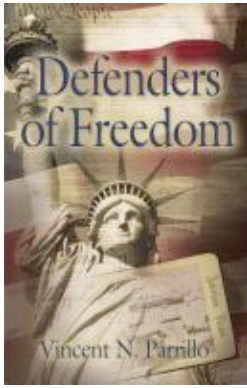


We the People

Defenders of Freedom



Vincent N. Parrillo



Based on actual events, this historical novel tells of people fighting for minority rights against oppressors. Although briefly about soldiers in the First World War, this is mainly the story of advocates on behalf of immigrants, of activists for women's right to vote, and of one man who, as the Ellis Island Commissioner, defied his bosses in Washington and even Congress to ensure that helpless victims of patriotic hysteria would have due process of law.

Defenders of Freedom

Order the complete book from

[Booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com)

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/8236.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**

Your free excerpt appears below. Enjoy!

**DEFENDERS
OF FREEDOM**

Vincent N. Parrillo

Copyright © 2015 Vincent N. Parrillo

ISBN: 978-1-63490-791-0

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Bradenton, Florida, U.S.A.

Printed on acid-free paper.

This is a work of historical fiction based on actual persons and events. To enhance the reader's experience, the author has taken some creative liberty with dialogue and character interactions.

BookLocker.com, Inc.
2015

First Edition

Author's Note

Defenders of Freedom takes place primarily between 1907 and 1919. It is the sequel to *Guardians of the Gate* (2011), in which that story unfolded between 1893 and 1902.

As before, Matt and Nicole Stafford, Guenter Langer, and Frank Martiniello are fictionalized composites of actual employees at Ellis Island. The other main characters are real-life people.

Although some liberties were taken for dramatic purposes, all the events described in this historical novel relating to employees, immigrants and events at Ellis Island are authentic. So too are the occurrences that relate to the woman suffrage movement and the brave women who endured brutal treatment at Occoquan Workhouse in Virginia.

From a Jeffersonian perspective, freedom means one does not suffer from authoritarian repression and has the liberty to act just like any other law-abiding citizen. The book's title thus refers to its characters who fought for the rights denied to some by others. Although that includes soldiers in the First World War, some of whom lost their lives, mostly the title refers to others within the United States who fought against a majority subjugating a powerless minority. Thus, this book is mainly the story of advocates on behalf of immigrants, of activists for women's right to vote, and of one man who, as Commissioner of Immigration for the Port of New York, defied his bosses in Washington and even Congress to ensure that helpless victims of patriotic hysteria would have due process of law.

Table of Contents

Prologue 1893	vii
1904	1
1907	5
1908	25
1909	43
1910	71
1911	93
1912	121
1913	141
1914	183
1915	203
1916	213
1917	245
1918	291
1919	325
Epilogue	339

Prologue

1893

A perfect June morning offered sights and sounds that could delight anyone walking along this country road. Sunlight danced upon the newly mature leaves gracefully undulating in the gentle breeze. Sunbeams occasionally penetrated through the branches to the forest floor, offering light and shadow contrasts to the array of browns, grays and greens as far as eyes could see into the woods. Offering melodious accompaniment to this pleasant scene was Nature's own soundtrack, the serenades of songbirds to one another.

Fred Howe had deliberately come to this place in the hope of buoying his spirits and getting some inspiration about what to do next in his life, but it wasn't working. He couldn't let go of the feeling that he was a failure. Unlike this dirt road that went somewhere, he was convinced that he was on a path to nowhere.

Armed with his Ph.D. in journalism from Johns Hopkins and filled with idealism and enthusiasm, he had gone to New York City to set the world on fire as an editorial writer. However, no one was impressed by his educational background. He could still hear the rejection voices in his head.

"Look, kid," lectured McGuire, the *Times* city editor, "Nobody begins as an editorial writer. You got to work your way up. You got to learn how we do things here. You got to know this city."

But, he couldn't even start at the bottom. The depression had hit the newspapers too. They had reduced their staffs, and the city was filled with out-of-work reporters. He had met some of those desperate

men where he stayed—a cheap, overcrowded boardinghouse in Lower Manhattan—men thinking themselves washed up at age forty. Some even had made macabre jokes about relocating to the East River.

Getting nowhere, that winter Fred opted for a different career and enrolled in New York Law School. However, his plan to complete his studies in six months' time and get admitted to the bar in June was thwarted in April when the State Board of Regents in Albany established a minimum of two years' study in law as a precondition.

Completely broke and unable to remain that long in the city, he swallowed his pride and returned home to Meadville, Pennsylvania.

So here he was—twenty-five years old—with no money, no job and no prospects, marooned in a small town where his university training was worse than useless. Adding to his humiliation, he was back living with his parents and sisters, and no longer independent.

Still feeling sorry for himself, Fred walked with his head down, occasionally kicking a rock to the side. An approaching pair of a woman's feet came into his line of sight. He quickly looked up into the face of a young woman, her face nicely framed by a wide, sweeping straw hat.

In that brief moment before she passed him by, he looked into what he thought were the biggest, warmest brown eyes he had ever seen. She offered a slight smile. Too astonished to respond in kind, he turned and watched her until she disappeared from view.

Eagerly, Fred returned to his family's home so he could ask his sister about the lovely stranger.

"Sure, that's Marie Jenney," answered Marian. "Everybody is talking about her."

His younger sister, Belle, joined in, "She's from Syracuse!"

"What? You know about her too?"

Belle grinned and nodded her head.

"I heard Marian tell her friends."

"Belle, you shouldn't be listening to my private conversations!"

Belle made a face, which both of them ignored.

"What else do you know about her, Marian?"

"She's studying at Unitarian Theological Seminary. Can you believe that?"

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, Fred, none of us think she's a serious student."

"Why? And who's 'none of you'?"

"My friends, Maggie and Emily. She's renting a room from Emily's parents. We've talked to her a few times."

"Why don't any of you think she's serious?"

"C'mon, Fred! You saw her. She's much too beautiful to be a minister.

"She is beautiful, that's for sure."

"Fred's got a girlfriend. Fred's got a girlfriend," taunted Belle, as only a little sister can.

He smiled, not at all displeased by the premature sing-song.

"Well, she's not my girlfriend, but I'd sure like to know her."

"We think there's probably some man at the seminary who brought her there," cautioned Marian.

"A man! Have you ever seen her with one?"

"No, but how else do you explain such a beautiful girl at a theological seminary wearing such good clothes? It's either that or else she comes from a wealthy family."

"Well, I'm going to find out," Fred declared.

Marian smiled and offered, "She goes to Sunday services at the Unitarian church."

"Thanks, Marian. Then I won't be at our Methodist church this Sunday," he said with a smile.

Determined to meet the beautiful stranger, Fred waited outside the church after Sunday services. Going over to the Forresters, he greeted them and began speaking to Emily's mother, Clara, who had been his sixth-grade teacher. Seeing him glancing several times at Marie as he spoke, Clara sensed his real purpose and invited him to join them for dinner that afternoon. Fred happily accepted.

Later that evening he was again displeased with himself. The dinner had not gone well. He had been too self-conscious, too tongue-tied, and completely unable to sustain a conversation. He knew that he had not made a good first impression on Marie. How could he? He had absolutely no skills in talking to women, and Marie talked so effortlessly, as did everyone else at the table. He wished he could speak as easily as everyone else.

Even so, his infatuation with Marie steeled his courage somewhat and, on the next weekend, he invited her for a walk and picnic at the lake. He barely contained his delight when she not only agreed but offered to prepare their lunch as well.

Sitting on a quilt and enjoying their meal, he tried not to appear as awkward as he felt. He still found himself at a loss for words, but this time he had a plan to help them pass the time together. He brought along two books on economics for them to read together. Economics was one of his passions, something that he could more easily discuss and, from the dinner conversations last Sunday, he knew it interested Marie

as well. What he didn't know was her strong views on the subject.

"So you're saying that women shouldn't have to ask for money?"

"Yes, they should be economically independent, Fred. After all, marriage is a partnership. Women do their share of the work, so why shouldn't they have a regular allowance to spend as they wish?"

"I don't know of any family where that occurs."

"Just because you don't, doesn't mean it shouldn't be. Life isn't a man's thing. It's a human thing. Women should be able to enjoy life as much as men do."

Marie's way of speaking was so sweet and gentle that Fred in no way felt his masculinity threatened, even though he found her thoughts unique. Until then, all he knew about women were the beliefs ingrained in him as a child from observing his own family, relatives, and neighbors. Marie certainly did not fit his traditional concept of women as a silent presence. He had simply assumed that, because men worked and brought home their pay, it seemed natural that they should control all the money. Marie's position was radical, but strangely, he saw the logic in her position.

His attraction only grew as they spent more of the summer weeks together. In their conversations he learned much more about her opinions. There should be, she insisted, equality in all things—in voting, in work, in a career.

Her comments challenged his sense of masculine power and noblesse oblige, of gentlemanly generosity towards women. Yet, even though she disrupted his picture of the relationship between men and women, Fred nonetheless found himself increasingly attracted to his disrupter. He liked her spunkiness, was dazzled by

her beauty, and admired her keen mind, realizing she assimilated ideas and concepts far more readily than he could. More importantly, he knew that he was falling in love with her.

For her part, Marie found Fred a refreshing change from other men she knew. He had none of that arrogant male self-confidence she found repulsive. On the other hand, she did not find him weak-willed either. By now she knew him as an intelligent person of integrity whose sense of fairness and compassion combined to make him someone whose company she enjoyed greatly.

Their summer idyll was ending, though, and the realities of their pathways in life were intruding. Fred had passed the Pennsylvania bar exam and he had accepted a job over in Pittsburgh as secretary of the Pennsylvania Tax Conference, charged with reviewing the state's tax system.

On his last day before leaving, the two of them, silently holding hands, went on a long walk together. After a while, they stopped before the large boulder upon which they had sat several times before. He took her in his arms and they kissed. As their lips parted, he looked into those big, brown eyes that had so captivated him the first time he saw her. Fumbling for the right words, he tried to explain himself.

"Marie, you have no idea how much I love you."

She smiled and rubbed his upper left arm.

"I think I do," she softly replied.

"Do you love me?"

"Yes. How could I not?"

They kissed again and sat down upon the boulder.

"I don't want to leave you, Marie, but I have no other choice if I don't take this job."

"I know," she answered, almost in a whisper.

“Come with me.”

“I can’t.”

“Yes, you can. Come to Pittsburgh with me. We can build a life together.”

For a few moments she remained silent, looking outward, her left hand squeezing his resting on her right shoulder. She turned her head and they looked directly at one another, their faces only inches apart. Fred saw the tears welling in her eyes and he knew her answer.

“I want a career just like you do, Fred. And like you, I want to do something for the world too.

“But that doesn’t mean—”

“No, Fred, I want to complete my studies at the seminary. I want to become a minister. As much as I love you, this is my calling and I won’t give it up. After all our talks, you must know how I feel.”

He did know, and he told her so. As much as he wanted her to join him, he was also well aware of both her independent spirit and determination to chart her own path.

Their parting that day was tender and loving, but it was a parting nonetheless.

1907

Dr. Matt Stafford gazed adoringly at his daughter Rebecca as she slept. The smile on his face broadly hinted at his calm delight in seeing the innocent face of his two-year-old girl.

Without his bidding, his mind drifted back to a similar scene more than seven years ago when he first saw his son James, then three years old, asleep in his bed. Back then, though, he had not known that James was his son, that Nicole had become pregnant just before she married Tom, who thought *he* was the father. He learned the truth three years later when Tom died and they could be together openly.

Even though Nicole could hardly have let anyone else know earlier about the identity of James' real father, Matt initially had difficulty in accepting the fact that she had not told *him*.

Once she did, the news for him was a strange mixture of joy and disappointment—delight that the boy who triggered such fondness was his, but also regret in missing out on sharing many joys: first learning they would become parents, touching Nicole's abdomen and feeling movement in her womb, the moment of birth, the everyday pleasure of holding and gazing upon one's infant child, witnessing all those developmental nuances of his first sitting up or crawling, his first steps, first words, and much more.

He may have lost those early precious moments with James, but for the past five years he had shared in James' boyhood years. Many of these occasions triggered his own youthful memories. He wanted James to experience a similar full measure of happy, exuberant

times, and so he took great delight in playing with him, taking him places, and their doing things together. He also gently worked to instill his values into his son in the hopes he would become the man that Matt wished him to be.

With Rebecca, though, he had been involved in all those treasured small daily achievements denied him in James' early years. Perhaps for that reason, he treasured every day, not wanting to ignore a single instance of his time with her. That was why he had once more come to her bedside, just to see her anew. He smiled again, bent down to kiss her head, and quietly left the room.

Entering the parlor, he saw Nicole look up from her book, her lips curling in a sweet smile. As always, whenever he gazed into her exotic brown, almond eyes, he became enraptured. He knew that he loved her as much now as ever. The passion was also still there, mutually and frequently expressed, but now discreetly reserved for late evenings when the children were fast asleep.

This was not yet that time though, as Matt was eager to show his plans to Nicole, something he had excitedly told her earlier that he wanted to do.

She got up and tenderly asked, "Do you want to show me the plans now?"

"Yes, please," he quickly answered, going to the dining room table and unrolling the blueprints.

These had been busy professional years for Matt. Almost immediately after the 1902 opening of the 120-bed hospital on Ellis Island, the one he had helped design, Commissioner William Williams declared it "utterly inadequate," and lobbied for its expansion to handle the unexpected and dramatic increase in immigration and in immigrants with health issues. Just

last year, nearly two thousand immigrants had to be admitted to New York City hospitals because of a lack of facilities on the island.

Finally, after years of bureaucratic red tape, progress was now evident. Just opened was the psychopathic ward—housed in a two-story rectangular building with a flat roof, with an exterior façade that blended with the Georgian Revival style of the hospital. On Island Three, built with landfill from New York City subway excavations, construction had already begun on the Contagious Diseases Hospital.

Matt had also been involved in the architectural planning of the hospital extension. Soon, construction would begin on this building, with a three-and-a-half-storied central pavilion and two wings that would be two-and-a-half stories high. This hospital extension would contain medical wards with dressing rooms, bathrooms, and enclosed porches, as well as offices and sitting rooms.

What excited Matt, though, were the final plans for the contagious diseases hospital and these he wanted to show to Nicole.

“This will be really something, Nicole,” he began. “The design follows the pavilion plan that’s been used in England and France for about fifty years. When it’s finished, there will be eleven buildings with a total of twenty-eight separate wards. See, this is Ward A for measles. That’s being built right now. As you know, measles are the most common sickness, so we’ll have several wards for those patients and other wards for pneumonia, whooping cough, scarlet fever, chicken pox, mumps, diphtheria, trachoma, tuberculosis, venereal disease, and scalp diseases.”

“What is this building,” asked Nicole, pointing to one away at the end from the ones to which Matt had pointed.

“That’s the mortuary.”

“Oh.”

“A necessity, I’m afraid.”

“Yes, of course,” Nicole responded, having a fleeting recollection of the time she, Tom, and James visited Matt in the then-newly built hospital when a patient committed suicide.

“Not to get too morbid,” Matt said, pointing nearby,” but this room will be an autopsy amphitheater. Visiting medical students and other doctors will be able to study and learn the pathology of exotic diseases.”

“I’m glad you didn’t mention nurses, Matt. That’s one experience I think I’d avoid.” Her eyes next focusing on another element of the blueprint, she noted, “That is a rather long corridor.”

“Yes, it is. It will be five hundred feet long and connect all the wards. As you know, darling, the doors to the wards are not directly opposite each other but diagonally apart to limit the flow of air from one to another.”

“Yes,” agreed Nicole, “and these banks of windows will maximize the flow of air between the interior and exterior.”

“Exactly. Do you know what woman recommended this fresh air design?”

“It had to be Florence Nightingale.”

“It was! Good for you!”

“Do I win a prize?” she asked coyly.

“You do, indeed.”

“Do I get to pick it?”

“If you wish.”

“I do.”

“What do you pick?”

“What do you think?”

“I like this game. I think I know what you’ll pick,” he said, smiling.

“Yes?”

“Yes, so come claim your prize.”

With a seductive smile, she slowly moved toward him. They kissed and embraced, their arms encircling one another in a budding passion. Soon, his left hand traveled downward, clasping a still-firm buttock. As was his fondness in doing, his right-hand fingertips gently touched the side of her head. Beginning at her temple, they slowly moved along the outer edge of her ear onto her cheek and down to her chin. Next, he placed the tip of his index finger on her lower lip and traced it around her entire mouth. Kissing her lips lightly, he took her hand in his, and they walked upstairs to their bedroom.

Quickly disrobing, they climbed into bed. Their kisses became more and more passionate as their hands caressed the familiar contours of each other’s body. Soon he entered her, and the two became one, giving and receiving sexual pleasure until they came together. They lay together quietly, falling asleep in each other’s arms.

* * *

It was impossible for anyone living in the northeast quadrant of the United States to ignore the massive immigration wave. Millions of immigrants were arriving, far more than at any time before in the nation’s history. People commonly used such terms as *hordes*, *swarm*, *flood*, *tidal wave*, and *inundate* to describe the immigration these days. Immigrant parents now headed

nearly two-thirds of the families living in Boston, Chicago, Detroit, and New York, and officials were predicting even higher proportions by the 1910 census.

Numbers alone did not explain what was happening. Most of the new arrivals came from central, eastern and southern Europe—notably Italy, Poland, and Russia—countries significantly different in culture and lifestyle than the United States. Coming from rural peasant stock, they were having difficulty adjusting to life in an urban, industrial land. Americans—mostly of northern and western European descent—were also having a hard time acclimating to these highly visually people, so noticeable by their darker complexions and hair, as well as their unique clothing and kerchiefs on the women.

Compounding the negative societal reaction were the overcrowded conditions in the cities resulting from thousands arriving every day and settling near the available jobs. In the rundown tenements—where more than a hundred might live in a single five-story building—sickness, disease and death were the norm. In noisy, congested streets and neighborhood stores and on window signs, languages other than English dominated. The crime rate was also high in these immigrant neighborhoods, a fact that the newspapers continually reminded their readers.

Amidst the hue and cry from both sides of the immigration issue, Congress finally hammered out a compromise in passing the Immigration Act of 1907. This legislation created a special commission to investigate immigration, issue reports, and make recommendations.

Under this law, feebleminded immigrants would also be excluded from entry into the United States, in addition to the insane and epileptics. The definition of

moral turpitude expanded to include any immoral purpose, not just prostitution. Furthermore, identifying someone as “mentally or physically defective” no longer rested solely on certain demonstrated conditions; doctors now had wider latitude to exclude any immigrant whose defect in their judgment would affect the alien’s ability to earn a living.

Each of these changes were about to create many challenges for the Ellis Island staff and heartbreaking experiences for many immigrants.

* * *

“Good morning, Inspector.”

Frank Martiniello had been seated at his registry desk, examining the manifest sheet of ship passengers whom he was about to examine. Instantly recognizing the slight English accent as that of Robert Watchorn, he quickly stood up and returned the greeting.

“Good morning, Commissioner.”

Born in Derbyshire in 1858 and arriving at Castle Garden at age 22, Watchorn had become an Ellis Island inspector in 1895, after more than a decade of labor union activism. A series of special assignments followed, most notably to stop the flow of thousands of unprocessed immigrants taking trains into the United States from Canada.

When he began setting up the first inspection stations in several of the Canadian cities, railroad companies put obstacles in his way. When he threatened to stop every train at the border until inspections were done, they caved in. Once the stations were operational from the Pacific Coast port of Victoria all the way to Quebec City, the flow of unprocessed immigrants all but ended.

Roosevelt, aware of Watchorn's accomplishments, appointed him commissioner of immigration at the New York station in 1905, after Williams abruptly resigned after the president's refusal to dismiss Williams' lazy and useless assistant, Joe Murray. Without backing from the president for his own choice, he no longer wanted the position.



Robert Watchorn

Martiniello knew from firsthand experience how the new commissioner exercised his authority. One time he was asked to go to Watchorn's office to translate in an appeal case being heard on a Russian immigrant who was under a deportation order.

The immigrant gave a positive first impression. He was in his prime with a strong physique, and he looked intelligent. Standing rigidly before the commissioner's desk like a soldier at attention, the man's trembling hands revealed his nervousness. He knew that the well-dressed man intently staring at him represented power and was about to decide his fate.

Continuing to study the Russian keenly, Watchorn asked, "On what ground has it been decided to exclude him?"

"No money," Frank answered.

"Has he a trade?"

"Yes, tinsmithing."

"How much did he earn in Russia?"

"Forty rubles a month."

“Is his record good?”

“Yes.”

“Is he healthy?”

“Yes.”

“Then he meets every lawful requirement for admission, except for his temporary lack of funds, which he should easily overcome. Mr. Martiniello, this man may be poor but he is the sort of immigrant who will do this nation good, not harm. I am sustaining his appeal and shall recommend that we allow him to land.”

Overjoyed after Frank explained, the man clasped his hands before his chest, bowed his head, thanking the commissioner in his native language, “*Balshoye spasiba. Balshoye spasiba.*” [Thank you very much.]

Watchorn smiled and nodded his head in acknowledgment of the grateful alien’s response.

Turning to Frank, he said, “These people are not the scum of Europe, as some say. For instance, I’ve seen thousands of people in the coal mines of Pennsylvania who came here as aliens, but now are as true citizens as any we have. They are frugal, industrious, and intelligent. They cherish their homes, do what they can to educate their children, and are love their adopted land. It is the same everywhere with immigrants.”

“Yes, sir,” agreed Frank.

“I’ve had many hard knocks since I came to this country,” added the commissioner, “but my first experience here at Ellis Island, coming when I expected to receive the hand of fellowship, was one of the hardest of all.”

“What happened, sir?”

“I bought a piece of pie for ten cents from a concessionaire and gave him a half dollar. I immediately began eating it while I waited for my change. He didn’t

give me any, and when I insisted, he told me to leave or he'd call a cop. When I stayed and demanded my change, he called over a policeman who hustled me away.

"That episode braced me for what was to come. It tightened my determination to win out, to overcome the odds which, I realized for the first time, a friendless alien faces. Right then and there, I made up my mind that, when I could, I would do whatever I could for helpless immigrants. It's been a journey of twenty-seven years for me from the immigrant floor downstairs to this office. Now I make sure that the aliens' first experience with Americans is a positive one."

"That was an interesting story, Commissioner. Thank you for telling me."

"Well, perhaps I have said too much."

"No, sir, not at all."

"It is curious how things come around, if you work for them and are patient. You need patience. I tell you my story for what it is worth. If it proves anything, it is that, like me, immigrants come to these shores with the power to strive, seek and find, as Tennyson once said."

Their conversation concluded, Frank left the commissioner's office that day with even greater admiration for his boss.

So now, in hearing Watchorn's voice, Frank was not intimidated. Standing alongside the commissioner, he noted, was a stocky and dark-haired young man, whose five-foot-two-inch height contrasted sharply with the taller commissioner.

"Mr. Martiniello," Commissioner Watchorn began, "Let me introduce you to our newest interpreter, Fiorello LaGuardia."

As the two men shook hands and exchanged greetings, Watchorn continued, "I want him to work beside you today, so you can teach him the ropes."

"Yes, sir."

"Good. Well, give him a quick overview, as we're about to begin."

As the commissioner walked away, Frank said to Fiorello, "It's good to have you with us. God knows we need all the help we can get."

"The papers say immigration is at an all-time high."

"They got that right. We're processing more immigrants every day it seems. The lines seem endless."

"Sounds like I'll be pretty busy."

"That's for sure. You'll be working seven days a week. It's a constant grind from the moment you get off the eight-forty ferry in the morning until you leave on the five-thirty boat in the evening."

"Well, I'm glad to have the job, and the pay is decent. It will allow me to go to law school at night without any financial worries."

"You're going to be a lawyer?"

"Yes, that's what I want to be."

"*Buon per te!* [Good for you!] Tell me, have you worked with immigrants before?"

"Yes, but at the other end—before they left. I worked as an interpreter for a year at our consulate in Trieste. When I was twenty, I became consul at Fiume. People would come to that port city for permission to emigrate and it was my job to clear them."

"Then you'll easily fit in here, no doubt. What languages do you speak?"

"I know Italian from my father who came here from Foggia. My mother is Jewish and from her I learned Yiddish. By living and working in Europe, I picked up

German, French, and several Croatian dialects. In fact, I got my job here by placing first in the civil service exam on the Croatian language.”

“Croatian! That’s one language I don’t know at all. Why did you leave your job as consul?”

“Aw, I got into a tussle with the officials in Fiume. They wanted me to line up emigrants at a reception for the Archduchess Josepha and I refused to put them through that. After that, I decided I had had enough, so I resigned, came back to America, and here I am.”

“That’s something, standing up to pressure like that.”

“If I think I’m right, I speak my mind. What about you? What languages do you speak? I mean besides Italian. Your name and accent tell me that you’re an immigrant yourself.”

“That’s right. I came here in the 1890s. In Italy I was a barber but, here, because I can speak French, German, Polish, and Spanish, I got this job.”

“Look! I guess I better learn my job fast. The immigrants are coming into the hall now. What should I know?”

“We work from ship manifest sheets. As you can see on this one, it contains thirty names, along with their age, sex, marital status, occupation, literacy, nationality, last residence, and final destination. It also tells if the immigrant has ever been in prison or the poorhouse, who paid for the journey, and how much money the immigrant is carrying. There’s even more, as you can see.”

“I didn’t realize there was so much information.”

“The law requires the shipping companies to provide all this. Here, we ask questions on these items to be certain the answers are the same. It’s our job to detect

any suspicious answers or behavior, any impersonations or ineligible immigrants. Of course, all that is the inspector's job. As an interpreter, you just help the immigrant understand each question and respond. Although I often interpret while conducting the legal inspection, today I'll have you do all the interpreting. Ready?"

Fiorello nodded, eager to begin.

"Let's get started then. It's going to be a long day."

* * *

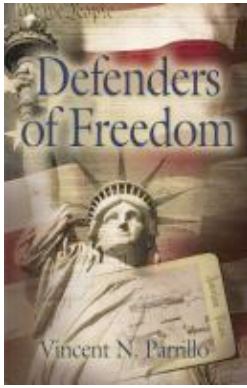
The commissioner looked at his watch. It was nearly time for the Secretary of Commerce and Labor to arrive. He needed to wrap up his time with these female college students whom he had just taken on a tour of the island. Standing with them on the ferry dock, he felt compelled to say something to these affluent young women who had voiced their opposition to "lax" immigration enforcement.

"Let me tell you about a 76-six-year-old Italian immigrant who recently arrived and was on his way to live with his son in Lynchburg, Virginia. His son was not here to pick him up. Should we have admitted him?"

"Of course not," said one of the students. "At his age, he was too old and weak."

"Do all of you agree?" Watchorn asked the others, who quickly agreed with their classmate.

"Well, what actually happened," he continued, "sounds like a movie, but it's true. At the last possible moment before we acted, the son showed up and, with great emotion, the two embraced. Now that they were reunited, should we send that 'old and weak' father, as you called him, back to Italy?"



Based on actual events, this historical novel tells of people fighting for minority rights against oppressors. Although briefly about soldiers in the First World War, this is mainly the story of advocates on behalf of immigrants, of activists for women's right to vote, and of one man who, as the Ellis Island Commissioner, defied his bosses in Washington and even Congress to ensure that helpless victims of patriotic hysteria would have due process of law.

Defenders of Freedom

Order the complete book from

[Booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com)

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/8236.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**