In the 1950’s, teenage boy's fashion was for the first time, different from their father's. The first picture shows the iconic “Greaser”, “Teddy Boy”, “Jock” and “Nerd”. The Teddy Boys were the British boys who started the teenagers as a consumer group movement. They choose to wear the Edwardian Suits of their father's with the pants slimmer and shorter, often showing off vivid and social unacceptable socks. The second picture, seniors laughing at themselves in their newly minted yearbook, showed that during the 50’s, men's clothing was crisp and well kept, even the Greaser’s ringer-shirt was purposely tucked into their jeans. Wrinkles and sloppiness was not tolerated by adults.
Fashion was often set by movie stars and musicians. Marlon Brando and Elvis Presley were responsible for major changes in the way the teenage males dressed. Both gave the rebel or the Greaser major fashion lessons. Marlon Brando is shown wearing a ringer T-shirt, black leather biker jacket, 501 Levi Jeans and a stingy brim hat. He is basically wearing the “Greaser” iconic look.

Elvis, on the other hand, showed a more mainstream look, still pushing social boundaries with his style of music and moves. He is often credited more for this and his hair styles than his fashion style.

PROM
The song says, “A white sport coat and a pink carnation”, and when it came it Prom, yes, a white sport coat with a pocket square handkerchief, black bow-tie, black slack or tuxedo pant and a white shirt was the number one choice for young men. The current fashion of a black shirt was unheard of; however “pops” of color could be seen in shirts from the rebellious types of young gentlemen wearing their “Sunday Best Suits”. Also, please note, the young men DID NOT match their ties to their dates dresses. Speaking of dates, it was customary to give your date a corsage of flowers, usually a wrist corsage, which is easier to wear for the young lady, but occasionally she would be given a shoulder corsage, and you did not have to worry about it, because your mom took care of it for you. You in return were sometimes given a boutonniere to wear on the lapel of your jacket.

Also frequently worn were both dark suits and lighter beige suits, sometimes worn with bow ties, other times worn with thin ties. Both the white sport coat and the regular suit options were worn with well cared for shoes with a shine, or if you had it, blue suede shoes (once again imitating a favored pop icon). Prom was the Social Event of High School and you wore the best you could afford.

Prom was often the first time Dad would let you solo at night with the “good” family car and curfews were generally lifted until 11pm. There was no such thing as an organized After Prom.
Social Standings and Style

Just as it is today, in the 50's, fashion and your social standing were pretty much linked together and for the most part what you have seen in the pop culture as 50's fashion for teenage males, is dead on correct. For our intent and purposes, we are going to break the fashion into three groups, the Greasers (T-Birds), the Jocks: who are comprised of the Athletes, the Ivy Leaguers & the Preps and the classic and iconic Nerds.

THE “GREASERS”

Shown, being arrested for drag racing, the greaser’s in the pictures are wearing normal everyday clothing for the young rebellious group of men. Notice that the jeans and the chinos are very baggy in fit, the shirts are all tucked in and undershirts are worn under the button up shirts. The greasers are showing that their jackets were not dead matches to each other, but rather each male had his own style and his jacket reflected that.
Ignoring the two modern males in the above photo, you can see many examples of the classic black leather jacket. Shown are actors Henry Winkler ("Fonzie" of "Happy Days"), John Travolta as the leader of the T-Birds in "Grease!", James Dean in "Rebel With Out A Cause", Charlie Sheen and Marlon Brando.

Other types of jackets and coats were worn. Work jackets were worn in black, blue and khaki. Trench coats were seen in both black and brown. Levi denim jackets were also worn as well as windbreakers. John Travolta wears a blue windbreaker in the opening sequence of "Grease!" as homage to James Dean.
Shirts

Shirts were generally neat and tucked into jeans. They were NOT wrinkled!! If a button up shirt was worn, a white T-shirt was worn beneath it. White T-shirts worn alone general had the sleeves rolled up with a pack of cigarettes hidden in the rolls. White A-shirts, (Athletic shirts, tank tops) were worn for the first time as outer wear, by themselves. Other types of shirts were the Daddy-O Style shirt, Italian knit shirts, ringer shirts and of course the button down shirts of plaid, Hawaiian in detail and those styled with a western, cowboy flare.

Pants

Levi’s 501 were the staple of a young man in the 50’s. They were black washed or blue, generally worn a bit baggy, and rolled with a 1 to 4 inch cuff. The jeans seemed to be in good repair, with out rips and tears and holes that are acceptable today. Baggy cotton twill pants were worn as well, with out pleats at the waist, think of today’s chinos.

Shoes

Black Biker Motorcycle Boots were worn, as well as cowboy boots, army boots and converse tennis shoes. The Bandana and chain wallets seemed to be the fashion accessories most used, along with hats, such as the stingy brim hat and the flattop hat.

THE JOCKS

This group is for the athletes, the preps and the ivy leaguers. Generally portrayed as “The Big Man on Campus” type, being the Captain of the Football team and dating the cheerleaders. The Ivy Leaguers were at the very top of the social/financial pecking order, with hopes of going to an Ivy League College after High school, such as Harvard or Yale. The Preppies were the guys that were slated to go to college, generally the North-eastern American Upper class families.
Letter Sweaters were worn by the Jocks, in place of the greaser’s jackets. Sweat suits, track suits and shorts were worn as well. The Jocks also added more of the polo style sweaters for everyday wear and did not wear the plain white T-shirt or A-shirt unless in practice. Otherwise they seemed to wear the same type of clothing as the greasers, only better made.

Penny Loafers and Boat shoes were favored among these young men.

Current Designers who favor their “look” would be Ralph Lauren, Brooke Brothers and J Brass.
NERDS

Nobody “did” Nerd better than the movie, “Revenge of the Nerds”, even though the movie is set in the 1980’s, the iconic Nerd’s general clothing choices never seem to change. Button up shirts, buttoned up to the neck, with a wild print, a horrid clashing plaid or stripes with the required pocket protector filled with sharpen pencils and pens just waiting to be used are seen, as well as the thick glasses, suspenders and slightly high watered pants that always seem to be belted above the waist, maybe in a clashing plaid and braces or severe acne would be the general look of a nerd. Clashing patterns and styles are always in play and well, general social awkwardness is the rule.

This little guy, was the original Nerd. Coined in a child’s book by Dr Seuss in 1950, he was the first image ever associated with the term.

And as our Musical starts out, this might just be the best lesson.
SOME GENERAL THOUGHTS: From Lisa Snider

I know this is a lot of information, feel free to contact me if you feel you need help putting together your costumes or if you are just not sure what you should be looking for. I am a night owl, you may text me up until 1AM on any night. My Cell Number is 937*573*8656, my e-mail is sniderlm@hotmail.com, you are more than welcome to send pictures and text when you are out and about finding your outfits, and I will text back a yes or no for the outfit, or ideas of how to make it work better for both you and the show.

If you really are at a lost for what to do about your costume, please talk with me, I am able to make most of the rehearsals and I can and will meet up with you at various thrift and second hand stores to help you choose what you wish to wear. I am not permitted to transport any student other than my own daughter for anything connected with the Musical, however I am willing to meet up in different cities and go to multiple cities if need be to find what you need and most importantly, outfits that please you. I would prefer that at least 2 students were on shopping adventures, instead of one male student.

Please keep in mind what you are looking for and the roles you are trying to fill in regards to your costumes. Yes, that black leather jacket is awesome at $5, but, it is of little use to a Nerd or Jock.

LOCALLY

Thrifts stores, consignment stores and your grandmother's closet are all great places to find pieces of vintage or better yet, modern clothing that can double for vintage. Almost all thrift stores have sales, like regular stores, you just need to look around the cashier's area to find out what and when the sale is.

Here are a few of my favorite haunts:

Good Wills: Troy, Springfield (Bechtel Road), Springfield (Leffel Road), Piqua, Miamisburg, Centerville, Sidney, Beavercreek, Huber Heights (Taywood Rd). Each week, a certain color of barb is on sale for 50% off, and on Weds there is a Senior Citizen Discount. You may return items, if you have your receipt and the barb is on the clothing within 7 days of purchase.

Salvation Army: Troy, Centerville, Piqua (behind the old mall on Looney Road) In Piqua, Weds is the day to shop, almost everything is on sale, 50% off the marked price, look at the register area, it is posted. Every day there is also a sale on one color of tag, 50% off the mark price. All sales are final.

Miami Valley Thrift: Absolute favorite for tops. They do 25% off everything in the store on Mondays, every week of the year, unless it is a Holiday Monday, and then the items are 50% off the marked price. Do not take the tags off an item; if you do they will remark it; however it will not be available for sale until the next business day. All sales are final.
Most thrift stores accept cash, debit and credit cards. Checks are not generally accepted and if you are using a credit or debit card you must have the matching driver's license/state id to make the purchase.

It is my goal that everyone who is in the Musical have costumes that they both like and are comfortable in. I am more than willing to work with you to make this happen. Feel free to call or text me if you have a question, a complaint, a problem, an idea or just need to vent. If you text me and I text back "dr", it means I am driving and I will pull over and text back as soon as it is safe to do so. Please bear with me, I am new to texting, and I make a lot of mistakes!

Also, Please keep in mind, no matter how much you and I like a costume, the Stropes have final say on all costuming choices.

Thank You,

Lisa Snider

Costumer, "Grease!" 2013 THS

937*573*8656

sniderlm@hotmail.com