As American As Apple Pie, Baseball, and Xenophobia:

How did a Nation of Immigrants become so Anti-Immigrant?

An Honors Thesis in partial fulfillment for the requirements for Honors in

International Studies.

By

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Abstract:

The United States has a rich history of immigrants compromising its population, and much is made of the “melting pot” metaphor to describe U.S. society. Nonetheless, a strong anti-immigrant sentiment permeates U.S. society as well. This research effort attempts to demonstrate that such anti-immigrant sentiments did not develop overnight. Indeed, the origins of such sentiments began quickly after the arrival of the first immigrants. In executing this research, an overview of early U.S. immigrants will be examined, paying specific attention to the experience of three groups of immigrants to the U.S.—the English, the Italians, and the Chinese. These examples reveal how ethnicity as well as religion has served to create an anti-immigrant subculture— even in a nation largely comprised of immigrants. Finally, we use a contemporary case study by providing a detailed examination of two young Georgia women: one a Caucasian citizen born in the United States and the other an undocumented Hispanic student that grew up in the United States. The study looks at the similarities in their K-12 educational experiences but contrasts the vastly different post high school graduation experiences as a result of current legislation.