

SS CHARLES HENDERSON

Sorry, no picture available of SS *Charles Henderson*

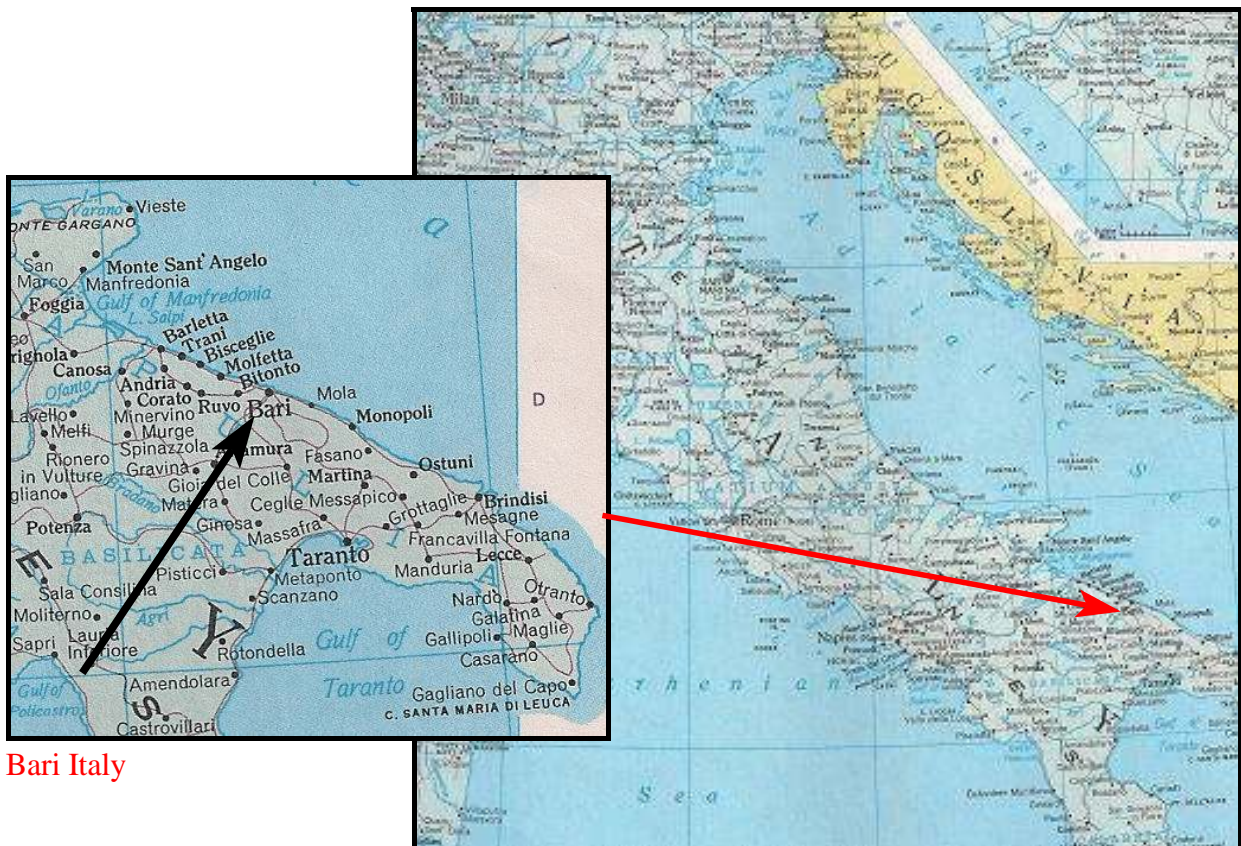
[If any reader of this document has a picture of this ship and would like to share it would be greatly appreciated]

A “thumbnail” history of whom was the person behind the name of this Liberty Ship.

Charles Henderson (1848 - 1915) was a Baptist clergyman and sociologist....he was born in Covington, Indiana graduated at the University of Chicago in 1870 and at Union Theological Seminary in 1873. From 1873 to 1883 he was pastor at Terre Haute, Indiana and from 1883 to 1892 at Detroit. Appointed in 1892 assistant professor of sociology at Chicago University, he was afterward advanced to the full professorship. In 1898-99 he was president of the National Conference of Charities, in 1902 president of the National Prison Association, and in 1910 of the International Prison Congress. In 1907 he served as secretary of the Illinois Commission on Occupational Diseases. He died in 1915.

[Anyone wishes to share a picture of this gentleman this would be greatly appreciated]

The SS *Charles Henderson* was Liberty ship freighter that was built at Delta Shipbuilding Co. for WSA [War Shipping Administration] in 1943....[Keel laid: March 19, 1943; Launched: May 1, 1943]. She was delivered to the Operator: Mississippi Shipping Co. Inc. on May 19th, 1943.



Bari Italy

The *Charles Henderson* was docked at berth 14 in Bari, Italy.....she was pretty much loaded down with about 2,000 tons of 1,000 lb. and 500 lb. bombs for the USAAF I do mean she was stuffed with these puppies.

Well on April 9th, 1945 she was discharging this cargo.....this 'off loading' was being performed Italian stevedores, under the charge of British Army sappers. All of a sudden a sheet of flame shot up from the after # 5 hold....and this was followed by a tremendous explosion.

Actually the after part of the *Charles Henderson* disintegrated in flames, and a cloud of black smoke rose several thousand feet in the airwith burning debris from the ship raining down all around.

The fore part of the *Charles Henderson*, still loaded with about half the ships cargo of bombs, was blown forward, ending up partly on the quay. This explosion not only destroyed the *Charles Henderson* it also devastated the berth, and adjoining sheds, and all the port equipment in the vicinity. A large section of the ship's bridge landed in the nearby Navy Yard and everything there went up in flames.

There were three other ships in port...including a tanker and all of these caught fire as well. Then there was the tidal wave that developed from the explosion as well that damaged every other ship in the port and caused some of the wrecks from the previous disaster...[some 16 months earlier there was another explosion involving 'mustard gas'which all but leveled this port....but that will be discussed at a later time]....to be torn away from the mole and to again block the harbor.

It took every bit of a month to make the port operational again, a job that was completed just as the war in Europe was drawing to a close.

What remained of the *Charles Henderson* ...[which by the way was not much]...was sold to Genoa shipbreakers for scrapping.

The *Charles Henderson* could be replaced...the totally sad news was the loss of life. Forty-two crewmen as well as twelve U.S. Navy Armed Guard lost their lives.....and it went on from there....267 Italian workers got killed as well...along with 1,600 injured....as well as an undetermined number of Allies military personnel were killed.

LOST CREW INFO

As you've read above there were 42 crewman lost, as well as 12 U.S. Navy Armed Guard. The author research to gain access to the list of the above from both groups....well I was able to come up with 39 names of the 42 that was lost....but **unfortunately** I **could not** find any of the named U.S. Navy Armed Guard.

The names that I did uncover will be listed at the below site. Just click on the site title.

[LIBERTY & MERCHANT SHIP CREWS \[LOST\]](#)

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Sources:

The Liberty Ships
By: Capt. Walter W. Jaffee

I welcome any and all comments as well as any additional data you may wish to share....pictures and or data....related to this document or any of my other ship history documents that is list or in any way related to my Ship History site below.

BUD'S LIBERTY & MERCHANT SHIP HISTORIES

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