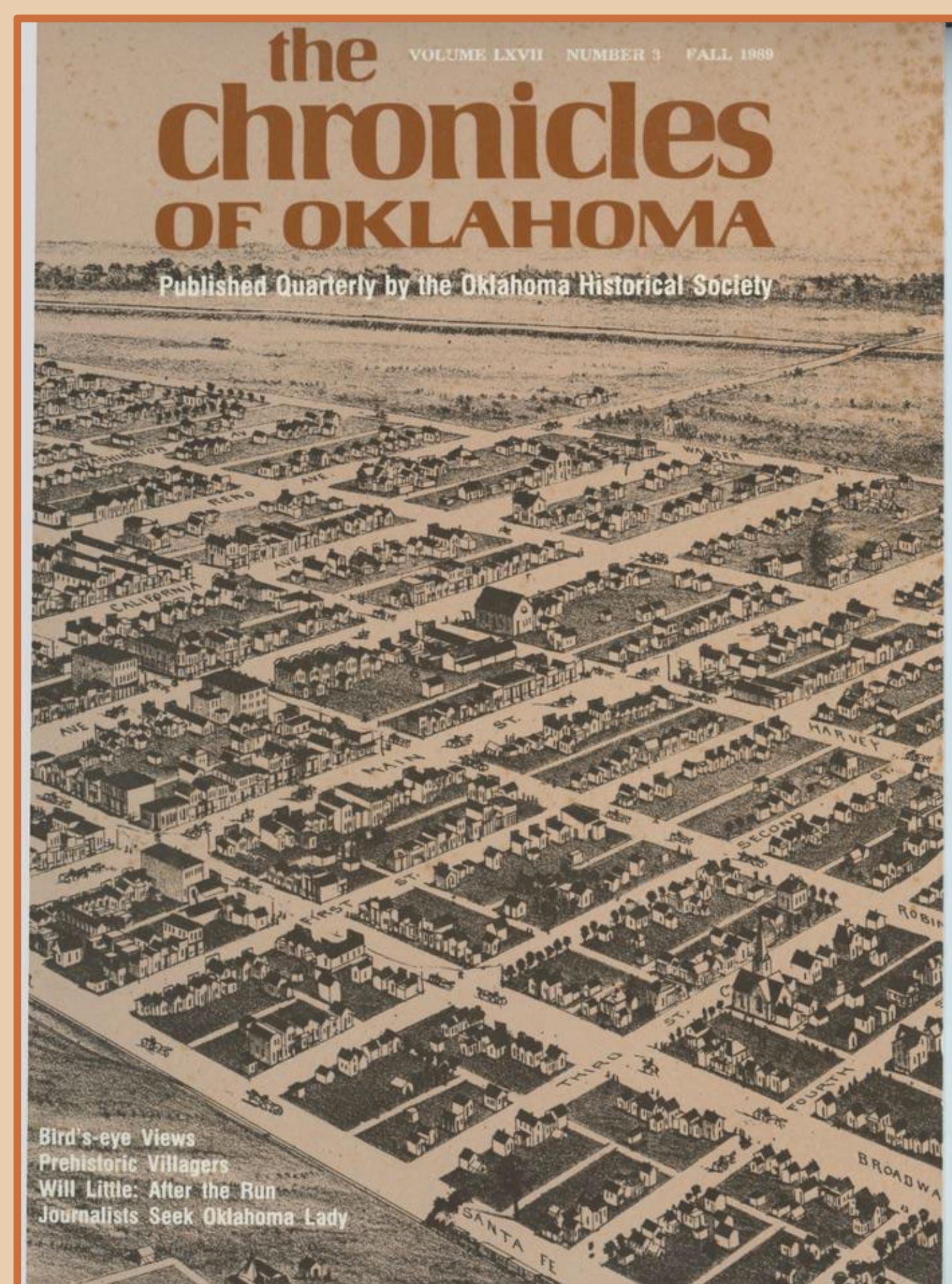# Creating Subject Metadata for The Chronicles of Oklahoma in The Gateway to Oklahoma History
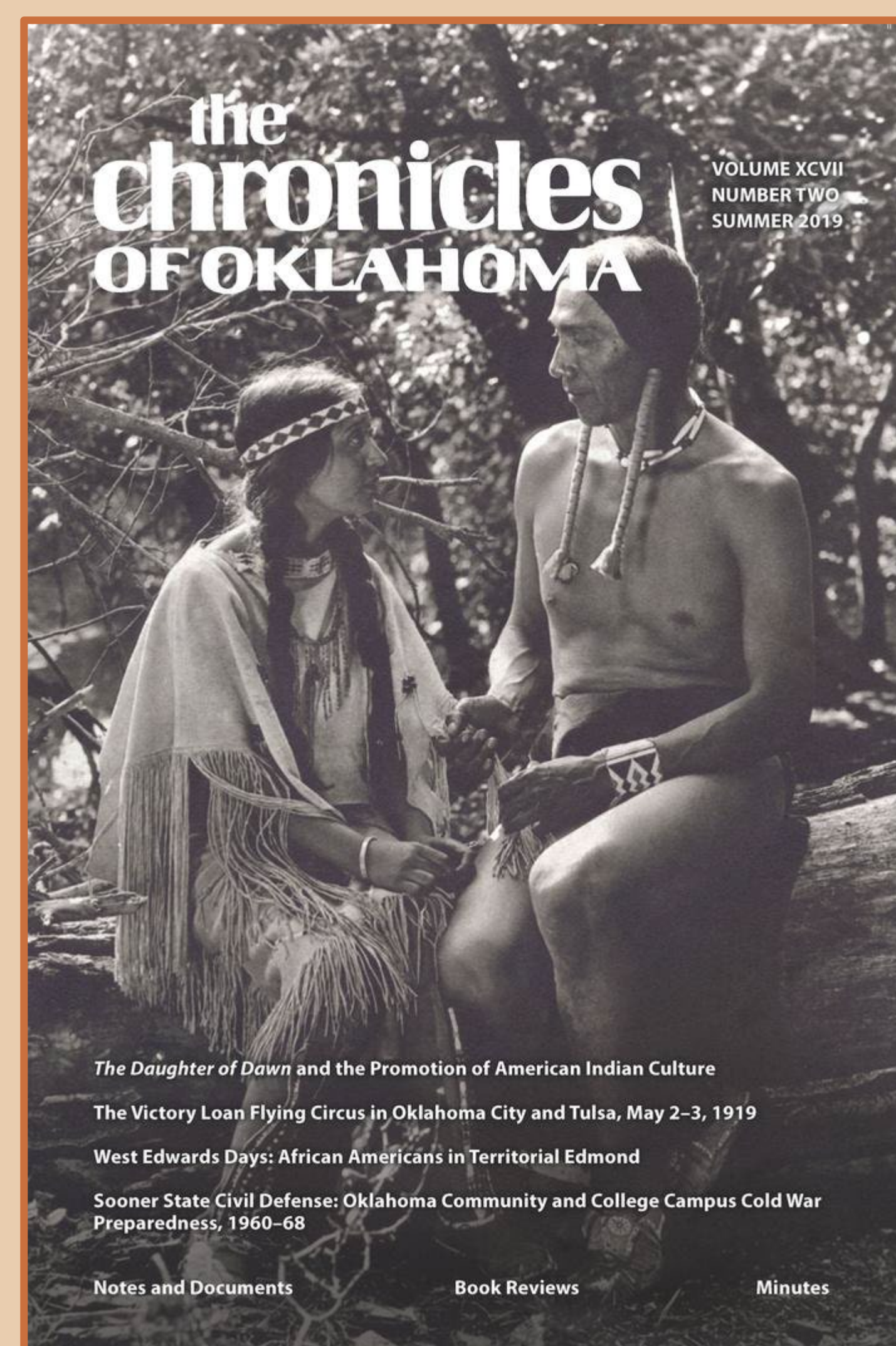
Hannah Carroll, Whitney Johnson-Freeman
UNT Digital Library

Introduction

The Chronicles of Oklahoma is a periodical available on the Gateway to Oklahoma History that has been published for over a century. UNT has partnered with the Oklahoma Historical Society to describe its issues and articles and make them available to the public.

Oklahoma Historical Society. Chronicles of Oklahoma, Volume 67, Number 3, Fall 1989, periodical, Autumn 1989; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc1827534/

Oklahoma Historical Society. Chronicles of Oklahoma, Volume 97, Number 2, Summer 2019, periodical, Summer 2019; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc1725833/

Subject Metadata

Part of describing The Chronicles of Oklahoma includes the creation of subject metadata. Articles cover a variety of sensitive cultural and historical topics, and terminology in articles can differ depending on perspective and time period. We attempted to create a controlled vocabulary of subject terms that would be accessible to researchers of the collection while also respecting the representation of people groups and events.
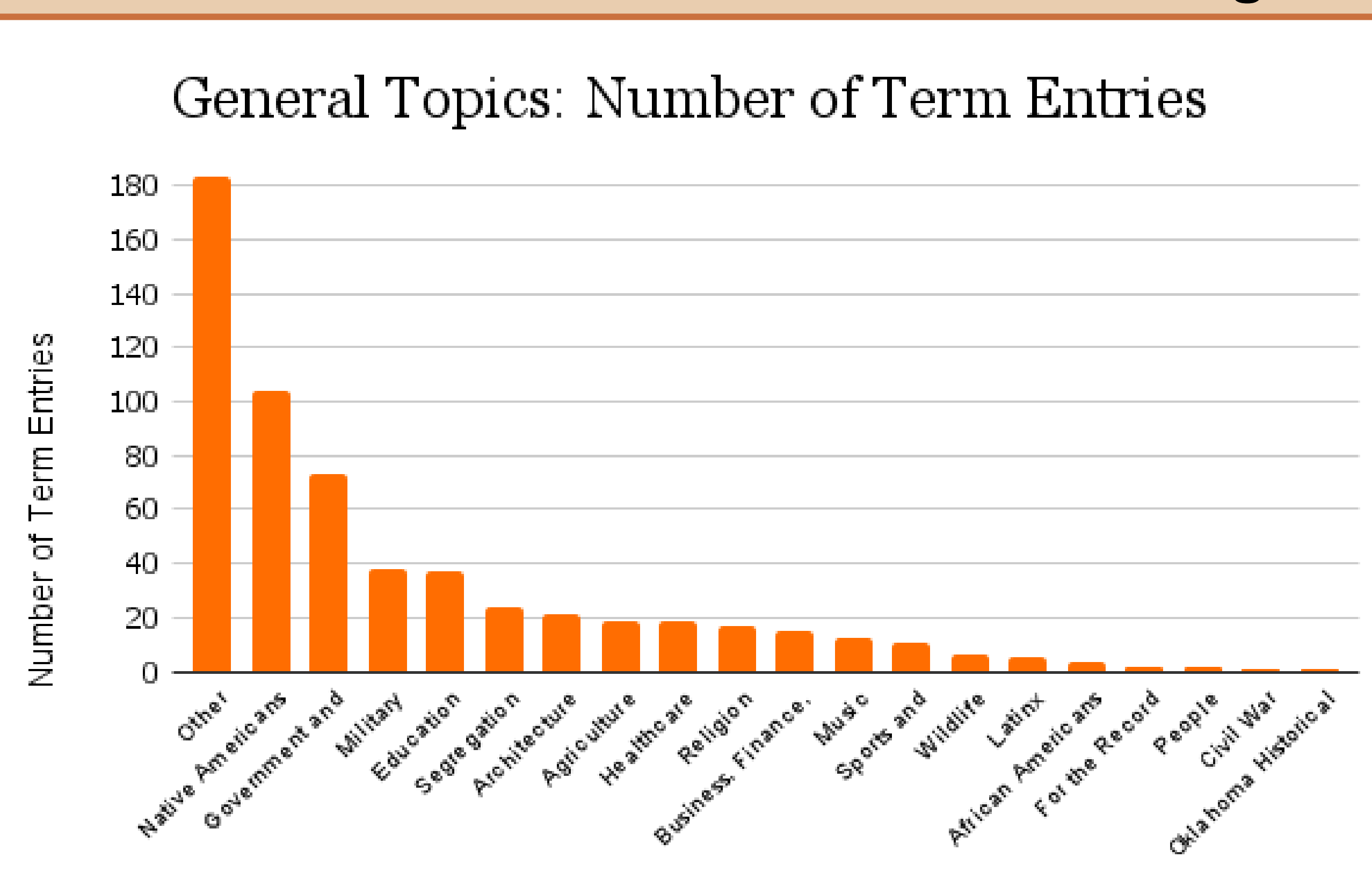
Our Process

First, we created a spreadsheet to store terms. This table (Fig. 1) shows the term type based on source: the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH), our own University of North Texas Browse Subject System (UNTL-BS), which is a controlled vocabulary already created by our institution, and keywords used to describe similar collections held by other institutions or found in the articles themselves.

Fig. 1

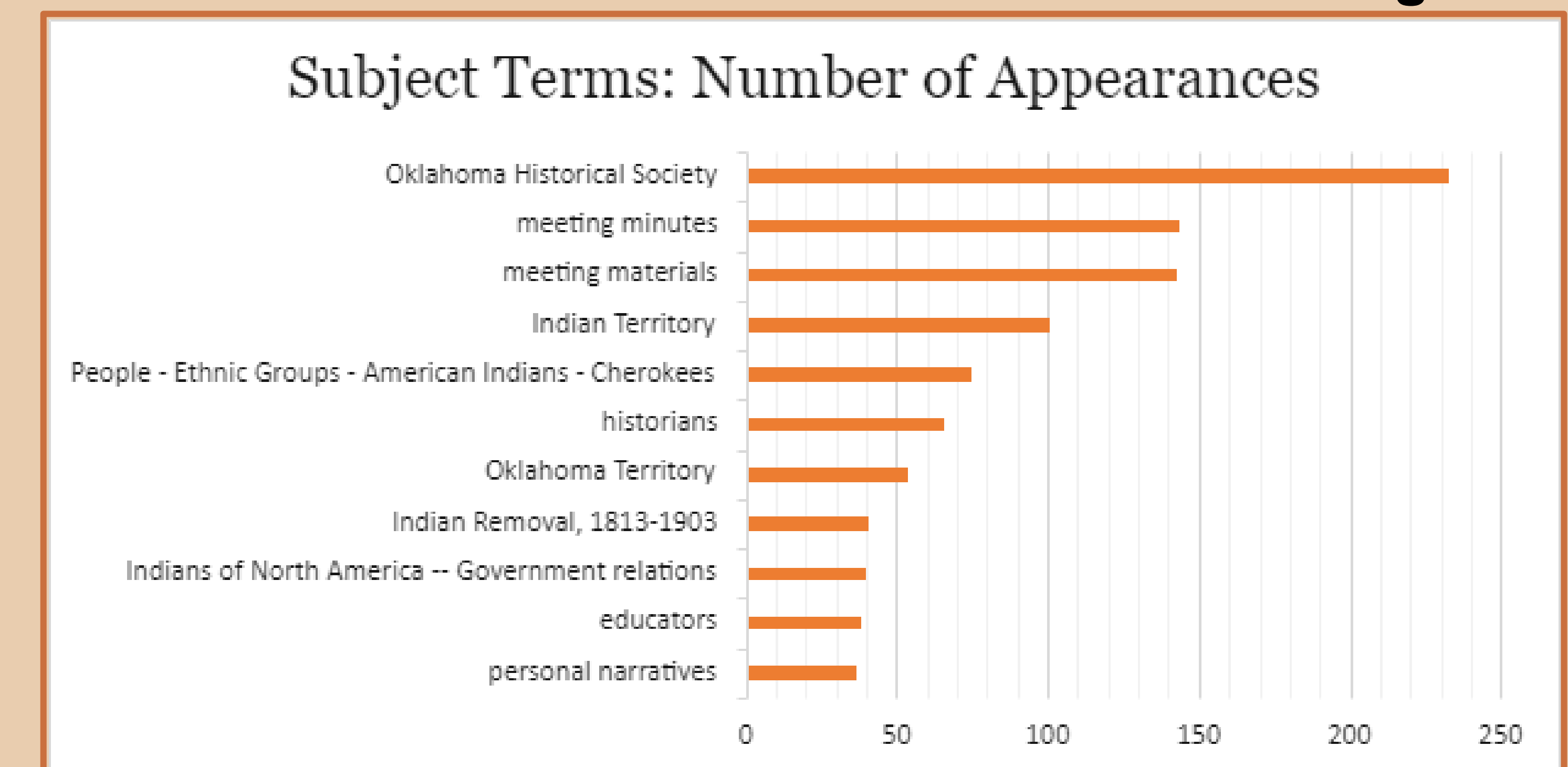| Type of Subject Term	Number of Term Entries
Keyword	340
LCSH	235
UNTL-BS	18
Named Animal	1

Most of these term additions occurred during the metadata creation process, since we would add to the spreadsheet as we worked. We also created a column to organize the spreadsheet further and grouped subject terms in categories by general topic (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2

General Topics: Number of Term Entries

Results

Fig. 3

Subject Terms: Number of Appearances

This chart (Fig. 3) shows the most used subject terms in completed article records. For the sake of illustration, I have removed terms included with every article (histories, Periodicals, and Oklahoma – History). Content of the articles often involves depictions of American Indian tribes and their history. When describing tribes, we try to specify tribe names, which are included in our UNTL-BS system, alongside LCSH standardized terms. Although there may be discrepancies, we are monitoring changes in preferred terminology to try to keep our controlled vocabulary current.

Project Outlook

The process of creating descriptive metadata for the Chronicles is still ongoing: we have completed records for 1,031 articles from 1980 to 2019, and plan to work back to the 1920s. Earlier content may include outdated terminology that reflects societal attitudes of the past. We aim to retain information as much as possible and represent it in an inclusive, accurate, and accessible way while standardizing descriptive metadata.

OHS Logo

UNT Logo