

Oliver Cromwell might be turning in his grave. The biggest selling Christmas single of all time is Bing Crosby's *White Christmas*, soundtrack of the holiday movie classic *Holiday Inn*. More than 30 million copies have been sold. (In fact, only Elton John's *Candle in the Wind '97* has sold more copies, at 33 million.) Every Christmas season, record companies rush to release Christian and secular Christmas songs by artists young and old.

The word "carol" is derived from the old French word *caroller*, which means dancing around in a circle. It was derived from the Latin *choraula*, which in turn was derived from the Greek *choraules*.

"It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" was written in 1849 by Edmund Hamilton Sears. The score was provided the next year by Richard Storrs Willis, a New York organist.

In 1865, after a trip to the Holy Land, Rector Phillips Brooks wrote the words to "O Little Town of Bethlehem." Three years later, Lewis Redner wrote the score.

The most popular Christian carols:

Silent Night, Holy Night
O Come All Ye Faithful
O Holy Night
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
Little Town of Bethlehem
Angels From the Realms of Glory
The twelfth day of Christmas
Santa Claus is coming to town
Go Tell It On the Mountain
Away in a manger
Joy To the World
What Child Is This
The First Noel

Most popular secular carols:

White Christmas
The Twelve Days of Christmas