

Benedict and Mary Juni Family

The Juni family were Swiss immigrants who settled near Beaver Falls where the family lived peacefully until August 18, 1862 when the Dakota began killing whites. Alarmed by neighbors, Benedict loaded clothing, bedding, and provisions in his wagon. He was not convinced of this shocking news, however, and sent his family and children off with the Hayden and Zimmerman families. At that time, Benedict, Jr. had taken their only horse to round up the oxen. A younger son remained with his father and was helping to guard the stock. The Dakota showed up at their homestead and father and both sons took off running to alarm other neighbors. Eventually young Benedict was taken hostage after dodging Indians from the ferry up the the Faribault house. He remained in custody of the Indians until Camp Release. He was not cruelly treated, as he wrote in a later narrative published in 1902, but witnessed many heartrending scenes during his captivity.

Mary and her children continued on with the Hayden and Zimmerman escapees when their wagons were ambushed along the road. The Dakota killed Anna Maria, the oldest Juni daughter and took the rest of the party to the Faribault house. There they were left after being threatened of being burned alive, when the Indians moved on for other prey. The frightened women and children remained in the house until Captain Marsh and his soldiers found them, at which time they all fled to the fort. Mary died soon after, thought to be from “nervous prostration produced by fear and anxiety for the welfare of her family during the terrible days of the Sioux Massacre in 1862,” as noted in a later Benedict Juni, Jr. biography.

Benedict, Sr. then volunteered and served as a Private in Company L of the 1st Minnesota Cavalry during the Civil War. He remarried Ernestine Massopust and moved to the Milford area where he lived out his life. Benedict died in Milford in 1897 at the age of 72 and is buried in the New Ulm City Cemetery.