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On the 3d and 4th of December a very unfortunate occurrence took place near Niobrara, Nebraska Territory, the particulars of which, according to the best evidence I have been able to obtain, and which, I believe, are true, are as follows: A party of Poncas, numbering four men, six women, three boys, and two girls, in all fifteen, were on their return from the Omaha reservations to this agency, and camped on the evening of December 3 about three miles below Niobrara, near the farm of Mr. Huddleston, with whom they were acquainted. In the early part of the evening they were visited by two soldiers, who were on their way to Niobrara, whom they informed that they were Poncas and on their way home; one of these soldiers was Lieutenant Comstock, of the 7th Iowa volunteer cavalry, and they passed on apparently satisfied.

Near midnight a party of soldiers from a detachment of company B, 7th Iowa cavalry, stationed at Niobrara, came to the camp. The Indians, who had retired for the night, came out of their lodges and shook hands with the soldiers, who then fastened their horses and went into the lodges. These soldiers at once commenced taking liberties with the squaws, and very soon behaved in an outrageous manner; offering money with one hand and presenting a revolver with the other, they demanded their possessions. The Indians, becoming alarmed, pulled up the lodge covering and escaped to a copse of willows. The soldiers fired their revolvers at them as they ran, and then commenced destroying their lodges and effects. They cut to pieces a drilling lodge covering, burned the saddles and saddle blankets, fired balls from their revolvers through the camp kettles, pans, &c., cut open sacks of corn, beans, and dried pumpkin, and strewed the contents over the ground, and left, carrying away with them a skin lodge covering, beaver skins, buffalo robes, blanket, three guns, traps, and many small articles. The Indians had hidden their ponies in the willows; with these, before daylight, and after the soldiers had gone, they returned to the camp, gathered together the corn which had not been destroyed, and such other articles as they could find, and packing