



Hogg Foundation
for Mental Health



Episode 143: Black History, the Hogg Foundation, and the Red Scare in Texas (Transcript)

Ike Evans:

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Hi. Welcome to "Into the Fold," the mental health podcast. I am your host, Ike Evans. Today, we're delighted to bring you Episode 143, "Black History, The Hogg Foundation, and The Red Scare in Texas." But first, some mental health headlines.

In Hogg news, we would like to congratulate our newest Central Texas African American Healthy Minds grantees. Ten organizations were each awarded \$10,000 to support mental health and wellness among African Americans in the Central Texas area. In the show notes for this episode, you'll be able to find a link to the announcement on our website -- H-O, double-G dot UTexas dot edu - which will have a full listing of the grant partners. Learn more about their work, and give them your support.

In other news, President Biden, in his State of the Union Address, calls for more mental health care at schools. This followed an announcement that the U.S. Department of Education will develop a \$280 million grant program to help schools hire more mental health counselors. In an article by "Education Week," the President is quoted as saying, quote, "When millions of young people are struggling with bullying, violence, trauma, we owe them greater access to mental healthcare at school," unquote.

Finally, the Hogg Foundation is showcasing the winners of the New Voices Showcase For Youth. Last fall, more than 20 young people submitted short videos that try to answer the question: "How would the world be different if it cared about your mental health?" Six of the video submissions were of such quality and originality to earn their creators small grant awards. The first of these, titled "Winona's Monster," is a unique stop-motion animation film created by Jacqueline Garcia. You can find a link to it in the show notes for this episode. The remaining five videos will be published on our blog in the coming weeks, so look for those. That does it for mental health headlines. Don't be left out of the loop. Become a Hogg Insider by subscribing to mental health headlines. You can find a sign-up link on our main website at H-O double-G dot UTexas dot edu.

The Hogg Foundation is above all a learning organization. We want to know more about the people and communities we aim to impact through our work. It was as true decades ago as it is now. Yet there have been times when our questing for more knowledge has run headlong into the social and political climate of the time. A very memorable instance of this took place in the 1950s. Beginning in 1954, the Hogg Foundation conducted the Texas Cooperative Youth Study, a large-scale survey of nearly 13,000 high-school students. It surveyed their attitudes on a range of issues, including segregation and other hot-button social issues of the time. Now, keep in mind that the study began the same year as the landmark Brown versus Board of Education Supreme Court case that mandated the desegregation of public schools. This was the charged atmosphere in which the Hogg Foundation unwittingly found itself once the study became more widely known. White parents in particular were alarmed by the study's questions. This response triggered a backlash that even drew in elements of the anti-communist panic that was emblematic of the time.

As soon as I found out about this, I became fascinated. This episode and its aftermath hold important lessons for us today. Here to help us draw out those lessons are our two guests. Aviv Rau is a graduate research assistant for the Hogg Foundation and a graduate student in the Information Studies program at the University of Texas at Austin. And Dr. Don Carleton is Executive Director of the Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin and the author of "Red Scare." They dropped in yesterday for a conversation about undertaking research and learning in a time of censorship and fear. I take you now to that conversation.

Aviv Rau is a graduate research assistant for the Hogg Foundation and a graduate student in the information studies program at the University of Texas at Austin. And Dr. Don Carleton is executive director of the Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin and the author of "Red Scare." Welcome to you both.

Aviv Rau: Thank you.

Dr. Don Carleto...: Glad to be here.

Aviv Rau: Yeah. Me, too.

Ike Evans: Aviv, let's start with you. Tell us a little bit about the youth study's early conception. Whose idea was it? What was the intention behind it, and why was it thought necessary?

Aviv Rau: Sure. The Texas Cooperative Youth Study was a study conducted principally by the Hogg Foundation, along with the Texas Education Agency's Homemaking Education Division. It was also sponsored by about 16 state institutions, specifically their home economics departments. One of those, primarily, was UT Austin, where two of the principal researchers were based. These were also

Hogg foundation staffers, Dr. Bernice Milburn Moore and Dr. Wayne Holtzman. In 1954, essentially, they were looking to study the attitudes of youth in high schoolers all over Texas. They conducted a representative sample with 13,000 students from all over, of different class backgrounds, different racial backgrounds, and different religious backgrounds, pretty much every sort of community in Texas, farming communities all the way up to the large metro areas, and what they thought of school, what they thought about their future prospects, all sorts of topics like that that, at the time, they weren't really hearing a lot from students, by students, on those issues.

We don't know exactly why it arose when it did. We do know that Wayne Holtzman, as I mentioned, was one of the principal researchers. He was already studying college students' attitudes specifically toward segregation and desegregation around the same time. And Dr. Bernice Milburn Moore, she had a more eclectic background, educationally, but had built a reputation as a consultant on family and home-life issues across the state. She did work not only with the Hogg Foundation and with the UT Home Economics Department but also worked for the Texas Education Agency for a time, as well as the homemaking division of the State Board for Vocational Education and Austin Independent School District. She was a consultant, as I mentioned, and advertised her services as drawing from youth themselves. We assume that that methodology maybe came a little bit from Moore's previous work.

Essentially, they were looking to study students' attitudes broadly but especially about segregation and desegregation at this time. Obviously, a national debate was happening in the background. Nineteen fifty-four, as we know, was the year of the Brown versus Board of Education Supreme Court case. I think that was a big undercurrent that was influencing why folks felt compelled to study not just kids' attitudes broadly but specifically social issues around things like segregation in schools.

Ike Evans: How was the study conducted, and what were its findings?

Aviv Rau: Yeah. The study was conducted through teams of researchers from those 16 state institutions that traveled to high schools all over Texas, conducted the survey. Now, because it was co-sponsored by the Texas Education Agency, that meant that it made it into the schools' curriculums, so there was a 300-question survey that was actually given to kids on school time, during school hours. It employed research methods that were popular at the time we might raise some eyebrows at today and we recognize as a little bit problematic, namely, of course, now there are a lot of measures that researchers take when they work with minors and just anytime that there's institutional review-board-type standards we've implemented today, those don't seem to have been quite as existent at the time, if at all.

Ike Evans: Okay. Let me cut in here.

Aviv Rau: Yeah.

Ike Evans: What was the result of them not doing those things that we would've done today?

Aviv Rau: Exactly. Yeah. The result was that kids were candid. The result was also that parents were upset about that, frankly. There was a lot of backlash from parents, from schools, from school boards, and other institutions, from legislators, about the fact that this was conducted on school time, essentially. Some people saw it as very extracurricular in its focus. Why are kids being surveyed about their home lives on school time? Parents asked questions like that. But essentially, key findings, just to sum it up very simply, were that there were negative effects of segregation on Black students' mental health outcomes. That was a really huge outcome of the study that -- You know, a lot of people were looking, of course, at segregation at the time, less so tying it to mental health and adverse mental health effects for Black students. So they found that families were still the primary socialization agent of children, even as there was some fearmongering about all these different social institutions potentially shaping children at this time.

The study found that, regardless, families were still primarily shaping their children through their values and transmitting their cultural values that way in the home. They also had some findings that we'll raise eyebrows at today with our more maybe sophisticated methods of sociological study. One such finding was that higher education and socioeconomic status of parents correlates with kids feeling better and having lower rates of delinquency. Lower education ultimately was correlated with kids feeling pessimistic toward the world, pessimistic toward their job prospect, and pessimistic toward education. Obviously, we might complicate those narratives today, and I think we should. But ultimately, another key finding was that kids with mothers who worked outside the home were no more unhappy, had no more problems of personal adjustment than kids who had a stay-at-home mother. This was really big at the time, of course, with a lot of working mothers leaving the home in Texas, especially in white Texas communities, middle-class communities, where there was previously a stay-at-home mother. This is one of the first times when a lot of mothers were working outside the home, and the study maintained that that did not affect children negatively.

Ike Evans: Okay. This next question is for, I guess, the both of you, starting with you, Aviv. You mentioned that there was a public reaction to the study, to how it was conducted. How would you characterize the reaction? Did anyone anticipate it?

Aviv Rau: Yeah. As far as we know, at the Hogg Foundation, at least, I can say it was certainly not anticipated, at least with this level of vitriol and this strongly. I think a lot of the historical documents give us the perception that the Hogg saw this as any other grant that they funded and project that they would take on. They were doing a lot of research at the time into all sorts of different sociological issues, as well as just other relevant social issues at the time. So this wasn't seen as exceptional, at least in the literature that we have. Once it caused this stir, as I mentioned, with legislators, concerned parents,

conservative commentators on television, in Houston, it really caused a big stir, which we can get into in a second. But essentially, this forced the Hogg Foundation to realize that there were real-world impacts and there were real-world responses to a lot of the research that was happening maybe in a more academic or research environment. It wasn't necessarily being received as just that. It was really tied to a lot of political issues at the time.

After this, there was a public outcry that caused Ima Hogg, who was benefactor of the Hogg Foundation, to reverse her position on how the foundation conducted research. She claimed the study should not have been given to children. Doctor Sutherland, who was the executive director of the foundation at the time, saw any kind of social science study or activity was just getting this sort of response at the moment. He claimed that there were a lot of conservative groups that saw this as an invasion of privacy and tied it to implanting communistic ideals in youth, which, yeah, I think ties to a lot of other things going on at the time around Texas and around the nation.

Dr. Don Carleto...:

Well, I think it's also important to understand that the study, like so many other studies of our culture and society, needed to be done. That's what we do as academics in universities. But also, the shock at the negative reaction is really an indication of also a problem we have as scholars and academics. That's an incredible naivete about politics and the environment that we're actually living in as opposed to what we see on campus. The fact that there was a negative reaction to these studies shouldn't shock anyone because this is in the midst of a period of great turmoil in American society. We had just come out of World War II. The American people, really, where they were looking at, a very hoping, a very peaceful non-war setting. The boys were home from the war and all this. They were looking for the nirvana of America. That's just peace and what we characterize the 1950s for white people. All of this stuff, it is part of this.

It was also a reaction that's rooted really deeply in American culture, and that's anti-government. The anti-government movement is at the heart of the Red Scare and McCarthyism of the period. First, we have to realize that the first decade after World War II was characterized by this anti-communist hysteria. When I say anti-communist, I don't mean some sort of intellectual anti-communism. I'm talking about just basically seeing-Reds-under-every-bed hysteria kind of thing that really didn't even exist. It was a ghost. I mean, the communists were hardly -- You could put them all in a phone booth in the United States in the 1950s. Anyway, that first 10 years after World War II was characterized by what we call McCarthyism and dominated by Joe McCarthy, but it actually has roots much deeper in American history. It preceded McCarthy. He was just smart enough to tap into it for his own political opportunism to get reelected. He had a miserable record as a senator and needed something, a hot topic to run on. He needed a platform.

Anyway, that segued into once the Red Scare just ran out of steam because the anti-communists, the hysteria folks, like the men and women in Houston, which we can get into in a second, they started attacking the Eisenhower

administration, which had helped encourage the Red Scare for purely political reasons to get elected and take over the White House in 1952. They'd been out of power for 20 years. There was an incredible frustration in the Republican Party. They were desperately looking for some means to regain power. They latched onto this budding anti-communism and encouraged it. The press was with them. The whole thing was political opportunism. Once they did get power in the White House, McCarthy and some of the more right-wing Democrats and Republicans included Eisenhower in the great communist conspiracy and even attacked the Army. That was the end of that one. That's when the powers in the Republican Party, like Richard Nixon, squashed the Red Scare and they censored McCarthy as a senator. He didn't live much longer after that. He drank himself to death.

Anyway, that was then replaced because of this anti-government thing, which was really at the base of all of this. Also racism. It's a marriage of anti-government and racism. Once McCarthy was dispensed with, the Red Scare didn't go away, the anti-communism, but it was really mixed then more strongly after the decision that you mentioned, Brown versus the Board of Education. It then turned into more of a Black scare than a Red Scare. When this report came out, it was running smack dab into the middle of this whole stew pot of anti-government and anti-intellectualism and racism, which all three have deep, deep roots in American history. This is nothing new at all. Any shock at the Hogg Foundation about the negative reaction was really naive. I'm not trying to be overly critical here. I'm a product of the academic environment myself.

The other thing I need to emphasize here is that part and parcel of the right-wing reaction in the '50s to these kinds of things, again, was really deeply rooted in this anti-government. I want to emphasize in this first decade after World War II, we're talking about, really, more strongly anti-government. After Brown versus the Board of Education, that decision was made, that's when it really switched into more openly racist. The racism was always there, but it was more focused on overturning FDR'S New Deal. Anyone that was connected to any kind of social -- The word social itself became a negative term. I mean, there were even movements to do away with social studies, for example.

Any sociological study is just a buzzword for communism and communist indoctrination. That's what this whole study was all about, wasn't it? I mean, if you're right wing, if that's your worldview. I would argue it's not so much the individual study that we're talking about today, but it's part and parcel of this larger antisocial, anti-sociology, anything that smacked of socialism, even though the people that were attacking them had no clue what socialism even was. To me, that's an expected reaction to this study that we're talking about the Hogg Foundation was involved in.

Aviv Rau: Absolutely.

Ike Evans: Okay. Yeah. Dr. Carleton, our scene for this backlash in this case is the Houston School Board. One thing that I was wondering is, how anomalous was that for

what many people might think of as just your quintessential exercise in local governance, to be so impacted by anti-communist sentiment in Texas?

Dr. Don Carleto...: Well, yeah. A Red Scare on Main Street is what I call it. We know about the Red Scare, the House Un-American Activities Committee in Washington, the Hollywood 10, the movie industry. The labor movement had its own Red Scare. But there was also a local Red Scare all over the United States. It's been fairly ignored. My book "Red Scare," not to self-promote here, because it was published several years ago, so don't worry about it, I studied Houston as a case study because I was curious about how this all seeped down to the local level. In Houston, it manifested itself in Houston Public Schools. Public schools have always been a target of these know-nothings who have always been paranoid that teachers are indoctrinating their young children into this anti-God communist collective worldview kind of thing. It's never gone away. We're dealing with this kind of thing today. It's not new.

I think it's very important to understand that this is not a new thing. It ebbs and flows. It mainly flows, to be honest with you. That's what happened in Houston. The focus was on the Houston School District and the Houston School Board. The Houston School Board became a contested elected office with a battle between people that were identified as pro-New Deal in Houston and people who were trying to overthrow the legacy of the New Deal, everything from Social Security to just government collective activities. Again, I mentioned anti-government earlier. This is what that was all about. But then, you throw in this whole issue of the growing civil rights movement. That's all part and parcel of it as well. Houston was a hot bed for that.

I have to tell you, that was not necessarily the case all over the United States, or even in Texas, because it manifested itself as anti-communist hysteria in different ways in different places. In Dallas, it manifested itself in the art museum with communist art, mainly a Picasso painting. The Dallas Art Museum was going to indoctrinate all the young children in Dallas to become communists by looking at this painting. In San Antonio, it was the public library. The public library, it was discovered, had one of Karl Marx's books there that somebody might read. Of course, no one would understand it, who checked it out, but nonetheless, it was going to indoctrinate them. Anyway, it was in different ways in different places. Houston was, again, it was the public schools.

Ike Evans: Okay. You've already touched on this, but we shouldn't forget that the director of the foundation at the time, Bob Sutherland, was a sociologist by training. Not a psychologist. Not a psychiatrist. It was sociologists who conducted the study. How much more challenging would it have been to be a social scientist at this time in history compared to other disciplines?

Dr. Don Carleto...: Well, the flourishing of social science was really, I think you could say, the '20s and '30s and '40s. Then, it got sucked into this huge anti-Roosevelt, anti-New Deal worldview that the Republicans were pushing. Southern Democrats, too.

Not just Republicans. In fact, there were actually, believe it or not, liberal Republicans during this period.

Ike Evans: Right. Yeah. A long time ago.

Dr. Don Carleto...: Yeah. I don't want to let the Democrats off the hook, either, because they were really doing this as well. Anyways, anyone that was a sociologist was immediately -- by this group. I'm talking about the right-wing group -- was seen as a communist, almost. A fellow traveler, at the very least, or naively kidnapped intellectually by the communists somehow. It was not a happy time to be a sociologist during the 1950s, and as far as that goes, even an economist. Some of the members of the University of Texas faculty of the department of economics were attacked as spreaders of communism because they taught their students Marxism as part of their course. It's, again, all part and parcel of this know-nothingism. There's a strain of that and anti-intellectualism in American history.

Ike Evans: Okay. Aviv, we've been listening to Dr. Carleton for a few minutes. What do you think about as you listen to him contextualize what happened with our modest study?

Aviv Rau: Yeah, absolutely. I think, for me, I'm hearing a lot of callbacks specifically to, and I think we touched on it a little bit, but this reaction in Houston in 1958 to the study, to the Texas Cooperative Youth Study, is both so emblematic of these bigger themes, both in Houston and, obviously, nationwide, across Texas, across the South. But specifically, there were a few events I want to signal to in Houston that coincided with the timing of the study. The study was brought to Houston in 1957 through 1959. Right in the middle there, in 1958, Hattie Mae White made Texas history by being the first Black person elected to public office since the Reconstruction era. That was when she won a seat on the Houston ISD School Board. She was the first Black person and Black woman to do so.

Her election was met with a lot -- a lot -- of vitriol. There was a group of very conservative white women who formed this voting faction and this block on the board and called themselves the Minute Women. They were on the board at this time, the time of the study as well. So the study became just one of many issues on which the board was clearly divided, divided, of course, along lines of race and racism. So the study was one of those issues that came up. Hattie Mae White was the one sole vote in favor of allowing the study to be conducted in Houston schools. All of the other all-white members of the school board voted against it and not only against the study but used their position more broadly to purge teachers that they called subversive, of course, playing into a lot of fears about the Red Scare, but also, as Dr. Carleton was signaling to, those fears were really combining with a lot of fears about integration. As we know, school desegregation was a hot-button topic in Houston for a long time. Desegregation was a long process in Houston.

I think that this culminated in this environment that was so tense that a researcher actually on the study ended up at a televised Houston ISD Board meeting burning publicly the study data because there was just clearly so much back-and-forth and so much talk about it. Even the researchers conducting it, at that point, maybe didn't expect the reaction, maybe at this point knew what was going on but felt they themselves had turned this position from, "Oh, we're just doing some data collection on students and whatever," to, "Wow, this has such a social impact for everybody around me and has so much politics wrapped up in it all that let's just burn this and not talk about it anymore." That was in June of 1959. I think that moment really sets the scene for how the study was received as well as just all of those underlying tensions in Houston around that.

- Ike Evans: Yeah. I mean, just, all you have to do is say that someone calls themselves the Minute Women, today, as well as then, I could make an educated guess about their politics and ideology. It's pretty remarkable.
- Aviv Rau: Exactly. Yeah.
- Ike Evans: Well, Dr. Carleton, you don't have to be shy about selling your book. I mean, I'm going to be sure to mention it in my outro and encourage people to have a look at it.
- Dr. Don Carleto...: Well, the University of Texas Press very generously reprinted it. The book came out in the mid-1980s, but they reprinted it in, I think, 2015 or 2016, as a result of the Tea Party Movement.
- Aviv Rau: Interesting.
- Dr. Don Carleto...: Because the Minute Women really were another version of the Tea Party.
- Aviv Rau: Yeah. There's those threads.
- Ike Evans: All right. Aviv, just on behalf of the Hogg Foundation, we're really proud of the work that you've been doing since we've brought you on. Thank you so much for your research into this. Dr. Carleton, thank you so much for coming on to just add a historian's point of view.
- Dr. Don Carleto...: You're welcome.
- Ike Evans: We really appreciate you both. Thanks a lot.
- Aviv Rau: Thank you so much.
- Dr. Don Carleto...: Thank you.
- Aviv Rau: For today's mental health and you, we have a listener testimonial. Pamela Gouger of Houston would like for you to know this: "I was always told not to tell

anyone about what was going on with my mother as a child, and it was to stay behind closed doors. I became a peer in 2016. That's when I started sharing my story. My mother would go into rages and try killing my brother and I. She always would tell me that my brother was the devil. I held all this in for years. After becoming a peer and finding out that my mom was diagnosed with schizophrenia and her psychiatrist kept her on Xanax, eventually, I had to have my mother arrested and sent to rehab.

"I shared my story regarding my trauma and how it affected me as I got older. I felt that because I held all that in for so long, I became dependent on drugs and became homeless. I went to a rehab in 2006. That is when I started healing. I feel that times have changed but not fast enough for mental health. People need to talk and let others know they are not alone." Thank you, Pamela, for that wonderful testimonial. Let this serve as a reminder that we're always looking for listener testimonials. If you have anything that you'd like to say, reach out to us at intothefold@austin.utexas.edu.

That does it for this episode. We're glad you could join us. Special thanks, as always, to my colleagues, Anna Harris, Kate Rooni, and Darrell Wiggins, for their production assistance and to the Hogg Foundation for their steadfast support. Just as taking care of ourselves enhances our ability to help others, so it is as well that by helping others we enhance our own resilience. Please, leave us a review, and subscribe to us on the podcast app of your choice. You can find us on iTunes, Apple Podcast, Google Play Music, Spotify, or TuneIn, among others. Taking us out now is Anna's good vibes. Thanks for joining us.