Down by the river

Lenape descendants journey down Delaware to Pennsbury Manor for new treaty signing

By PETRA CHESSNER SCHLATTER

If you catch a glimpse of a canoe caravan of American Indians traveling down the Delaware River in the next few days, it's not your imagination.

As part of a two-week canoe caravan called "Rising Nation," Lenape Indian Tribe members are traveling 330 miles from the top of the Delaware River in lower New York state to Cape May, N.J. The group is expected to stop in Washington Crossing on August 15 where they will camp and then, sometime after that pass by Lower Makefield, Yardley Borough and Morrisville.

The canoeists will pause for a treaty signing on August 24 at Pennsbury Manor in Falls Township, the former estate of William Penn. The public-only event will feature performers including Bill Miller, Mary Youngblood, Jim Beer and the River, The Rishy Dog Singers and The Red Hawk Singers.

Traditional Native American dances also will be performed. And there will be Native American elders who will speak as well as some Lenape chiefs, historians and environmental people.

Calling the journey an "historical event," Lenape spokesperson Jim Beer said the river journey is part of an effort to bring the Lenape together again.

Chief Bob Redhawk of the Eastern Lenape will make the journey down the river.

"Over the river" Sunday, August 4 at Hancock, N.Y., said Beer, who is participating in the journey. The group will travel 20 miles per day.

After Pennsbury Manor, the journey will continue to Palmyra Cove Nature Park in New Jersey. The trip will end six miles from Penn Treaty Park in Philadelphia.

The journey and treaty signing at Pennsbury Manor, Beer said, "marks a new beginning of brotherhood between the Lenape and the people who neighbor the Delaware River.

churches, historical societies and citizens committed to support the Lenape culture and help to sustain the people, language and way of life.

The brotherhood that is being renewed," Beer said, "is that which existed between the Lenape people and the one the Lenape called brother - William Penn. William Penn's dealings with our people were good and fair.

The Lenape people,