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# SPORTS ANTIQUE OF THE WEEK

FEB. 26TH-  
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Standout items  
 by SportsAntiques.com

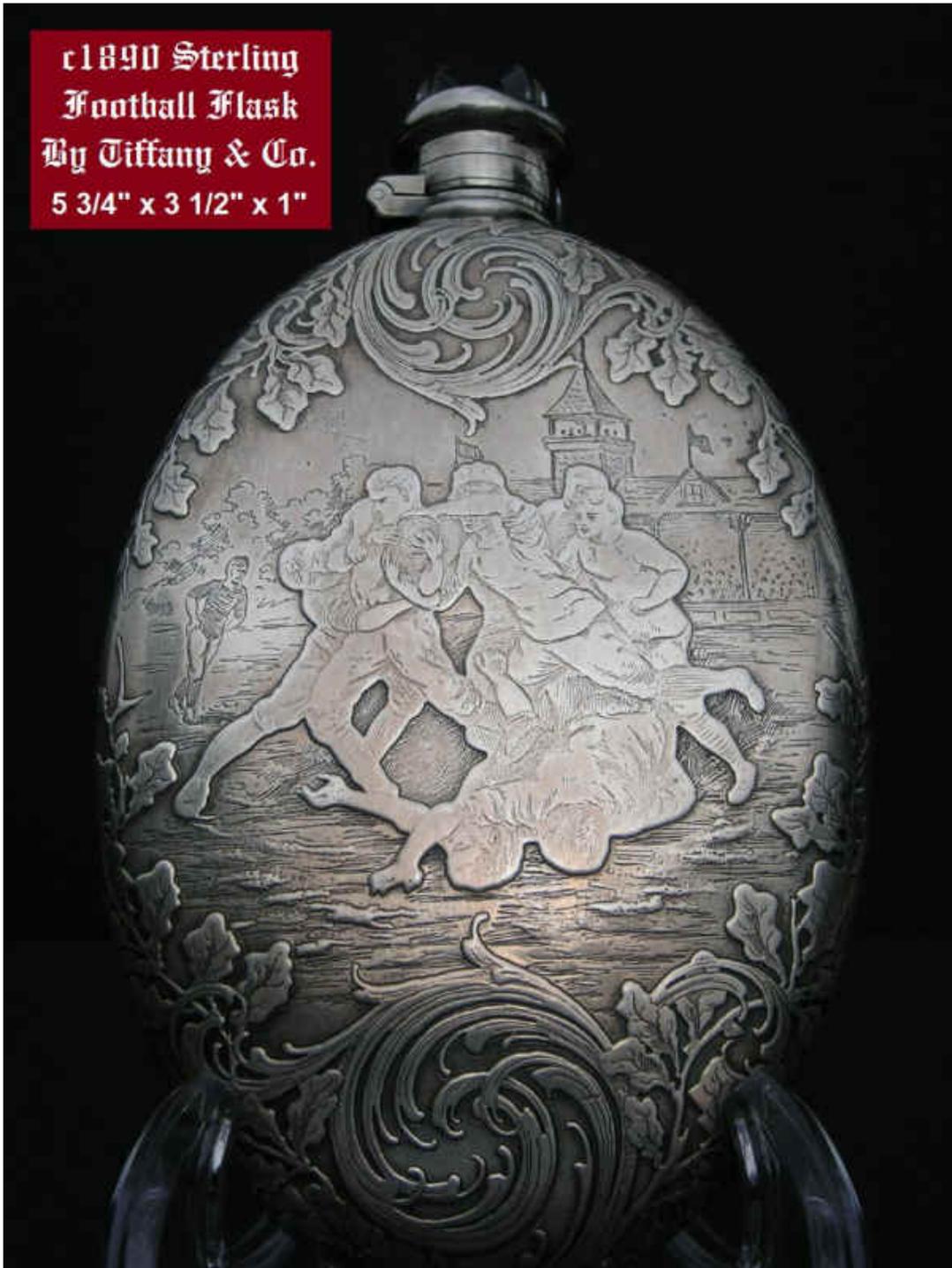
EXPLORE IN SEATTLE'S BACKYARD



SEATTLE SOUTHSIDE  
 SeaTac | Tukwila | Des Moines

[SEE PACKAGE DEALS →](#)

c1890 Sterling  
Football Flask  
By Tiffany & Co.  
5 3/4" x 3 1/2" x 1"



**C1890**

**Sterling Silver**

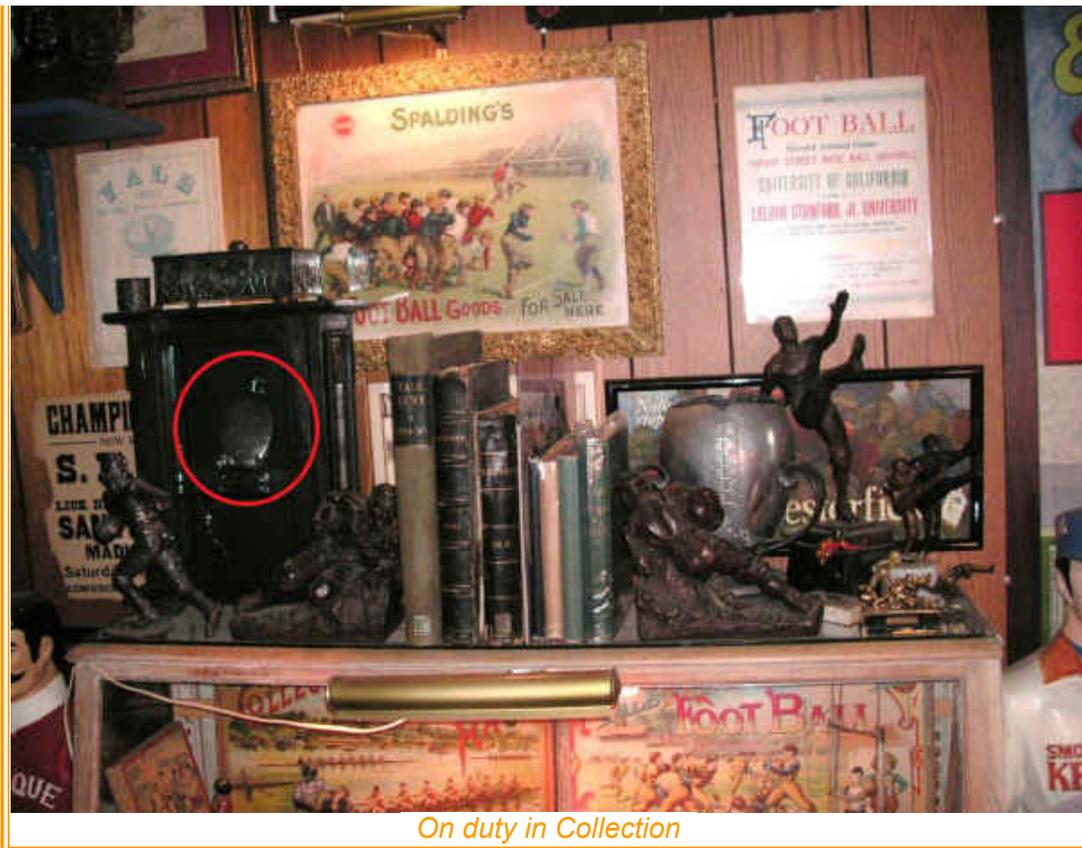
**FOOTBALL FLASK**

**BY TIFFANY & CO.**

5 3/4" tall x 3 1/2" wide

*spirited scrimmage scene in relief  
only known example*





*On duty in Collection*

## **SportsAntiques.com**

**Sports Antique of the Week**  
**Feb. 26th- March 4th 2011**

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## **c1890 Tiffany & Co.** **FOOTBALL FLASK**

**By Carlton Hendricks**

*3/5/11*

*This story has been revised from the  
original version from this point on*



If you click on the photo stitch above and compare the scrimmage scenes of the flask and print you'll see they are very similar. My initial impression was they were so close I felt sure the designer of the flask had used the print as his or her model and plagiarized the image. So sure of it, I concluded the prior version of this story on that basis. However, after finishing and posting the story I uncovered evidence which would make that impossible. At least, as it applies to this particular print.



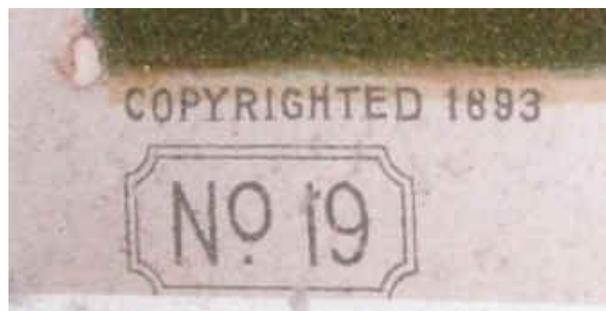
**Edward C. Moore,  
Director Tiffany & Co. Silver Dept. 1868-1891**

### **NEW EVIDENCE SURFACES**

Here's what happened. After the first version of this story was posted I wanted to add some information about the markings on the bottom of the flask that proved it was American. I had intended to include this in the first version but forgot and left it out. As previously mentioned, Tiffany & Co. charges \$1,000.00 to research items, but I wasn't inclined to pay it. However, within my own research library I have the 1978 book "Tiffany Silver" by Charles H. Carpenter Jr., which is the definitive book on the subject.



By it I learned the "M" in the marking stood for Moore. Specifically, Mr. Edward C. Moore, head of Tiffany's silver division for more than twenty three years, from May 1st 1868 until his death August 24th 1891. According to the book Tiffany wares stamped with an "M" like my flask indicate the item was produced during Edward C. Moore's tenure as head of the silver division. Please note however, I don't believe it indicates he personally designed our flask. Instead I believe the specific designer would have been one of the many employed within Tiffany's design department, and who's name remains unknown.



As I was in the process of revising/updating the story to include this information, it occurred to me the "M" implied the flask would have been produced prior to August 24, 1891....and the print is copyrighted 1893....so there is there is no way the designer of the flask could have copied it....At least, that particular print. I must add...it was enough to throw a fit over after I thought I had it all figured out and put to bed.



ebay



## HOW IT HAPPENED

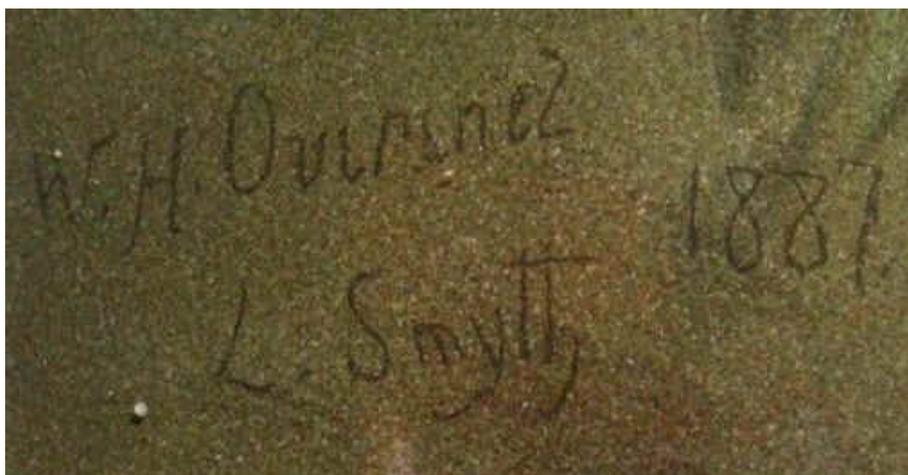
So how is it the scenes are so similar? Well...After reviewing the matter more carefully I see three practical possibilities how it could have occurred. The first is coincidence...That is, it's not impossible it could have been purely coincidental. The second way it could have occurred is the flask designer copied the original painting which was done in 1887, or a different print than the Knapp, or some facsimile of the original painting. The third possibility is the artists, William Haysham Overend, and Lionel Percy Smythe, saw the flask and modeled their painting after it.

[click to enlarge](#)



## COINCIDENTAL?

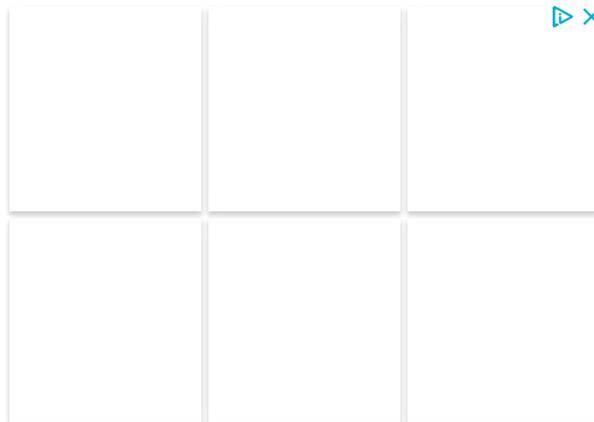
Regarding the possibility the resemblance is coincidental; if you click on the photo stitch above and compare the two scenes carefully, they certainly are not identical, only very similar. The runner at the front in the print is completely missing from the scene on the flask. Also, you will see the position of limbs in the tumult differ in the flask scene, and the players faces look younger and more colligate, and there are no mustaches. The building and crowds in the background, though very similar in some ways, are indeed different. And the view is different, the flask's scene is from a lower vantage, the print higher, showing much more of the crowd and building.



## PLAGIARIZED?

Regarding the possibility that the flask designer may have seen the original painting or a different facsimile than the Knapp, First we should recognize the time lines. We know the flask was made no later than August 24th 1891 and the Knapp print shows the original painting was signed by the artists and dated 1887. So if the painting was plagiarized it would have occurred within approximately a four year span. Moreover, the flask's markings indicate it was made by Tiffany & Co. in New York City. The painting would have no doubt been painted in the U.K., most surely London....on the opposite side the Atlantic. It's possible the painting could have made its way to New York and the flask designer saw it there....but the painting seems like it would have been an icon of British sports with no reason for it to travel here. Of course it is possible the Knapp Lithographic concern could have purchased and brought it here intending to produce Americanized lithographs of it, i.e. add an American flag. But on the other hand the painting seems like it would have held grand icon status by the English and wouldn't have been lightly let go of. Especially if it was commissioned by the London Daily News as it is believed to have been....But on the other hand, money can make things happen....At any rate...if the flask designer did indeed use the original painting for their model, he or she almost certainly would have had to have taken a photo or sketch of it for the details to be so similar....

An interesting caveat relating to the plagiarism possibility is that in the Tiffany book by Carpenter...it is very clearly address' that Edward C. Moore, traveled extensively to Europe and elsewhere, to study art and culture and gather art and artifacts which he brought back and used for designing. Even more specifically, the book states Moore was a collector and amassed a personal collection of art and antiquities from around the world and that he lent items to the Tiffany design room for designers to use for inspiration. Therefore it's possible Moore could have acquired an earlier English version lithograph than the Knapp, brought it back to America, and the flask designer copied it. Although, I should mention, I've never seen such an earlier English version.



### **THE OTHER WAY AROUND?**

The third mentioned possibility is a complete reversal of the dynamics. That is, William Haysham Overend, and or Lionel Percy Smythe may have seen the flask and were so impressed by the scrimmage scene they modeled their painting after it. For this to happen the flask would have had to have been made prior to the paintings date of 1887. Tiffany did have a store in London from 1868 on, so either of the two artists could have seen it there.....or elsewhere. For all we know, their boss, the editor of the London Daily News could have bought an example of the flask at the London store and showed it to Overend and Smythe. Moreover, according to the 1992 edition of “*A Dictionary of Sporting Artists 1650-1990*” by Mary Ann Wingfield, Lionel Percy Smythe “lived mainly in France”....and Tiffany had a store in Paris from 1850 on.

### **THE WRAP UP**

Please be understand this speculation is not intended to be exhaustive and is only meant to explore the more practical possibilities. Perhaps at some point we can access Tiffany & Co. archives for information that could help get to the bottom of this. Beyond verbalizing a few ideas I’ve come up with, I have no special detective skills to solve this. I readily welcome from this readership....make that implore...further speculation, correction, or a tap on the shoulder pointing to something I’ve overlooked. Ordinarily I wouldn’t expend this amount of debate on an item. However the complexities of the subject combined with its unique quality command a special stirring of the mind.

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