St. James Infirmary

Ethnomusicologists say that "St. James Infirmary" is derived from the English folk song "The Unfortunate Rake", as is another American song, "Streets of Laredo". The "St. James Infirmary" would then be St. James Hospital in London, torn down in 1532 to build the St. James Palace.

It was made popular by Louis Armstrong in the 1920s, and has been sung, played and recorded by a great number of people since then, including New Orleans jazz bands. There are many sets of lyrics, some quite different from each other.

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