

The Evening Star, August 22, 1873, p. 2

The investigation into the *Wawaset* disaster closed today, and the commission will soon report. No evidence was elicited today to show how the fire originated, although the firemen were closely questioned, and it remains as much a mystery as ever. The testimony today seemed to establish pretty conclusively that the steamboat company had every reason to suppose that they were entitled to carry 150 passengers, and that the designation of fifty in the Custom-house records was a verbal error. There had been no question, however, on the part of those familiar with the size of the *Wawaset* that she was fully qualified to carry the larger number named. There is no doubt, either, wherever the blame of the disaster may be, that the boat had been carefully and fully equipped for work by her owners. The experience of the *Wawaset* has, however, demonstrated that the private rooms of the firemen and of all the crew, in fact, should be on deck and not below. In the case of the *Wawaset* the weight of the testimony is to the effect that the fire originated in the firemen's room forward of the engine, where it had a chance to get full headway undiscovered. The supposition is that it caught from matches, or fire dropped from a pipe. Had this room been on deck the fire would have been discovered before it had seized possession of the whole interior of the vessel.