

# MICHIGAN “DID YOU KNOW” – YELLOW JOHNNY GONE WILD

## By Randy Karasek

Michigan specialists seem to have a reputation for interest in minor variations, especially canning codes, but the number of variations for the common yellow Johnny Pfeiffer is able to be taken to the extreme. On my Michigan Beer Cans website there are no less than **TWENTY ONE** documented variations!!! If I can take the time to document them, you can take the time to read about them... ☺ ☺ ☺

### White pants, white shoes, cream socks, cream cuffs – 4 variations

Try saying that five times fast! However, that will be the general theme of the variations. Specifically, the color clothing Johnny is wearing is the most major variation difference, followed by canning codes, skin coloring, and in several variations the designer’s use of an airbrush!

Our first example has Johnny in white pants, white shoes, cream socks, cream cuffs, and comes in both IRTP (MBC 63-12) and non-IRTP (MBC 63-16.N). All have a similar Keglined panel (difference is canning code) and similar front face.



**Keglined panel**

**MBC 63-12**

**MBC 63-16.N**

Seems simple enough so far, but even here we have three variations of the non-IRTP:



**MBC 63-16.1**

Keglined panel 68-A  
Note the airbrush under the Pfeiffer’s (more white)



**MBC 63-16.2**

Keglined panel 23-A



**MBC 63-16.3**

Keglined panel 68-A  
Note the airbrush under the Pfeiffer’s (more brown)

### White pants, white shoes, white socks, white cuffs – 1 variation

MBC 63-20 (shown below) still has white pants, white shoes, but no color in his cuffs or socks. This has the nickname “Pale Johnny”, and doesn’t appear to be a misprint since multiple examples are known. So far this has only been identified as non-IRTP



**MBC 63-20**



**MBC 63-24.1**



**MBC 63-24.2**

### White pants, white shoes, pink socks, pink cuffs – 2 variations

Moving from pale color we have full red color MBC 63-24.N (shown above). Same white pants, white shoes, but now his cuffs and socks have turned beet-red, giving this one the nickname “Blushing Johnny”. What did Johnny do to make him blush so deeply? Again, doesn’t appear to be a misprint since multiple examples known, and this variation comes in both IRTP (MBC 63-24.1) and non-IRTP (MBC 63-24.2).

### Blue pants, white shoes, cream socks, cream cuffs – 1 variation

MBC 63-28, blue pants and white shoes. Why did Johnny change his pants from white to blue? Look more closely at the following and you will see other differences. Not only in



**Blue pants**



**MBC 63-28**



**White shoes**

pants color but the Keglined panel is missing as well, replaced with the CCC 72 Continental Can Company logo. Theory has it that Continental stepped in to make cans for Pfeiffer during an American Can Company strike. If true, the new artist may have simply taken liberty and given Johnny’s pants some color!



### Blue pants, black shoes, white socks, white cuffs – 3 variations

Moving on, American Can Company is back, and Johnny is still wearing his new blue pants, but this time he has changed his shoes to black! However, there must still be a transition of can designers. It is probably tough to tell from the following pictures, but MBC 63-32 has the Pfeiffer's brand outlined in brown, while MBC 63-34.N has the Pfeiffer's brand outlined in black (really need to hold the cans side-by-side to confirm not a misprint). MBC 63-34.1 has canning code 68-A; MBC 63-34.2 has no canning code.



**MBC 63-32**



**MBC 63-34.N**



**MBC 63-34.1 : 68-A**



**MBC 63-34.2 : No code**

### Blue pants, black shoes, white socks, white cuffs – 3 more variations

Perhaps Pfeiffer's relationship with American Can Company didn't last, they didn't immediately switch back to American after their short run with Continental's blue pants, or they simply started producing so much beer in their basic design that they needed other can companies to keep them supplied. For our last three blue pants, black shoes variations we have MBC 63-36.1 from Cans Inc, MBC 63-36.2 from the National Can Company, and MBC 63-36.3 which has no canning info at all.



**MBC 63-36.1**  
Cans Inc, Chicago



**MBC 63-36.2**  
National Can Company



**MBC 63-36.3**  
No canning info shown

## **Now Johnny completely freaks out – 7 variations**

Whether Johnny simply got tired of wearing only blue and white pants, Pfeiffer decided to experiment with possible new design colors, or a canning company employee was just having fun toward the end of their shift, the next set of Johnny Pfeiffer cans (labeled MBC 63-38.N) are assumed unique and have been included with MBC content simply because they have such a cool variety of colors.



## **That brings the variation total to TWENTY ONE!!!**

Are there more variations yet to be discovered? Likely YES. It is amazing that Pfeiffer went out of business due to the quantity of beer sold in this basic design alone. One story has over 3,000 of these cans found in a chicken coop (wife wouldn't let the husband drink inside). I myself have seen over 100 plus (all of the same variation) found in the crawl space of a Niles, Michigan home. And at the Lexington convention there was an entire table of just indoor/mint yellow Johnny Pfeiffer cans (and I regret not looking over each and every one).

Do these cans have any value? That depends. The basic white pants, white shoes and blue pants, black shoes from American Can Company are really a dime a dozen. It amazes me when I see \$20+ prices tags on these cans. Most Michigan dumpers probably curse this label since it keeps appearing again, and again, and again, and again, and again...

However, variation MBC 63-28, blue pants, white shoes from Continental Can Company is super tough (Chris Taylor found one in Lexington after I thought I had spent the previous two days looking at every yellow Pfeiffer). And MBC 63-36.2, blue pants, black shoes from National Can Company pretty tough as well (at least I own one of those).

In addition, this yellow Johnny design has been painted over some tougher labels. For example, at the Charlotte convention I was shown a green Patrick Henry from Fox Deluxe, Grand Rapids that had been rubbed out from a Johnny paintover. And Leon Hampton has posted pictures of his dumper Fox Deluxe Bock, USBC 65-09, which he discovered under a yellow Johnny. So there are some "diamonds" out there, just need to sort through tons of dirt to find them!

If you actually made it through all the above, congratulations! Maybe you are a variation collector after all. If you want to view more details or pictures for any of the above cans, please visit my "Michigan Beer Cans" website, <http://www.mbcinfo.com>