

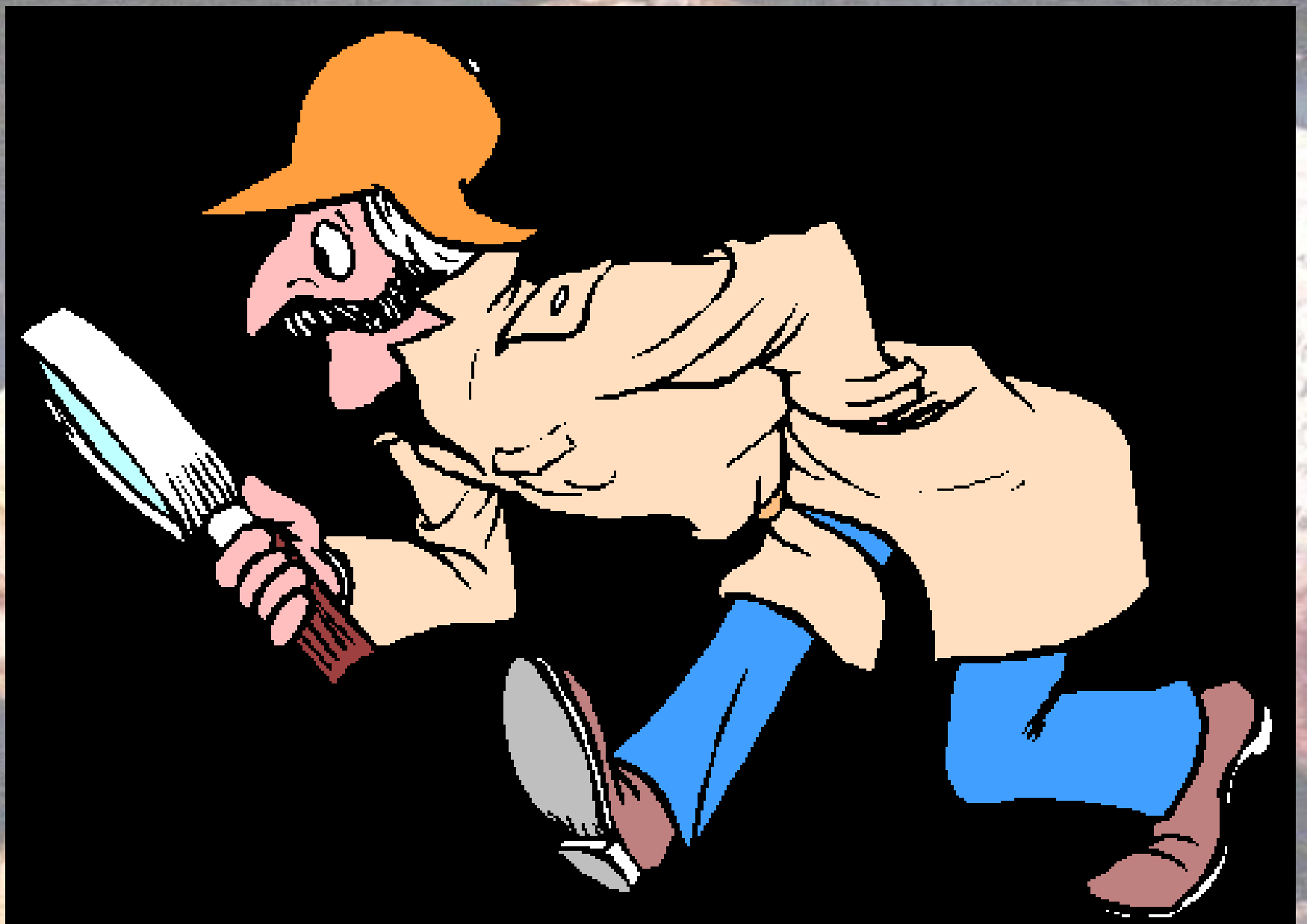
Primary and secondary sources in history

The background of the slide features a close-up of an open book. The pages are aged and yellowed, with some text visible but mostly illegible. A scroll of parchment is draped across the pages, also showing some text. The overall tone is historical and scholarly.

- After completing this quick tutorial you should be able to:
- 1) Identify different types of historical sources of information
- 2) Understand how to use these sources to reconstruct events of the past

Identifying sources

- There are two types of sources that historians use to reconstruct past events.
- 1) Primary sources – sources produced by individuals who actually participated in the historical events that the sources described.
- 2) Secondary sources – sources that synthesize primary source data into a single account of historic events. These also often seek to analyze, interpret, and/or evaluate the events they describe.





Primary sources

- Types of primary sources:
- Diaries, contemporary photographs, memoirs, video/film of event, letters, speeches, newspapers, official records, etc...

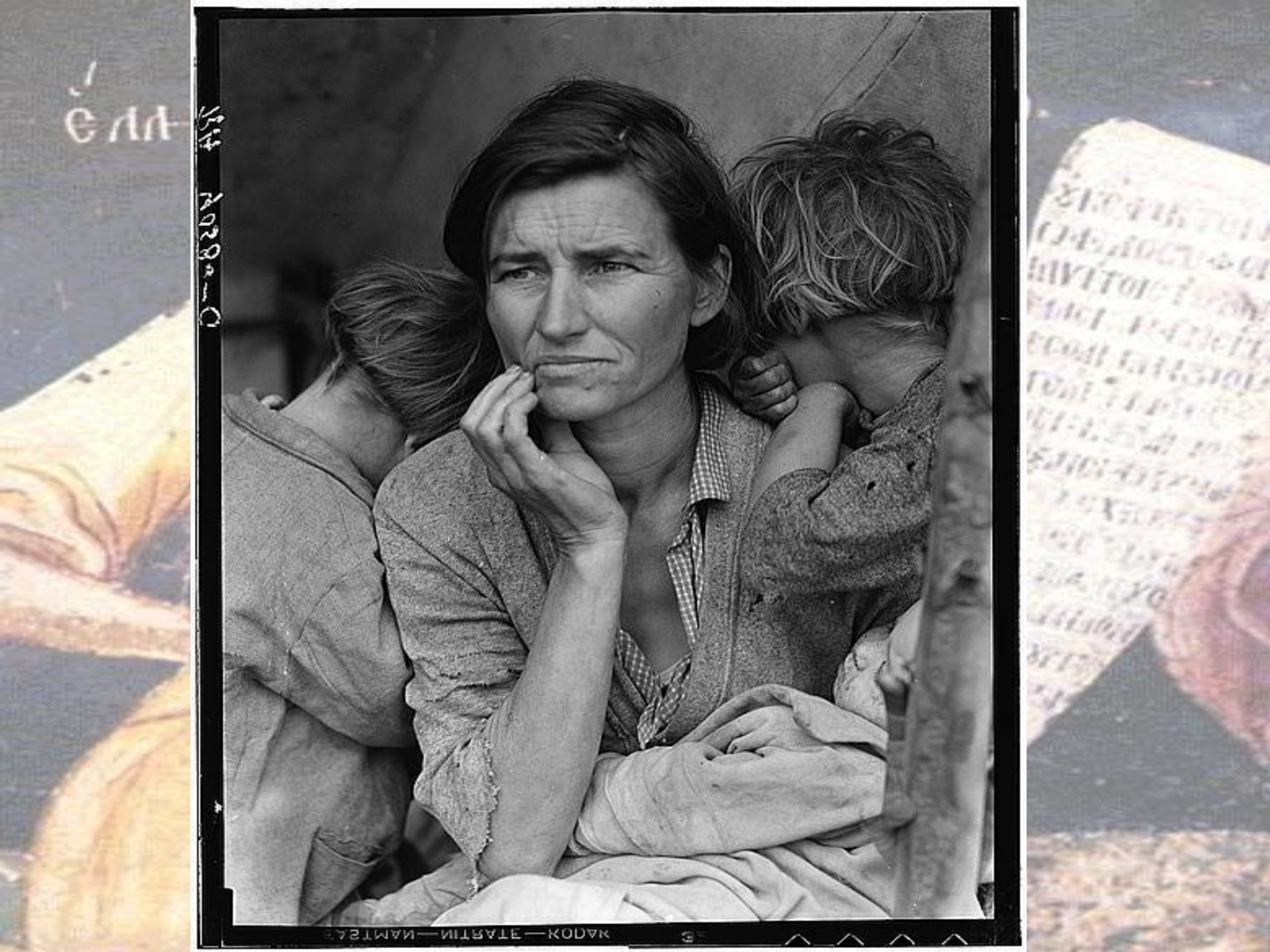
bond of family love than the earthly one!
 God help me ever to keep her memory fresh in
 my heart, and to love and adore Him as she did.

University of Virginia, Sunday evening Sept 24, 1899 - Again
 I find myself at the old University, and it is
 a rare pleasure to be here. Since I left in
 97 the new buildings which were then go-
 ing up have been completed, the new Ran-
 dall Dormitory has been begun and completed,
 and many little improvements made on
 the grounds, so that altogether the material
 side is immensely better than at that
 time and before that. - But it is late now,
 and I must stop and retire.

Mon. evening, Sept 25 - It has been cloudy all day,
 and raining in the afternoon and evening.
 I have just come from Preston Dargan's
 room, where I went to write a French
 exercise with him. As it did not take
 us long to do that, we played a couple

of games of chess afterward.

I wish to record something of the time
 since my entry of Sept 4th. After Mother's
 death I decided to come on here and
 complete my course for the M.A. degree.
 I think that will be a much wiser
 course than to take a small school.
 And perhaps I will be able to go on
 with special advanced work in chosen
 lines for a year or two more before
 stopping. It is now my intention to
make a special study of Physics. I
 hope to get my B.A. and M.A. degrees
 by taking this session B.A. French,
 B.A. Botany, and M.A. Physics. Besides
 those, I expect to take Senior Elec-
 tricity and a course of lectures by
 Mr. Humphreys on Spectroscopy.
 I left home at 6.30 P.M. on the 13th,
 got to Petersburg after midnight,



1914

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KODAK SAFETY FILM

ORIGINAL

CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE

THIS CERTIFIES, That on the 14 day of Mar., 1917, at Coon Rapids
in Carroll County, Iowa, according to law, and by authority and license under
the seal of the District Court, I duly

JOINED IN MARRIAGE

Elmer O. Anderson and Laura May Wilson

Given under my hand this 14 day of Mar., 1917,

MARRIAGE SOLEMNIZED IN PRESENCE OF

Mrs. Hazel Bolger
Rhoda Wilson

} Witnesses

A. J. Matthews
Pastor M. E. Church

ΕΛΛΗΝ·ΘΥΚΙ

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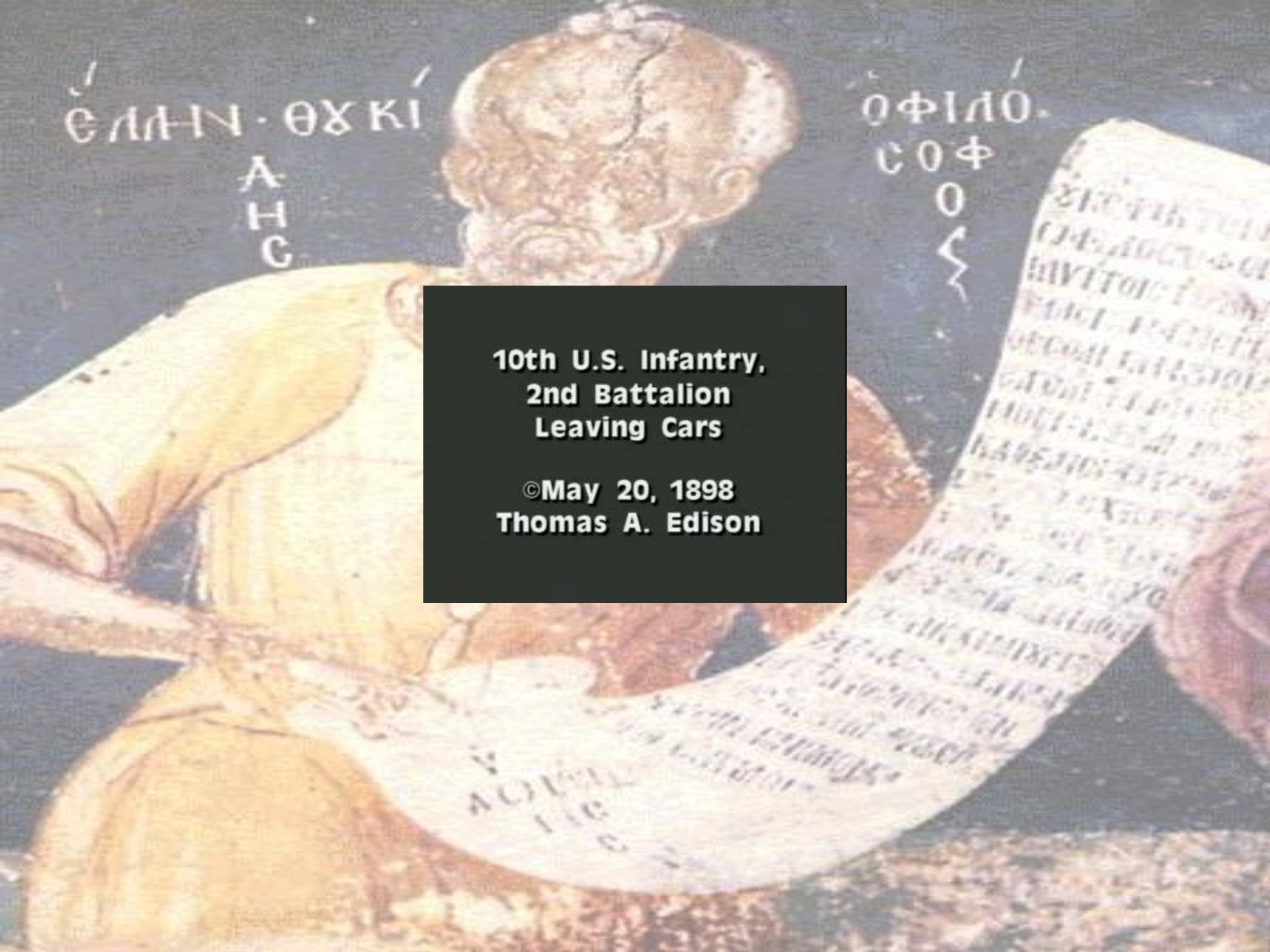
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**10th U.S. Infantry,
2nd Battalion
Leaving Cars**

**©May 20, 1898
Thomas A. Edison**



Reliability of primary sources

- Pros – documented by eyewitness; often documented close in time to actual event; a picture is worth 1,000 words
- Cons – limited in scope to participants involvement; may relay the bias of the individual; damaged or incompleteness of record may be misleading; photos can be doctored



Secondary sources



- Types of sources:
- Textbooks; scholarly articles; biographies; newspaper stories, etc...
- Note – some secondary sources can become primary sources about the time they were written.

THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

DON'T
KNOW
MUCH
ABOUT[®]



Everything You Need
to Know about American History
but Never Learned

KENNETH C. DAVIS

author of Don't Know Much About[®] the Bible

Reliability of secondary sources

- Pros – synthesizes large amounts of primary source material for the ‘big picture;’ supposed to be free from bias; provides deeper context and perspective on events
- Cons – usually written after long periods have elapsed after original event; construction involves interpretation of sources that may not be universally accepted.