

# Dress Codes to SELF-EXPRESSION



Mike Dillon (center) and his band mates, "The Illusions," 1968

Boutiques suddenly popped up near college campuses where we could buy paper flowers, psychedelic posters, love beads to make necklaces and bracelets, wire-rimmed sunglasses, batik bedspreads, incense, moccasins, hippie shirts, gauzy skirts, headbands, and more. We'd never seen shops like this before. And hair—forget bouffants, flips, and beehives! Long hair and afros, for both sexes, were in!

—Joann Jasmer Parker

The fashion change was kind of sudden. In 1963 I was wearing "oxford" clothing to school—wing tips, shells, penny loafers, button-down shirts, Nehru jackets. But around my senior year (1967), it went to fringe jackets and "Beatle" boots. Everything was bellbottoms, wide lapels, and corduroys. I grew my hair that year, and they sent me home on detention for a few days. I had to cut it to get back in.

—Mike Dillon

What to wear? For some high school girls pants were out of the question, "even on cold days," said Maureen DeCamp. "I don't know how we survived." When hemlines rose to "mini," some schools tested suspect skirt lengths on an "appropriateness" scale. For boys, long hair, untucked shirt tails, and boots numbered among punishable offenses.

Fashion, particularly in the mid-to-late 1960s, embodied a youthful optimism that sprung from changing ideas about individuality, sexuality, and political and social structures. As the generational divide widened, many teens identified with the mod cuts, groovy fringes, and bursts of colors and patterns animating a buttoned-down world.

Billboard advertisement, 1968. Courtesy ROAD: Resource of Outdoor Advertising Descriptions, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising & Marketing History, Duke University David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library



My favorite shirt had long puffy sleeves with cuffs and little tucks around. I loved that thing. . . . I was kinda hippie, but hippie when I wanted to be. I did follow the rules, but I thought outside the box, let's put it that way. . . . When our high school thought we girls were getting too tacky, they had these charm school people come in to speak on the art of being feminine—[whispering] proper women.

—Susan James-Morrow

Dressing well was very, very important to us! My sister and I sewed a lot of our clothes. I remember trying to dress and look like Twiggy (a fashion supermodel). Dayton's sponsored a look-alike Twiggy contest, and my girlfriends and I all wanted to be in it. . . . Going to dress reviews, 4-H, and looking at the fashion trends in Seventeen magazine dictated a lot about how we dressed, too.

—Maureen DeCamp

Maureen DeCamp, about 1968



High-school students, 1968, courtesy Jon Erickson



# THE 1968 GENERATION