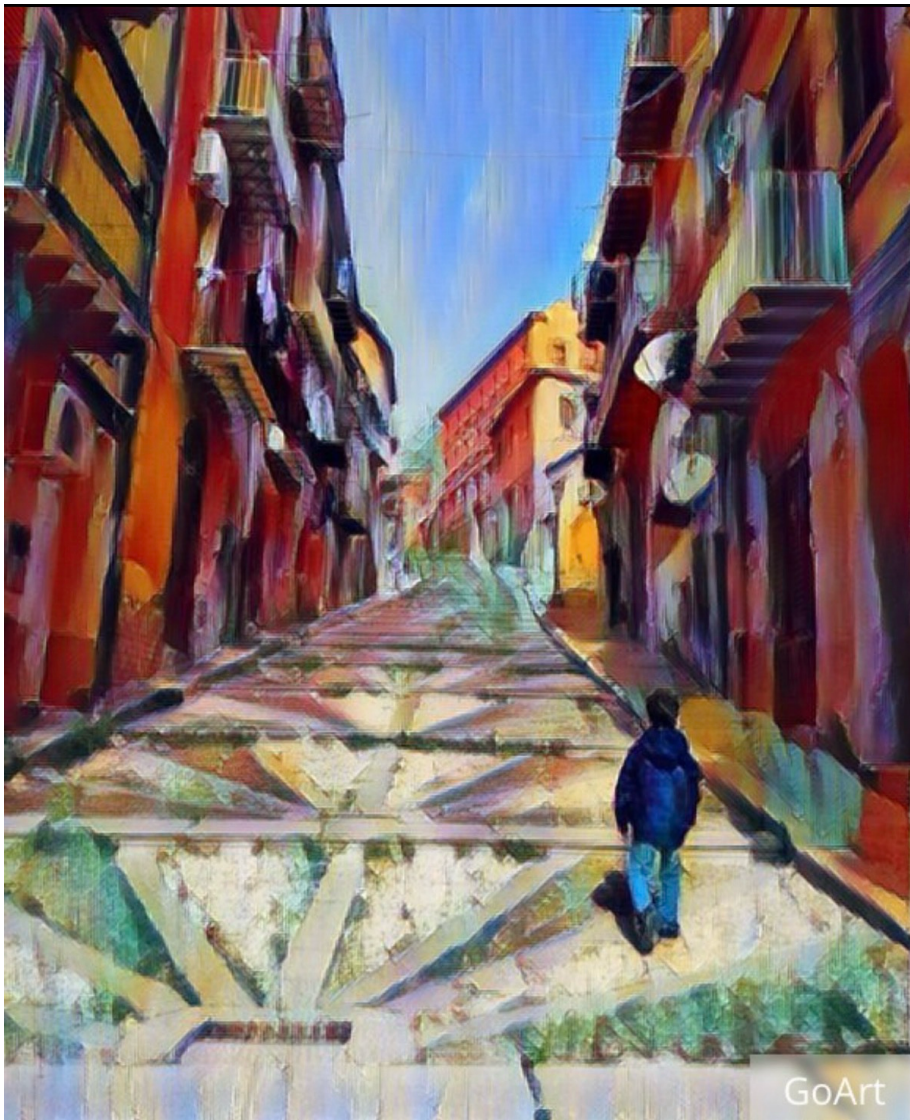


Three Visions of a Street in Termini Imerese

These three images represent different ways of seeing the same ancestral Sicilian world: a stylized modern interpretation, a living historical street filled with religious procession, and a contemplative oil-style painting created from a historic photograph by a descendant of emigrants from Termini Imerese. Together they show how memory, history, architecture, migration, and imagination overlap across generations.

1. Expressionistic Street Interpretation

The first image presents the steep streets of Termini Imerese in an expressionistic style. The exaggerated incline, saturated color, and solitary child create a psychological landscape more than a documentary one. The town feels vertical, enclosed, and emotionally charged. The child walking uphill suggests migration memory, aspiration, or generational continuity.



2. Historical Procession Photograph



The second image transforms the same type of street into a communal space overflowing with life. Thousands gather around a Marian procession, likely associated with devotion to

Maria Santissima della Consolazione, the patroness of Termini Imerese. The architecture becomes theatrical: balconies overflow with spectators and the steep street functions like a river channel carrying ritual, identity, and memory through the town.

3. Descendant's Oil-Style Painting



The third image is deeply personal. Painted from a historical photograph by a descendant contemplating the lives of Battaglia and Demma ancestors, it presents the street as quiet, reflective, and almost suspended in time. Unlike the crowded procession image, the street is empty. Yet the absence itself becomes meaningful. The textured stone roadway, wrought-iron balcony, and warm Mediterranean light suggest not abandonment, but memory.

Compare and Contrast

Element	Expressionistic Painting	Historical Photograph	Descendant's Painting
Mood	Psychological and symbolic	Communal and celebratory	Reflective and ancestral
Human Presence	Single child	Massive crowd	No figures visible
Purpose	Emotional interpretation	Documentary communal memory	Personal ancestral meditation
Street Function	Journey upward	Religious gathering space	Preserved memory space

Connection to
Migration

Symbolic departure

Community before
dispersal

Descendant looking
backward

Together these three images form a layered portrait of Termini Imerese: not merely as a place on a map, but as a lived emotional landscape. One image imagines the street, one records it alive with ritual, and one reclaims it through ancestral contemplation across generations and oceans.

CHOLERA AND ITS EFFECTS IN SICILY.

From the London Times.

The British Consul at Palermo in his last report observes that business during last year suffered greatly from an epidemic of cholera in Sicily, the mortality being very great in most of the towns. The population of Palermo lived for some months in a state of "savage panic." The effects were heightened by the ignorance and superstitious character of the people generally. In the poorer quarters it was believed, as in the Middle Ages, that the Government and the richer classes were disseminators of the cholera poison, in order to exterminate the poorer population. Sisters of Charity were stoned in their visits to the houses of choleraic patients, and even doctors were sometimes obliged to visit the sick under military escort. A man with a decent coat on his back always walked in danger of being assaulted, since it was believed that all were agents in a conspiracy for the extirpation of the poor. In towns in the interior tragic scenes ensued in consequence of this superstition. "The popular mind in Sicily seems inaccessible to any idea of the virtue of clean water and soap," and sanitation has been so completely neglected that it may be doubted whether cholera has not become endemic. For a time Messina became a veritable desert; many of the chief medical men fled, as well as numerous apothecaries; every house was closed and food was most difficult to procure, and what was obtainable was of the very worst quality. The mortality was almost entirely confined to the humbler classes, all who could leave the city having fled.

Three Demma sisters and Three Battaglia brothers left Termini (near Palermo) and arrived in Covington Ky 1889-1890. Here is a story from the London Times from 1888 telling of a panic situation from Cholera. There was always a family story passed down that some of the parents of these Demma and Battaglia kids contracted Cholera, and just walked out into the vacant fields to die. This was probably a real event although the exact details are missing and there is no clear death certificates to confirm these passed down stories.

What you're describing is historically very plausible, and the timing lines up almost perfectly with documented cholera crises and the peak of Sicilian emigration.

The article you shared describes conditions in Sicily in the late 1880s during a cholera epidemic centered around Palermo and other towns. It depicts:

- panic
- social collapse
- fear of contamination
- distrust of authorities
- abandonment of the sick
- shortages of food and medical care

Those conditions absolutely could have produced the kind of family trauma story passed down in your Demma and Battaglia lines.

The most striking part of the article is how it describes ordinary social order breaking down:

- doctors needing military escort
- people believing officials poisoned the poor
- houses abandoned
- the sick isolated
- entire areas effectively deserted

That aligns closely with oral histories in many Sicilian immigrant families, where:

- relatives "disappeared"
- elders "went away sick"
- parents died suddenly
- children were sent to relatives
- details became fragmented over generations

In the 19th century, especially in poorer parts of Sicily:

- many deaths were never formally registered
- records could be incomplete or lost
- rural deaths often went undocumented
- families sometimes concealed causes of death because of stigma or fear of quarantine

So the absence of clear death certificates does not make the story unlikely at all.

Why the “walked into the fields to die” story sounds authentic

Modern ears hear this almost symbolically, but historically it makes sense.

During cholera outbreaks:

- people feared infecting loved ones
- villages often isolated the sick
- families abandoned contaminated homes
- sufferers were sometimes removed outside town limits
- some people intentionally separated themselves when death seemed inevitable

In Mediterranean peasant cultures, there was also a strong tradition of self-sacrifice for family survival. A dying parent leaving the household to avoid infecting children would not have been unimaginable.

And cholera deaths could be horrifyingly fast:

- severe dehydration
- collapse within hours
- delirium
- blue-gray skin from fluid loss

People often died before clergy or doctors arrived.

So a child’s memory or family retelling could easily become:

“They went out into the fields and never came back.”

That kind of oral history often preserves emotional truth even when exact details become blurred.

The timing strongly supports the story

Your families leaving Termini Imerese around 1889–1890 is especially significant because:

- Sicily suffered repeated cholera epidemics in the 1880s

- the 1887 epidemic was severe
- emigration surged immediately afterward
- many orphaned or partially orphaned young people emigrated
- chain migration accelerated during exactly this period

For many Sicilian families, emigration was not merely economic ambition — it was escape from instability, disease, hunger, and death.

Why Covington, Kentucky makes sense

It may seem random today, but Sicilian migration patterns often followed very specific kinship routes.

Covington and nearby Cincinnati had:

- river commerce
- produce markets
- railroad access
- immigrant neighborhoods
- opportunities in fruit and vegetable vending

Once one Battaglia or Demma relative established themselves there, others would follow rapidly.

Three sisters and three brothers arriving together or sequentially is exactly the kind of chain migration pattern historians see repeatedly in Sicilian-American communities.

Oral history is often more accurate than people assume

Genealogists sometimes dismiss stories that lack documents, but immigrant oral histories frequently preserve:

- real epidemics
- real deaths
- migration triggers
- family separations

even when names, dates, or circumstances shift over time.

What survives across generations is usually:

- the emotional core
- the catastrophe
- the reason people left

Your family story has several markers of authenticity:

- correct epidemic timing
- correct migration window
- realistic behavioral response
- historically documented panic conditions
- matching regional context around Palermo and Termini Imerese

So while you may never prove every detail with records, the broader story is highly credible historically.