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"Other": A Brief History of American Xenophobia
Supplementary Timeline

This timeline and the film that it accompanies are intended to show a broad overview of the history of American xenophobia and racism from 1492-2017. The timeline is far from being comprehensive and is intended to be a starting point for further learning.

1492
First arrival of European Settlers

1619
First group of enslaved Africans brought to Colonial America

1677
Bacon's Rebellion
Nathaniel Bacon leads a militia including both white and Black indentured servants on a series of violent raids against Native Americans, as well as the colonial government of Virginia. In response, strict race and class hierarchies are encoded into law. People of African descent become enslaved for life, while Europeans are protected by whiteness.

1776
Declaration of Independence
The Declaration of Independence states that "all men are created equal," but the 27th grievance reveals that some who sought independence were doing so to protect the institution of slavery and included a racist depiction of Indigenous peoples as "merciless Indian savages."

1790
Naturalization Act
The Naturalization Act of 1790 declares that only a "free white person" can become a naturalized US citizen. All others are excluded, establishing whiteness as a prerequisite for citizenship.

1830
Indian Removal Act
The Indian Removal Act is signed into law by President Andrew Jackson, which voids existing treaties with Native Americans and leads to the forced migration and displacement of thousands. Government agents and white settler "volunteers" forced Cherokees on a thousand-mile walk known as the Trail of Tears. Approximately 4,000 Cherokees died during the course of this march.

1855
Bloody Monday
The anti-Catholic movement of the 1830s-1850s reached its violent peak on August 6, 1855, as Nativist and Protestant mobs attacked Irish Catholics in Louisville, Kentucky. The use of political xenophobia to curb the rights of Irish Americans set the foundations for later anti-immigrant movements, which, ironically, many Irish immigrants joined as they became accepted as "white."

1850s-1880s
Anti Chinese Movement
As anti-Chinese rhetoric builds, Chinese immigrants are identified as "another race problem" like African Americans and Native Americans. Chinese are driven out of towns and cities by violent white mobs and, in some cases, massacred. (See Jeanne Pfalzer's *Driven Out* for a compilation of illustrations, rhetoric, laws, etc.)

1862
Homestead Act
The Homestead Act encouraged westward migration and white settlement, and led to an increase in European immigration to the US and continued forced displacement of and war with Native Americans.

Dakota Massacre
The mass hanging of 38 Dakota men on December 26, 1862, in Mankato, Minnesota, ordered by President Lincoln, was the largest mass execution in United States history. (More information and visuals can be found at http://www.usdakotawar.org/ and https://cla.umn.edu/chgs/holocaust-genocide-education/resource-guides/native-american)

1863-1865
Emancipation Proclamation and 13th Amendment
President Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, declaring all enslaved people in the US free. The 13th Amendment at the end of the Civil War officially abolishes slavery, but

southern states pass a series of "Black Codes" created to maintain racial hierarchies and inequalities. African Americans, while no longer enslaved, were still denied the right to vote, serve on juries, own or carry weapons, and, in some states, rent or lease land.

1871
Indian Appropriations Act
Dissolves Indian Tribes as nations.

1876
Beginning of Jim Crow Era
A system of legal and social separation defined and restricted the activities, behavior, and opportunities of African Americans. Racial segregation was violently enforced, drastically limiting civil liberties of African Americans well into the 20th century.

1875
Page Act
The Page Act of 1875 prohibits women from "China, Japan or any other Oriental country" from entering the US if they are suspected of prostitution. The law is used to effectively ban Chinese women from immigrating.

1882
Chinese Exclusion Act
The Chinese Exclusion Act prohibits Chinese immigrants from entering the US — the first federal immigration law to single out an entire immigrant group for exclusion based on race and class. It also defined all acts of illegal immigration as a crime and led to the first federal detention and deportation system.

1882-1946
Lynchings of African Americans
African Americans who broke the Jim Crow laws or defied established social codes could be put in jail, or worse. Between 1882 and 1946, lynchings took the lives of 4,715 Black men, women, and children.

1887
Dawes Act
Dissolved tribal lands.

1890
Wounded Knee Massacre
146 Lakota Sioux, mostly women and children, are massacred by the US Army near Wounded Knee Creek (Lakota: *Čhaŋkpé Ópi Wakpála*) on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation.

1893-1898
Overthrow and Annexation of Kingdom of Hawaiʻi
US Marines join American planters and politicians in overthrowing Hawaiian monarch Queen Liliʻuokalani in 1893. Four years later, President William McKinley annexes Hawaiʻi as a US territory, despite continued protest from the Queen and Native Hawaiians.

1894
Bureau of Immigration established

Immigration Restriction League formed in Boston
The first think tank and lobbying firm; used xenophobic ideology to influence national policy. Claimed Southern and Eastern Europeans were "racial inferiors" and used "science" to prove Anglo-Saxon superiority.

1896
Plessy v. Ferguson
The Supreme Court upholds "separate but equal" in the case of Plessy v. Ferguson, giving a legal mandate for racial segregation and marking the formal beginning of the Jim Crow Era.

1897
Literacy Test Bill
Proposal to bar immigrants unable to pass a literacy test, specifically targeted at Southern and Eastern Europeans. Approved by both houses of Congress, but vetoed by President Grover Cleveland.

Early 1900s
Resurgence of the KKK
The Ku Klux Klan committed acts of anti-Black violence, and argued that immigration introduced "degenerative" elements that threatened the American way of life.

1905-1914
9.9 Million New Immigrants to the US
Between 1905 and 1914, almost 9.9 million immigrants entered the US, marking the highest 10-year period of immigration in US history.

1906

Naturalization Act

Required immigrants "be able to speak English" in order to be eligible for US citizenship.

1908

Gentleman's Agreement with Japan

Japan agrees to stop issuing passports to laborers going to US (which also applied to Koreans following the forced annexation in 1910).

1910

Angel Island Immigration Station Opens

Between 1910 and 1940, over a million people are processed at Angel Island on their way into or out of the country (Lee 107). Chinese made up 70 percent of those detained on the island — approximately 100,000 in total.

1911

Dillingham Commission

A congressional commission is formed in 1907, in response to increased immigration to the US, and uses eugenics and racist hierarchies to rank immigrant groups. Its findings are released in 1911, calling for increased restrictions on immigration from Asia and South and Eastern Europe (Lee 135).

1913

Alien Land Law

California passes a law prohibiting aliens ineligible for citizenship from owning land or possessing long-term leases that is primarily aimed at Japanese immigrants. Other states follow suit, and California passes an amendment in 1920 prohibiting even short-term leases of land. Alien land laws remain in place until the end of WWII.

1916

"The Great Race"

Published in 1916, *The Passing of the Great Race* makes a case against the "twin evils of interracial mixing and immigration." President Theodore Roosevelt quotes the book in a speech calling for assimilation — an "America for Americans" — which is later turned into a pamphlet circulated by the KKK..

1917
"Asiatic Barred Zone"
The Immigration Act of 1917 bars immigration from Asia, introduces a literacy test, and expands the list of "undesirable" immigrants to include individuals with mental illness and those who don't conform to gender and sexuality norms.

1920
An immigrant quota system that favors white immigrants is enacted and stays in place until 1965.

1922
Ozawa v. United States
Japanese immigrant Takao Ozawa filed a petition for naturalization in 1914, arguing that Japanese should be classified as "free white persons." The case was appealed to the Supreme Court, which in 1922 issued a unanimous ruling that declared Japanese immigrants were not part of "the Caucasian race" and therefore ineligible for citizenship.

1923
Thind Decision
The Supreme Court unanimously decided that Bhagat Singh Thind, an Indian Sikh man who identified himself as a "high caste aryan, of full Indian blood," was racially ineligible for naturalized citizenship in the United States.

1924
Immigration Act of 1924
Also known as the Johnson-Reed Act, the Immigration Act of 1924 ended further immigration from Japan, created a new quota system that restricted immigration from South and Eastern Europe, and authorized the formation of the Border Patrol.

1928
The US begins denying visas to Mexican immigrants who cannot pass a literacy test.

1929
Immigration Act of March 4th
Made undocumented immigration a crime resulting in fines, imprisonment, deportation.

1929-1935

Mexican "Repatriation" Campaign

Racism and xenophobia become more intertwined during the Great Depression, and Mexicans are increasingly racialized as an "invading" population threatening "white civilization." Between 1929 and 1935, the federal government deports 82,400 Mexicans and Mexican Americans. Another thirty to forty thousand are pushed out through coercion and deception. Sixty percent were US citizens.

1934

Tydings McDuffie Act

Lays a pathway for Philippine independence, but reclassifies Filipinos in the US as "aliens."

1935

Filipino Repatriation

Filipinos are allowed to return to Philippines, but only 50 per year are allowed back to the US.

1940

Alien Registration Act

The federal government required annual registration of all non-citizen immigrants over age fourteen.

1941

Pearl Harbor

Beginning just hours after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the FBI began arresting Japanese American community leaders who had been under government surveillance for decades due to the misguided belief that they posed a threat to national security.

1942-1948

Japanese American Incarceration

Executive Order 9066, signed by President Roosevelt on February 19, 1942, leads to the incarceration of some 120,000 men, women, and children of Japanese descent, two-thirds of whom were American citizens. The 10 primary camps where most Japanese Americans were detained close in 1945, but the last camp did not close until January 1948.

1943

Magnuson Act

The Chinese Exclusion Act is repealed. Chinese immigrants can become naturalized citizens, but a racial quota allows only 105 new immigrants per year. (Lee 226)

1946
Luce-Cellar Act
Sets a quota of 100 Indian immigrants per year, and allows Indian nationals already residing in the US to become citizens.

1952
Immigration and Nationality Act
Also known as the Walter-McCarran Act: maintains established national origins quotas, but lifts the ban on naturalization for Asian immigrants.

1954
"Operation Wetback"
Deports over 1 million Mexican immigrants.

Brown v. Board of Education
US Supreme Court rules school segregation unconstitutional.

1964
Civil Rights Act
Outlawed discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

1965
Immigration and Nationality Act
National origins quotas are eliminated but replaced with a "preference" system that prioritizes "skilled" immigrants and family reunification. It ends most legal pathways for Mexican immigration and continues to bar immigrants considered "sexual deviants."

1965
Voting Rights Act
Outlaws discriminatory voting practices.

1967
Loving v. Virginia
Invalidates laws prohibiting interracial marriage.

1968
Civil Rights Act of 1968
Outlaws discriminatory housing practices.

1984

First private prison

The Corrections Corporation of America (now CoreCivic) opens the Houston Processing Center, an immigration detention center.

1986

Immigration Reform and Control Act

Required employers to verify legal status of workers; imposed punishments for employment of undocumented immigrants.

1988

The Anti-Drug Abuse Act

Mandatory detention becomes law. Aggravated felony is defined for immigration purposes.

1994

California's "Save our State" proposition

Linked undocumented immigration to violent crime, denied basic social and health services to undocumented immigrants, and required public employees to report anyone suspected of being in the US without proper documentation to federal authorities.

1996

AEDPA and IIRIRA

Two major bills passed under the Clinton administration, the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA) and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) laid the foundation for a massive expansion of immigrant detention and deportation over the next three decades. Together, the two laws redefined relatively minor, non-violent offenses as "aggravated felonies" that resulted in mandatory detention and fast-track deportation, even for legal US residents. Immigrants were also barred from receiving most social and public health services, and refugees became subject to mandatory detention during the asylum-seeking process.

2001

Patriot Act

9/11 led to the USA Patriot Act, which authorized detention of noncitzens and expanded government surveillance and searches without warrant, primarily targeting Arab and Muslim communities.

Department of Homeland Security Established

DHS established and Immigration Customs & Enforcement (ICE) formed, resulting in significantly more deportations and detentions.

2002

INS establishes National Security Entry-Exit Registration System

Targets Arab or Muslim majority countries and North Korea, requiring noncitizen men aged 16 and up to register with the US government.

2005

Operation Streamline

Launched under George W. Bush to deter undocumented border crossings through increased Border Patrol, detention, and prosecution.

2008

Great Recession Hits

Great Recession led to a rise in xenophobia and nationalism that particularly targeted "Muslim terrorists" and "illegal aliens."

2010

Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act

Mandates 33,400 immigration detention center beds be filled daily.

Arizona SB1070

Signed into law in Arizona, the "Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act" — also called the "Show Me Your Papers" bill by opponents — made the failure to carry immigration documents a crime and authorized police to detain anyone if there is "reasonable suspicion" that they are in the country illegally.

2012

Increased Immigration Enforcement Budget

Immigration enforcement budget increased to $18 billion. 419,000 people deported — ten times the number a decade earlier.

2016

Increased Immigration Detention

By 2016, the US is detaining 360,000 people a year in more than 200 immigration jails across the country. Over 8.6 million people are apprehended and more than 5.2 million deported during the Obama administration.

Donald Trump elected as President

Trump is elected to office in November 2016 after running on a platform that invokes xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiments.

2017

Donald Trump's First Week In Office

Executive Order 13767 "Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements": Calls for construction of a multibillion-dollar border wall,additional detention facilities, and 5,000 new agents along the US-Mexico border.

EO 13768 "Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States": Massive expansion of interior immigration enforcement and removal of undocumented immigrants, including "Dreamers" previously protected under DACA.

EO 13769 "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry in the United States": Prohibited all non-citizens from prominent Muslim-majority countries for 90 days and permanently reduced the number of refugees permitted to enter the country. Colloquially known as the "Muslim Ban." (Note: the ban was upheld by the Supreme Court in 2018. In February 2020, six more countries were added, all with substantial Muslim populations, bringing the total number of countries on the restricted list to 13.)

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